



A LIFE IMPROVEMENT BUSINESS™

Berks Connections/Pretrial Services Long-Range Strategic Plan

2021 Bridge Plan

2022 Preliminary Strategic Plan

April 8, 2021

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Strategic Assessment	2
Strengths	2
Weaknesses	3
Opportunities	3
Threats	4
Strategic Assumptions	5
Key Issues	5
2021 Key Issues	5
Belief Statement	7
Mission Statement	7
Vision Statement	7
Agency Core Values	7
2021 Bridge Plan	8
2022 Potential Long-Range Strategies	9
Appendix	
2021 – 2022 Bridge Plan Projects	
2021 – 2022 Timeline	
2021 Development Plan	
2020 Year-End Review	

Introduction

This document is the result of a series of meetings conducted with the Board of Directors, Executive Directors, and leadership staff of Berks Connections/Pretrial Services (BCPS) between August 2013 and January 2014. The plan was renewed in January 2015. In February 2016, the board and co-executive directors edited the organization's strategic assessment and renewed its strategies. That version of the plan was renewed by the board in January 2017. It was completely rewritten by the board and leadership team in January 2018 and renewed in January 2019, 2020 and 2021. During these meetings, the participants:

1. analyzed the state of the organization—its strengths and weaknesses—as it exists today;
2. defined the community operating environment—its opportunities and threats—now and into the future;
3. identified the key issues facing the organization;
4. defined a set of strategic assumptions to be considered throughout the planning process;
5. reviewed and modified the mission, belief and vision statements of the organization;
6. defined the activities BCPS will pursue in 2021 to “bridge” the COVID-19 pandemic;
7. defined the preliminary strategies and supporting strategic actions to be used by BCPS to fulfill its mission, and address its key issues beginning in 2022;
8. established the *Critical Measures of Success* that will be used to evaluate the organization's progress as it moves through its strategic plan; and
9. targeted the specific, short-term actions to be taken to implement the long-range strategies and assigned accountability to the appropriate individuals within the organization.

The results are as follows.

Strategic Assessment

Strengths

The strengths of BCPS, as identified by its leadership team, fall into four categories:

1. The impact and difference we make
2. Our people and their ability to work with others
3. The work we do and the outcomes we achieve
4. Our current financial status

More specifically,

The impact and difference we make

- We are in the life improvement business. We believe people can change and we give them the hope, opportunity, and second chances to do so. We transform the lives of people we serve, their families, and the community-at-large. Our staff are fully engaged and committed to this purpose.

Our people and their ability to work with others

- We work well together as an agency.
- Our management team works well together.
- We are able to adjust to change. Our team is highly flexible.
- We collaborate well with other agencies and departments.
- We have a high-functioning board.
- Our volunteer support is at an all-time high.

The work we do and the outcomes we achieve

- We are committed to providing evidence-based programming.
- We serve +/- 4,000 people each year, and there is no other organization ready to provide these services.
- For years, we have been good at delivering a human service with respect for the people we serve.
- We fill a void in the community by referring people to services and providers they need.
- We provide a good and high level of service.
- We provide significant funds for things like bus passes, IDs, vouchers for clothing related to employment.
- We monitor our results (for up to a year) for people we have helped on reentry.
- Our work at the CRC has resulted in better outcomes than those that were being achieved before the CRC. (This was reported in a study by Alvernia University that compared recidivism and employment outcomes before and after the CRC was started.). On a quarterly basis, we report recidivism rates of typically between 8% and 10% at both 6-month and one-year benchmarks. This well exceeds the goal that was established when the CRC was opened to reduce the recidivism rate by 20%. Prior to the opening of the CRC, the rate, when measured in this manner, was 27% for 6 months post release and 20% at one year. Employment rates are equally impressive. Rates at six months and one year have been consistently over 60% compared to the pre-CRC rates of 29% at 6 months and 23% at one year.

- Our recidivism rate for individuals referred into our DOC Workforce Development Program is 26% compared to the statewide average of 43% at 1 year post incarceration. Our employment rate for those in our program longer than 90 days is 66% compared to the statewide average of 57%.
- We are willing to take risks and are always willing to grow.
- We are effective at responding to service needs.
- We are effective at adjusting to the ever-changing needs of our population.
- Our pretrial outcomes are better than those of other similar organizations in the state.
- We provide verified assessments to the judges, so they can make a more informed decision when determining whether to release or detain.
- We supervise our pretrial clients effectively to ensure they are appearing in court and abiding by their bail conditions.

Our current financial status

- We are financially stable.
- Our funding streams are diverse. We currently receive funding from 10 different sources, of which seven are consequential.
- While we are still somewhat vulnerable to losing a contract, we are dramatically less so than in the past.
- We have a sustainable development effort in place.

Weaknesses

The weaknesses of BCPS, as identified by its leadership team, are:

- Our DOC programs and related funding is currently unstable.
- We have not yet defined our next vision of our development activities.

Opportunities

The opportunities facing BCPS as it moves forward fall into three categories:

1. Fundraising and revenue-generating opportunities
2. Program and service opportunities
3. Internal systems and resource opportunities

More specifically,

Fundraising and revenue-generating opportunities

- Capitalize on our connection with community volunteers and supporters.
- Identify and pursue grants and non-traditional funding.
- Create a powerful, fact-based case for support.

Program and service opportunities

- Grow and strengthen our employer network.
- Expand our workforce development services to other counties.
- Expand the utilization of our pretrial assessments.

- Capitalize on the national attention pretrial is currently receiving.
- Complete more pretrial interviews before the preliminary arraignment.
- Expand geographically to other counties.
- Expand our workforce development services to additional populations.

Internal systems and resource opportunities

- Find a better way to use our volunteers' talents.
- Increase our team of volunteers.
- Expand our use of board members to capitalize on their skills.
- Capitalize on our Life Improvement Ambassadors.
- Build an HR structure to support our future growth.
- Build administrative systems to support our future growth.

Threats

The threats currently facing BCPS fall into two basic categories:

1. Those threats primarily within our control
2. Those threats primarily outside of our control

More specifically,

Those threats primarily within our control

- Our people could fail to handle the changes facing us.
- We could fail to support a reliable fundraising program.
- We could fail to build a sustainable business model (in part because of our opportunities).
- We could fail to hire the right people to advance our mission.

Those threats primarily outside of our control

- The people in political positions could change and not support our programs.
- We could lose our office space.
- We could be sued.
- We could have a huge PR problem.
- We will always be vulnerable to fluctuations in our funding sources.
- One funding source could dry up and materially impact us.

Strategic Assumptions

In addition to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as previously defined, we have identified the following assumptions and consider them to be givens that must be recognized as we develop our long-range strategies and move forward through our planning process.

- There will always be a need for our services.
- To the best of our knowledge, we are unique in the services we provide and the way we provide them.
- We deliver services less expensively than the county and state could. (Our current costs when compared to the cost of incarceration saves the state \$127/person/day.)
- It will be hard for returning citizens to find sustainable work for the foreseeable future.
- It will always be important for board members to demonstrate leadership in public relations, friend-raising, and fundraising. It will always be important for us to have an engaged board.
- The COVID-19 pandemic will impact our ability to operate as we traditionally have for at least the first nine months of 2021.
- Our ability to gain access to our traditional key stakeholders will be limited as long as the pandemic is impacting our access to them.
- Our ability to gain access to our new stakeholders will be limited as long as the pandemic is impacting our access to them.
- The pandemic does provide opportunities and time to address important, but not urgent, activities that our traditional operations sometimes prevent us from capitalizing on.

Key Issues

Based on the identification and analysis of the current strengths and weaknesses and potential opportunities and threats as detailed previously, we have concluded that the following key issues must be addressed in BCPS's long-range plan.

- How will we respond to evolving thinking and trends for pretrial services?
- Should we be expanding into new populations, and if yes, within what parameters?
- How can we measure our:
 - Effectiveness?
 - Efficiency?
- How can we better support emerging diversionary trends?
- How can we expand our core competence at cognitive development programs?
- Can we expand into the federal system and if yes, how?
- Can we expand our parole-related employment work to the probation population?
- Can we expand support to the domestic relations population?
- Can we start a profit-making organization to generate revenue that helps absorb overhead?
- What is our next vision of our fundraising, development, and mission advancement activities?

2021 Key Issues

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way every organization works and what it is capable of accomplishing. BCPS is no exception to this impact of the pandemic. With that principle in mind,

the leadership of BCPS has identified the issues it needs to consider and address in its 2021 bridge plan. These issues include:

- What will the “new normal” be for BCPS in 2021 and in a post-COVID world?
- In 2021 and beyond, how will we be different in the way we:
 - Develop and deliver programs?
 - Market to our donors and business prospects?
 - Expand our program promotion, and correspondingly, our reach?
 - Interact with each other on a daily basis?
 - Hire and orient new staff?
 - Conduct internal training activities?
 - Maintain the collegial, professional working environment we have come to value?
 - Raise revenue and charitable funds?
 - ??????
- How will we engage new audiences and promote diversity, inclusion, equity, and civility as a core capability?

Belief Statement

Berks Connections/Pretrial Services believes that people can change. Returning citizens can become contributing members of society. It is difficult to return to society from incarceration; therefore, people need help reentering life outside of jail or prison. The work we do and the way we do it improves the success rate of returning citizens. While people are incarcerated, their families are negatively impacted as well. These family members, young and old, need assistance and it is an essential component of our mission and vision to help them.

Mission Statement

Berks Connections/Pretrial Services improves lives and creates safer, more prosperous communities by providing services, support, and community reintegration to individuals involved in the justice system and to their families.

Vision Statement

In 2019, as the leadership of Berks Connections/Pretrial Services continues its planning activities, it has created the following vision of the outcomes of its efforts.

The communities we serve are safer and healthier because people in the justice system have the tools and support to live productive, law-abiding lives.

Agency Core Values

- 1) We believe in others
- 2) We have a commitment to excellence
- 3) Our agency and the work we do are transformational

2021 Bridge Plan

In 2021 BCPS, will form six work groups to evaluate and implement six projects that will advance the mission and operations of the organization and can be accomplished in a COVID-restricted world. These groups will be chartered to:

Revitalize the organization's advancement activities to ensure its ability to fulfill its mission for generations to come. These activities will include: *Vanessa/Peggy/Nikki*

- Major donor giving to provide initial funding for an endowment
- Planned giving to enhance the endowment over the longer term
- Major gifts to support initiatives and programs in present time
- Events
- Annual giving
- ?????

Develop and implement an initiative centered on diversity, inclusion, equity, and civility.

Within this context, focus an employee resource group on determining: *Patty/Employee Planning Group*

- The way we work together
- The way we work with the individuals and families we support
- The way we hire
- The way we are positioned in our community
- The way we raise resources
- Potential business opportunities
- ?????

Define, develop, and launch a pilot program of one cohort of cognitive behavioral intervention program participants (with measurable outcomes) for a population in a non-traditional setting. *Christine/Jess*

Complete our succession plan and disaster recovery plan. *Patty/Team*

Launch a board-level Program Oversight Committee. *Governance Committee/Peggy/Nikki*

Guide the Berks County Forensic Taskforce to engage stakeholders and address system-wide issues in Berks County as they relate to reentry. *Christine*

2022 Potential Long-Range Strategies

Based on the strategic assessment as detailed previously, BCPS has identified three overriding strategies, with supporting strategic actions, it will implement in its efforts to fulfill its mission and achieve its vision beginning in 2022.

BCPS will implement the first-year of its newly revitalized development plan.

Potential 2022 Objectives

- *See newly revitalized development plan.*

BCPS will increase its financial sustainability through mission advancement activities including:

- **exploring the possibility of expanding the R3 program to support the City of Reading and its revitalization efforts.**
- **providing cognitive development programs for employers and other service providers.**

Potential 2022 Objectives

- *Explore the possibility of expanding the R3 program to support the City of Reading and its revitalization efforts.*
- *Expand our cognitive development program to the private employer market with the goal of expanding beyond its pilot program conducted in 2021.*

BCPS will continue to develop and deploy the management best practices that assure the organization's ability to meet the needs of future generations.

Potential 2022 Objectives

- *To be determined.*

Appendix

2021 – 2022 Operational Objectives
with action steps

2021 – 2022 Timeline

2021 Development Plan

2020 Year-End Review

Objective/action steps	Accountable person	Target date
1. Revitalize the organization's advancement activities to ensure its ability to fulfill its mission for generations to come. These activities will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Major donor giving to provide initial funding for an endowment• Planned giving to enhance the endowment over the longer term• Major gifts to support initiatives and programs in present time• Events• Annual giving	<i>Vanessa/Peggy/Nikki</i>	
1.1 See separate plan in the appendix of this document.		

Objective/action steps	Accountable person	Target date
2. Develop and implement an initiative centered on diversity, inclusion, equity, and civility.	<i>Patty/Employee Work Group</i>	
2.1 Define the employee work group's mission by creating a mission statement on diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI). This statement should reflect our intention to advance our culture of DEI with our staff, clients and community. This could either be done with our management team or the employee group.	Patty/Employee Work Group	5/21
2.2 Define the goals of the employee work group to support the mission. These goals may include employee education, assessing agency and program policies, building a more diverse workforce, understanding and supporting our diverse clients, understanding and supporting our diverse staff, and communicating the agency's focus on DEI to the public.	Patty/Employee Work Group	6/21 – 7/21
2.3 Leveraging the diversity of the work group, design a program to meet the goals.	Patty/Employee Work Group	6/21 – 12/21
2.4 Create a plan to regularly review and audit the mission, goals and implemented program.	Patty/Employee Work Group	12/31/21

Objective/action steps	Accountable person	Target date
3. Define, develop, and launch a pilot program of one cohort of cognitive behavioral intervention program participants (with measurable outcomes) for a population in a non-traditional setting.	<i>Christine/Jess</i>	
3.1 Select the target population. (We plan to do this with a supportive employer and will have a program for struggling employees and an option for their management team to supplement the employee training.)	Christine/Jess	DONE
3.2 Engage Peter Terranova and Sharon Mast as advisors for this project.	Christine/Jess	3/31/21
3.3 Enlist the help of the Employment Development Specialist (EDS) to establish and define the benefits and outcomes employers will want to see from the program.	Christine/Jess	4/30/21
3.4 Design the program to be delivered based on the target audience, develop a first draft of the curriculum, and define the way the effectiveness of the program will be measured.	Christine/Jess	7/31/21
3.5 Identify the pilot employer with the aid of the EDS.	Christine/Jess	8/31/21
3.6 Review the program with the pilot employer. Make any necessary adjustments.	Christine/Jess	9/30/21
3.7 Set up the system to measure and report results.	Christine/Jess	9/30/21
3.8 Launch and conduct the first cohort of the program.	Christine/Jess	10/21 – 12/21

Objective/action steps	Accountable person	Target date
4. Complete our succession plan.	<i>Patty/Team</i>	
4.1 Create the basic structure for a plan that will incorporate regular succession planning into our existing performance management process. This plan should include: assessing employees' competencies, identifying high-potential employees, and developing an action plan to use the data collected.	Patty/Team	3/21 – 7/21
4.2 Meet with the management team to add substance to the plan structure. Convey the purpose of succession planning and that much like performance management, it is a supervisor-driven process with HR input and guidance.	Patty/Team	7/21 – 12/21
4.3 Implement the plan and create changes as needed.	Patty/Team	Begin 12/31/21

Objective/action steps	Accountable person	Target date
5. Launch a board-level Program Oversight Committee.	<i>Governance Committee/Peggy/Nikki</i>	
5.1 Define, in writing, “program oversight” as it pertains to BCPS’s programs.	Peggy/Nikki	Complete
5.2 Define the expected deliverables each of our funders has specified for each of our programs. Define the funding we receive for each of these programs.	Peggy/Nikki	Complete
5.3 Define the reporting requirements each funder has established for each funded service.	Peggy/Nikki	Complete and Routine
5.4 Develop a charter for the Program Oversight Committee.	Peggy/Nikki	Complete
5.5 Determine the number of meetings to be held each year and the appropriate schedule for each of those meetings.	Peggy/Nikki	4/21 – 6/21
5.6 Develop a preliminary agenda for each meeting to be held.	Peggy/Nikki	4/21 – 6/21
5.7 Develop a structure for minutes to be recorded and produced for each meeting.	Peggy/Nikki	4/21 – 6/21
5.8 Determine who will be on the committee and who should serve as its inaugural chairperson.	Peggy/Nikki	Complete
5.9 Conduct the scheduled 2021 meetings and evaluate the effectiveness of the entire process.	Peggy/Nikki	7/21 – 12/21
5.10 Adjust the committee’s structure, agenda, schedule, members, and accompanying paperwork and prepare for its second year.	Peggy/Nikki	1/1/22

Objective/action steps	Accountable person	Target date
6. Guide the Berks County Forensic Task Force (BCFTF) to engage stakeholders and address system-wide issues in Berks County as they relate to reentry.	<i>Christine</i>	
6.1 Finalize membership on the Steering Committee and define, at a high level, that membership's mission and vision of the taskforce	Christine	Complete
6.2 Define PCCD's expectations of the outputs and outcomes of the BCFTF.	Christine	Complete
6.3 Define the perceived needs of reentry of the 50 +/- organizations what are part of the BCFTF.	Christine	4/21 – 5/21
6.4 Create a mini-steering committee to formalize the taskforce and define how it will operate.	Christine	Complete
6.5 Determine system-wide priorities for the Steering Committee to address during the first year.	Christine	Complete
6.6 Adapt the sample charter provided by PCCD to charter for the taskforce.	Christine	7/21
6.7 Determine the number of meetings to be held each year and the appropriate schedule for each of those meetings.	Christine	Complete
6.8 Develop a preliminary agenda for each meeting to be held.	Christine	Quarterly
6.9 Develop a structure for minutes to be recorded and produced for each meeting.	Christine	7/21
6.10 Conduct the scheduled 2021 meetings and evaluate the effectiveness of the entire process.	Christine	12/21
6.11 Adjust the taskforce's structure, agenda, schedule, members, and accompanying paperwork and prepare for its second year.	Christine	1/22

**Berks Connections/Pretrial Services
2021 - 2022 Bridge Plan Timeline**

Obj./ Action	Summary of Action	Acctbl. Person	Mar '21	Apr '21	May '21	Jun '21	Jul '21	Aug '21	Sep '21	Oct '21	Nov '21	Dec '21	Jan '22
1	Revitalize the organization’s advancement activities to ensure its ability to fulfill its mission for generations to come. These activities will include: • Major donor giving to provide initial funding for an endowment • Planned giving to enhance the endowment over the longer term • Major gifts to support initiatives and programs in present time • Events • Annual giving	Peggy/Nikki/ Director of Development											
1.1	See separate plan in the appendix of this document.												
2	Develop and implement an initiative centered on diversity, inclusion, equity, and civility.	Patty/Employee Work Group											
2.1	Define the employee work group’s mission by creating a mission statement on diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI). This statement should reflect our intention to advance our culture of DEI with our staff, clients and community. This could either be done with our management team or the employee group.	Patty/Employee Work Group			●								
2.2	Define the goals of the employee work group to support the mission. These goals may include employee education, assessing agency and program policies, building a more diverse workforce, understanding and supporting our diverse clients, understanding and supporting our diverse staff, and communicating the agency’s focus on DEI to the public.	Patty/Employee Work Group				●	●						
2.3	Leveraging the diversity of the work group, design a program to meet the goals.	Patty/Employee Work Group				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
2.4	Create a plan to regularly review and audit the mission, goals and implemented program.	Patty/Employee Work Group										●	
3	Define, develop, and launch a pilot program of one cohort of cognitive development program participants (with measurable outcomes) for a population in a non-traditional setting.	Christine/Jess											
3.1	Select the target population. (We plan to do this with a supportive employer and will have a program for struggling employees and an option for their management team to supplement the employee training.)	Christine/Jess	Done										
3.2	Engage Peter Terranova and Sharon Mast as advisors for this project.	Christine/Jess	●										
3.3	Enlist the help of the Employment Development Specialist (EDS) to establish and define the benefits and outcomes employers will want to see from the program.	Christine/Jess		●									
3.4	Design the program to be delivered based on the target audience, develop a first draft of the curriculum, and define the way the effectiveness of the program will be measured.	Christine/Jess					●						
3.5	Identify the pilot employer with the aid of the EDS.	Christine/Jess						●					
3.6	Review the program with the pilot employer. Make any necessary adjustments.	Christine/Jess							●				
3.7	Set up the system to measure and report results.	Christine/Jess							●				
3.8	Launch and conduct the first cohort of the program.	Christine/Jess								●	●	●	
4	Complete our succession plan.	Patty/Team											
4.1	Create the basic structure for a plan that will incorporate regular succession planning into our existing performance management process. This plan should include: assessing employees’ competencies, identifying high-potential employees, and developing an action plan to use the data collected.	Patty/Team	●	●	●	●	●						

Berks Connections/Pretrial Services 2021 - 2022 Bridge Plan Timeline

[illegible]

Berks Connections/Pretrial Services 2021 - 2022 Bridge Plan Timeline

Obj./ Action	Summary of Action	Acctbl. Person	Mar '21	Apr '21	May '21	Jun '21	Jul '21	Aug '21	Sep '21	Oct '21	Nov '21	Dec '21	Jan '22
6.11	Adjust the taskforce's structure, agenda, schedule, members, and accompanying paperwork and prepare for its second year.	Christine											●



A LIFE IMPROVEMENT BUSINESS™

Berks Connections/Pretrial Services

2020 Year-End Review

April 8, 2021

Year-End Review of Operational Objectives

Objective One: Develop a strategic vision and related action plan for our future fundraising, development, and mission advancement activities.

- We hired Vanessa and Julia, our intern, to support Vanessa on projects and on social media.
- Our inability to offer our in-person volunteer opportunities due to COVID afforded us the time to launch new donor software. We have cleaned up and augmented the information in our donor database. We are reaching out to volunteers and major donors with Thanksgiving cards and we are prepared for a December solicitation.
- When implemented, this software will provide the information we need to focus our development activities. Using this software, we are:
 - Putting together a donor calendar and a marketing calendar.
 - Preparing for a board ask.
 - Preparing for planned giving and major giving initiatives.
 - Preparing grants.
- Our virtual breakfast this year went well and raised \$50,000 (on a goal of \$45,000) and we celebrated our awardees virtually.

Objective Two: Explore the possibility of expanding the R3 program to support the City of Reading and its revitalization efforts.

- COVID prevented us from pursuing this objective. We will approach the city (again) at the right time.
- We *did* introduce the program to the Mayor and he was impressed enough to speak at our graduation of R3 participants.

Objective Three: Expand our cognitive development program to the private employer market with the goal of launching one pilot program in 2020.

- We pursued a grant opportunity with the PA Department of Labor and Industry, but the grant dollars were refocused on COVID-related issues.
- While we are not packaging our cognitive development program, it is ready to be finalized, and the program could be done virtually.
- For 2021 we should reimagine how we do cognitive programming and develop a virtual delivery system (with a pilot organization or employer).

Objective Four: Charter and launch a Program Oversight Committee.

- This objective is not done. It will still be a focus in 2021.

Objective Five: Address the issues identified in our PANO accreditation process.

- Succession planning was completed for co-executive directors.
- A disaster recovery plan for IT will be done in December.
- We have responded well to the risks we confronted in 2020. Despite those risks, we were able to continue operations during the shutdown.
- We will work on a full disaster recovery plan in 2021.

As a result of our multi-year focus on change work we would like to point out these additional accomplishments of note.

- We moved our offices to new facilities.
- R3 is now a sustainable program.
- We are responding aggressively to state cutbacks in workforce development and other state programs.
- Our visibility, awareness, and support in the community, the region, and our field has never been higher.
- Our volunteers tell us they have never been better treated.
- Our local community engagement has reached new heights.
- We have opened doors with a record number of new employers and our employers financially support our mission as well as employ the individuals we support.