

# THREE-YEAR PLAN

*McHenry County Mental  
Health Board*

*FISCAL YEARS*  
**2027-2029**



## Mission

To lead and contract for quality health (mental health and substance use disorder) and intellectual/developmental disability prevention and treatment services for all people of McHenry County, Illinois.

## Vision

McHenry County residents experience optimal mental wellness through access to an integrated system of behavioral healthcare and intellectual/developmental disability services of excellent quality representing a recovery and resiliency focused, consumer driven, and inclusive community-based continuum of care.

## Values

- We lead the way in transforming lives and systems through partnership and planning.
- We empower individuals and families toward mental wellness and resiliency.
- We are accountable for quality, cost-effective services.
- We value diversity in services, staff, and community.
- We provide education in order to aid recovery and prevention.
- We provide equity and accessibility to services regardless of one's ability to pay.

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EMPOWERING MINDS



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TRANSFORMING LIVES



# ABOUT MCHENRY COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD

The McHenry County Mental Health Board is a special unit of government under the Community Mental Health Act 405 ILCS 20. As a result of Illinois House Bill 708, in 1967 voters in McHenry County established a community Mental Health Board and chose to levy an annual tax for the purpose of providing community facilities and services for those with mental illness, intellectual/developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders.

Following this referendum, the county government appointed a board of representatives to administer the mental health fund and carry out the duties of the Community Mental Health Act. The McHenry County Mental Health Board quickly held its first meeting and began to develop operating procedures and to fund agencies.

As part of a governing body, Board members must provide leadership and determine what is in the best interest of county residents. The Board is mandated to assure that those in need of mental health, intellectual/developmental disability, or substance use services will have those services available to them. They continuously engage in policy development focused on their governance of all access, quality, and cost concerns.

In March 2024, a voter referendum moved the McHenry County Mental Health Board from property taxes to sales tax (e.g. Special Retail Tax in 55 ILCS 5 of Counties Code). 55 ILCS 5/5-1006.5 is the enabling legislation for sales tax and gives authority to a mental health board and connects the function of said mental health board to Community Mental Health Act.

The Illinois Community Mental Health Act mandates Community Mental Health Boards in the state to:

- Review and evaluate community mental health services and facilities.
- Plan for programs of community mental health services and facilities.
- Consult with others regarding the most efficient delivery of services.
- Appropriate funds to maintain mental health services and facilities.

# 2024–2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

## HIGHLIGHTS

### **Strategic Initiative 1: Enhance Access to Quality Care for Behavioral Health and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities**

- Create and support immediate Next Day intakes through the No Wrong Door policy.
- Implemented the No Wrong Door philosophy for “ineligible” clients through the Intake Coordinators Group.
- Reduced wait lists by 20% through the Intake Coordinators Group.
- Implemented and evaluated the “Handle with Care” pilot to connect local law enforcement with school based providers.

### **Strategic Initiative 2: Enhance the Continuum of Quality Care for Behavioral Health and Intellectual/Developmental Disability Services**

- Expanded Trauma Informed Care training and availability by hiring a consultant to increase the number of trainings and ongoing support.
- Improved funding decisions by incorporating updated performance measures and program and fiscal outcomes.
- Increase the Mental Health Board driven trainings and Continuing Education Units provided by 5% year over year by hiring a training assistant and developing a formal training calendar.

### **Strategic Initiative 3: Increase Awareness and Visibility of Community Resources**

- Increase behavioral health literacy of the public by messaging in public forums, support of national awareness months on social media, and increased Question, Persuade, Refer Suicide Prevention Training in the County.
- Developed a multi-page insert local newspaper publication to promote all Network providers.
- Hosted an Annual School Resource Fair to continue to educate school counselors, social workers and other professionals about available resources.
- Enhanced access and support to McHenry County Mental Health Board Network agency programs and awareness campaigns by revamping the Hotsheet and distribution lists, increasing our digital footprint.

### **Strategic Initiative 4: Provide Visionary Leadership, Empowerment, and Advocacy to Behavioral Health & Intellectual/Developmental Disability Stakeholders**

- Supported the increase in Certified Community Behavioral Health Center partnerships by monitoring and supporting our local Certified Community Behavioral Health Center’s supplication to the state.
- Assisted McHenry County in obtaining Gold Level Bell Seal for the Workplace from Mental Health America.
- Contracted with a grant writer for the McHenry County Mental Health Board Network.
- Increased access to the McHenry County Mental Health Board–contracted grant writer for the Network, leading to greater utilization of grant writing support among McHenry County Mental Health Board funded agencies.

# STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The McHenry County Mental Health Board utilized a comprehensive and data-informed approach to guide the development of the 2027–2029 Strategic Plan. Foundational resources for this process included the Board’s previous strategic plan as well as the McHenry County Health Atlas developed by the McHenry County Public Health Department. These materials provided critical baseline information and helped identify existing trends, priorities, and areas requiring continued attention.

As part of the planning process, the Mental Health Board conducted a thorough review of the prior strategic plan to evaluate progress toward established goals, identify initiatives requiring additional focus, and recognize objectives that had been successfully achieved. This reflective analysis ensured that the new strategic plan would build upon prior accomplishments while addressing ongoing and emerging community needs.

To further inform the planning process, the Board gathered input from Network behavioral health providers through an anonymous survey. Feedback from providers offered valuable insight into service delivery challenges, system strengths, and evolving community needs. This information also served as an important point of comparison when evaluating broader community perceptions and experiences.

In addition, the Mental Health Board reviewed survey data collected during Town Hall meetings held over the past several years. These community engagement efforts provided meaningful qualitative and quantitative feedback regarding residents’ concerns, priorities, and experiences related to mental health, developmental disability, and substance use services and supports within McHenry County.

The Board also distributed a public survey to ensure that community members had the opportunity to directly contribute to the strategic planning process. Responses from this survey significantly informed the development of the Strategic Plan’s goals, priorities, and action steps, helping to ensure that the plan reflects the needs and perspectives of the broader community.

Finally, the Mental Health Board sought input from community leaders and key stakeholders through a separate survey process. This feedback provided a broader systems-level perspective on existing service gaps, opportunities for collaboration, and potential areas for future programming and resource development. Collectively, the information gathered through these multiple engagement strategies created a strong foundation for the development of a responsive, community-centered, and forward-looking 2027–2029 Strategic Plan.

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2027 - 2029

## GOAL 1: COLLABORATION, ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS

Working collaboratively with partners, influencing key audiences and decision-makers through advocacy, and expanding visibility to ensure the organization's work, impact, and priorities are widely recognized and supported.

### 1.1. Encourage partnerships and collaboration – funded agencies, outside organizations, etc.

1.1.1. Introduce shared service opportunities among McHenry County organizations at least twice annually.

1.1.2. Implementation of a referral system in McHenry County, including system selection and set up, professional development: train agency staff, agency buy in, continued evaluation of system effectiveness and use.

1.1.3. Expand and implement collaborations with county departments. Identify duplicative services, determine beneficial partnerships.

1.1.4. Reach out to local governments, as well as Chambers of Commerce, to better understand their needs. Provide presentations on available resources, and explain the role of the Mental Health Board.

### 1.2. Expand access to community-based support services.

1.2.1. Analyze existing data to pinpoint priority support-group needs, cultivate partnerships to launch new groups, and promote greater visibility of current support-group resources.

1.2.2. Develop, market and provide a community wide training program.

1.2.3. Promote available community groups through the McHelp App.

# GOAL 1: COLLABORATION, ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS

## 1.3. Increase awareness of available services and resources in McHenry County.

1.3.1. Increase the Mental Health Board's social media presence.

1.3.2. Market the Mental Health Board by improving public understanding regarding the role the Mental Health Board plays in the community - public comment/presentation at other board meetings by Mental Health Board Members.

1.3.3. Update and improve McHelp with rebranding.

1.3.4. Promotion of existing services in and out of network - explore promotion opportunities to expand awareness of services in the county.

1.3.5. Explore other outreach opportunities community organizations.

1.3.6. Promote quality of Network and available training to bring in potential workforce and students.

## 1.4. Identify opportunities for new partnership/collaborations.

1.4.1. Actively engage in the conversation by finding a seat at the right tables to address needs of the community.

1.4.2. Find opportunities for Mental Health Board to support and partner on new initiatives.

## 1.5. Advocacy to promote structures and resources within the community that people need.

1.5.1. Advocate for other agencies that are working to support community needs.

1.5.2. Find opportunities for state and county grants to support the community's needs.

## GOAL 2: ACCOUNTABILITY AND QUALITY

Strengthen accountability and quality by ensuring consistent use of provider driven data, supported by ongoing training and up-to-date standards of care. Improve how outcomes are defined and measured to better reflect service impact, while using data to drive timely, fair, and informed decision-making.

### **2.1. Promote use and provide training on evidence-based practices.**

- 2.1.1. Evaluate trainings being offered and adjust for current needs.
- 2.1.2. Increase provider and staff training on evidence-based practices.

### **2.2. Redefine current outcomes measurements.**

- 2.2.1. Determine the basis of outcomes reporting.
- 2.2.2. Evaluate benchmark calculations and evaluation procedures.
- 2.2.3. Gather provider feedback on outcome measures that would more accurately reflect the work being performed.
- 2.2.4. Explore methods to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of prevention programs.
- 2.2.5. Explore the breakout of outcomes by pillars of care rather than as a whole.

### **2.3. Ensure that collected data is useful and being utilized.**

- 2.3.1. Determine when data triggers action.
- 2.3.2. Ensure that metrics enable fair/balanced evaluations of programs.
- 2.3.3. Investigate ways to incorporate data from other resources.

### **2.4. Re-evaluate the audit process to ensure that it is aligned with outcomes and decision making.**

- 2.4.1. Develop protocols to trigger the financial audit component when defined thresholds or conditions occur, in addition to routine financial review activities.
- 2.4.2. Identify efficiencies within the audit process and evaluate the appropriate frequency and scope of audits.

### **2.5. Provide guidance for non-human services used by agencies.**

- 2.5.1. Research best practices related to the use of artificial intelligence in social services.
- 2.5.2. Establish network guidance on the best practice use of artificial intelligence, making sure warm hand off and referral needs are being met.

## **GOAL 3: ACCESS AND COORDINATION**

Improve access to and coordination of services by reducing barriers, strengthening community partnerships, and expanding service delivery options.

### **3.1. To foster the expansion of services to underserved areas.**

3.1.1. Develop collaborative partnerships to expand access to services through innovative delivery models by engaging community stakeholders.

3.1.2. Engage with volunteers and connect with agencies. Incorporate community based training with information about volunteer opportunities.

### **3.2. Promote and increase access to youth services available in the county.**

3.2.1. Explore ways to partner with schools, early childhood organizations, youth groups, and underserved age groups to raise awareness of available resources and identify barriers.

3.2.2. Provide community-based training to address youth needs and issues.

3.2.3. Expand functions in the McHelp app to support youth services.

### **3.3. Address the affordability of services.**

3.3.1. Promote affordable service options within the county.

3.3.2. Find and support non-traditional services such as support groups and the McHelp App.

3.3.3. Provide training related to navigating state and community resources.

### **3.4. Promote and increase access to services available in the county to counter social isolation in all age groups.**

3.4.1. Explore ways to partner with churches, schools, parks, senior networks, and social groups to promote social opportunities within the community.

3.4.2. Provide community-based training to address social isolation topics.

3.4.3. Explore the promotion of social events through the McHelp app and the referral network.

## **GOAL 4: COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

Develop, expand, and sustain accessible, coordinated community resources that address identified gaps, strengthen workforce capacity, and enhance collaboration with partner organizations to improve access to community resources.

### **4.1. Identify services gaps through a community needs assessment.**

- 4.1.1. Conduct surveys and focus groups.
- 4.1.2. Seek out community and agency input.
- 4.1.3. Interpret community needs assessment results into actionable items.
- 4.1.4. Assemble, represent and analyze existing data.

### **4.2. Support workforce wellness and development.**

- 4.2.1. Make leadership training available to agencies.
- 4.2.2. Identify and promote non-monetary solutions to maintaining a healthy workforce.
- 4.2.3. Partner with Workforce Development and local colleges to provide information to agencies about job fairs and training programs.

### **4.3. Engage with partner organizations regarding the coordination of services within the county related to transportation, housing and food insecurity.**

- 4.3.1. Have a seat at the table in the development of programs.
- 4.3.2. Explore partnerships with other counties/mental health boards to address major gaps in services.
- 4.3.3. Include available community services in referral network implementation.
- 4.3.4. Communicate available resources to network providers.

### **4.4. Develop, promote and provide a community-based training program to provide education on Mental Health, Substance Use and Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities.**

- 4.4.1. Partner with providers on educational programs.
- 4.4.2. Identify training topics that the community is seeking.
- 4.4.3. Market training availability.

### **4.5. Evolve and rebrand the McHelp app.**

- 4.5.1. Explore partnerships with community groups to determine how the McHelp app could be used to promote their services.
- 4.5.2. Develop internal processes to ensure continual updating and evolving the McHelp app to address community needs.

# STRATEGIC PLAN CONCLUSION

Over the next three years, the McHenry County Mental Health Board will remain committed to advancing four strategic priorities:

- (1) Collaboration, Advocacy, and Awareness**
- (2) Accountability and Quality**
- (3) Access and Coordination**
- (4) Community Resource Development**

The Mental Health Board is dedicated to the ongoing evaluation and implementation of this strategic plan and will allocate resources appropriately to support the successful achievement of its goals. To ensure transparency and community engagement, the Board will also maintain a public dashboard on its website, [mc708.org](http://mc708.org), providing regular updates on the progress and outcomes of the plan's initiatives.

As the McHenry County Mental Health Board looks to the future, it remains committed to building a stronger, more responsive behavioral health system that meets the evolving needs of the community. Through collaboration, accountability, and strategic investment, the Board will continue working to expand access, strengthen partnerships, and improve outcomes for all residents of McHenry County.



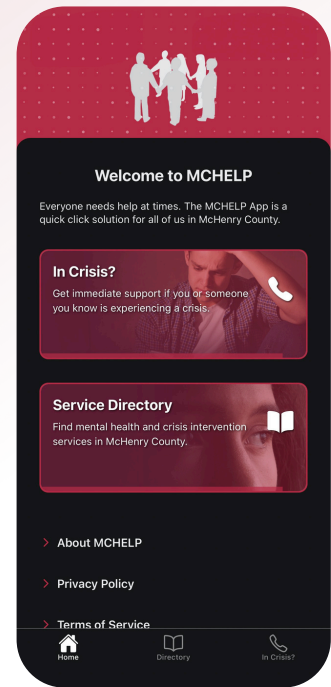
## MCHHELP APP: Help is just a tap away.

A free anonymous app that allows you to confidentially text or talk to a licensed mental health counselor. Learn more by scanning the QR Code or visit McHenry County Mental Health Board on the web: [www.MC708.org](http://www.MC708.org).

Call or text your concerns to MCHHELP on any subject 24/7,  
365 days a year.

DOWNLOAD TODAY!

SCAN ME!



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