

Executive Summary

In late 2025, the City of Santa Fe Children and Youth Commission (CYC) built upon the existing strengths of their current funding strategies to establish new funding priorities by coming together under their commitment to serving the community of Santa Fe. In January 2026 the Children and Youth Commission completed a Strategic Plan for the FY 2027-2029 funding cycle.

The commission is dedicated to enhancing community services, expanding equitable access, and fostering sustainable growth in program effectiveness. The identified funding priorities, reflecting the commission's commitment to empowering the community of Santa Fe are:

1. Education and Career Readiness
2. Youth Physical and Mental Health and Well-Being
3. Support Services for Youth at Higher Risk

The City of Santa Fe extends gratitude and thanks to the hard work of the committee members. The City deeply appreciates their dedication, commitment and hard work. Their collaborative efforts drive the CYC mission and successful implementation of this plan during the upcoming funding cycle.

Our Mission

We advocate for and provide resources to organizations and community projects. Together we creatively address barriers that result in positive outcomes by engaging children, youth and families in Santa Fe.

Our Vision

A connected community where all children and youth have the support and opportunity to thrive.

Acknowledgements

The consultant team would like to thank the CYC Commission members, staff, evaluation team, and all stakeholders who participated in data collection and the strategic planning process. Their dedication and passion are essential to helping families thrive in Santa Fe.

Children and Youth Commission Members

Chanelle Delgado, Co-Chair
Crystal Ybarra, Co-Chair
Danielle Silva

Dianna Conklin
Lisa Salazar
Richard Lindahl
Sarah Amador-Guzman

Youth and Family Services Division Staff and Consultants

Lia Salaverry, Youth and Family Services Division Director
Sandra Emory, Youth and Family Services Program Manager
Sierra Vigil-Trujillo, Youth and Family Services Project Administrator
Natalie Skogerboe and Ana Coghlan, Aspen Solutions, Data Development Consultants

Introduction

This 2026–2029 strategic plan demonstrates the ongoing dedication of Santa Fe's Children, Youth, and Families Commission. Grounded in their mission, the plan focuses on providing funding opportunities that support community initiatives, continuing the important work of serving members of the community who have historically been underserved.

The CYC mission serves as the guiding star that defines their purpose. *“We advocate for and provide resources to organizations and community projects. Together we creatively address barriers that result in positive outcomes by engaging with families and the community in Santa Fe.”*

The commission strategically allocates funding to the three key priority areas, enabling grantee program providers to deliver community support services that strengthen services and support for children and youth. The CYC cannot accomplish this work alone. They collaborate closely with the Santa Fe Youth and Family Services Division, other city partners, and trusted community organizations that are already engaged in this life-changing work. Together, they are creating a Santa Fe where every young person has the support and opportunities needed to reach their full potential.

During the CYC's recent strategic planning sessions, the Commission carried out a comprehensive planning process for the fiscal cycle 2026–2029. Guided by CYC's mission to advocate for and fund community organizations and projects, commission members focused on identifying and addressing barriers affecting members of the Santa Fe Community. Their goal is to build a connected community where every child and young person receives the support and opportunities necessary to thrive and grow into valued, productive members of society.

To facilitate implementation and ongoing evaluation of the strategic plan, the following areas were reviewed and discussed during the planning sessions:

- **Priority Areas/Funding Categories** = Key focus areas aligning with the mission.
- **Goals** = Long term purpose.
- **Objectives** = Asks, “What do we need to do?”
- **Desired Outcomes** = What we hope to achieve.
- **Priority Indicators** = A data point used to assess progress toward an objective.

The plan is designed to strengthen the CYC’s response to community needs. By leveraging existing assets and aligning our efforts with community partners, funding supports programs that promote equity and expand opportunities for Santa Fe’s youth using reflective, strengths-based, preventative strategies. Through this intentional shift from siloed approaches,

Historical Context

The Children and Youth Commission (CYC) was formed by Resolution 1989 and is charged by the City of Santa Fe, through an Ordinance in 1998, with; surveying and assessing the needs of the children and youth within the city of Santa Fe, identifying and recommending to the governing body existing legislation, policies and programs that promote the healthy development of young people, determining priorities for program development, advocating in the community on behalf of children and youth, and planning short and long range improvements for young people, from birth through the age of twenty-one (21).

The Commission commits funding in three-year contract cycles and annual small grant opportunities. The purpose of the funding is to support community programs that promote healthy development for children and youth; ages birth to twenty-one (21).

The Commission works in partnership with the City liaison of the Youth and Family Services Division to provide advice on ways to effectively plan, coordinate and support children and youth related efforts in the Santa Fe community. Plans and policies are presented to the governing body for approval. In 2019, to create effectiveness and efficiency in the funding and community work that comes out of the Youth and Family Services Division, the Santa Fe Regional Juvenile Justice Board successfully merged with the Children and Youth Commission.

The Santa Fe Regional Juvenile Justice Board offers extensive expertise in youth opportunities and juvenile justice, as well as funding when available. Merged with the CYC, they aim to drive positive results in the lives of community members - including improved health, improved behavioral health, improved sense of safety, and more equitable access to the kinds of opportunities that allow all constituents to achieve their full potential.

The Commission is working towards positively affecting the overall health, safety, and quality of life of all children in Santa Fe. During the 2019 Children and Youth Commission Strategic Planning Retreat, the Commission developed an Ends Framework and identified shared values, guiding principles and a vision and mission statement. The Commission also identified and adopted a new strategy to address some of the three communities' most urgent needs.

Our Shared Values

The CYC's shared values were identified during a collaborative process during the 2026 strategic planning retreat, where commissioners engaged in intentional dialogue to articulate the foundational beliefs that guide their work on behalf of Santa Fe's community.

Commissioners discussed core values that reflect their collective commitment to education and career readiness, youth physical and mental wellbeing and strengthening family involvement. These shared values continue to serve as the compass for commission decision-making, ensuring that strategic priorities remain grounded in the principles established through that participatory planning process. These values reflect what CYC and our community partners believe to be true about young people and the work we do together:

- **Every young person has promise.** We see children and youth as individuals full of potential—not problems to be fixed, but people to be invested in.
- **Families are the foundation.** Strong families build strong communities. We support programs that honor and strengthen family connections.
- **The community knows best.** The people closest to the challenges often have the best solutions. We listen to and learn from the communities we serve.
- **Equity opens doors.** Every young person deserves access to opportunity, regardless of background, zip code, or circumstance.
- **Prevention is powerful.** Investing early and supporting young people before challenges escalate creates lasting change.
- **We are stronger together.** Collaboration among funders, service providers, and community members multiplies our impact.

Guiding Principles

These principles shape how CYC makes decisions and carries out its work:

1. **Lead with Equity** We prioritize funding for communities that have historically had less access to resources and opportunities.
2. **Build on Strengths** We invest in what's working by recognizing the assets, resilience, and wisdom that already exist in young people, families, and communities.
3. **Center Community Voice** We listen to young people, families, and the organizations that serve them. Their input shapes our priorities.
4. **Fund for Impact** We use the results-based accountability framework to track meaningful outcomes, not just activities. We want to know: Are young people's lives better?
5. **Encourage Collaboration** We support grantee partners in working together, sharing resources, and coordinating services so families don't fall through the cracks.
6. **Steward Resources Responsibly** We maximize investment by aligning with City partners, avoiding duplication, and funding programs with demonstrated effectiveness.
7. **Stay Flexible and Learn** We review our progress regularly and adjust our strategies based on what the data and community tell us.

Our Approach

With support from the CYC, the consultant team began the strategic planning process in late October 2025 by conducting a comprehensive data discovery through thematic data analysis. The consultant team reviewed approximately 131 documents provided by CYC, including but not limited to:

- 2023-2026 strategic plan
- Grantee reports
- Meeting minutes, agendas, and presentations

These insights were consolidated into strengths, challenges and strategic opportunity areas.

Additionally, stakeholder input was gathered through virtual focus groups and confidential interviews. The consultants invited 31 CYC stakeholders and conducted interviews with 14 participants across three groups:

- **Primary Stakeholders: Former grant recipients and participants**
 - Total: 13 invited | 5 interviewed
- **Secondary Stakeholders: CYC commissioners, staff, departments, and Juvenile Justice Board**
 - Total: 9 invited | 5 interviewed
- **Tertiary Stakeholders: Representatives from CYFD, City of Santa Fe, State of New Mexico, and Santa Fe County**
 - Total: 9 invited | 4 interviewed

The collected data informed a discovery report highlighting successes, gaps, challenges, and opportunities for future consideration.

Phase two began in January 2026 with two interactive planning sessions in Santa Fe, New Mexico, led by consultants. Using neuroscience and culturally relevant methodologies, participants worked together to identify priorities, challenges, and important issues like poverty and mental health. They also created priority areas and indicators that match the Children and Youth Commission's goals.

In the final phase, the consultants collected data from the planning sessions and updated the strategic goals to match CYC's priority focus areas for the 2026-2029 fiscal cycle.

Integration with Results-Based Accountability Evaluation

The strategic plan is aligned with the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework, which is a disciplined, data-driven approach that starts with desired community-level outcomes and then works backward to identify the needed strategies and actions. It builds on two levels of accountability: population level that focuses on community well-being, and performance level that focuses on the effectiveness of specific services, programs, or organizations. "Turning the curve" or creating the desired change at the community level is achieved by the strategic actions of focused services and programs.

Following this approach and through the strategic planning process, the CYC identified priority funding areas and aligned goals, objectives, and desired outcomes. Lastly, population-based priority indicators were identified that link to existing valid data sources. Once organizations receive finding from the CYC, they then identify performance-level indicators that contribute to the larger changes and priority indicators.

Grantee Performance Measures Focus on Three RBA Questions:

1. **How much are we doing?**
 - Examples: # people served, # classes held, # case management hours
2. **How well are we doing it?**
 - Examples: Client satisfaction, wait times for service, preferred language used, meeting education standards, successful referrals
3. **Is anyone better off?**
 - Examples: Changes in knowledge (improved reading scores), skills (gained/maintained employment), behaviors (reduced substance use), circumstances (housing stability or safety)

Opportunities for Growth Within the Community

The commission has committed to including reporting on progress toward strategic plan completion during meetings to maintain focus on achieving key milestones and fostering community growth. Ongoing collaboration with other city committees ensures coordinated efforts and maximizes funding opportunities that effectively address community needs. Together with the dedicated evaluation team, the commission will continuously track progress and promptly adapt to any challenges, ensuring all efforts remain aligned with goals and outcomes.

Strategic Goals, Objectives and Indicators

The CYC strategic plan offers funding support to grantees for programs that serve the Santa Fe community. Below are the draft outcomes for the next fiscal cycle.

Mission Statement: We advocate for and provide resources to organizations and community projects. Together we creatively address barriers that result in positive outcomes by engaging with families and the community in Santa Fe.		
Vision Statement: A connected community where all families have the support and opportunity to thrive.		
2026-2029 Identified Priority Areas:		
One: Education and Career Readiness	Two: Youth Physical, Mental Health and Well Being	Three: Support Services for Youth at Higher Risk

Goal 1: Equitable opportunities for education and career readiness are provided.

- Objective 1.1: Expand access to education and career opportunities for children and youth.
- Objective 1.2: Enhance youth academic engagement including postsecondary career outcomes by providing funding to program that support this initiative.
- Objective 1.3: Align education programs with local workplace needs to enhance youth career readiness.

Goal 2: Equitable opportunities for youth to engage in enrichment activities to strengthen their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

- Objective 2.1: Expand access to programs designed to enhance youth physical and mental wellbeing.
- Objective 2.2: Increase youth resilience, coping skills, and overall wellbeing.

Goal 3: Equitable opportunities for youth will be provided for restorative justice and community alternatives, especially for youth engaged in juvenile justice, protective services, and/or emergency systems.

- Objective 3.1: Reduce youth involvement in juvenile justice, child welfare, school disciplinary systems and/or emergency systems.
- Objective 3.1: Increase access to restorative and community-based prevention programs for youth facing higher risk factors.

Goal 1: Equitable opportunities for education and career readiness are provided		
Objectives	Desired Outcomes	Priority Indicators
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand access to education and career opportunities for youth 2. Enhance youth academic engagement including postsecondary career outcomes by providing funding to program that support this initiative 3. Align education programs with local workplace needs to enhance youth career readiness 	Children and youth excel in school and are prepared to enter the workforce	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 3-4 year-olds enrolled in Pre-K b. Kindergarten readiness c. Chronic absenteeism d. High school graduation rates e. GED equivalency obtained f. Youth aged 16-24 not in school and not working

Goal 2: Equitable opportunities for youth to engage in enrichment activities to strengthen their physical and mental health and wellbeing.		
Objectives	Desired Outcomes	Priority Indicators
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand access to programs designed to enhance youth physical and mental wellbeing. 2. Increase youth resilience, coping skills, and overall wellbeing. 	Youth are physically and mentally healthy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mental health (sadness, anxiety, frequent mental distress) b. Substance use c. Regular physical activity d. Fruit/Vegetable intake e. Food insecurity f. Protective factors (caring adults and peers) g. Future orientation (plans after high school, goal setting) h. Housing instability

Goal 3: Equitable opportunities for youth will be provided for restorative justice and community alternatives, especially for youth engaged in juvenile justice, protective services, and/or emergency systems.		
Objectives	Desired Outcomes	Priority Indicators
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce youth involvement in juvenile justice, child welfare, school disciplinary systems and/or emergency systems. 2. Increase access to restorative and community-based prevention programs for 	Youth are supported and less likely to re-engage in systems (such as juvenile justice, protective services, and/or emergency services).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Skipping school due to safety concerns b. Child abuse & neglect c. Delinquent referrals d. Violence e. Substance use f. Housing instability g. Protective factors (caring adults and peers)

youth facing higher risk factors.		h. Future orientation (plans after high school, goal setting)
-----------------------------------	--	---

Conclusion

This plan is rooted in supporting the power of community to make change. The CYC invests in Santa Fe’s community and understands the impact that happens when resources meet opportunity, when organizations collaborate, and when a community never gives up on its people. This plan builds on that important work. The City of Santa Fe CYC expresses gratitude to its grantee partners, commissioners, and evaluation team for their daily dedication to supporting families.

Looking Ahead

The work of supporting young people is never finished. With each funding cycle, each partnership, and each young person whose life is impacted by this investment, the CYC moves closer to their vision: connected Santa Fe community members have the support and opportunity to thrive.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to making a positive impact on the City of Santa Fe.