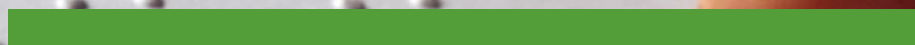
The background of the page is a close-up photograph of a person's hands touching Braille on a white surface. The hands are positioned in the lower half of the frame, with fingers spread out. The Braille dots are clearly visible on the white paper. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the skin and the raised dots of the Braille.

# ***Anchor Center for Blind Children Strategic Plan***



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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Anchor Center for Blind Children's vision and mission serve as the foundation for our commitment to being a nationally recognized leader in developmental, educational, and support services for children who are blind or visually impaired, as well as the caregivers and professionals who serve them. Our core values guide us in always working in the best interest of each child, valuing unique contributions, making collaborative, mission-driven decisions, and appreciating the resources and donors that make our programs possible. With a rich history that began in 1982, Anchor Center has become a vital center of support and education for caregivers and siblings.

The Anchor Center for Blind Children's five-year strategic plan, developed through an inclusive and collaborative process, outlines a clear vision for the future, guiding the organization's efforts and resources towards providing sustainable services and support to blind and visually impaired children and their caregivers. This comprehensive framework addresses key areas such as organizational structure, program offerings, and financial sustainability, aiming to strengthen the organization's capacity to serve and foster a culture of innovation and excellence.

The strategic planning process for Anchor Center for Blind Children consisted of the formation of three subcommittees focusing on Programs, Organization, and Finance. The aim was to comprehensively evaluate current operations and identify areas for growth and improvement. These subcommittees conducted extensive research, engaged with stakeholders, and collaborated closely to develop a robust and comprehensive strategic plan.

The Programs subcommittee evaluated the delivery of programs in support of our mission, focusing on opportunities and trends to better meet the needs of our community. The Organization subcommittee concentrated on evaluating our goals, activities, and plans related to outreach and communications, expanding capacity, optimizing the use of facilities, staff recruitment and retention, and culture building. The Finance subcommittee examined our current financial position and long-term viability, ensuring that Anchor Center's growth trajectory and aspirations are well-supported.

The strategic plan is centered around three main goals: 1) Sustainability and Continued Delivery of High-Quality Services; 2) Developing Organizational Capacity to Support Increased Impact through Thought Leadership and Training Efforts; and 3) Diversifying and Increasing Revenue to Support Anchor Center's Mission and Vision. Each goal is accompanied by specific objectives and measurements to track our progress.

By implementing the recommendations and goals set forth in the strategic plan, Anchor Center for Blind Children will be well-positioned to achieve its long-term vision and mission, providing high-quality services and support for visually impaired infants, young children, and their caregivers.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

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The Anchor Center for Blind Children is proud to present our strategic plan, developed through a comprehensive and collaborative process that began in the fall of 2022. This document aims to outline our vision for the future, establishing clear goals and objectives that will empower us to continue our vital mission of providing essential services and support to blind and visually impaired children and their caregivers. As we strive to improve and expand our reach, this strategic plan serves as a roadmap, guiding our organization's efforts and resources towards achieving our shared goals.

Our strategic planning process was designed to be inclusive and engaging, involving the Board of Directors, staff, and other key stakeholders in the decision-making process. Through a series of board discussions, stakeholder surveys, staff meetings, and the formation of three subcommittees – Organization, Programs, and Finance – we were able to identify our strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats, as well as establish priorities for the coming years. This collaborative approach ensured that we considered diverse perspectives and experiences, leading to a more robust and well-rounded plan.

The intent of this strategic plan is to provide a comprehensive framework for Anchor Center's growth and development, addressing key areas such as organizational structure, program offerings, and financial sustainability. By focusing on these critical aspects, we aim to strengthen our capacity to serve blind and visually impaired children, while also fostering a culture of innovation and excellence within our organization. As we embark on this exciting new chapter, we are confident that Anchor Center for Blind Children will continue to be a beacon of hope and support for the many caregivers who rely on our services.

## 3. VISION, MISSION, VALUES, HISTORY

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### Our Vision

To set the standard as a nationally recognized leader in developmental, educational and support services for children who are blind or visually impaired, as well as the caregivers and professionals who serve them.

### Our Mission

To teach visually impaired infants, young children and their caregivers, providing hope and a nurturing environment where children reach their highest potential.

### Our Core Values

At Anchor Center we:

- Always work in the best interest of each child.
- Value the unique contributions of every individual in our organization.
- Employ collaborative, mission-driven decision making.
- Operate in the spirit of gratitude to the donors who make our programs possible.
- Expect leadership in all aspects of our organization.
- Act for the best interest of the whole.
- Appreciate the network of resources (community, volunteers, staff, etc.) that enable us to build capacity and fulfill our mission and vision.

### Our History

Anchor Center for Blind Children was founded in 1982 through the collaborative efforts of a librarian from the Colorado Library for the Blind and the local Delta Gamma alumnae chapter. Their shared vision of providing a nurturing and supportive environment for blind and visually impaired children led to the creation of a specialized center that would focus on the unique needs of these children and their caregivers. The humble beginnings of Anchor Center saw its first class comprised of four preschool students and six homebound infants. Today, we have come a long way, serving over 195 children each year while providing support and education to caregivers and siblings.

Volunteers have played a crucial role in Anchor Center's history and continue to be an indispensable part of our organization. From our early days in a borrowed Sunday school room to our state-of-the-art facility in the Central Park neighborhood which opened its doors in 2007, the dedication and hard work of our volunteers have been instrumental in our growth and success. As we have expanded our reach and impact, we have also evolved our programs and services to meet the diverse and changing needs of the children and caregivers we serve, never losing sight of our mission to empower blind and visually impaired children to reach their full potential.

Throughout our history, Anchor Center for Blind Children has been steadfast in its commitment to providing exceptional care and education to the children who rely on our services. Our dedicated staff of professionals, therapists, and educators work tirelessly to transform the lives of countless children, helping them build the essential skills and confidence they need to succeed in an ever-changing world. As we reflect on our journey, we remain deeply grateful for the unwavering support of our donors, volunteers, and community members who have played an invaluable role in enabling us to fulfill our mission. With their continued support, we look forward to growing and expanding our impact, ensuring that every child who needs our services can benefit from the life-changing programs and resources we provide.

## 4. SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

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The strategic planning process for Anchor Center for Blind Children led to the formation of three subcommittees, each with a unique focus: **Programs, Organization, and Finance**. These subcommittees were created to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of our current operations and to identify areas for growth and improvement. Each subcommittee conducted extensive research, engaged with key stakeholders, and collaborated closely with other subcommittees to support the development of the strategic plan, ultimately aiming to help Anchor Center achieve its long-term vision and mission.

The Organization subcommittee concentrated on evaluating our goals, activities, and plans related to outreach and communications, expanding capacity, optimizing the use of facilities, staff recruitment and retention, and culture building. The Programs subcommittee was tasked with evaluating the delivery of programs in support of our mission, focusing on opportunities and trends to better meet the needs of our community. Finally, the Finance subcommittee examined our current financial position and long-term viability, working to ensure that Anchor Center's growth trajectory and aspirations are well-supported. Through the combined efforts of these subcommittees, a robust and comprehensive strategic plan was developed, which will guide Anchor Center for Blind Children into a bright and successful future.



## Programs

The programs committee was formed to evaluate Anchor Center's delivery of programs to support our Mission.

### **Key aspects of the Program committee's activities include:**

- Meeting and engagement with key staff members including Cathy Smyth, Elise Darrow and Caroline Vaszauskas.
- Discussing opportunities and trends to better meet Anchor's mission and support Anchor's Mission and Vision.
- Coordination with the Organization Team and Finance team through updates to support future Anchor Center needs directed at achieving our long-term Vision and Mission.

### **Key activities of the Program committee include:**

- Positive results from an inclusive programming approach with a desire to continue to provide and expand inclusive programming while simultaneously expanding and deepening available services for children with visual impairments.
- Continue to provide and expand inclusive programming while simultaneously expanding and deepening available services for children with visual impairments.
- Opportunities to increase impact for students diagnosed with Cerebral/Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) by implementing and researching practices designed to support these students.
- A building audit may allow Anchor to ensure programming space is utilized effectively.
- To maintain the delivery of high-quality services, retaining qualified Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVIs) is crucial, as well as developing a pipeline for future hires in all specialized roles.
- In order to continually improve programming, success metrics around services and outcomes should be defined and utilized to guide services.
- There is a need for financial self-stability across program offerings and opportunities for greater earned revenue.

- The eye clinic is an important part of Anchor’s services providing children and caregivers with a valuable service. It is important that Anchor develops a sustainable plan for the eye clinic.
- Anchor’s research efforts around CVI for children from birth to 5 offer potential to make an impact at Anchor and at the local, national and international levels.

### **Committee Recommendations:**

#### ***Recommendation 1: Preschool Sustainability***

Continually raise our service levels for children with visual impairments to ensure the highest level of care, driven by world-class programs and verified by data-driven metrics, while ensuring sustainability of the services for the long term.

#### ***Recommendation 2: Eye Clinic Sustainability***

Develop a long-term sustainability plan for the on-site eye clinic, extending support for our programs and partnerships and fully leveraging Anchor’s CVI expertise.

#### ***Recommendation 3: Cerebral/Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) Research and Practice***

Improve outcomes for children with CVI and establish Anchor Center as a leading CVI expert through four major pillars of excellence: research, program improvement, training programs, and partnerships.

## Organization

The organization subcommittee was formed to evaluate Anchor Center's goals, activities and plans related to outreach and communications, expanding capacity and optimizing the use of facilities, staff recruitment and retention, and culture building.

### **Key activities of the Organization committee included:**

- Meeting with Meghan to understand related projects and impact on key areas of investigation; understand her vision, insights, and ideas to inform our support and refine areas/topics of research to develop strategic plan goals.
- Meeting with website stakeholders to determine gaps in functionality and content, including results of Board of Director's stakeholder survey.
- Cataloguing efforts that relate to the organization committee's charter in order to coordinate and support these efforts: TSVI task force, Accelerating Impact, and marketing/fundraising website development needs.
- Coordination with the Programs and Finance team to support future Anchor Center needs directed at achieving our long-term Vision and Mission.

### **Key findings from the Organization committee include:**

- A unique opportunity exists to define Anchor Center's value proposition, long-term goals and extend the reach of the mission and vision.
- Anchor Center is well positioned to establish unique thought leadership in Cerebral/Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) research and vision impairment education in support of Neonatal Assessment Visual European Grid (NAVEG) screenings and a national standard for infant vision screening.
- Anchor has considerable expertise and cultural strength to grow a national reputation as a Center of Excellence in visual impairment education and science that will support the organization's goal of generating 30% of revenue from paid services over the next five years.

## Committee Recommendations...

***Recommendation 1: Establish national thought leadership in screening, research, teaching and providing comprehensive care for children five years old and younger with serious vision impairments.***

Advocating for a national standard for infant vision screening. Developing consistent, compelling messaging to promote Anchor's vision, mission, and values. Improving awareness of Anchor Center among customer groups five- fold over the 2023 benchmark survey measure.

***Recommendation 2: Transform Anchor stakeholder/customer journeys through outreach, website functionality, and program development –***

Establishing access to resources, simplifying program enrollment, and launching a revenue generating platform for multiple customers. This effort will focus on: Hospitals and their staff seeking education, specifically CVI training; Pediatric Ophthalmologists who diagnose visual impairment; Parents (and others) seeking resources and educational programming for visually impaired infants and preschoolers; Professionals, like TSVIs, seeking training, employment and use of facilities related to Anchor programming; and Individuals and Corporations who want to financially support Anchor's mission and vision.

***Recommendation 3: Continue to evaluate the goal of becoming a “full-time” pre-school and explore the potential for additional locations—***

Maintain the unique, personalized aspects of Anchor programming. Focusing on continually improving infant, toddler, pre-school, home visit, and family services programming and understanding how to access pre-school funding, as well as state and national Medicaid reimbursement to expand services.

## Finance

The Finance Committee was established to evaluate Anchor Center's current financial standing and long-term sustainability in order to support the organization's growth and aspirations.

### **Key activities of the Finance committee include:**

- Meeting with key staff members including John Taylor, Savannah Wippel and Meghan Klassen.
- Coordination with Dr. Barresi and Association Ventures to identify pathways for developing earned revenue sources.
- Investigating the financial support structures of similar organizations, including Perkins Center for Blind Children.
- Coordination with the Organization Team and Programs team in order to support future Anchor Center needs directed at achieving our long-term Vision and Mission.

### **Key findings from the Finance committee include:**

- At present, 94% of Anchor's funding is derived from private sources, while similar organizations have a private/public ratio of approximately 60-70% private funding and 30-40% earned revenue. Increasing overall revenue from earned revenue sources and allocating a larger portion of the budget to earned revenue is needed to better support future growth and sustainability.
- Anchor Center heavily relies on event-based revenue and private donations. Although the development team has been highly effective in supporting our growth, there is an opportunity to explore additional strategies that could diversify our fundraising efforts and engage key stakeholder groups more actively.

## Committee Recommendations:

- ***Recommendation 1: Diversify Revenue***

To better support long-term growth and sustainability, it is crucial to diversify revenue sources. We recommend conducting further research and developing strategies to increase revenue with set targets. Current research directions include 1) securing public funding through billing Medicaid, leveraging Universal Pre-K and Denver Preschool Program funds, 2) offering training programs including certified CVI training, and 3) renting out facilities.

- ***Recommendation 2: Broaden Fundraising efforts:***

To enhance fundraising efforts, it is recommended Anchor broadens the scope of activities. This includes 1) involving board members in fundraising initiatives, 2) targeting Colorado-based Delta Gamma members, and 3) engaging medical professionals as ambassadors for the organization. By expanding these efforts, Anchor can secure more diverse support and funding sources to ensure long-term success.

## 5. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND MEASUREMENT

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At the core of Anchor Center for Blind Children’s history and work, is our mission “to support visually impaired infants, young children and their caregivers” and our vision “to set the standard as a nationally recognized leader in developmental, educational and support services for children who are blind or visually impaired”. To continue realizing our mission and vision, we have identified three goals related to **Programs and Services**, **Support Infrastructure**, and **Finance**. The goals are derived from the subcommittee’s recommendations. Alongside these goals, we have defined objectives and measures to track our progress. These goals align with our mission and vision, emphasizing our ultimate goal of delivering high-quality programs and services.



## **Goal 1: Sustainability and Continued Delivery of High-Quality Services**

At the core of Anchor Center, is our care for children with visual impairment from birth to age five. Key findings underscore the significance of continued, sustainable delivery of high-quality programs and services to advancing Anchor Center for Blind Children's mission and vision. Of particular importance are the positive results from the inclusive programming approach and the need for its expansion. Opportunities to increase impact for CVI-diagnosed students and improve space utilization through a building audit. The need to retain qualified staff, develop a hiring pipeline, and establish success metrics to guide services. The importance of financial self-stability, greater earned revenue, and a sustainable plan for the eye clinic. Lastly, the potential impact of Anchor's CVI research efforts for children aged birth to five at local, national, and international levels, further strengthening the organization's mission and vision.

### **Objectives:**

- Develop sustainable Early Intervention, Infant & Toddler, Preschool, Eye Clinic, and CVI initiatives, ensuring long-lasting support for children with visual impairments.
- Continue to provide and expand inclusive programming while also ensuring that services offer a continuum of support and are centered in children with visual impairments.
- Demonstrate leadership and best-in-class practices in the field of visual impairment, setting the standard for care, education, and innovation across the industry.
- Offer a competitive, holistic compensation structure that ensures Anchor Center will continue to provide high quality services.

### **Measurement:**

- On an annual basis, assess each objective in terms of long-term sustainability and demonstration of leadership and best-in-class practices.



## **Goal 2: Develop the organizational capacity to support our efforts to increase our impact through thought leadership and training efforts.**

To accomplish our program and service delivery goals, Anchor Center requires robust human resources, systems, and physical infrastructure for sustained support. Key findings emphasize the necessity to maintain and enhance efforts in outreach, communications, capacity expansion, staff recruitment, retention, and culture building. These findings reveal opportunities to refine the organization's value proposition, cultivate thought leadership in CVI research and vision impairment education, and develop a national reputation as a Center of Excellence.

### **Objectives:**

- Redesign the website to include the ability to accept payments, offer training, sell products and services.
- Enhance our reputation, boost awareness, and make resources accessible by leveraging technology and effective communication to expand our reach and impact. Improve awareness of Anchor Center among groups five-fold over 2023 benchmark survey measure.
- Develop training expertise and offerings directed at professionals and parents in the field of visual impairment including becoming certified trainers in applicable areas of focus.
- Develop and implement short and long-term strategies to attract, support, and retain highly skilled Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVIs) to Anchor Center and within the profession.
- Develop the capacity to deliver and promote adoption of NAVeG screenings at hospitals.

### **Measurement:**

- Assess the ability to deliver and sell training, products and services.
- Assess our reach and impact through our resource dissemination and communication efforts. Use benchmark survey tools to evaluate progress.
- Assess our ability and success developing and offering training.

### **Goal 3: Diversify and increase Revenue to support Anchor Center's ability to achieve our Mission and Vision as identified by Goals 1 and 2.**

To ensure the long-term sustainability and growth of Anchor Center, the financial standing of the organization was assessed, and opportunities were identified to enhance revenue sources. Recognizing that 94% of funding originates from private sources, the committee recommends diversifying revenue through research-based strategies, exploring public funding, training opportunities, and facility rentals, and broadening fundraising efforts by engaging board members, collaborating with Colorado-based Delta Gamma members, and enlisting medical professionals as ambassadors.

#### ***Objectives:***

- Generate revenue to meet the organization's ongoing financial needs and growth plans.
- Increase earned income from public funding sources, trainings, material sales, and other strategies.
- Transition the donation/earned income ratio toward a long-term goal of 70/30.

#### ***Measurement:***

- Maintain a balanced budget over a 5-year period.
- Annually evaluate and set goals for our earned income ratio.
- Implement strategies to diversify fundraising efforts beyond large individual donors and events.

## 6. ROAD MAP

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To ensure the successful achievement of our goals, we recommend assessing progress annually and establishing action steps and goals for the upcoming year based on the annual assessments. The following milestones outline our suggested approach:

### 2024:

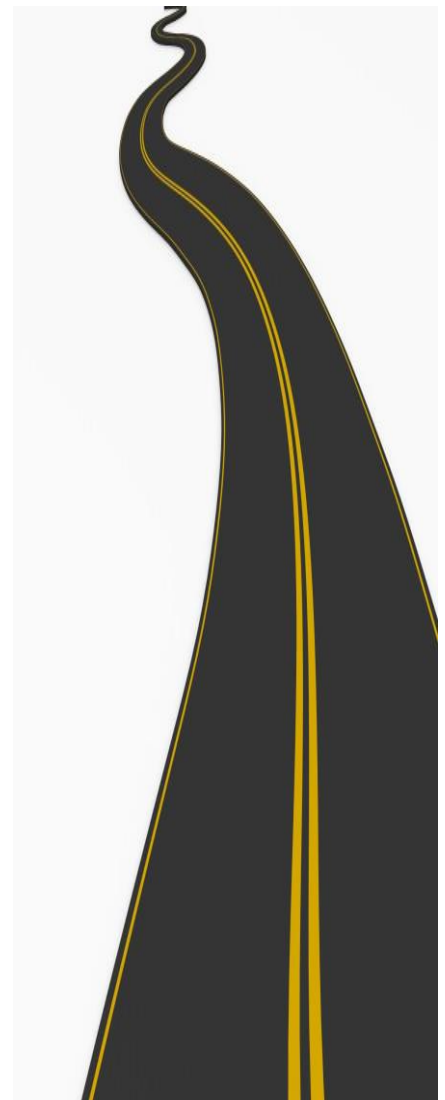
- Staff develops implementation plan based on this strategic plan.
- Board reviews the staff's implementation plan to ensure alignment with goals.
- Reassess the mission, vision, and values statements to be aligned with Anchor Center's direction.
- Form a board subcommittee to support the staff's implementation efforts and work.

### 2025-2027:

- Evaluate the previous year's progress in achieving the strategic plan goals.
- Annually conduct assessments and suggest metrics for continuous improvement in subsequent years.
- Recommend necessary changes based on the evaluation of progress toward achieving goals.
- Establish board subcommittees as needed to support the staff's plans.

### Year 2028:

- Evaluate the overall progress in achieving the strategic plan.
- Develop the next five-year plan based on the evaluation.



## 7. CONCLUSION

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The strategic plan outlined in this document provides a comprehensive roadmap for Anchor Center for Blind Children to achieve its mission and vision by focusing on three main goals: 1) ensuring sustainability and the continued delivery of high-quality services, 2) developing the organizational capacity to increase our impact through thought leadership and training efforts, and 3) diversifying and increasing revenue to support our ability to achieve our mission and vision. These goals, along with their corresponding objectives and measurements, will guide the organization's efforts over the coming years as we strive to set the standard as a nationally recognized leader in developmental, educational, and support services for children who are blind or visually impaired.

Through the collaborative efforts of our board, staff, and stakeholders, we are confident that the implementation of this strategic plan will enable us to improve the lives of visually impaired infants and young children, as well as their caregivers. By focusing on the key areas of program and service delivery, organizational capacity, and financial stability, Anchor Center for Blind Children will continue to grow, innovate, and thrive, remaining steadfast in our commitment to setting the standard for care, education, and innovation in the field of visual impairment.