



EAST SIDE
Neighborhood
Services

2022-2025

STRATEGIC PLAN

Approved by East Side Neighborhood Services
Board of Directors on August 25, 2022

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INTRODUCTION

*Community is much more than belonging to something;
it's about doing something together that makes belonging matter.*

—BRIAN SOLIS

East Side Neighborhood Services (ESNS) was one of the first settlement houses in Minnesota. It was founded in 1915 as a nonsectarian and nonpartisan neighborhood house to assist community members in need of social services.¹ The settlement house movement began in London and spread throughout the United States in the 1890s during a period of great socio-economic challenges associated with European immigration. Settlement houses, which were established by charities with the mission to help the poor escape poverty, were established in 32 states. At the peak of the movement in the 1920s, as many as 500 settlement houses operated in the U.S.,² many of which also provided schools for new immigrants, especially in rural areas.

From 1890 to 1910, more than 12 million people immigrated to the United States. Many lived in crowded and disease-ridden apartment buildings, worked long hours, and experienced extreme poverty. Children often worked to help support the family.³ During that period, settlement houses promoted democratic ideals and provided education, child care, meal services, and recreational facilities for European immigrant families.

Over its more than 100-year history, ESNS's name has changed. Originally known as the North East Neighborhood House (NENH), it was located in the same area of Minneapolis as it is today. The community was then heavily populated by Slavic immigrants, and NENH thus offered much of the same immigrant-focused programming as other settlement houses of that era.⁴ As a legacy organization that focuses on community problems to meet current needs, ESNS's offerings and activities have pivoted over the years to address the most challenging issues faced by the broad diversity of people who live in its service community.

ESNS's mission of helping people remove social and economic barriers is as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.⁵ ESNS's programs and its plans for the future are built upon its past—one filled with vision, risk taking, responsibility, and high ethical principles. The timeline below traces several major steps in the development of settlement house movement in Minneapolis, from its beginnings to the vital programming currently underway.

1 Minnesota Historical Society, "East Side Neighborhood Services: An Inventory of Its Records 1889-1961," <http://www2.mnhs.org/library/findaids/p0003.xml>

2 Howard Husock, "Bringing Back the Settlement House," *Public Interest*, 109, Fall 1992, pp. 53-72.

3 Michael Friedman and Brett Friedman, *Settlement Houses: Improving the Social Welfare of America's Immigrants*, New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2006.

4 "East Side Neighborhood Services: An Inventory of Its Records at the Minnesota Historical Society," <http://www2.mnhs.org/library/findaids/p0003.xml>

5 John E. Hansan, "Settlement Houses: An Introduction," Virginia Commonwealth University, <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/settlement-houses/settlement-houses/>



ESNS HISTORICAL TIMELINE

1890s

Plymouth Congregational Church provided a variety of services to address social ills for new immigrants to Northeast Minneapolis.

1915

Northeast Neighborhood House (NENH), one of four local settlement houses at the time, was established to acquaint immigrants with American culture.

1919

NENH staff moved into new building, named Drummond Hall.

1930

Eastern European immigrants made up nearly 60% of Northeast Minneapolis's total population.

1949

Campers referred to Camp Bovey, a 200-acre property on a private lake, as their "summer home."

1963

NENH merged with Margaret Barry House and incorporated as East Side Neighborhood Services (ESNS).

2001

ESNS moved to a new facility at its current location.

2020

Many community programs changed the way they provided services in response to the COVID pandemic beginning in 2020.

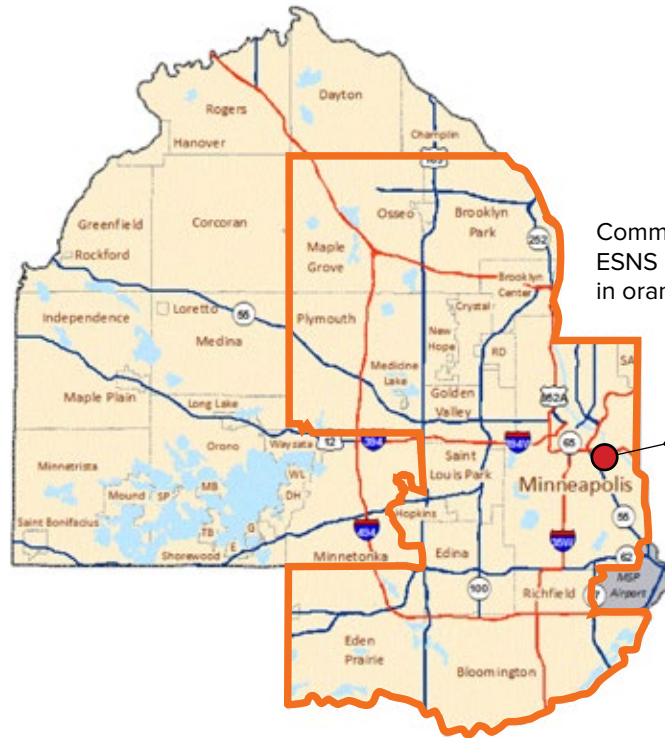


*Historical-NE
Neighborhood House
Day Care*



SERVICE AREA

East Side Neighborhood Services supports individuals and families in the Greater Hennepin County Area. The communities in this larger area include Bloomington, Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Edina, Golden Valley, Maple Grove, New Hope, Plymouth, Richfield, Robbinsdale, St. Louis Park, and all of Minneapolis, including downtown.



Communities impacted by ESNS services are outlined in orange.

ESNS 8 sites in Hennepin County.

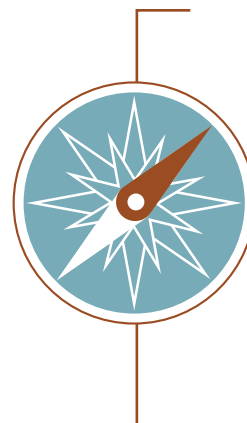


PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Today, East Side Neighborhood Services consists of five focus areas, each of which plays an important role in addressing social and economic barriers in ESNS’s service area:

In 2021, ESNS’s food programs served more than 3,300 Hennepin County households. Every year, its Youth Department serves more than 400 young people, including up to 75 students in its contracted alternative high school, Menlo Park Academy. Other programs offer services to job seekers, seniors, families, and other residents of the area. Initiatives to enhance the current staffing model, improve program visibility, and increase resources are already underway. A survey completed by about three-quarters of ESNS’s staff showed staff to be very positive and engaged in community work. All indications suggest that this commitment and vision will guide ESNS’s continued success and improvement over the next three years and beyond.

The following provides a brief summary of ESNS’s current offerings and activities.



- EDUCATION PATHWAYS
- EMPLOYMENT
- FAMILY WELL-BEING
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- HEALTHY AGING



EDUCATION PATHWAYS

ESNS's partnerships with the Office of Justice Programs, Minneapolis Public Schools, and the Minnesota Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program provide seven children and youth programs at five locations.

Out-of-School Time Programs

Three K-5 programs in three locations:

- **Pratt Achievers** helps students meet or exceed grade-level benchmarks and develop interpersonal and social skills.
- **Luxton Learners** supports academics through small group classes, tutoring, and homework help; helps youth develop leadership skills; provides service learning opportunities; and supports emotional and social growth.
- **Mulberry Junction** offers individualized academic support and opportunities for creative expression, leadership development, and outdoor play.

Two 6-12 programs in two locations:

- **Menlo Vibe** offers enrichment programming for Menlo Park Academy students focused on connecting with caring adults, developing stronger connections to school and community, and increasing critical thinking, professionalism, and communication.
- **Emerge** offers Venture Academy students academic and enrichment opportunities, such as cooking, arts and crafts, youth leadership, and film-making.

Menlo Park Academy

This alternative education program located within ESNS offers subjects required for graduation with a focus on high-interest, real-life learning.

Northeast Child Development Center

Provides opportunities for children to develop physically, socially, and cognitively according to individual learning styles. Infant care, toddler care, preschool, and parent resources are available.

Be@School

Helps increase the attendance of students assigned to the program by supporting their families and eliminating barriers. Families are connected to services throughout the community according to their needs.

Camp Bovey

Offers nature education and outdoor skills at ESNS's summer camp located in Gordon, Wisconsin.

Youth Employment

Supports youth academic success; offers preparation for post-secondary education and training and job skills development; makes training, internship, and volunteer connections to help youth gain on-the-job experience; and helps youth apply the skills and experience they gain to apply for jobs and get hired.

Creative Arts Therapy

Provides trauma-informed preventative and needs-based programming to individuals and groups. Curriculum is based on age, community climate, and community input. The program is designed to enrich self-esteem and interpersonal skills, support development of healthy coping methods, and encourage healthy risk-taking.





EMPLOYMENT

Offers four programs to low-income, unemployed, or underemployed job seekers who would like to earn a livable income.



Nursing Assistant + Training

This partnership with Minneapolis Community College provides training in assisting children, adults, or seniors in a variety of settings, such as nursing homes and hospitals. Participants receive transportation assistance, resume and cover letter review, and job placement assistance.

Youth Employment

This partnership with Minneapolis Youth Works offers youth ages 14-21 opportunities to develop and achieve goals for academic success; provides job skills and career development; helps forge connections between training, internships, and volunteer work to help youth gain on-the-job experience that will help them get a job.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

Promotes the dignity and self-sufficiency of older, unemployed, low-income residents by placing them in temporary part-time community service jobs in which they earn minimum wage.



Certificate and Training Program

Helps income-eligible job seekers 18 years and older make career plans and find full-time employment and gain support such as training, coaching, career exploration, and job retention counseling to build skills needed to secure and retain full-time permanent employment.



FAMILY WELL-BEING

Offers person-centered, trauma-informed healing programs to address community violence; helps people work toward personal changes in their attitudes and behaviors; and works to stop domestic violence as it occurs and to prevent it from happening in the future.

Family Healing

Men's and Women's Interpersonal Violence Series (individual and group sessions)

Mental Health Therapy

Individual, family, and group therapies to help work through mental health challenges by developing coping skills and utilizing resources.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Offers community a place to gather, heal, and learn.

Building Space Rentals

- All types of institutions, organizations, and community groups are encouraged to gather in ESNS’s rental space.
- The ESNS building is accessible and all are welcome.



HEALTHY AGING

Offers food, social, transportation, and employment supports.

Vital Living

Provides three programs to help secure food support for those who may have difficulty accessing traditional food shelves or grocery stores.

Other programs ensure that older adults are valued and socially and intellectually engaged. Supports an intergenerational community that focuses on health and well-being for all generations, including interactive activities for caregivers, the person they are caring for, and volunteers who support the in-person respite program.

Food Security Programs

The **Glendale Food Shelf** operates in partnership with Minneapolis Public Housing Authority to service Glendale Townhomes in Southeast Minneapolis.

The **Senior Food Shelf** provides both both client-choice shopping and home deliveries.

The **High Rise Mobile Food Shelf** brings food directly to 45 low-income apartment buildings across Hennepin County for primarily older adults and people with disabilities without transportation to grocery stores.

Senior Transportation

Offers accessible door-to-door transportation for older adults and those with disabilities to medical appointments, senior dining, routed grocery shopping, and recreational outings.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

See description under Employment.





MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

During the strategic planning process, East Side Neighborhood Services adjusted its mission and defined its values to comply with the findings of the assessment and subsequent discussions with the Board of Directors, Strategic Planning Committee, and staff.

Mission

To build pathways toward equity by addressing social and economic barriers.

Vision

Every person thrives, every voice matters.

Values

WE BELIEVE IN...

COMMUNITY	INNOVATION	EFFECTIVENESS	INCLUSION	COLLABORATION
Engagement, connection, partnerships.	Continuous learning and generating new ideas from it.	Performing in a productive and proficient manner, resulting in consistently achieving expected and measurable outcomes.	Respecting, supporting, and valuing everyone and ensuring the right conditions for everyone to achieve their full potential.	Communication, engagement, and teamwork that is inclusive of internal and external partners.





ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

East Side Neighborhood Services’ Strategic Planning Committee was charged with ensuring that the new strategic plan reflects ESNS’s mission, vision, and priorities.

The committee met nine times during the planning process to provide oversight, including providing directions related to the environmental scan; analyzing community feedback; refining the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis; and considering strategic directions. The Board of Directors met during two retreats to review the progress of the committee and to discuss and refine elements of the strategic plan. The environmental scan involved 72 stakeholders who participated in one-on-one interviews or completed a digital survey, including ESNS board and staff, funders, elected officials, business leaders, government and nonprofit leaders, organizational partners, and programs/service consumers.

Findings from the scan suggested making a slight adjustment to ESNS’s mission by replacing the word “disrupting” with “addressing.”

Although some key stakeholders expressed a limited understanding of specific ESNS programs and services, they overwhelmingly recommended placing “more or most” of the organization’s focus on family stability, including food insecurity, basic needs, equity, child and senior supports, and education, which they described as the services most needed by Minnesota communities. Participants described ESNS as having many strengths and new opportunities. As noted in the SWOT analysis below, the findings also revealed several challenges that need to be addressed. Among the environmental trends that stakeholders encouraged ESNS to be alert to or to continue to address were the following:





- Changing responses to COVID and financial opportunities related to the pandemic
- Shifting demographics of East Side communities (e.g., younger families, increased ethnic and cultural

diversity, emerging Latinx community citywide, including new refugees and immigrants)

- Increasing social disparities (e.g., income, homeownership, housing shortages, homelessness including encampments)
- The importance of providing participant and data-driven programming (e.g., including people with lived experience in decision making)
- The new civil rights era (e.g., calls for improved racial justice, equity, and inclusion)
- The future of public safety (e.g., policing, and police funding)
- ESNS staff reaching retirement age
- The increasing number of older adults needing care at home
- Technology advancement and use of apps

Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

This SWOT analysis summarizes key findings from all assessments into a usable framework for identifying and analyzing internal and external factors that impact East Side Neighborhood Services. The analysis displayed below served as a foundational planning tool in creating the strategic plan’s goals and objectives.

 STRENGTHS	 WEAKNESSES	 OPPORTUNITIES	 THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longevity • Board and staff leadership • Multigenerational programs/services • Facility • Funding diversity • Volunteers • Core values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility • Not enough funding • Unclear program links • Staff and board diversity • Unaddressed administrative issues (e.g., policies, metrics, benchmarks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renaming and branding • Greater data gathering and use • Change to transformational mindset in programs/services • Building new and better leveraging existing partnerships • MRIs (mission-related investments) and PRIs (program-related investments) • Exploring mergers and acquisitions • Developing and enhancing social enterprises • Policy change work and advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ongoing pandemic and its long-term impacts • Shifts in available funding • Donor fatigue • Neighborhood gentrification



MOVING FORWARD

This strategic plan is intended to set goals that will maintain existing programming that ESNS's key stakeholders are most proud of and to establish goals, objectives, and key performance indicators (KPIs) for achieving new outcomes identified by the ESNS board and staff. This plan offers a blueprint—a guide for ESNS operations—that focuses on clear, collective goals and will help the organization prioritize resources and make decisions to produce these desired outcomes. It is meant to provide a shared vision for ESNS's service area and a basis for identifying, evaluating, and communicating progress and results.

Goals, Objectives, and Key Performance Indicators

◆ Branding and Visibility

1. Elevate ESNS's brand story through internal and external messaging.

- 1.1. Continue to refine, and implement the branding and communications plan.
- 1.2. Promote the impact that ESNS has had over the last 2.5 years.
- 1.3. Seek external expertise to rebuild ESNS's website.
- 1.4. Capture and effectively share ESNS impact stories to increase donors and support.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

YEARS 1, 2, 3

- Marketing, fundraising, and programs reflect current understanding of what is needed to enhance ESNS.
- Broad segments of the community are familiar with ESNS's programs and services.
- Funds are available to support long-term marketing efforts.
- Increased media coverage educates the community.
- Internal communication ensures wide understanding of key organizational objectives and initiatives.

◆ Funding Strategies

2. Develop strategies to diversify ESNS's funding portfolio.

- 2.1. Exercise strategic financial decision-making that preserves long-term financial health.
- 2.2. Expand and diversify opportunities for individuals and organizations to donate and support ESNS.
- 2.3. Examine ESNS's earned income sources (e.g., long- and short-term space rental, child care, transportation, Camp Bovey) and make improvements to increase profitability.
- 2.4. Develop bold and new funding opportunities to ensure excellence in programs, facilities, and financial stewardship.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

YEARS 1, 2, 3

- Fiscal planning and management have been enhanced.
- Policies, operating procedures, and standards are refined as needed.
- Adequate finances are available to sustain ESNS operations and programs.
- All income earning enterprises have developed mini business plans to achieve financial sustainability.

◆ Organizational Excellence

3. Advance a flexible and resilient organization that delivers superior community programs and services.

- 3.1. Position ESNS as an employer of choice, including refining human resources tools and strategies and offering competitive wages and compensation.
- 3.2. Ensure ESNS remains a nonprofit of choice for board service and volunteerism.
- 3.3. Evolve ESNS's infrastructure through the use of technology and quality assurance measures, thereby developing organization-wide performance metrics and enhancing quality.
- 3.4. Develop and implement a board-approved succession plan for ESNS leadership roles and identifying and developing new or potential leaders who can move into leadership roles when they become vacant.
- 3.5. Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and engagement throughout the ESNS system, programs, policies, and procedures.
- 3.6. Maintain excellent facilities and continue to explore environmentally friendly, sustainable practices.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

YEARS 1, 2, 3

- An innovative workforce that is motivated to exceed community expectations is retained. A ESNS staffing plan is developed and implemented.
- ESNS recruits and retains a board that reflects the community it serves.
- Up-to-date technology that supports collaboration, automation, and a seamless user experience is in place and functioning effectively.
- A board-approved succession plan is developed and implemented.
- ESNS is meeting the needs of a diverse community and is an inclusive workplace that promotes mutual respect and accountability for all employees.
- The people, processes, and platforms needed to get the most out of the ESNS's physical assets and infrastructure are operating.
- A Strategy and Results Department is established.

◆ Programs and Impact

4. Utilize comprehensive management strategies to optimize ESNS's multigenerational programs and services.

- 4.1. Develop an intergenerational program and services logic model.
- 4.2. Periodically evaluate programs and services for impact, quality, and mission alignment.
- 4.3. Identify and address any gaps in service delivery.
- 4.4. Encourage the development of activities that create a sense of place and offer a destination for residents and visitors.
- 4.5. Ensure the ESNS building continues to be a source of community pride by providing gathering spaces for a wide range of community residents that are responsive to changing community needs and interests.
- 4.6. Every three years, identify emerging community needs through analysis of existing data reports.

- 4.7. Contrast community needs with ESNS programs to determine if improvements are needed.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

YEARS 2, 3

- Enhanced outcomes, data tools, systems, and service delivery have been established.
- Programs and services provide access to resources to help users meet their fundamental needs.
- Excellent programs and services are sustained through proactive investment in understanding community needs and investments in program evaluation.
- Data are analyzed and used to make informed decisions.

◆ Strategic Partnerships

5. Build responsive, high-quality partnerships that assist ESNS in better meeting community needs.

- 5.1. Develop partnerships to link consumers to other social services.
- 5.2. Join with Greater Hennepin County faith communities and others to enhance ESNS services and referrals.
- 5.3. Build alliances with chambers of commerce and corporations in Greater Hennepin County to nurture mutually beneficial opportunities.
- 5.4. Seek and develop bold, creative community partnerships to ensure effective programming.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

YEARS 2, 3

- New and effective partnerships are built.
- An Evaluation Plan that demonstrates the impact of partnerships is developed and implemented.



IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

Based on the Needs Assessment, discussions with the Strategic Planning Committee, Board of Directors, staff, and selected research, East Side Neighborhood Services established five main priorities for 2022-2025: (1) branding and visibility, (2) funding, (3) organizational excellence, (4) programs and impact, and (5) strategic partnerships. The resulting plan summarizes the ways in which ESNS's many programs and services already address these priorities and highlights focus areas for 2022-2025.

Implementation

To oversee the accomplishment of the strategic goals outlined in this plan, ESNS's Board of Directors may assign committees and staff liaisons to track individual goals and/or objectives as necessary and appropriate. ESNS's president and other staff members will provide board members with operational workplans and periodic reports on the overall progress toward each goal, including discussion of what is working and recommended changes or additions to the plan. The Board of Directors reserves the right to amend this plan as needed throughout the three-year implementation period. In setting goals for the next three years, a level of funding equal to or above previous levels was assumed.

Evaluation

ESNS staff will report quarterly to the full board about the status of implementing the strategic plan, including progress on each of the five strategic goals. Following these progress reports, the board will determine if goals and objectives are being achieved, and if not, consider whether the following are necessary:

- Deadlines need adjusting.
- Additional resources (personnel, money, equipment, facilities, training, etc.) are needed to achieve the goals.
- Goals and objectives should be adjusted to remain realistic and relevant.
- Priorities should be changed to put more focus on achieving the goals.
- Additional monitoring and evaluation could provide information to help improve future work.

Acknowledgments

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Key Stakeholder Interviews

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Margo Ashmore, My Noreaster Newspaper
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