



2019-2022

STRATEGIC PLAN

LEVERAGING THE NETWORK FOR A STRONGER REGION



Because Together We Do More



Strategic Planning Process

In 2017, the Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. (ACAM) began its planning process involving all key stakeholders in defining the strategic direction of the organization over the period of four years, 2019-2022. In 2017, the Board developed a list of possible strategic goals and, in 2018, hired Woollard Nichols & Associates to assist with facilitating the strategic planning process. All ACAM Network Executive Leaders were surveyed regarding their history with the organization, thoughts about strengths and challenges and desired goals. ACAM held a two-day planning retreat in June 2018, during which 100% of the Executive Leaders spent 15 hours developing their list of possible strategic goals. The ACAM Board met in July to review the work of the Executive Leaders and to develop draft mission and vision statements. A list of strategic goals combining the work of the Board and the Executive Leadership was developed and reviewed at an Executive Leadership meeting in November. Draft mission and vision statements were reviewed at each meeting, as well. In total, more than 378 person-hours were invested by the Board, Executive Leadership and ACAM staff, in meetings, to develop this plan.

These ACAM stakeholders developed the following plan with five (5) strategic goals, four (4) sub-goals and thirty-one (31) objectives that will guide the programs and development of the Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. through 2022.

Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries' (ACAM) Vision and Mission

ACAM's Vision:

An innovative, connected network that ensures families in need have a path to stability, health, and wealth.

We do this through:

- **Creating** state of the art programming and initiatives that fosters evaluation and builds a learning community
- **Aligning and garnering talent and resources** to support the expanding reach of the Network
- **Developing technology** and data-driven solutions with the Network
- **Strategically supporting** and leveraging leadership and assets
- **Building the brand of the Network as a whole**
- **Communicating results** to increase the impact of our network

ACAM's Mission:

The ACAM Network advances collaboration to create community-wide solutions for thriving nonprofits, neighborhoods and families.

Priorities

1. **Help families gain tools to develop long-term stability as the demand for services continues to rise – building the resiliency of our region through more resilient families**
2. **Connect, enhance and improve neighborhood-based projects, strengthening them with a common vision, standardized processes, and outcomes for a stronger regional social safety net (from which other organizations and regions may benefit through replication and enhanced research)**
3. **Strive to honor and enhance the unique relationship partner organizations have with the individual communities they serve, while also fostering leadership and organizational transformation for regional impact**
4. **Focus on ways that improved capacity serves a larger purpose across multiple organizations**

ACAM's Strategic Goals and Objectives

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: Create state-of-the-art programming processes and initiatives to create regional impact

Goal 1.1 Expand and diversify program initiatives by ensuring excellence in programming

- **Objective 1.1.1** Ensure that program changes are informed by evaluation
- **Objective 1.1.2** Link and deepen ACAM programs that are designed to further goals of the cohorts
- **Objective 1.1.3** Intentionally develop additional community assistance partners
- **Objective 1.1.4** Utilize collaborative, well-researched pilot studies to test initiatives.
- **Objective 1.1.5** Target trainings, events, workgroups to strategic objectives that build on each other and increase knowledge exponentially
- **Objective 1.1.6** Develop program best practices in concert with quality programs
- **Objective 1.1.7** Individual partner agencies should be able to employ and customize the processes/programs suggested

Goal 1.2 Strengthen models for family resiliency

- **Objective 1.2.1** Promote a Family Resiliency/Self-Sufficiency Model (Resiliency FIRST)

Goal 1.3 Increase ACAM's cross-sector presence and partnerships to develop needed specialized service partners that can support the Network

- **Objective 1.3.1** Identify and mobilize additional partnerships

Goal 1.4 Create a collaborative regional disaster response system for the ACAM Network

- **Objective 1.4.1** Improve on disaster response by creating a high-performing disaster response: Form Disaster Relief Committee (DRC)
- **Objective 1.4.2** Determine best communication practices
- **Objective 1.4.3** Share partners' current plans, including policies and procedures
- **Objective 1.4.4** Create a coordinated disaster plan for in-Network partners
- **Objective 1.4.5** Create an inter-Network plan for collaboratively helping partners by providing disaster assistance to each other's staffs
- **Objective 1.4.6** Create a shared disaster database "trading post"
- **Objective 1.4.7** Create new and ongoing partnerships with the cities and counties
- **Objective 1.4.8** Provide training and networking on individual disaster relief best practices

Goal 1.5 Develop an enhanced version of ACAM's proprietary Nine Elements Assessment Tool (NEAT©)

- **Objective 1.5.1** Develop NEAT© 2.0

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: Build ACAM Network's brand and influence

- **Objective 2.1** Communicate the successes of the Network.
- **Objective 2.2** Use the power of the Executive Leadership and In-Network Partners to advertise Network success.
- **Objective 2.3** Use power of Network data to advertise its successes.
- **Objective 2.4** Publish innovative strategies

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: Strategically support and leverage in-Network leadership and assets

- **Objective 3.1** Build Executive Leadership Peer Support and Capacity
- **Objective 3.2** Support the Capacity of In-Network Partners

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: Develop technology and data-driven solutions with our network (to achieve a measurable increase in family stability)

- **Objective 4.1** Leverage technology to better serve clients and the ACAM Network
- **Objective 4.2** Develop program evaluation capacity so partners can analyze and refine program efficacy

STRATEGIC GOAL 5: Align and garner talent and resources to support the performance and the expanding reach of the Network

- **Objective 5.1** As the Board of Directors increases its size, recruit thought leaders and influence brokers
- **Objective 5.2** Increase and Diversify ACAM Revenue Sources
- **Objective 5.3** Generate Revenue from a Social Enterprise Venture

ACAM's Milestones

DEFINITION OF ACRONYMS

- EL = Executive Leadership
- IBC = Influence Brokers Council
- DC = Development Council
- PC = Programming Council
- RRC = Retention, Recruitment & Compliance Council
- SOC = System Optimization Council

Goal 1.1: Expand and diversify program initiatives by ensuring excellence in programming

Objectives	Milestones	Date	Owner	Resources Needed
1.1.1 Ensure programming processes are state of the art	Each year, the Programming Council will have an agenda item discussing new developments in programming processes and comparing these to ACAM. Based on these discussions, changes will be planned for the next year.	Each Dec beginning 2019	PC	Staff
1.1.2 Link and deepen ACAM programs that are designed to further goals of the cohorts	Each year the Programming Council will review programs to ensure that they are designed to further the goals of the cohorts.	Each Dec beginning 2019	PC, RCC	Staff
1.1.3 Intentionally develop additional community assistance partners	One additional community assistance partner will be developed each year.	Each Dec beginning 2019	RCC	Staff
1.1.4 Utilize collaborative, well-researched pilot studies to test initiatives.	For each initiative, utilize a pilot study when possible	Ongoing	PC	Staff
1.1.5 Target trainings, events, workgroups to strategic objectives that build on each other and increase knowledge exponentially	Each new training proposed will be reviewed to ensure work builds on previous work and increases knowledge exponentially.	Ongoing	PC	Staff
1.1.6 Develop program best practices in concert with quality programs	Each project will be reviewed to ensure ACAM is developing best practices, not programs.	Ongoing	PC	Staff
1.1.7 Individual partner agencies should be able to employ and customize the processes/programs suggested	Each project will be reviewed to ensure individual customization of programs by individual organizations	Ongoing	PC, RCC	Staff

Goal 1.2: Strengthen models for family resiliency

Objectives	Milestones	Date	Owner	Resources Needed
1.2.1 Promote a Family Resiliency/Self-Sufficiency Model (FRSS)	1. Create a workgroup to help develop Family Resiliency/Self-Sufficiency Model (FRSS) Resources: Funding, Case Management, Wraparound	3/31/19	PC	Staff
	2. Define theories of change, practice and philosophy of care for Family Resilience Model	9/30/19	PC	Staff
	3. Vet, promote, and advocate for support of initiatives that ultimately address core issues	12/31/22	PC	PC

Goal 1.3: Increase ACAM's cross-sector presence and partnerships to develop needed specialized service partners that can support the Network

Objectives	Milestones	Date	Owner	Resources Needed
1.3.1 Identify and mobilize additional partnerships	1. Develop a list of program areas in which initiatives can be developed, such as Affordable Housing, Homelessness Prevention, Health, Financial Education, or Disaster	6/30/19	PC, RCC	Staff
	2. Choose collaborative initiative(s) upon which to embark	12/31/19	PC, RCC	Staff
	3. Identify out-of-network community partners for initiative(s)	12/31/19	RCC	Staff
	4. Plan the initiative(s)	6/30/20	PC, RCC	Staff
	5. Implement the initiative(s)	12/31/21	PC	Staff
	6. Utilize the strengths and passions of all in-network and out of network partners, not just high performers, to encourage participation	Ongoing	PC, RCC	Staff
	7. Provide representation to collaborative partners	Ongoing	RCC	Staff

Goal 1.4: Create a collaborative regional disaster response system for the ACAM Network

Objective	Milestone	Date	Owner	Resources Needed
1.4.1 Improve on disaster response by creating a high performing disaster response: Form Disaster Relief Committee (DRC)	1. Identify members: internal partners and external experts	3/31/19	PC and the DR sub-com (DRC)	Staff
1.4.2 Determine best communication practices	1. Develop a communication plan for disasters: Ensure ACAM and partners have several points of contact for each EL and partner. Determine best communication practices. Identify other partners / agencies / congregations in proximity for potential disaster collaboration or shared space.	6/30/19	DRC	Staff
1.4.3 Share partners' current plans, including P&P's	1. Collect current plans from each partner	9/30/19	DRC	Staff
1.4.4 Create coordinated disaster plan for in-network partners	1. External experts are identified and involved, as necessary	12/31/20	DRC	Consultant
	2. Multiple levels of communication, by type of disaster, are included	12/31/20	DRC	Staff
	3. Location moves are planned for, if necessary	12/31/20	DRC	Staff
	4. Consider whether temporary administrative (management) help is needed for coordination, and if so, predetermine possible sources.	12/31/20	DRC	Staff
1.4.5 Create internet work plan for collaboratively helping partners by providing disaster assistance to each	1. Develop plan for collaborative disaster assistance for each other's staff	12/31/19	DRC	Staff
	2. Create plan for partners to apply to funders for disaster assistance with to their own staff	12/31/19	DRC	Staff
1.4.6 Create a shared disaster database "trading post"	1. Develop plan for database and costs of development	12/31/20	SDC and DRC	Consultant

	2. Identify funding opportunities and apply	12/31/21	CD, SDC, DRC and Staff	Staff
	3. When funding is available begin to build database	12/31/22	SDC and DRC and Staff	Consultant
1.4.7 Create new and ongoing partnerships with the cities and counties	1. Identify each City and County involved	6/30/19	DRC and IC	Staff
	2. Meet with each City and County identified to discuss plan	12/31/20	DRC and IC	Staff
1.4.8 Provide training and networking on individual disaster relief best practices	1. Create training module	12/31/20	DRC and Staff	Staff
	2. Conduct Training	12/31/21	DRC and Staff	Staff

Goal 1.5: Develop an enhanced version of NEAT©

Objective	Milestone	Date	Owner	Resources Needed
1.5.1 Develop NEAT©2.0	1. Complete Development of NEAT©2.0	12/31/20	PC	Staff
	2. Create a tablet friendly version of NEAT©2.0.	12/31/22	PC, SOC	Staff and Consultant

Goal 2: Build ACAM Network's brand and influence

Objective	Milestone	Date	Owner	Resources Needed
2.1 Communicate the successes of the network.	1. Create a communication (marketing?) plan using 2.1 and 2.2, as well as "WOW " statement.	12/31/19	IBC	Marketing & Digital Media Consultant
	2. Consider hiring a Marketing Consultant to crease the Plan	6/30/19	IBC	Funding
	3. Implement Communications (Marketing) Plan	12/31/22	IBC	Staff
2.2 Use the power of the Executive Leadership and In-Network Partners to advertise network success.	1. Rename "ED Group" to Executive Leadership Group	1/1/19	IBC, Staff	Staff

	2. Collect Biography of each partner Executive Leader to create image of true partnership	3/31/19	IBC	Staff
	3. Post EL biographies on website	6/30/19	IBC	Staff
	4. Collect partner success stories and network success stories.	Each Year Beginning Jan 2019	IBC	Staff
	5. Develop methods to automatically integrate with network agencies to obtain success stories.	6/30/19	IBC	Staff
	6. Focus messaging (website, communications) on power of member agencies using terminology such as Builder/Climber/Evolver (not necessarily those terms) and partner successes	12/31/19	IBC	Staff
	7. Educate network partners on ACAM mission, program model and outcomes at one EL meeting each year.	Each year	IBC	Staff
	8. Engage partners in one joint community education initiative per year	Each year	IBC	Staff
2.3 Use power of Network data to advertise Network successes.	1. Determine Network data needed. Collect and publish yearly.	Each year	SOC	Staff
2.4 Publish innovative strategies	1. Develop a strategy for publishing NEAT© 1.0 using possible partnership with Rice University.	Each year	SOC	Staff and Consultants
	2. Publish NEAT© 1.0	12/31/20	SOC, IBC and DC	Staff

Goal 3: Strategically support and leverage in-Network leadership and assets

Objective	Milestone	Date	Owner	Resources Needed
3.1 Build Executive Leadership Peer Support and Capacity	1. Continue monthly Executive Leadership meetings	Each month beginning 1/19	EL	Staff

	2. Create an Annual Executive Leadership Teambuilding Event (cost share if necessary)	12/31/19	EL	Staff
	3. Consider some formalization of mentoring based on skill sharing	6/30/19	EL	Staff
	4. Spotlight new Executive Leadership's at meetings when changes in leadership	As necessary	EL	Staff
	5. Schedule Executive Leadership and Board "meet and greets" to build Board Members' passion and understanding of Partners.	Twice a year, every year	IBC	Staff
	6. Continue to share best practices by assigning one EL to present a best practice at every other EL meeting	Six times a year, every year	EL	Staff
3.2 Support the Capacity of In-Network Partners	1. Use existing data to identify needs of in-network partners.	Annually	PC	Staff
	2. Develop interventions as needed for identified needs using data, analysis, and consultant reports	Each June	PC	Staff
	3. Provide organizational support in a manner that meets in-network partners where they are.	Each July-Sept	PC	Staff

Goal 4: Develop technology and data-driven solutions with our network
(to achieve a measurable increase in family stability)

Objective	Milestone	Date	Owner	Resources Needed
4.1 Leverage technology to better serve clients and ACAM Network	1. Determine technology need(s), for example: Make referral process more seamless or use technology to enhance communications (See 1.3.6 for "Disaster Trading Post")	6/30/19	SOC	Staff
	2. Define terms, Users and Uses of database integration:	12/31/19	SOC	Consultant
	3. Create plan for technological advance, including measurable ways this increases family stability	6/30/20	SOC	Consultant

	4. Obtain partner buy-in	9/30/20	SOC, EL's	Staff
	5. Find funding for technology advance	9/30/21	SOC, DC	Funding
	6. Develop technology advance	3/31/22	SOC	Consultant
	7. Train partners	6/30/22	SOC, Staff, EL's	Consultant
	8. Implement technology advance	9/30/22	SOC, Staff, EL's	Consultant
	9. Evaluate results of technology advance	12/31/22	SOC, Staff, EL's	Staff
4.2 Develop program evaluation capacity so partners can analyze and refine program efficacy.	1. Revise PS&O indicators to identify and measure evaluation capacity (NEAT© 2.0)	12/31/21	SOC	Staff
	2. Promote the development of program evaluation capacity as part of funded initiatives	12/31/22	DC, SOC	Staff
	3. Design and implement creative, accessible, practical trainings related to program evaluation and outcome measurement for various partner audiences	12/31/20	SOC, PC	Staff
	4. Research, define and pilot measures related to the development of the Resiliency FIRST Model	12/31/21	SOC PC	Staff

Goal 5: Align and garner talent and resources to support the performance and the expanding reach of the Network

Objective	Milestone	Date	Owner	Resources Needed
5.1 As the Board of Directors increases its size, recruit thought leaders and influence brokers	1. Increase the size, capacity and diversity of the Board of Directors, including those with understanding, commitment to and passion for poverty issues	Each year	Board	
	2 Create impactful "onboarding" for Board members	1/31/19	CEO and Board President	Funding Consultant

	3, Create individual fundraising goals for each Board member	3/31/19	CEO and Board Members	Board involvement
	4. Create an advisory Committee made up of potential Board members from each regional area. (This can be a pool for potential Board members)	1/1/20	Board and Staff	Staff
5.2 Increase and Diversify ACAM Revenue Sources	1. Leadership Luncheon – Create and implement plan to make this an event people want to attend (Long-Term goal – 4 years)	12/31/22	DC and Board	Staff
	2. Invest in Consultant to identify how to increase Individual Giving	12/31/20	DC, Board	Staff
	3. Use Board to increase major donor cultivation, developing a target for each Board member	6/30/19	DC	Staff
	4. Create an initiative or event to fund Organizational Dev. grants for CAMS	12/31/21	DC	Staff
	5. Redesign ACAM funding strategy to assure long term stability	12/31/19	Board, DC	Staff
	6. Instill a review of funding requests to ensure they align with strategic direction.	6/30/19	Board, DC	Staff
5.3 Generate Revenue from a Social Enterprise Venture	1. Choose a Social Enterprise, if desired - For example: a) NEAT© - Investigate if there is a market - What is differentiation? - How to package? - How to market?	12/31/20	Board, DC	Staff
	2. Consider Fee Based Consulting Services – market nationally ACAM’s expertise in topics such as volunteer management, interfaith collaboratives, evaluations	12/31/21	Board, DC	Staff
	3. Consider contracts and services that can generate revenue for programs and services	Annually	Board, DC	Staff

ACAM's Workgroup Charges

The ACAM Board, Network Executive Leadership and ACAM Staff jointly agreed to reduce the number of workgroups to five and to rename them “councils”. Their name, description and primary assignment in the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan are as follows:

➤ **The Influence Brokers Council (IBC)**

This group will be responsible for defining, enhancing and broadening ACAM's brand and influence in the Greater Houston Community. It promotes both the ACAM brand and the perceived impact of the Network. It provides materials to enhance Board members' and Network Partners' engagement in advancing ACAM's vision, mission and purpose. It employs a common message that drives fund development. IBC will also be responsible for community education and outreach regarding priorities inherent in its mission, such as the faith-based nonprofit sector and nonprofit capacity building and collaboration.

- ***2019-2022 Strategic Goal #2: Build ACAM Brand and Influence***

➤ **The Development Council (DC)**

This group will be responsible for ensuring that ACAM has the resources to accomplish its mission. The DC will increase the diversity and number of funding sources for ACAM, resulting in increased funding. They will also investigate and plan for one or more social enterprise revenue sources.

- ***2019-2022 Strategic Goal #5: Align and garner talent and resources to support the performance and the expanding reach of the Network***

➤ **The Programming Council (PC)**

This group will address the current and future programming of the ACAM Network. The PC will use the network's strength to address the root causes of poverty and local emergencies. They will develop collaborative initiatives to create higher impact outcomes and access diverse resources. They are also charged with overseeing the ongoing development and evaluation of training opportunities. They will ensure that ACAM's training and networking events remain relevant to community assistance ministries and promote best practices, peer learning and information exchange. An important focus over the next few years will be the development of a collaborative regional disaster response system for the ACAM network.

- ***2019-2022 Strategic Goal #1: Create state of the art programming processes and initiatives to create regional impact;***
- ***2019-2022 Strategic Goal #3: Strategically support and leverage In-Network leadership and assets.***

➤ **The System Optimization Council (SOC)**

This group will manage current data collection and take the lead in envisioning and creating state of the art data collection systems that help to maximize community impact. They will ensure ACAM's ability to collect consistent and reliable client service data from the member ministries and clearly communicate the collaborative's activity to stakeholders. The SOC works toward the standardization of terminology and unit definitions, weighing the cost-benefit of the level of data collected.

- ***2019-2022 Strategic Goal #4: Develop technology and data-driven solutions with our network (to achieve a measurable increase in family stability)***

➤ **The Recruitment, Retention & Compliance Council (RRC)**

This group will continue to serve as an advisory and working group that leads in the review and development of current and potential ACAM members. The RRC reviews and writes retention, recruitment and compliance policies; actively assists in the review of member expectations and membership levels, and reviews new member applicants. The RRC also supports the ACAM's CEO when member compliance issues arise. The RRC furthers the objectives set forth in strategic planning.

- **2019-2022 Strategic Goal #1: Create state of the art programming processes and initiatives to create regional impact**

This plan was developed in partnership with Woollard Nichols & Associates.

