



NISRA

Northern Illinois
Special Recreation Association

Three Year Strategic Plan FY 2025/2026 – 2027/2028

Fiscal Year May 1 – April 30



CORE Values

Fun ~ Professional ~ Compassionate ~ Trustworthy ~ Innovative

Approved January 15, 2025



Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*



Strategic Plan 2025-2028

Mission:

Enriching the lives of people with disabilities through meaningful recreation experiences.

Vision:

To be a community of limitation free recreation.

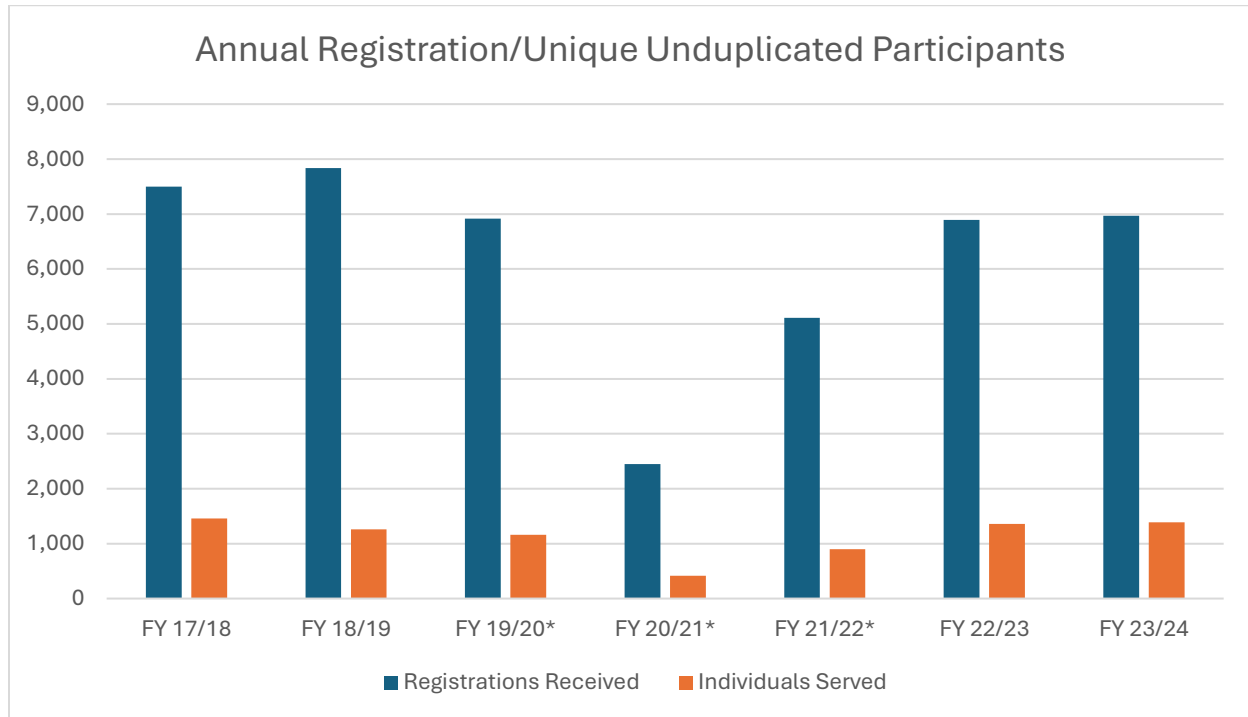
Values:

Fun
Professional
Compassionate
Trustworthy
Innovation

Strategic Plan Process: This plan is developed with ongoing input from the NISRA Board of Directors, NISRA Foundation Board members, program participants, parents/guardians, collaborative partners, full-time staff, part-time staff and volunteers. Two consumer focus group meetings were conducted utilizing an outside facilitator in the winter of 2024 to augment the feedback received from program evaluations and recent surveys. NISRA recognizes that its future success relies on continued dialog and collaboration with these stakeholders. The plan is reviewed annually and approved by the NISRA Board of Directors with each subsequent new plan starting with the beginning of a new fiscal year, May 1st. An “evergreen provision” is utilized in which the current fiscal year is removed from the plan and a new fiscal year of goals is added three years out from the start of the next fiscal year. Staff meet annually at the end of the summer season to share input from stakeholders, make revisions to goals as initiated by stakeholders and establish goals for the new fiscal year being added.

Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*

Program Participation Statistics



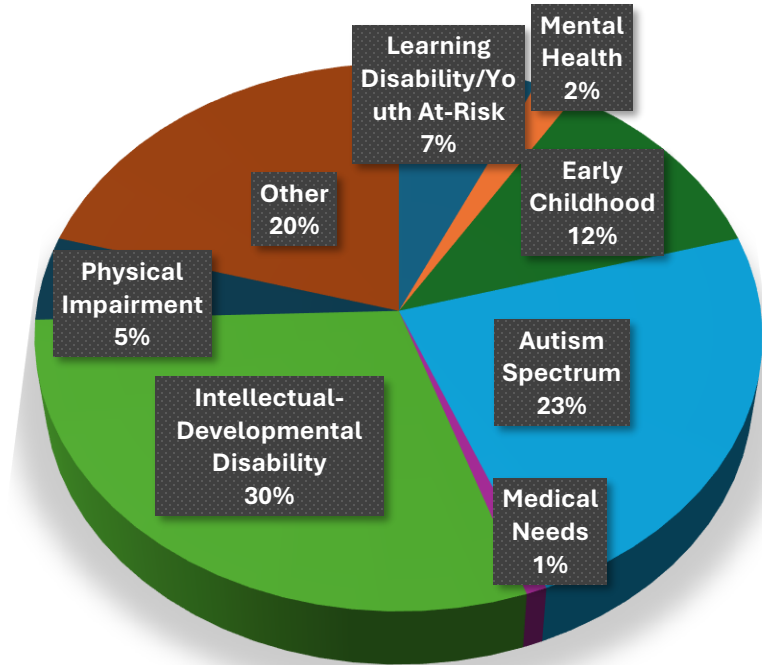
Fiscal Year	Registrations Received	Individuals Served
FY 17/18	7,497	1,459
FY 18/19	7,834	1,257
FY 19/20*	6,917	1,160
FY 20/21*	2,447	413
FY 21/22*	5,108	901
FY 22/23	6,894	1,357
FY 23/24	6,967	1,390

*Due to COVID-19 Pandemic, all Spring FY2019/20 in-person programs were canceled. Limited in-person and virtual programs offered in FY2020/21 due to COVID-19 Pandemic. FY2021/22 Pandemic safety protocols in effect for most of fiscal year.

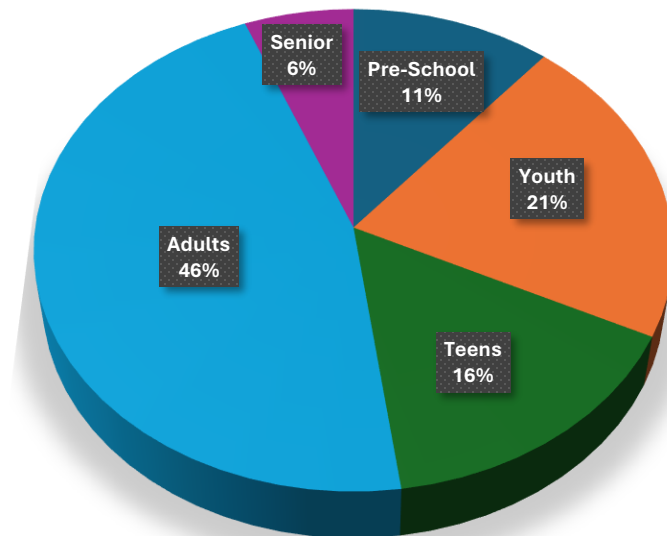


Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*

FY2023/24 Program Participation by Primary Disability



FY2023/24 Program Participation by Age



Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*

Program Services Goal:

Provide high-quality, inclusive, and responsive programs that promote wellness, meet diverse needs, foster community partnerships, and enhance the overall quality of life for residents with disabilities.

Objective 1: Enhance program offerings through collaboration with Member Districts, school districts and community organizations.

Strategy 1: Continue to offer joint programs with NISRA Member Districts and social service agencies that NISRA currently does not offer programs with and annually evaluate the success of these programs.

Action 1: Offer family, joint and collaborative programs each season.

Action 2: Evaluate registration versus attendance numbers

Action 3: Identify Member Districts to offer joint programs with

Lead Staff: Regional Coordinators, Manager of Cultural Arts & Special Events and Sr. Manager of Recreation

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: October 2026

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Attendance rates

Metrics of Success: Compare registration numbers vs actual attendance numbers

Strategy 2: Implement school-based programs, such as Special Olympics Young Athletes and Leisure Education programs to strengthen connections with schools.

Action 1: Reach out to D300 to implement SOYA for school year 24/25

Action 2: Reach out to two additional districts for SOYA 25/26

Action 3: Maintain relationships with Harvard CUSD50 and Northern Illinois Association (NIA)

Action 4: Implement new Leisure Education programs to member district special education programs

Lead Staff: Manager of Day Camp & Outreach, Manager of Special Olympics, Sr. Manager of Operations and Sr. Manager of Recreation

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: Oct. 2026

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: School access and communication

Metrics of Success: Number of new program offerings implemented

Strategy 3: Engage community organizations (e.g. girls scouts, girls on the run, etc.) to develop and offer collaborative inclusive recreation programming opportunities.

Action 1: Identify community organization contacts

Action 2: Make initial contact with organizations

Lead Staff: Sr. Manager of Recreation and Regional Coordinators

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: October 2027

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Establishing contacts and aligning program structures

Metrics of Success: Receiving responses from community organizations

Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*

Objective 2: Develop and expand targeted programs to meet specific needs of various populations.

Strategy 1: Develop and offer specialized recreation programs for individuals with primarily physical challenges, traumatic brain injury or acquired brain injury.

Action 1: Develop a needs assessment to send to current families inquiring about programming interests.

Action 2: Identify program opportunities for individuals with primarily physical challenges, traumatic brain injury or acquired brain injury.

Lead Staff: Regional Coordinators and Sr. Manager of Recreation

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: October 2027

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Responses rates to surveys, transportation needs

Metrics of Success: Responses resulting in new programs

Strategy 2: Investigate participation interest and feasibility of expanding the number of annual overnight trips for specific age/disability groupings.

Action1: Offer an overnight trip for individuals 35+, closer ratios, who may not qualify for longer trips. Trip offered May 16-18, 2025.

Action 2: Identify ideal participation, reach out to families to encourage registration

Lead Staff: Superintendent of Recreation and Recreation Team

Target Start Date: Now Target Completion Date: October 2025

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Registration numbers for qualified individuals

Metrics of Success: Successful registration numbers for trip to run

Objective 3: Expand the LIFE Adult Day Program to meet the growing demand for daytime services for adults aged 22 to 45 with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities, ensuring geographic accessibility and program awareness across key districts over the next five years.

Strategy 1: Develop partnerships with high school transition programs and social service agencies

Action 1: Meet quarterly with school transition coordinators

Action 2: Develop relationships with social service organizations serving transition age students

Action 3: Connect with school transition programs to compile an accurate list of students aging out of school programs

Lead Staff: Manager of Adult Day & Veterans Programs

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: Spring 2027

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Identifying appropriate contacts, communication

Metrics of Success: Increase interest in the LIFE program

Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*

Strategy 2: Develop plan to expand geographic reach of LIFE program sites

Action 1: Educate school districts, students and families about LIFE's offerings through direct outreach, including hosting tours of the LIFE program and attending transition informational nights at local high schools.

Action 2: Develop marketing materials (flyers, brochures, and videos) highlighting LIFE's programs and distribute them during transition informational nights at local high schools

Action 3: Attend and present at informational nights in each member district to directly educate families on LIFE's offerings and answer questions

Action 4: Host one annual community event in each district to further engage families, educators, and other key stakeholders in learning more about LIFE and its impact

Lead Staff: Manager of Adult Day & Veterans Programs

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: Spring 2028

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Identifying appropriate contacts

Metrics of Success: Identifying geographic locations to open new LIFE sites

Strategy 3: Develop expansion plan for LIFE program

Action 1: Review data on where current LIFE participants live and future interest from transition students

Action 2: Reach out to NISRA member district to determine facility availability

Action 3: Develop plan for vehicle capacity for each program site

Lead Staff: Manager of Adult Day & Veterans Programs and Superintendent of Recreation

Target Start Date: Spring 2026 Target Completion Date: Spring 2028

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Availability of program space and transportation

Metrics of Success: Opening additional LIFE program sites

Objective 4: Optimize staffing ratios to support participants with greater needs.

Strategy 1: Review and evaluate program staffing ratios to support the involvement of participants with greater behavioral and personal support needs.

Action 1: Assess intake process

Action 2: Complete new participant intakes

Action 3: Review behavior trends/trends in the TR Community to better support participants.

Action 4: Develop a scandalized process for requesting staff, interpreters, etc.

Lead Staff: Sr. Manager of Recreation, Sr. Manager of Support Staff

Target Start Date: ASAP Target Completion Date: End of April Each Year

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Evolving diagnosis and support needs/staffing

Metrics of Success: Standardized process for program staffing

Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*

Objective 5: Restructure NISRA program offerings for Veterans

Strategy 1: Restructure current Health Minds Healthy Bodies program

Action 1: Review contractual guidelines for Healthy Minds Health Bodies
 Action 2: Meet with NISRA Member District staff to solicit feedback on fitness program
 Action 3: Work with NISRA Member District staff to develop new program
 Action 4: Develop and implement training on new program

Lead Staff: Manger of Adult Day & Veterans Programs and Veterans Program Specialist
 Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: Spring 2026
 Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Need at each Member District
 Metrics of Success: Seamless implementation of new program

Strategy 2: Develop different programming areas within Veterans Programs

Action 1: Evaluate current programs
 Action 2: Access needs of Veterans being served
 Action 3: Reach out to partner organizations

Lead Staff: Manger of Adult Day & Veterans Programs and Veterans Program Specialist
 Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: Spring 2027
 Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Accessing program needs
 Metrics of Success: More efficient program offerings, serving more Veterans

Operations Goal:

Enhance operational excellence and service delivery to ensure high-quality, accessible, and inclusive programs and services for all participants and stakeholders.

Objective 1: Achieve high levels of customer satisfaction by providing exceptional customer service to all participants and stakeholders.

Strategy 1: Expand needs assessment through focus groups and realistic community needs.

Action 1: Develop focus group in diverse locations within Member Districts
 Action 2: Strategizing innovative actions through a needs assessment

Lead Staff: Superintendent of Recreation
 Target Start Date: Summer 2025 Target Completion Date: End of October each fiscal year
 Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Lack of response/engagement from stakeholders
 Metrics of Success: Increased response rates

Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*

Objective 2: Ensure continuous improvement and accountability by meeting and exceeding industry accreditation standards.

Strategy 1: Maintain system/process to continue to meet IAPD Distinguished Agency Accreditation standards to satisfy renewal standards in 2026.

Action 1: Search revised and new standards

Action 2: Complete needed steps to set up standards for review

Lead Staff: Executive Director and Sr. Management Staff

Target Start Date: Now Target Completion Date: October 2026

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Development of new standards

Metrics of Success: Successful completion of accreditation

Objective 3: Meet the highest level of PDRMA risk management and safety standards.

Strategy 1: Ensure NISRA continues to provide safe and reliable transportation, programs, participant and staff services.

Action 1: Continue to offer safety training topics on new trends and agency needs

Action2: Develop and complete annual SMART goal

Action 3: Continue to participate in completion of PDRMA safety programs

Lead Staff: Sr. Manager of Operations and Superintendent of Recreation

Target Start Date: Now Target Completion Date: End of calendar year

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Identifying areas needing to be addresses

Metrics of Success: Receive incentive money from PRDMA on an annual basis

Objective 4: Explore the expansion and improvement of indoor and outdoor programming spaces, facilities and services to meet the growing needs of the community.

Strategy 1: Complete the evaluation and begin the implementation of the expansion of indoor and outdoor programming space at NISRA/SAGE TR Center and Member Districts.

Action 1: Determine need for expanded program space

Action 2: Discuss expansion with Member Districts

Action 3: Meet with appropriate contractors to determine feasibility

Action 4: Determine funding needs/NISRA Foundation involvement

Lead Staff: Executive Director and Sr. Manager of Operations

Target Start Date: Now Target Completion Date: October 2026

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Ability to build on land, cost

Metrics of Success: Successfully completion of expansion

Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*

Strategy 2: Explore options and create a plan to establish enhanced program space in a member facility in the southern part of the NISRA service area.

Action 1: Communication with Member Districts on securing location site

Action 2: Establishing roles and responsibilities of agency and member district involvement

Action 3: Implement appropriate trainings and in-services

Lead Staff: Sr. Manager of Recreation, Superintendent of Recreation and Sr. Manager of Operations

Target Start Date: Spring 2026 Target Completion Date: October 2027

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Facility space, cost

Metrics of Success: Joint program space

Objective 5: Serve as the primary resource for ADA compliance and inclusion of people with disabilities in member district programs.

Strategy 1: Explore the need for two regular part-time Inclusion Specialists

Action 1: Complete needs assessment and time study on inclusion needs

Action 2: Determine if additional hours are needed to meet needs

Lead Staff: Executive Director, Superintendent of Recreation and Manager of Inclusion

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: October 2026

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Cost

Metrics of Success: Successfully being able to tend to member district inclusion needs

Strategy 2: Develop additional trainings and inclusion supports for Member Districts

Action 1: Develop needs assessment for member district staff

Action 2: Determine need to bring in outside training facilitators

Action 3: Explore the possibility of offering ability awareness programs for Member District ET and Summer Camp participants.

Lead Staff: Manager of Inclusion and Inclusion Specialist

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: October 2026

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Cost, engagement of member district staff

Metrics of Success: Successfully being able to tend to member district inclusion needs

Objective 6: Improve operational efficiency and communication through continuous technological upgrades, integration, and purchasing of new software.

Strategy 1: Implement new registration software

Action 1: Research software options

Action 2: Purchase new software

Action 3: Secure and implement new software

Action 4: Conduct staff trainings

Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*

Lead Staff: Superintendent of Recreation

Target Start Date: Spring 2025 Target Completion Date: April 2026

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Cost, transfer or data, staff training

Metrics of Success: Implementation of new software

Strategy 2: Move VOIP phone system to the cloud

Action 1: Research available VOIP systems

Lead Staff: Sr. Manager of Human Resources & Admin and Office Services Coordinator

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: April 2026

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Cost

Metrics of Success: Implementation of new system

Strategy 3: Expand use of digital/electronic options for managing financial practices, such as utilization of electronic files for invoicing and GL coding to electronic files stored on common shared drive.

Action 1: Research effectiveness on the utilization of digital/electronic options

Action 2: Determine which options would be most feasible/effective

Action 3: Develop plan for implementation

Lead Staff: Sr. Manager of Human Resources & Admin and Business Services Coordinator

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: October 2026

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Availability of resources, cost

Metrics of Success: Successfully moving to digital files

Strategy 4: Implement process dedicated email box for electronic invoicing.

Action 1: Create procedures on electronic invoicing

Action 2: Notify vendors on new procedures and process

Lead Staff: Sr. Manager of Human Resources & Admin and Executive Director

Target Start Date: Now Target Completion Date: April 2026

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Vendor responses

Metrics of Success: implementation of process

Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*

Marketing and Promotion

Enhance community engagement and awareness by building collaborative relationships, effectively utilizing resources, promoting services within Member Districts, and encouraging lifelong recreation interests through positive leisure activities.

Objective: Enhance NISRA's online presence and accessibility through website improvements and language translation capabilities.

Strategy 1: Review, revise, and update the NISRA website to improve ease of use and visual appeal.

Action 1: Investigate and implement options to convert the site into other languages to broaden community engagement.

Action 2: Ensure NISRA website meets accessibility standards

Lead Staff: Manager of Communications & Marketing

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: October 2026

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Resources, Cost

Metrics of Success: Implement of new website upgrades

Strategy 2: Implement strategies to assist with written language translation needs.

Action 1: Identify needs for language translation

Action 2: Research reliable translation software/solutions

Action 3: Develop plan for implementation

Lead Staff: Manager of Communications & Marketing, Sr. Manager of Recreation & Superintendent of Recreation

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: April 2026

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Cost

Metrics of Success: Plan to move forward and address needs

Objective: Strengthen collaboration with NISRA Member Districts to enhance marketing and promotion efforts.

Strategy 1: Work with NISRA Member Districts to identify and utilize marketing and promotion resources specific to NISRA communities.

Action 1: Create a co-marketing agreement with all Member Districts for marketing the 50th anniversary and collaboration through each brochure for the year 2026.

Action 2: Create ongoing collaboration for marketing of NISRA within Member Districts

Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*

Lead Staff: Manager of Communications & Marketing, Executive Director and Superintendent of Recreation,

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: End of year 2026

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Engagement from member districts

Metrics of Success: Standardized marketing across Member Districts

Objective: Develop a plan to celebrate and promote NISRA's 50th Anniversary to enhance visibility and community engagement.

Strategy 1: Develop a comprehensive 50th Anniversary marketing plan to celebrate and promote NISRA's milestone, increase presence and engagement in the community.

Action 1: Evaluate all 50th anniversary celebration ideas, assess what is feasible

Action 2: Create committees

Action 3: Ongoing activities implemented during 2026

Lead Staff: Manager of Communications & Marketing and Executive Director

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: End of year 2026

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Cost

Metrics of Success: Plan implementation

Human Resources Goal:

Maintain and continue to enhance human resources practices to ensure a high-quality, diverse, and professionally developed workforce that aligns with NISRA's mission and values.

Objective 1: Recruit and retain support staff to enhance service delivery.

Strategy 1: Attract and retain support staff, including retirees and individuals with passion for specific recreation activities.

Action 1: Advertise specific areas of programming at specific locations, such as Del Webb, Hill Striders, etc.

Action 2: Develop retention plan

Lead Staff: Sr. Manager of Human Resources & Admin and Sr. Manager of Support Staff

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: Fall 2027

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Finding places to advertise for support staff, maintaining competitive wages

Metrics of Success: Increase in support staff from season to season

Objective 2: Ensure high standards of training and preparedness for staff

Strategy 1: Develop and maintain comprehensive training programs to ensure staff meet high professional standards and are well-prepared for their roles.

Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*

Action 1: Offer different days and times for training to seasonal employees
 Action 2: Offer shorter, topic specific trainings and workshops (i.e. sign language, communication devices) in partnership with outside agencies (i.e. McHenry County Collage)
 Action 3: Research online training programs to supplement NISRA's offering
 Action 4: Enhance the online staff and volunteer portal

Lead Staff: Sr. Manager of Human Resources & Admin and Sr. Manager of Support Staff
 Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: Fall 2027
 Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Cost, engagement of staff, availability of trainers
 Metrics of Success: Continue collecting feedback and evaluations after each training to ensure success and safety standards

Strategy 2: Increase the number of Program Drivers employed.

Action 1: Identify transportation companies to recruit part-time drivers
 Action 2: Create marketing materials to recruit drivers.

Lead Staff: Sr. Manager of Human Resources & Admin and Sr. Manager of Support Staff
 Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: Fall 2027
 Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Finding places to advertise for support staff
 Metrics of Success: Increase in support staff

Objective 3: Maintain a highly desirable workplace that promotes staff retention.

Strategy 1: Regularly assess and enhance workplace policies and practices to foster a positive, ethical, and professional work environment.

Action 1: Create a satisfaction survey for full-time employees, and conduct stay interviews on an annual basis
 Action 2: Create an agency succession plan
 Action 3: Continue offering a mentorship program among full-time employees
 Action 4: Offer an anonymous suggestion box or form to provide employees an opportunity to share suggestions.

Lead Staff: Executive Director and Sr. Manager of Human Resources & Admin
 Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: Fall 2027
 Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Internal climate/culture
 Metrics of Success: Staff report of success

Strategy 2: Develop a sustainable plan to hire interns and future full-time employees.

Action 1: Evaluate college therapeutic recreation programs outside of Illinois to access potential future graduates.
 Action 2: Attend career fairs at Universities, High School and Middle Schools

Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*

Lead Staff: Superintendent of Recreation, Sr. Manager of Human Resources & Admin and Manger of Inclusion

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: April 2028

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Limited therapeutic recreation programs/graduates

Metrics of Success: Increase in intern and full-time staff applications

Strategy 3: Develop a staff enrichment and development program.

Action 1: Continue the Spirit Squad opportunities and events for full-time employees

Action 2: Offer professional development to all full-time employees on an annual basis

Lead Staff: Sr. Manager of Support Staff, Superintendent of Recreation and Sr. Manager of Human Resources & Admin

Target Start Date: Spring 2026 Target Completion Date: Spring 2027

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Staff engagement

Metrics of Success: Participation from an increased amount of employees

Objective 4: Perform outreach to recruit and retain a workforce that is representatives of the communities we serve.

Strategy 1: Annually review and adjust the agency plan of action to ensure a welcoming environment for all.

Action 1: Identify areas and Member Districts where we have minimal staff presence and develop a plan to recruit employees

Lead Staff: Sr. Manager of Human Resources & Administration and Sr. Manager of Support Staff

Target Start Date: Spring 2026 Target Completion Date: Spring 2028

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Limited diversity of recruiting team

Metrics of Success: Track communities that have been reached

Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*

Financial Goal:

Ensure financial integrity, stability, and growth by maintaining a healthy reserve fund, seeking additional revenue sources, and committing to strong financial controls and accountability.

Objective 1: Maintain a reserve fund to support financial stability.

Strategy 1: Maintain a reserve fund balance at the end of the fiscal year equal to ¼ of NISRA annual expenses.

Action 1: Create a realistic budget based on budgetary process

Action 2: Staff working within budgetary guidelines

Action 3: Ensure fundraising goals are met

Lead Staff: Executive Director, Superintendent of Recreation

Target Start Date: Now Target Completion Date: End of each Fiscal Year

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges: Increasing costs

Metrics of Success: Fund reserve balance at goal

Objective 2: Continue to uphold strong financial controls and accountability.

Strategy 1: Ensure robust financial controls and regularly audit financial practices to ensure accountability and transparency.

Action 1: Timely submission of P-card reconciliation and check requests

Action 2: Development of financial control processes and procedures

Action 3: Staff training

Action 4: Implementation of regular audits on practices

Lead Staff: Executive Director and Sr. Manager of Human Resources and Admin

Target Start Date: Fall 2025 Target Completion Date: Fall 2026

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges:

Metrics of Success: Audits show that correct practices are being followed

Objective 3: Seek additional revenue through fundraising, grants, and contributions.

Strategy 1: Research and develop alternative funding streams, including but not limited to grant writing, community service organizations, planned giving and corporate solicitations.

Action 1: Continued education and outreach in the community

Action 2: Increase corporate sponsorships

Action 3: Research different grant opportunities

Action 4: Diversify where Foundation funds are coming in from

Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*

Lead Staff: Executive Director

Target Start Date: Fall 2025

Target Completion Date: End of each Fiscal Year

Known Potential Barriers/Challenges:

Metrics of Success: Additional Foundation revenue, diversification of funders

Board President Approval: *Maria Cumpata*