



Greater Opportunities for Broome and Chenango, Inc.

Strategic Plan 2021-2026

Reducing Poverty and its Impacts on People

Setting forth to create a strategic plan for any business is always a challenge. Greater Opportunities for Broome and Chenango Inc. has provided flexible, local programs that lift people up and reduce poverty for over 55 years. With the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, our communities have experienced brand new challenges, which has included massive unemployment, lack of affordable housing and economic improvements that have not adequately addressed the increasing needs of individuals and families living in poverty. Greater Opportunities has remained flexible during these difficult times by providing services remotely as needed, making facilities improvements to address the safety and welfare of our staff and clientele, as well as looking at our policies and procedures to ensure we are following all federal, state, and local regulations.

Until the causes of poverty are addressed, the programs delivered by Greater Opportunities that look to improve an individual's self-sufficiency, while eliminating the causes of poverty, continue to be a necessity. The strategic planning process aided our agency in looking at current trends to determine if our programs are meeting the identified community needs. It reinforced our vision for the future and allowed Greater Opportunities to define its priorities over the next five years, while identifying and quantifying measures that will determine the agency's success. Greater Opportunities has continued to grow, especially with our finalized merger in 2020, while providing solid programs to our communities. We will continue to strengthen our current programs; assuring that our programs are amongst the best in both Broome and Chenango County. We will strive to be an example to other human service agencies on how to be fiducially responsible, while providing the best service to our clients.

Our Community by the Numbers

In 2020, Greater Opportunities worked with Heartland Solutions, a consulting firm, to re-examine and update data analyzed in the 2019 Community Needs Assessment, which encompassed all agency programming, as well as the community needs of Broome and Chenango County. Greater Opportunities uncovered critical issues, which include:

Finding 1: The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to move beyond addressing family and child needs to solutions that address circumstances experienced by low-income families.

Finding 2: We need to build a sense of community within our agency, our staff, and the larger community of Broome and Chenango County.

Finding 3: Greater Opportunities needs to continue to review program models in consideration of changes in the early childhood landscape and the limited access that families have to high-quality early childhood education.

Finding 4: Greater Opportunities needs to continue to address mental health and substance abuse trends in our community.

Finding 5: We need to continue to pursue safe and affordable housing and the expansion of social safety net programs for individuals utilizing community services.

	Chenango County	Broome County	NY State
% of people living below poverty level	15.1%	17.3%	13.7%
Rate of Unemployment	8.2%	10.7%	14.2%
Living Wage for Adult	\$14.25	\$15.96	\$30.76
Living Wage for one adult/one child	\$25.74	\$26.33	\$30.92
Current minimum wage in upstate NY	\$12.50	\$12.50	\$12.50

Sources: New York State Community Action Association/U.S..Census Bureau

2021-2026 Greater Opportunities Strategic Plan

Vision Statement

Greater Opportunities for Broome and Chenango, Inc. will become the most effective provider of comprehensive services for individuals, families, and children in New York State.

Mission Statement

The mission of Greater Opportunities is to educate, advocate, and empower individuals and families to improve the quality of their lives through the development of self-reliance, while promoting a culture of people working together to help themselves, one another, and their community.

We Value

The Impact

Clients

Greater Opportunities recognizes and respects the needs and concerns of all clientele served through our agency and treats every client with personal dignity. We do this by promoting an environment that is free from discrimination while promoting an environment of self-reliance. Greater Opportunities recognizes the strengths that each client possesses and provides the catalyst to help them achieve their personal goals.

Employees

Greater Opportunities recognizes, and respects, the wealth of knowledge and experience of our employees and serves as the cornerstone of which our agency is built and strengthened.

Integrity

Greater Opportunities is an organization that values full honesty and integrity in all aspects of agency programming, actions, and integration within the community.

Excellence

Greater Opportunities utilizes Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) performance-based initiative to support our anti-poverty focus and promote high quality and performing programs. Greater Opportunities is data driven-developing success measures, evaluating progress and impact, and disseminating results. Greater Opportunities utilizes results to improve and develop innovative programming.

Efficiency

Greater Opportunities utilizes all available resources, both externally and internally, in the most effective and efficient manner to provide quality and comprehensive services to the community we serve.

Methodology for Strategic Plan

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to evaluate the effectiveness of our agency in the development of this strategic plan. Qualitative methods integrated the use of input from Board members, staff, clients, and members of community agency partners. Quantitative methods consisted of surveys, client satisfaction data, needs assessments, and outcome data.

2021-2026 Goals & Objectives

Organizational Excellence

GOAL I: *Strengthen organizational capacity to support operations.* (ROMA Goal 2 and 3)

- Strengthen the Greater Opportunities brand to increase awareness of our organization and mission.
 1. Create and develop brochure for agency, as well as individual programs. (August 2021)
 2. Expand community outreach efforts through tv and radio ads, social media, and local newspapers (August 2021)
 3. Strengthen brand and mission with Greater Opportunities through the development of the “Opportunity Knocks” monthly newsletter (April 2021)
 4. Install electronic sign at Chenango Main Office Building (April 2021)
 5. Market Greater Opportunities phone application to providers and clientele (June 2021)
- Advance employee and volunteer excellence to ensure high quality service delivery through comprehensive trainings
 1. Agency-Wide survey to assess staff’s current certifications and/or talents, in order to develop trainings for staff development, as well as client development (September 2022)
 2. Create training curriculums in all service areas (September 2022)
 3. Utilization and awareness of Greater Opportunities staff in available skills programming throughout the community in order to avoid duplication of effort (December 2026)
- Ensure the agency is equipped with the appropriate facilities, personnel, and equipment to support operational excellence
 1. Agency-wide assessment of all buildings to develop comprehensive list of needed repairs, as well

- needed updates to facilities (March 2022)
- 2. Creation of preventative maintenance schedule based off comprehensive building assessment (March 2022)
- 3. Continue to provide PPE and facility improvements to ensure the safety and welfare of staff and clientele during the COVID pandemic (December 2022)
- 4. Research available funding sources in order to continue to build the skill set and size of the Greater Opportunities Maintenance Department (June 2023)
- Increase and diversify financial support to ensure greater community impacts.
 1. Develop capital campaign throughout Broome and Chenango County (December 2026)
 2. Continue to seek available opportunities to develop unrestricted funding through housing or other relevant areas (December 2026)
 3. Expand opportunities for charitable giving to the organization (December 2026)
- Ensure the Board of Directors is equipped to perform its governance responsibilities.
 1. Complete Board self-assessment (September 2021)
 2. Conduct comprehensive Board Training Retreat with extensive review of roles, responsibilities, and review of all program areas. (June 2023)

Service Delivery

GOAL II: *Focus resources to address unmet or under-served needs in the community through strategic partnerships (i.e. housing, employment, finance, food , transportation, health, education, and childcare).* (ROMA Goal 2 and 3)

- Expand access to supportive housing services to other areas within Chenango and Broome County
 1. Continue to develop New Berlin Housing units (June 2022)
 2. Explore alternative grant funding (i.e. HCR, HHAP) for additional safe and affordable housing units in both Broome and Chenango County (December 2026)
- Facilitate participant access to basic needs assistance programs, including the possible expansion of basic needs assistance programs, including transportation programs, through collaboration with other community services providers
 1. Support participant access to basic needs assistance programs through collaboration with other community service providers (December 2026)
 2. Utilization of Greater Opportunities phone application as a resource and link to available basic needs assistance programs available in the community (December 2026)
- Continue to expand programming around food security, including educational programs that support a nutritional component that promote health and reducing obesity
 1. Completion of a commercial kitchen in training area and production of educational videos that promote nutrition and wellness (September 2022)
 2. Conduct in-person nutritional cooking classes for individuals and families in new training center kitchen (September 2022)
 3. Continuation of partnerships with Cornell Cooperative Extension to promote wellness and access to nutritional and locally sourced foods (December 2026)
 4. Explore additional funding sources for the development of nutritional programming and projects (December 2026)

Economic Resiliency for Participants

GOAL III: *Build financial security for individuals and families that foster their resiliency and strength.* (ROMA Goal 1 and 3)

- Development of skill readiness and participation supports, especially programs that can help customers learn hard and soft skills in a variety of areas, including employment, financial literacy, health and nutrition, as well as programming that provide access to computers for job searching and applications.
 1. Assess current programming to determine new or expanded program opportunities or partnerships in asset, employment, and leadership development. (September 2024)
 2. Continued expansion of case management, group education, workshops, and referrals to assist in the increase the skill readiness of Greater Opportunities clientele (December 2026)
 3. Utilization and awareness of Greater Opportunities staff in available skills programming throughout the community in order to avoid duplication of effort (December 2026)
 4. Development of training and skill curriculums with the creation of the Greater Opportunities training center (September 2022)
- Expand access to Early Head Start through the application for expansion dollars to expand slots for Early Head Start (September 2023)

Program Service Excellence

GOAL IV: *Strategically align Greater Opportunities programs to maximize agency effectiveness and efficiency in serving people in need.* (ROMA Goal 2)

- Analyze planning and program delivery for collaboration, training, integration, and quality improvement opportunities.
 1. Continue to utilize agency assessments (i.e. Risk Assessment, Self-Assessment, CNA) to inform and evaluate agency performance (December 2026)
- Enhancement of internal and external communication practices to ensure the proper dissemination of information to both staff and clientele
 1. Development of “Opportunity Knocks” monthly newsletter to promote communication of happenings within the agency (December 2026)
 2. Continuation of social media (i.e. website, Facebook) to disseminate information to staff and the community (December 2026)
 3. Installation of electronic signs at Main Office building to serve as another communication source to the community (June 2021)
 4. Development of Greater Opportunities phone application for staff and clientele to enhance the ease of communication (September 2021)
- Consistent implementation and enactment of agency policies and procedures across all program areas
 1. Ensure access to all agency policies and procedures across all department areas (December 2021)
 2. Provision of consistent message, and follow-through, to staff in regards to agency policies and procedures (December 2021)
 3. Development of HR training segments on policies and procedures to be available on the phone application and website (September 2022)

- Development and expansion of linkage agreements with service providers throughout the community to minimize duplication of effort and to provide the most comprehensive services to clientele
 1. Update linkage agreements to make sure information is relevant and utilized (December 2021)
 2. Continued participation in community collaborations to avoid duplication of services within the community (December 2026)
 3. Continue to develop MOU's with community service providers to enhance and expand current agency programming (December 2026)
- Attract and retain a properly trained and competent workforce
 1. Create virtual tours of facilities and programs to provide a visual tool for potential staff to experience our current programming (December 2022)
 2. Development of on-boarding policies and procedures for new staff members (December 2021)
 3. Development of comprehensive employee appraisal system (December 2022)

Board of Directors

Community Action has a tripartite Board of Directors, which includes one-third representation from the low-income community, one-third representation from the private sector, and one-third representation from the public sector.

Low-Income

Alice Decker
 Sharon Wells
 Julie-Beth Holdrege
 Xandra Angle

Private Sector

Clyde Birch Jr.
 Carrie King
 Holly Abbott
 Traci Masso

Public Sector

Robert Starr
 Jerry Skrivan
 Dottie Langlie
 Grace Nucero-Alger

To achieve its goals, Greater Opportunities has four major program areas:

- Head Start and Early Head Start promotes school readiness through educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services for children and families, birth to five years.
- The WIC program is a federal supplemental food program for women, infants and children which provides nutritious foods to pregnant, post-partum and breast-feeding women and children up to age 5. WIC supports families in receiving nutrition education and referrals to other resources within the community.
- The Energy Services programs assists income-eligible families and individuals by reducing their heating and cooling costs, as well as addressing health and safety issues in their homes through energy-saving measures.
- The Greater Opportunities Housing Programs promote safe, affordable housing to low income residents in our community in the form of home rehabilitation, first time homeownership, supportive case management, and Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers. Greater Opportunities Housing staff provide assistance to individuals to obtain and maintain healthy interdependence with the rest of the community. Services include case management and life skills education and training, such as financial literacy, credit repair, and foreclosure prevention.

Evaluating Agency Performance

A strategic plan can only be successful through the routine evaluation of every area of agency functioning. The Senior Management and other key staff members will address each action step. Our Strategic Plan will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis at each Senior Management meeting. The Board of Directors will review our progress on an annual basis.

Internal and External SWOT Analysis

Internal	External
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Non-judgmental approach ✓ Proactive ✓ Dependable ✓ Providing valuable services to our communities ✓ Forward looking ✓ Multi-faceted approach ✓ Innovative and “thinking outside the box” ✓ Transparency ✓ Quality over Quantity ✓ Areas of improvement are discussed ✓ Flexible ✓ Dedicated staff that are professional ✓ Long-term employees ✓ Treatment of staff ✓ Collaboration internally and externally ✓ Meet individuals where they are to best meet their needs ✓ Keep going even in difficult times ✓ Listen to each other ✓ Diverse programming ✓ Build on existing talent ✓ Known to our communities ✓ Keep it simple ✓ Understanding of mission vs. business ✓ High standards ✓ Paying down debt ✓ Not afraid of talent 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Community Partners and collaborations ✓ Increased recognition of success stories to the public ✓ Growth in several program areas ✓ Capital campaign with existing alumni ✓ Agency identifies needs of community and clients ✓ Broadening our reach ✓ Large staff with a variety of talents to pull from ✓ Capitalize on current foundations/benefactors/churches within our community ✓ Task groups to get things achieved ✓ Launch rebranding campaign ✓ Create endowment ✓ Community awareness ✓ Seek additional sources of unrestricted income ✓ Greater Board involvement ✓ Seek additional funding through more UPK classes ✓ Exploration of mental health/substance abuse treatment services ✓ Technologically savvy ✓ Vast amount of staff with certifications ✓ Continue to build relationships with other agency service providers ✓ Capitalize on ideas generated from advisory committees ✓ Further job training ✓ Expansion of Housing in Chenango County
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Staff still not being comfortable with merger ✓ Practice Based Coaching needs improvement ✓ Communication 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mission drift ✓ Pre-kindergarten changes in New York State ✓ Possible budget cuts in Federal/State funds

- ✓ Keeping up with changing policies and regulations
- ✓ Continued reliance on state and federal funding in unstable economic climate
- ✓ Lack of togetherness
- ✓ Limited funding availability in some program areas
- ✓ Board training and engagement
- ✓ Have been unable to expand as we wanted (Head Start)
- ✓ Lack of communication with local politicians
- ✓ Lack of time
- ✓ Not enough self-promotion of programs and services
- ✓ Lack of staff understanding of all areas of programming
- ✓ Consistency of onboarding process
- ✓ Micro vs. macro managing
- ✓ Siloed departments
- ✓ Abandoned buildings

- ✓ Staff burnout
- ✓ Uncertainty of school-based centers and being asked to leave due to needing space
- ✓ Uncertainty with new Federal administration
- ✓ Competition from other agencies for limited funding
- ✓ Heavily grant dependent
- ✓ Inflexibility
- ✓ Minimum wage increasing
- ✓ Stuck in our ways
- ✓ Changing regulations in programs
- ✓ COVID-19-moratoriums/unemployment benefits
- ✓ Increasing costs
- ✓ Complacency
- ✓ Growing too fast
- ✓ In-fighting

G R E A T E R

OPPORTUNITIES



G R E A T E R
O P P O R T U N I T I E S

Empowering communities.
Empowering you.



G R E A T E R
O P P O R T U N I T I E S