

MINNESOTA
ELDER JUSTICE
CENTER



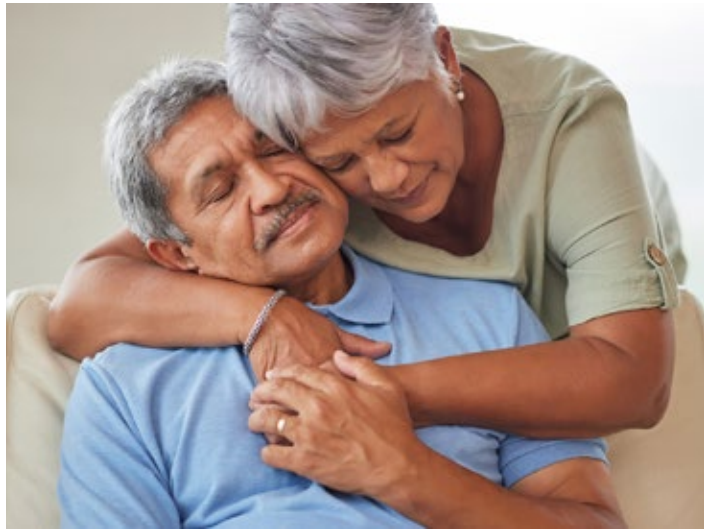
2023-2026

STRATEGIC
PLAN

Approved by Minnesota Elder Justice Center
Board of Directors May 16, 2023

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KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Gil Acevedo, Board Chair
Rana Alexander, Standpoint
Mark Anderson, Board Vice Chair
Jim Backstrom, Board Director
Felicia Bellenger, White Earth Nation
Elder/Vulnerable Adult Protection
Program
Marsha Berry, Advocate/Trainer, LGBTQ+
Linda Camp, Solo Older Adults
Shelly Carlson, Staff Multidisciplinary Team
Project Manager
Carmen Castaneda, Hennepin County APS
Phil Duran, Rainbow Health
Aisha Elmquist, Deputy Ombudsman for
LTC
Jeannie Fichtel, Board Treasurer
Iris Freeman, Board Director
Chelsea Georgesen, Board Director
Coreen Graham, Clay County APS
Jeremy Graves, Duluth Police Dept
Sue Gray, Board Secretary
Jay Haapala, AARP
Anne Hofgren, Legal Services of NW MN
Tammy Hollingsworth, Board Director
Patti Holmes, Administrative Coordinator
Lawrence Kerzner, Board Director
Scott Kreighbaum, Board Director

Toby Krone, Moorhead Police Dept
Lindsey Krueger, Health Facility
Complaints, MDH
Roxana Linares, Centro
Jamie Majerus, Judicial Branch
Mary McGurran, DHS-APS
Betsy Mevissen, Victim Services Manager
Connie Moore, Board Director
Rajeane Moone, U of M Center for Healthy
Aging
Kaitlyn Moos, Victim Services Advocate
and Navigator
Laura Orr, Staff Attorney
Marit Peterson, Associate Director
Jenn Purrington, Disability Law Center
Anita Raymond, VOA-CESDM
Brenda Shafer-Pellinen, Board Director
Mamie Segall, Board Director
Dawn Simonson, Trellis
Renee Stromme, Communications and
Training Manager
Jason Swanson, Minnesota River Area
Agency on Aging
Amanda Vickstrom, Executive Director
David Vukelich, St Louis County Social
Services – APS & Guardianship

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Connie Moore, Board Director
Maria Sarabia, Board Director
Brenda Shafer-Pellinen, Board Director
Mamie Segall, Board Director
Yolanda Y. Williams, Board Director

CONSULTANTS

Karen Gray and Nora Hall, Ph.D.
GrayHall LLP
www.grayhall.com
info@grayhall.com

Lisa Tabor
CultureBrokers®
culturebrokers.com
lisa@culturebrokers.com

OVERVIEW

For nearly a decade, the residents of the state of Minnesota have turned to the Minnesota Elder Justice Center (MEJC) as a trusted source of support, redress, information, reform, and resources on abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of older adults and vulnerable adults. Since its founding, innovative victim advocacy services, professional training, and public policy efforts have been embedded in MEJC services.

Over the past 73 years, elder abuse has moved through four stages from a need of protection in the 1950s to addressing caregiver stress in the 1970s to exploring elder abuse as a part of family violence in the 1990s to viewing it through multiple lenses in 2010, including passage of the Elder Justice Act, according to author Shelly L. Jackson, a consultant with the Elder Justice Initiative at the U.S. Department of Justice.

The MEJC opened its doors amid movements by U.S. states to pass laws to protect older adults from exploitation, neglect, and abuse. Today, legislatures in all 50 states have passed some form of elder abuse prevention laws.

As the needs and aspirations of older and vulnerable adults and their loved ones have evolved, MEJC has expanded its response. Now, it is an essential point of access for older Minnesotans experiencing abuse, and a central hub for a cross-sector of elder justice stakeholders.

In addition to offering a variety of essential services, the MEJC is an integral part of Minnesota's civic life, providing public policy and systems change at federal, state, and local levels. The MEJC is a place where older and vulnerable adults, their families and caregivers, and cross-sector stakeholders' ideas and experiences come together to create systems and policy change.

In recent years, the MEJC has also taken on a more active role in building mutually aligned cross-cultural partnerships with Minnesota communities. The MEJC is working to build deeper and broader partnerships in Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), and culturally-specific communities so that distinct cultural beliefs and experiences related to older and vulnerable adults are embedded in MEJC services.

With this Strategic Plan, the MEJC is reaffirming its mission, vision, and values, and clarifying priorities for the next three years so that services remain essential and valuable for Minnesotans for years to come.

MINNESOTA ELDER JUSTICE CENTER

The Minnesota Elder Justice Center (MEJC) opened its doors on October 1, 2014, combining the work of the Vulnerable Adult Justice Project (VAJP) and MN S.A.F.E. (Stop Abuse & Financial Exploitation) Elders Initiative. The aim was to create a venue to accelerate work to prevent and alleviate the abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of older and vulnerable adults.

The VAJP was founded in 2007 as a unique, statewide, interdisciplinary collaborative working to protect vulnerable and older adults through consensus-based policy change

efforts. The participants of the former VAJP remain partners of the MEJC and represent organizations that are broad and vary in their disciplines – prosecution, adult protection, domestic/sexual violence programs, medical and educational institutions, Department of Human Services and Department of Public Safety employees, criminal justice advocates, and more.

The Minnesota S.A.F.E. Elders Initiative was born in 2012 out of conversations between the Anoka County Attorney's Office and leaders from the former VAJP to increase knowledge of

elder abuse by the production of a Minnesota-focused educational tool kit and video. This group of professionals, including prosecutors, educators, law enforcement, experts on aging, financial advisors, and the medical community developed a tool kit for use throughout Minnesota to spot and reduce elder abuse. Central to the tool kit is “[Elder Victims: Abused, Exploited, Alone](#),” a 26-minute documentary created in partnership with Twin Cities Public Television.

The two organizations agreed to join forces to launch the Minnesota Elder Justice Center in 2014.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Minnesota Elder Justice Center Strategic Planning Committee was charged with ensuring that the new strategic plan reflects MEJC’s mission, vision, and priorities. The committee met 8 times during the planning process to provide oversight, including recommending strategic directions related to the environmental scan; analyzing community feedback; refining the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis; and determining the plan’s strategic pillars. The Board of Directors met during one retreat to review the progress of the committee and to discuss and refine elements of the plan. The environmental scan involved 43 key informants (22 external and 21 internal informants) who participated in one-on-one interviews, including MEJC’s board and staff; government and nonprofit leaders, a representative from tribal government, organizational partners, law enforcement, cultural communities’ advocates/trainers, and programs/services consumers.

Findings from the scan suggested making a slight adjustment to MEJC’s mission by eliminating the words “mobilizing communities.” Although some key stakeholders expressed a limited understanding of specific MEJC services, more than a third of the key informants recommended placing “more or most” of the organization’s focus on education and advocacy. Other very important aspects of MEJC’s ongoing work to keep in focus, as noted by nearly a quarter of the key informants, is policy and data collection. Most of the key informants

Key Informant Interviews—Strategic Planning Environmental Scan

KEY INFORMANT	INTERVIEWS COMPLETED
Nonprofit	9 (21%)
Government	6 (14%)
Law Enforcement	2 (5%)
Education	1 (2%)
Advocate/Trainer (LGBTQ+ Aging)	1 (2%)
Tribal Government	1 (2%)
Courts	1 (2%)
Advocate	1 (2%)
Board Members	13 (31%)
Staff	8 (19%)
TOTAL	43 (100%)

emphasized the value they place on MEJC’s work in prevention and direct services; and many of them called for MEJC to strengthen its work on diversity, equity, inclusion, and access, especially as it relates to communities of color and tribal nations.

Key informants described MEJC as having multiple strengths and they offered new opportunities for MEJC to pursue as noted in the SWOT analysis below. In Strategic Planning Committee meetings, items listed as “weaknesses” were viewed as opportunities to address.

Among the environmental trends that key informants encouraged MEJC to be alert to or to continue to address were the political environment for older adults and staff shortages in caregiving, especially rural staff shortages. In rural areas of Minnesota, the population of older adults is

expected to far outpace the number of younger people, according to the Minnesota State Demographic Center. MEJC is best known by elder justice advocates, attorneys, and other professionals in the fields of law enforcement, justice, and social services. MEJC works to ensure that the public, including older adults, their families, and caregivers, can easily find and access MEJC services when assistance is needed. Building additional partnerships and collaborations at local, regional, and national levels, especially with cultural communities and tribal nations, were key opportunities that emerged from the environmental scan. Many of the key informants believed that local, regional, and national partnerships and collaborations are great opportunities to expand MEJC’s model of work and brand.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excellent reputation• Staff/Leadership• Strong board• Trusted resource for information• Current partnerships and collaborations• Education and advocacy• Programs, services, and website	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Viewed as having limited partnerships and collaborations in specific cultural communities (e.g., Indigenous, Hmong, Somali, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities, rural communities)• Limited community-wide brand visibility and awareness• Organizational capacity• Needing a broader diversity of funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demographic shifts (e.g., more older than younger populations)• Tweaking mission statement• Stronger partnerships and collaborations with cultural and ethnic communities• Increased visibility and brand awareness• Organizational expansion/organizational capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Political environment for older adults• Staff shortages in caregiving• Rural staff shortages

MISSION, VISION, VALUES, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

MISSION

To prevent and alleviate abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of older and vulnerable adults.

VISION

The Minnesota Elder Justice Center is a trusted resource that improves lives, communities, and systems with and on behalf of older and vulnerable adults.

VALUES

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)	Model the fair treatment and full participation of all people, especially persons who have historically been underrepresented or subject to discrimination based on identity or ability.
Excellence	Committed, knowledgeable, curious, and creative in all our work.
Innovation	A learning organization that is willing to question the status quo, create novel solutions and strategies, and take risks to achieve our mission.
Integrity	Practice intellectual rigor, ethical behavior, transparency, and accountability to our many diverse stakeholders while staying true to our mission and equity framework.
Justice	Seek justice with and for older adults and vulnerable adults who have experienced abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation.
Openhearted Collaboration	Committed to being inclusive in creating and participating in partnerships that improve the lives of Minnesota's older and vulnerable adults.
Responsive Service	Minimize barriers to service and focus on the well-being of older and vulnerable adults. We are respectful, relevant, and responsive.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Older adults and vulnerable adults provide a rich history of life experiences that should be honored and respected.
2. Freedom from abuse, neglect and financial exploitation are fundamental rights.
3. Older adults, vulnerable adults and their families deserve information about their rights and choices.
4. Abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older and vulnerable adults are private tragedies with public consequences.
5. Collaboration and partnerships with key stakeholders are essential to preventing and alleviating abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of older and vulnerable adults.
6. Collaboration between victim services and social services is necessary to reduce abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation.
7. Supportive communities and families improve the quality of life for older and vulnerable adults.
8. We acknowledge and must work with the tension that exists between protection and autonomy.
9. The causes and solutions of abuse, neglect and exploitation are complex in scope and origin, because they are individual and systemic. Therefore, multidisciplinary, holistic solutions are needed.
10. Our work is data driven and research based.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

ADVANCE EXCELLENCE

1. Advance an inclusive workplace and workforce and continue to promote excellence in all aspects of MEJC's operations.

1.1. Further MEJC's Equity Framework Commitments.

- Strengthened knowledge and skills to advance MEJC's DEIA commitments.

1.2. Thoroughly build diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA) into MEJC's recruitment, hiring, and retention processes.

- Intentional, consistent, and accountable efforts to recruit, retain, and provide opportunities for staff who reflect the communities that MEJC serves.

1.3. Strengthen MEJC's DEIA analytics capability.

- Increased knowledge of all communities served and enhanced ability to identify gaps and priorities in both services and communities served.

1.4. Ensure trained staff to deliver essential services.

- Strengthened skills, resources, and abilities that allow MEJC to grow and thrive.

1.5. Ensure technology supports accessibility for staff, and those using MEJC's individual and professional services.

- Improved efficiency, productivity, and how tools and platforms work together.

1.6. Strengthen MEJC's governance and infrastructure to ensure continued delivery of impactful, quality programs and leadership to guide MEJC forward.

- MEJC's board is diverse, has multi-sector representation, reflects Minnesota communities, and members are active contributors, and fundraisers.
- Immediate and long-term staff and board leadership succession plans are in place.
- MEJC is fully staffed to carry out program and administrative activities.



STRENGTHEN SUSTAINABILITY

2. Grow and diversify MEJC's revenue sources to increase operational and financial sustainability.

2.1. Attract donors, contracts, and grants to support the current and growth needs of the organization.

- A comprehensive fund development/fundraising plan is in place.
- New staff are hired, including employees engaged in fund development and community engagement.

2.2. Ensure the organization maintains appropriate levels of cash reserves.

- Cash reserves represent a 4-6-month balance.

2.3. Explore establishing an endowment fund if conditions permit.

- The possibility of creating an endowment fund is fully explored.
- Initial donors to launch the fund are secured.

ENGAGE PARTNERS

3. Establish and strengthen partnerships with value-aligned organizations.

3.1. Maintain ongoing partnerships with organizations from a wide range of backgrounds and geographic locations.

- MEJC has ongoing dialogue and working relationships with organizations who offer diverse perspectives and distinct ways of working with various populations.

3.2. Continually assess the diversity of partnerships and plan for strengthening community participation.

- MEJC has a host of effective and value-aligned partnerships with cultural, ethnic, and socially diverse communities.

DRIVE INNOVATION

4. Continue to drive innovation to prevent and stop elder abuse.

4.1. Offer the best resources possible to assist victims of elder abuse.

- Participants are continuously confident in the information that MEJC provides.

4.2. Provide program participants services grounded in best practices.

- Partner programs and program participants are confident and prepared to respond to a broad range of needs that are related to abuse, neglect and financial exploitation.

4.3. Provide training that can be immediately applied by partner programs to their services and/or outreach.

- MEJC's work builds increasingly comprehensive crime victim services across the state of Minnesota.

4.4. Drive policy efforts that are based on participants' experiences and goals; seek to increase equity and access in older adult services and justice; and acknowledge partner perspectives.

- MEJC has the financial and staffing ability to adequately fund policy work as a program arm.
- MEJC has an annual board-approved policy platform.

PROMOTE AWARENESS

5. Elevate recognition of MEJC, elder abuse issues, and expand access to elder abuse resources.

5.1. Deploy clear, concise messaging about elder abuse and services; and victims of crime can identify MEJC as a specialized resource to serve them.

- A marketing and community outreach plan with benchmarks linked to community impact is created and implemented.
- A widening range of people are aware of MEJC services and know how to access them.
- Volunteer opportunities to aid community outreach efforts are expanded.

5.2. Enhance public relations, media, events, and social media marketing efforts around elder abuse issues within cultural, ethnic, tribal, and socially diverse communities.

- Marketing and outreach activities of MEJC speak to and resonate with cultural, ethnic, tribal, and socially diverse communities.



RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT PLAN

A key component of the Minnesota Elder Justice Center (MEJC) efforts continues to be the strong commitment from funding partners and individual donors. A significant amount of MEJC funding comes from government and foundation grants. These grants provide substantial financial resources to operate MEJC programs and services. MEJC volunteers and board members provide time and help with fundraising and advocacy tasks. MEJC is very grateful for this support and expects that it will be available at the appropriate levels to support operations and implementation of our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

PLAN MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Minnesota Elder Justice Center established five Strategic Priorities for 2023-2026: (1) Advance Excellence, (2) Strengthen Sustainability, (3) Expand Partnerships, (4) Drive Innovation, and (5) Promote Awareness. The implementation of goals in these priority areas will be monitored by MEJC's board and staff.

MEJC's Board of Directors may assign committees and staff liaisons to track the progress of individual goals and MEJC's executive director and other staff will provide board members with operational work plans and periodic reports on the advancement of each goal.

As a general practice, MEJC's board will include regular discussions of 2023-2026 goals, including what is working and what recommendations they have for changes to goals if shifts are needed. The Board of Directors reserves the right to amend the MEJC's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan as needed throughout the three-year implementation period.

EVALUATION

MEJC staff will report quarterly to the full board regarding the implementation of strategic goals, including steps forward on each of the five Strategic Priorities. Quarterly progress reports will allow the board to determine to what extent goals are being accomplished, and if not, consider whether:

- 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.
- Staff or board assignments should be changed to put more focus on achieving the goals.
- Additional monitoring and evaluation could provide information to help improve future work.

**Contact Minnesota Elder Justice Center to learn more about
preventing and alleviating abuse, neglect, and financial
exploitation of older and vulnerable adults.**

CONTACT

Amanda Vickstrom, MPP, Executive Director
Minnesota Elder Justice Center
1265 Grey Fox Road
Suite 2
Arden Hills, MN 55112
651-440-9300
amanda.vickstrom@elderjusticemn.org
www.elderjusticemn.org

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