

# CITY OF KENT HUMAN SERVICES STRATEGIC PLAN 2020–2025



2020–  
2025

Priorities, Goals, and Strategies



## Guiding Principles

- Maintain a **safety net of services** for Kent’s most vulnerable residents, while remaining flexible enough to respond to **emerging needs**.
- Focus on **data driven, upstream investments** that target root causes and reduce the demand for costlier interventions later.
- Honor and respect the **rich diversity** within the City of Kent and strive to ensure our services are accessible and **culturally relevant**.
- Recognize, respect, and build on the **strengths** of individuals, families, and our community.
- Strive to move people along the continuum to **stability**, promoting maximum independence.
- Value and uplift **collaboration and coordination** at every level, including amongst City divisions, local governments, non–profit agencies, private funders, and our residents.

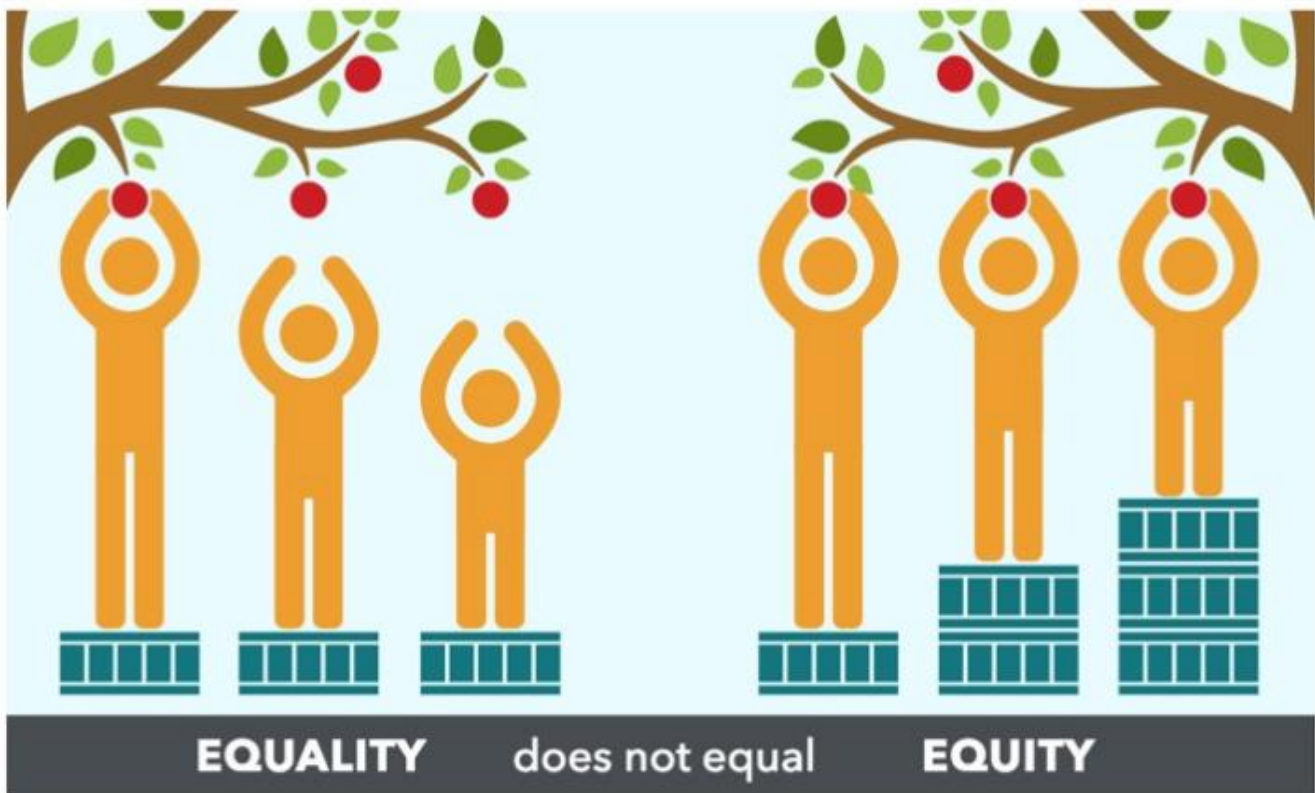
## Values

- **Person–centered** over service–centered. Strive to build services, policies, and processes grounded in what individuals and families need, as opposed to what we perceive the needs and solutions to be.
- **Strength–based** over deficit–based. Build on what works using a lens that promotes the strengths and resilience of individuals, families, and communities rather than solely focusing on what is going wrong what the challenges are. Consider rewording
- **Innovation** over tradition. Prioritize being flexible and adaptable in order to meet the ever–changing needs of our community our community.
- **Prevention** over crisis. Where possible, continue to prioritize intervention and prevention measures, rather than waiting for issues to become costlier crises before we intervene.
- **Sustainability** over deficit. Maximize value for taxpayers and develop financially–sustainable models that leverage additional resources wherever possible.
- **Equity** – We are committed to promoting fair and just access to community services, and building partnerships that engage and empower community groups and stakeholders in advancing access and demonstrate a clear commitment to equity.

## EQUITY

Equity is a key value in the City of Kent Human Service Strategic Plan. We seek to:

- Promote fair and just access for community services, and building partnerships that engage in a strong commitment to equity.
- Prioritize creating an environment where diversity thrives, inclusion and belonging is the norm, and equity is the ultimate outcome.
- Invest in and work with nonprofit organizations led by and/or serving communities of color to ensure City resources reach the populations most impacted.



## Priorities, Goals, and Strategies

### Priority – A Good Start

#### Goal 1 – Children are healthy and ready to start school.

##### Investment Strategies

- Expand affordable, culturally appropriate early learning, child care and preschool programs and activities.
- Support early intervention services that can impact a child’s developmental path and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities.

##### Policy and Planning Strategy

- Monitor and take advantage of opportunities to influence local and state policy that directly affect Kent residents.

#### Goal 2 – Youth are healthy, successful in school, and have positive attachment to community.

##### Investment Strategies

- Support strength-based, high quality, culturally responsive, and engaging services and programs that meet youth and families where they are and address the needs of the whole family.
- Promote and expand access to safe and supportive environments that ensure youth have healthy activities to engage in and provide education in personal safety and positive interpersonal relationships.
- Support prevention and early intervention services and programs for youth struggling with mental health and/or substance abuse disorders.
- Ensure unaccompanied youth, youth involved in the juvenile justice system, youth experiencing homelessness and children experiencing exploitation have access to safety, effective resources and programs to build skills to support their positive development and ability to fully participate in community life.

### Policy and Planning Strategies

- Build on and expand existing partnerships, programs and services for young people, and coordinate public and private programs to better serve our young people.
- Monitor and take advantage of opportunities to influence local and state policy that directly affect Kent residents.

## Priority 2 – Healthy Aging

### Goal 1 – Older adults thrive in the community as they age.

#### Investment Strategies

- Strengthen community options that allow older adults to age well and safely in the community – including home repair, home care, transportation options, and support services.
- Expand access to educational and social events, classes, activities.
- Ensure counseling, case management, and referral services are available in the community.
- Expand caregiver support programs and programs that prevent elder abuse, isolation, and exploitation.
- Increase access to programs designed to improve the health status of older adults in diverse populations.

#### Policy and Planning Strategy

- Monitor and take advantage of opportunities to influence local and state policy that directly affect Kent residents.

## Priority 3 – Enhanced Individual and Community Well-Being

### Goal 1 – Community members are safe, welcomed and included in social, civic and economic life.

#### Investment Strategies

- Expand access to culturally appropriate services and programs.
- Expand access to civic engagement opportunities in the community.

- Strengthen community connections that create protective environments and build support systems and social networks.
- Increase access to social engagement opportunities to decrease isolation.

#### Policy and Planning Strategies

- Increase education and awareness about inclusion and equity.
- Support access to and availability of resources, services and programs that advance equity.
- Foster partnerships with community organizations.

### **Goal 2 – Individuals and families have the opportunity to consistently meet their basic needs.**

#### Investment Strategies

- Prevent food insecurity, and increase availability and access to healthy, fresh food.
- Ensure families in crisis have access to emergency financial assistance for eviction prevention, motel vouchers, utility assistance, transportation, and medical prescriptions.

#### Policy and Planning Strategy

- Monitor and take advantage of opportunities to influence local and state policy that directly affect Kent residents.

### **Goal 3 – Residents have opportunities to improve their economic condition, build assets, and improve their long-term security.**

#### Investment Strategies

- Increase support for individualized employment support services, internships, and apprenticeships that enable residents to enter or progress in the job market.
- Expand opportunities for entrepreneurship and small business development.
- Increase access to financial literacy and provide programs to build assets.
- Support services that promote pathways to home ownership.
- Increase access to affordable, quality, legal assistance for low-income residents.

### Policy and Planning Strategies

- Develop strong regional partnerships to close the gaps in capacity, encourage collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries, and help overcome residents' barriers to opportunity.
- Create pathways to improve employment and income.

## Goal 4 – Residents can access culturally relevant resources to achieve quality physical and mental well-being.

### Investment Strategies

- Ensure access to services that promote physical, behavioral and oral health.
- Support programs that address the unmet needs of vulnerable populations struggling with mental health or substance use disorders.
- Support services that promote safe and healthy relationship skills and disrupt pathways toward intimate partner violence.

### Policy and Planning Strategies

- Expand access to a continuum of high quality behavioral health services that includes prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery support services.
- Increase awareness of the harms of domestic violence and of services available to survivors.

## Priority 4 – Stable Housing

### Goal 1 – Housing assistance services are tailored to individual's unique needs and strengths to help them achieve and maintain stable housing.

#### Investment Strategies:

- Ensure residents have flexible prevention services suited to their needs.
- Ensure consistent access to specialized outreach workers and case management, and promote more comprehensive wraparound services.
- Develop persistent, coordinated, and creative outreach efforts to engage chronically homeless individuals to link them to services.



- Increase access to programs that improve transitions of young people from foster care and the juvenile justice system.
- Ensure all individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness are connected to the Coordinated Entry System.

**Policy and Planning Strategies:**

- Expand regional efforts that seek to address root causes of homelessness.
- Ensure regional access to a continuum of housing options including rapid rehousing, shelter, and permanent supportive housing.

## **Goal 2 – Create an engaged and informed community regarding homelessness and homelessness solutions.**

Acknowledge the strength of our community to make change by leveraging their passion, energy, assets, and skills to help non-profits and other organizations achieve their mission of ending homelessness.

**Policy and Planning Strategies:**

- Engage and increase communication with residents on issues regarding homelessness and Kent’s current efforts to address homelessness in the City, including the work of other City departments and law enforcement, as well as our combined efforts at the regional level.
- Increase coordination with the faith community and community groups focused on providing grassroots homelessness services.
- Identify and promote volunteer opportunities with local civic groups, community organizations and service providers that complement the goals of the City, streamline resources to where they are most needed, and reduce duplication of services.
- Educate residents on programs that exist to prevent people from experiencing homelessness.