



Lower Grafton Council for Young Children and Families



The Lower Grafton Council for Young Children and Families (LGCYCF) was formed in 2008, providing a much-needed forum to address the needs of families with young children in Lower Grafton County. Through LGCYCF, providers work hand-in-hand with families to identify gaps in services and develop collaborative solutions. Administered by Granite United Way, LGCYCF addresses the needs of children and families in Alexandria, Ashland, Bridgewater, Bristol, Campton, Dorchester, Ellsworth, Groton, Hebron, Holderness, Lincoln, New Hampton, Plymouth, Rumney, Thornton, Warren, Waterville Valley, Wentworth, and Woodstock.

Funded Project: Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning

Preschool Development Grant funding enabled LGCYCF to undergo a needs assessment and strategic planning process. This work focused on the connections between young children's families and the resources they need to make sure they are healthy, prepared to learn, and thriving.

LGCYCF leadership engaged the Community Health Institute/JSI (CHI) to facilitate the needs assessment and a three-part strategic planning process, which resulted in the "LGCYCF Strategic Plan: Eye Towards Action." The needs assessment successfully outlined a robust set of findings through ongoing stakeholder input, a secondary data review, surveys directed towards key leaders in the community and caregivers of young children, and focus groups.

Once the needs assessment was complete, LGCYCF embarked on a strategic planning process resulting in the following goals for the coming years — raise awareness and access, increase resources and supports, and build trust and connection. Strategic planning sessions were attended by LGCYCF Advisory Group members, stakeholders, and other community members representing family supports, early education and childcare, behavioral health and primary care, caregivers of young children, and community planning.



RAISE
Awareness & Access



INCREASE
Resources & Supports



BUILD
Trust & Connection



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Impact

While the needs assessment and strategic planning processes were slowed by the challenges surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, LGCYCF successfully created a roadmap for child and family services in Lower Grafton County. The goals and action steps that came out of the strategic planning process fall into three categories:

1. **Raise Awareness and Action** to make caregivers aware of and able to access supportive programming and resources to keep their families strong without sacrificing their families' economic growth and development
2. **Increase Resources and Supports** so that programs that support families with young children are resourced to meet the needs of those they are intended to serve
3. **Build Trust and Connection** to instill in caregivers a sense of trust and connectedness with their community, including peers and providers

With these goals in place, LGCYCF is planning to hire a program coordinator early in 2022 to lead and coordinate the implementation of strategies to address the goals. The LGCYCF is also recruiting additional Council members from key sectors that are currently underrepresented, including public schools, childcare, therapists, legislators, pediatricians, and other early support and service providers. By increasing coordination and collaboration among these providers, the LGCYCF will be positioned to achieve the strategic plan's goals in the coming years.



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