2015 Strategic Plan

Recognizing Abilities and Opportunities
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The Board of Directors of Abilities First and its Leadership Team developed this Strategic Plan with stakeholder input as a roadmap for Abilities First as it works to fulfill its mission. The strategic direction and goals included in this plan are Abilities First’s response to its understanding of what its customer’s value most about the organization and current opportunities and challenges for people with developmental disabilities in the Greene County community.

Executive Summary

Abilities First is about turning abilities into opportunities. We work to bring our community together by emphasizing our likenesses rather than our differences. All of us want to be valued. We all have struggles; we all need opportunities. Abilities First will not let obstacles stop us from reaching our dreams, especially our dream of inclusion. Inclusion means full participation and it creates benefits for everyone in the community. We want to end separation and segregation of individuals with Developmental Disabilities. Segregation deprives people of lessons usually learned over a lifetime. Lessons that are hard to teach and without which, we have few opportunities. By including people with disabilities, we help our community bond and recognize/realize opportunities.

Abilities First is the local governmental entity, commonly referred to as a “Senate Bill 40 Board or County Board,” representing Greene County citizens with Developmental Disabilities and their families. Abilities First exists under the authority of the Revised Statutes of the State of Missouri, Sections 205.968-205.972. Since 1979, Abilities First (formerly known as the Greene County Board for the Developmentally Disabled) has administered tax levy revenue generated through a local property tax and used those funds to pay for community services for persons with developmental disabilities in Greene County.

The goals, strategies and objectives are built around four main themes that were identified in the strategic planning process. Those themes include:

- **Opportunities**
  - Abilities First defines the perfect community as one where people with developmental disabilities are a part of the community and have what they need to reach their dreams. People have and make choices from options based on their real abilities. We don’t have to talk about special services and supports because the point is making sure everyone has opportunities. The conversation is about the results such as jobs, homes, friends, art, understanding the human condition.

- **Awareness and Education**
  - People know Abilities First is a resource. Abilities First connects with the community directly and through various media. Abilities First staff are the front-line communicators about Abilities First. Abilities First has strong employer partnerships and the tools to support individual employees and employers; partnerships with educators and other stakeholders.

- **Maximizing Resources**
  - Funds are spread in a way that is balanced with the mission, the vision and the objectives of the Board. The Board looks at seeing a return on its investment, and measuring that return on investment. Abilities First tax levy funds are intended to be used for things that are over and above what individuals would be able to access if there weren’t levy funds available. Local citizens did not tax themselves with the intent of those tax dollars being used to supplant what State, Federal, or other funders provide in other areas that do not have the additional tax levy.

- **Organizational Alignment**
  - Working cohesively through the various programs toward a unified purpose. All activities are working toward the mission and vision and through the values of Abilities First. Strengthen internal awareness and move messaging forward into the community.
Mission
Turning abilities into opportunities.

Vision
Abilities First will expand opportunities, empower voices, and enable citizens with developmental disabilities to realize their dreams.

Values
- Choice
- Emphasizing likenesses
- Innovation
- Openness
- Inclusion
- Independence
- Self-determination
- Collaboration
- Valued roles
- Lives of distinction
- Productivity
- Partnership
- Accountability
- Opportunities
- Awareness
- Self-advocacy (Self-worth)
- Recognize ability
- Recognize value
- Self-respect
- Prevention
- Respect
- Equality
- Dignity

Organizational Charts

[Organizational Chart Image]

Organizational Structure
1979

Abilities First
Board of Directors

Executive Director
Organizational Structure 2003

Board

Executive Director

Administrative Assistant
Opportunities Available Through Abilities First

1. Grant funding to provide support for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in Greene County.
   - Agencies Funded By the Board:
     • A Sporting Chance
     • Art Inspired
     • Art Inspired Academy
     • Champion Athletes of the Ozarks
     • Council of Churches of the Ozarks
     • Developmental Center of the Ozarks
     • Equi-Librium Therapy Center
     • Nova Center of the Ozarks
     • Ozarks Area Community Action Corporation
     • Southwest Center for Independent Living
     • Springfield Regional Office
     • SWI Industrial Solutions
     • SWI Transit Company
     • The Arc of the Ozarks
     • The Next Step-Support Coordination
     • Vision Rehabilitation Center of the Ozarks

2. The Next Step-Support Coordination
In 2004, Abilities First started its Targeted Case Management Program known as The Next Step. Support Coordinators at The Next Step help individuals with developmental disabilities and their families identify and prioritize their wants and
needs and help them find the resources to reach their goals. Support Coordinators work with the individual and his/her support team to:

- Develop a personal plan with goals, outcomes, action steps and timelines.
- Assist in planning and transitioning throughout the phases of their lives.
- Advocate for the individual and his/her personal goals.
- Access community resources to provide the support needed to reach individual goals.

The Next Step is funded through an inter-governmental agreement with DMH.
Currently The Next Step is providing support coordination to over 1500 individuals.

3. First Steps Region 8 System Point of Entry (SPOE)
In 2005, Abilities FIRST was awarded the contract to operate the First Steps Region 8 System Point of Entry (SPOE) by the State of Missouri.

First Steps, Missouri’s Early Intervention Program, serves children from birth to age 3 and provides families the tools they need to help their children reach their highest potential.

Service Coordinators for First Steps are responsible to:

- Meet with the family to explain the First Steps program.
- Coordinate with various professionals to conduct any initial evaluations or assessments.
- Gather all pertinent information in order to determine eligibility.
- Schedule the initial meeting to develop a plan.

The SPOE provides Early Intervention Services in a 13 County region through an agreement with Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to provide services under the Federal IDEA Part C regulations.

- The SPOE serves approximately 850 families at this time.
4. Art Inspired Academy
In 2013, Abilities First started Art Inspired Academy. The goal of AIA is to provide an inclusive experience for individuals with and without disabilities to participate in creative arts programming including theater, music, dance and art. Students express themselves through artistic experiences while improving communication, motor skills, social skills, self control and confidence.

5. Art Inspired
At Art Inspired, we have created employment opportunities that empower individuals with developmental disabilities. Individuals with developmental disabilities work together with their peers in an integrated workplace, and employees are motivated to new levels of vocational skills and employability. Art Inspired features unique, hand-made items using recycled paper, as well as hand-made jewelry. Art Inspired also offers a gallery for artists to showcase their artwork, and a Creation Station for the public to create their own art. Monthly art classes are also available.

6. Inspired Boutique
Inspired Boutique is an up-scale resale shop. It features name-brand clothes, jewelry, collectibles, household items, furniture and more. Our goal is to earn your support by offering you fine quality pre-owned merchandise at affordable prices and to be your home for charitable donations.
7. **Friends of Abilities First**

Friends of Abilities First (FoAF) supports Abilities First in its important work by:

- Helping to educate the general public about issues related to developmental disabilities.
- Providing funds, when possible, to assist Abilities First in meeting the needs of its consumers which are not covered by available resources.

**Budget**

Presently, the levy generates approximately $2 Million in revenue.
2 - Other Family Support Services

- AF The Next Step TCM/PFH: $405,600.00
- Respite: $52,500.00
- AF Dental: $5,600.00
3 - Infant and Child Vocational Services

- ARC Summer Recreation: $51,216.00
- VRCO Children’s Services: $27,846.00
- OACAC Head Start Child Services: $10,459.00
- DCO Children’s Therapy: $160,835.00
- DCO Early Childhood and Ed: $126,669.00
4 - Transportation

- Workshop Transit Company: $59,784.00
- Foster Grandparent Program: $4,658.00
- CCO Daybreak: $7,601.00
- CAO Transportation: $6,830.00
- A Sporting Chance Transportation: $10,500.00

$- $10,000.00 $20,000.00 $30,000.00 $40,000.00 $50,000.00 $60,000.00 $70,000.00
5 - Residential Services

- NOVA Staff Training
- NOVA RN
- NOVA ISL Furnishings and Yards
- ARC Staff Training

$0 - $5,000.00 $10,000.00 $15,000.00 $20,000.00 $25,000.00 $30,000.00 $35,000.00 $40,000.00 $45,000.00
6 - Public Education and Other Supports

- SCIL: $15,000.00
- ETC Equine Therapy: $7,858.00
- CAO Life Skills Program: $5,266.00
- CAO Facility Rental: $2,775.00
- CAO Bowling: $4,000.00
- A Sporting Chance Softball: $3,950.00
- A Sporting Chance Golf: $2,760.00
- A Sporting Chance Facility Rental: $9,800.00
- A Sporting Chance Bowling: $1,350.00
- AF Special Services: $5,600.00
7 - Adult Day Services

- DCO Staff Training: $19,113.00
- DCO Adult Therapy and Evaluations: $6,008.00
- ARC Saturday Recreation: $12,837.00
- ARC Continuing Education: $9,044.00
Mandates

Missouri Revised Statutes Chapter 205, County Health and Welfare Programs (205.968 – 205.972 RSMo.)

A broad summary of the County Board legislation is as follows:

- The County Commission appoints the nine members of the Board of Directors.
- The Board may engage in or contract for any and all types of services, actions or endeavors, not contrary to the law, necessary to operate a sheltered workshop, residence facilities, or related services for the care or employment of individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Administrative control remains solely with the Board of Directors.
- The Board has exclusive control (within the parameters described above) of all its revenues, funds, or resources.
- The statute prescribes that County Board levy revenue is to be used to establish and/or operate sheltered workshops, residence facilities, or related services for the care or employment, or both, of persons with developmental disabilities.
- County boards may purchase services or directly provide services for residents of the county.
- For individuals to receive assistance from Abilities First, they must provide documentation of their developmental disability from a medical professional or from the State of Missouri, Department of Mental Health (DMH), Developmental Disabilities (DD) Division.

Environmental Analysis

Abilities First completed an environmental analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges for Abilities First. See Attachment for the complete SWOC Analysis.
Strategies, Goals, and Objectives
For the purposes of this plan the term “Goals” represents broad, general results to be achieved by the end of the planning period. “Strategies” represents a general description of actions we will take to achieve our goal. “Objectives” are measurable time limited results leading to our goals.

**Goal A:**
People have opportunities to use their abilities.

**Strategy:**
Build community capacity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective (measurable, time limited results leading to achievement of goal)</th>
<th>Schedule/ Timeline</th>
<th>Person(s) Responsible</th>
<th>Summary of Activity Required/Approach</th>
<th>Budget Impact (revenue/expense)</th>
<th>Performance Indicators/Deliverables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Develop and implement a continuous process to identify community needs.</td>
<td>1/1/16</td>
<td>Executive Director (ED), Advisory Council, IT Manager, Director of Support Coordination (DSC), SPOE Director, Director of Community Development (DCD).</td>
<td>Develop a system to gather data about needs for individuals with developmental disabilities to determine what opportunities are needed in our community.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Database developed and reports generated at any point in time.</td>
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<td>b. Create and implement data report for tracking community needs.</td>
<td>5/31/16</td>
<td>ED, Advisory Council, IT Manager, DSC, SPOE Director, DCD.</td>
<td>Develop a database to record community needs and create reports in formats usable for the AF Board’s planning purposes.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Report delivered to Abilities First Board of Directors at least annually for planning and budgeting purposes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Determine if funds are currently available for opportunities identified; or develop strategy to obtain funds.</td>
<td>8/1/16</td>
<td>ED, Advisory Council, Director of Finance, DSC, SPOE Director, DCD.</td>
<td>Review data report and develop criteria recommendations regarding trends in identified needs. Refer individuals to existing opportunities and assist them with accessing existing funding. Apply for grants and engage in fundraising for identified purposes.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Individuals are no longer waiting for opportunities, grant awards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Support Coordinators are understood to be life coaches and trusted by individuals and families to be the conduit for people to use their abilities and find their opportunities.</td>
<td>6/30/20 (ongoing)</td>
<td>ED, DSC, SPOE Director</td>
<td>Increase ties with area school systems to better improve transitions. Provide individuals and families with information to increase their willingness to try out opportunities and decrease the number of people who are stymied because of risk-aversion. Support Coordinators facilitate plan development and help maintain focus when individuals and families are often overwhelmed with day-to-day life, which can make big picture planning difficult.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Education Liaison in place. Transitions included in ALL plans. All plans include information about choices and changes and informed risk is included, discussed, and documented in the planning process, so if something doesn’t work out, all opportunity is not lost. Transitional support is available post-employment.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
**Goal B:**
People know Abilities First.

**Strategy:**
Bring the community together through education and awareness using unifying messages that we have more likenesses than differences and that everybody has challenges and everybody needs opportunities.

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<tr>
<td>a. Train staff to educate the people we serve about Abilities First.</td>
<td>12/31/2016</td>
<td>ED, Director of Public Awareness</td>
<td>Arrange message box training and develop a message box for staff to use to educate. Staff will present message box to individuals and families at regularly scheduled planning meetings or enrollment meetings as appropriate. Staff demonstrate awareness of how to fulfill their role in achieving the mission and vision.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Message box developed and staff have presented to all individuals and families. Support Coordinators ensure mailing addresses are current.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Use electronic media and video to deliver unifying messages.</td>
<td>6/30/20 (ongoing)</td>
<td>Director of Public Awareness, IT Manager</td>
<td>Develop and use a variety of media, prioritizing which will reach the most people to determine which projects to begin first. Maintain IT systems, website upgrades, and apps as technology continues to advance. AF has links to websites of organizations in the DD industry and those organizations reciprocate.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Videos: You Tube, PSA’s, and Local TV promos, Abilities First Apps, Active Facebook and other social media postings, mobile friendly website, websites linked.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Use print to deliver unifying messages.</td>
<td>6/30/20 (ongoing)</td>
<td>Director of Public Awareness</td>
<td>Develop and use a variety of print materials; prioritizing those which are most in demand and then those which will reach the most people, to determine which projects to begin first.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Comprehensive overall agency brochure, vehicle advertisement, donation bins, and quarterly newsletter. Print materials available at libraries, MO Career Center, Schools, Providers, Hospitals, Churches, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Abilities First maintains openness to its allocation strategy and provides the public with annual</td>
<td>6/30/20 (ongoing)</td>
<td>ED, Director of Community Awareness</td>
<td>Establish metrics to be used for annual reporting. Develop annual report. Hold annual meeting.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Annual report published and annual meeting held (by August 2015).</td>
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<td>e. Speak to area Service Clubs and organizations in the DD industry on a regular schedule (at least once annually) to include but not limited to Rotary, Kiwanis, and Sertoma.</td>
<td>6/30/20 (ongoing)</td>
<td>ED, Director of Community Awareness</td>
<td>Establish a process to consistently update presentation materials to include videos, PowerPoint slideshow.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Calendar developed and organizations addressed at least annually.</td>
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<td>f. Partner with Education for awareness and training opportunities.</td>
<td>6/30/2020 (ongoing)</td>
<td>ED, Director of Public Awareness, DCD, DSC, SPOE Director, Director of HR</td>
<td>Educational opportunities to promote awareness-Community Service requirements, field trips, etc. Speak at MSTA and NEA meetings. Determine cost and establish internships if practical. Training opportunities through partnership.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Students choose Abilities First for their community service opportunities such as Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) requirements. AF speaks at Teachers meetings at least annually. Interns working at AF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Partner with local businesses for fundraising/friendraising and awareness.</td>
<td>6/30/2020 (ongoing)</td>
<td>ED, Director of Public Awareness, DCD, IT Manager</td>
<td>Identify Community Partners/Stakeholders. Share website links. Seek partners in fundraising and awareness events. Use tactical positioning to impact awareness. Connect to community needs, access community resources. Provide awareness training to HR/Leadership in the business community.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Participate in Regularly attend Springfield Chamber of Commerce activities. Cross-promote websites and social media. Hold fundraisers and events in conjunction with business partners.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Goal C:**
Maximize Abilities First resources to achieve our mission and vision.

**Strategy:**
Prioritize opportunities needed and levy funds available, then prioritize other opportunities and pursuit of funds.

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</table>
| a. Funding decisions are balanced with the mission and vision of the Board. | 6/30/2016 | ED, Director of Finance, Director of Public Awareness, DCD | Define opportunities as per the AF mission, i.e.: Employment, Residential Services, Respite, Etc.  
Rank Categories according to criteria developed for the needs based survey data.  
Determine appropriate funding sources and how to access. | None | Balanced budget, alternative funding sources identified. Needs identified are addressed and data indicate people are no longer waiting for the identified opportunities. |
<p>| b. Abilities First funds are being used as the Board intends toward achieving its mission and vision. | 6/30/2020 (ongoing) | ED, IT Manager, Director of Finance | Abilities First funds are used to pay for things that are over and above what people would get if there were no levy funds. AF funding application includes questions to determine the measure of the benefit resulting from the use of Abilities First funds. Entities receiving funds have measurable data to demonstrate how those funds help AF achieve its mission and vision. Encourage provider agencies to fill those gaps, to be innovative, and to do things that will help turn abilities into opportunities. Support program development. Collaborate for | None | Electronic application process revised to include measurable objectives for funding recipients. Metrics established and implemented for agencies receiving funding. Achievable proposals for collaborative efforts to create opportunities are received. Employer partnerships are formalized. |
| c. Abilities First measures its return on investment for funds granted. | 6/30/20 (ongoing) | ED, Director of Finance, DSC, DCP. | Develop metrics to measure ROI, including formulas to compare unemployment rate of individuals with DD to the general population of Greene County. Obtain and use early Intervention measurements for ROI to provide data for planning purposes. Compare value/cost of inclusive employment to traditional paid services. Develop processes to compare costs/roi and define what does success looks like. Use the reports developed through the Quality Performance and CARF processes to establish and track metrics. Current dollars spent often lead to dependence; entities granted funds must demonstrate how the funds will be used to encourage independence for individuals and independent funding of the entity. | None | Metrics to measure roi are implemented and data is compiled into easily useable reports for the Board's planning and budgeting purposes. Reports/Dashboard provided to Board. Entities granted funds must provide documentation of their efforts to foster independence (included in funding application). |</p>
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<td>d. Individuals, families, and service providers have access to technology.</td>
<td>6/30/20 (ongoing)</td>
<td>ED, DSC, SPOE Director.</td>
<td>Collaborate with local providers to encourage use of technology to increase opportunities, such as electronic and audio-visual monitoring, which allows agencies to shift cost savings to direct care staff wages and recruit and keep better staff, and using telemedicine to allow access to professional help that may not be attainable otherwise.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Technology trainings developed and held for support coordinators, families and individuals, and other stakeholders.</td>
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</table>

**Goal D:**
Organizational alignment.

**Strategy:**
As Abilities First grows and progresses through changes necessary to fulfill its goals, the organization will remain focused on the mission and vision.

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<tr>
<td>a. The Board sets the strategic direction and enables and empowers the Leadership Team to implement that direction, to move it forward in the community, and the Board then monitors progress.</td>
<td>6/30/2020 (ongoing)</td>
<td>ED</td>
<td>Revise monthly Board report to include Department/program reports to Board with the information wanted by the Board.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>New Board report formatted and delivered at each Board Meeting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| b. One team, one mission. | 6/30/2020 (ongoing) | | The organization functions as a whole and staff demonstrate internal awareness of programs and services and how the pieces fit together to work toward the mission. | None | Hold Leadership team-building retreat. Hold education events for all staff. Regular employee trainings for AF benefits, work being done toward mission,
| c. Develop formalized succession plan. | 6/30/2016 | ED, DSC, SPOE Director, DCD, Director of Public Awareness, Director of Finance, Director of Quality Performance, Director of HR | Hire Assistant ED—to oversee operations and increase efficiencies and productivity of program services. Cross-train so all Leadership team functions have back-up and are not dependent upon one person. | None | Succession plan written and implemented. |
| d. Determine the office physical location when the Primrose lease ends. | 11/30/2019 | Physical location—rent or own | Unknown | Physical location established. |
## 2015 SWOC Analysis

### Strengths
- High ethical standards
- Providing opportunities and improving community as a whole
  - Good morale
  - Team Concept/Open Door Policy
  - Excellent communication
  - Local control
  - Financial stability
  - Tailored to our community
  - Healthy work environment
    - Flexibility
    - Respect
    - Forward-thinking
  - Committed to consumers, mission, and vision
  - Talented and well-rounded group and well-connected Board
  - Good technology
  - Well organized, efficient
  - Versatile-expanding to meet the needs of those we serve
  - Community outreach: creating inclusive workplaces in the community; educating the community through the Academy and workshops; social media and other types of Public Relations
  - Employment of individuals we serve exhibits dedication to mission, we “practice what we preach”
  - Resources: Support development and expansion of PFH which now serves 172 individuals and did not exist before 2010; dedicated staff to accessing resources for those we serve; developing community relations with resource providers
  - Expansion of teams and leadership as agency grows
  - Reinforcing relationships of teams through team building activities, training and empowerment
  - PR-Professional development person to increase community awareness and pursue additional resources
  - Facebook/Twitter/Media/Social networking
    - History and Longevity

### Weaknesses
- Limited funding
- Information technology
- Lack of public awareness
- Lack of standard reporting from external stakeholders
- Board members may have limited knowledge of NFPs
- Equality of funding to providers (different agencies get different amounts for the same or similar services)
  - Not accessing volunteer base
  - Limitations on how levy dollars can be spent
- Need more clarity on how to handle the balance issue between agency reserves and lack of emergency preparedness in bad financial times
- Non-exempt status has limited flexibility for Support Coordinators
- Pay for Support Coordinators is low compared to QDDP positions with providers making it more challenging to recruit and keep quality Support Coordinators
- Funding cuts have led to the elimination of Early Childhood Support Coordinator and 3 mentor positions
  - Staff turnover
- Coordinating admin and support staff duties in ever-changing system with fewer admin and support staff personnel

### Opportunities
- Increase levy revenue
- Synergy between agencies
- Utilize other non-profits
- Use civic clubs to help meet needs; i.e., a retired accountant from Rotary may be willing to be a payee for consumers
- Friends of Abilities First – fundraising creating means to meet needs that government programs can’t
  - “Outside of the box” supports
    - Employment idea
    - Visit other County Boards and take ideas

### Challenges
- Funding cuts
- Lack of public support/knowledge
- Difficult to get resources for consumer needs not directly related to the DD
  - How to recycle resources
- Stakeholders compete against each other
- Determining appropriate allocation amounts
- Ensuring our funds are not supplanting other funds
- When other funding is cut, how can we address needs
  - Getting players together vs time crunch
- Potential stakeholder resistance to change (could be providers, DMH staff, consumers, etc.)
| • Website – Donations/shopping cart that other agencies could tag on, “hub” for local activity |
| • Assist in understanding and accessing benefits for individuals we serve |
| • RO Re-Design will create opportunities to improve and change system to be user-friendly and consumer driven. More local control, flexibility, and empowerment |
| • Simplified intake process with RO re-design |
| • Friends of AF Board could be re-invented as a working/fundraising board (double in size) to increase support funding for the AF community programs |
| • Medicaid more difficult to attain and maintain |
| • Expanding services while resources diminish |
| • Political direction is not always reflective of our agency priorities |
| • Admin duties associated with re-design |
| • Ensuring DMH system re-design actually improves the system |
| • Use of levy funds restricted by outdated statutory language |
| • Threat of litigation |