

NEBRASKA PROBATION
Strategic Plan: 2024-2029

Cover Image: Detail of the Capitol Rotunda ceiling.

“The theme of the Rotunda is “Virtues of the State”. The eight winged figures in the dome form a celestial rose representing civic and sacred virtues: Temperance, Courage, Justice, Wisdom, Magnanimity, Faith, Hope and Charity. The three wall murals portray ways that citizens use labor and virtue to build a better state and world.”
<https://capitol.nebraska.gov/building/rooms/rotunda>



STATE OF
NEBRASKA
JUDICIAL BRANCH

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12 LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

- *Individuals and stakeholders are valued, heard, and supported through effective communication.*
- *Prioritize a culture of leadership.*
- *Understand and use Implementation Science principles throughout the organization.*
- *Evidence-based practices are foundational strategies for achieving positive outcomes.*
- *Nurture and develop staff.*
- *Embrace the individuality of justice-involved persons.*

INTRODUCTION

The strength within an organization lies within its people.

The success of an organization lies within its shared goals.

The days of top-down management are long gone. As leaders we now understand that applying implementation science is a not so common, common-sense approach. Organizations perform better when the people within the organization “own” the work, and the work aligns with its vision and mission. If I were to choose one goal in my time as Administrator, it is to create a sustainable culture where those who do the work have a say in the work and take pride in the outcome. Organizational Ownership is what happens when employees have a stake in the organization and its future, and when combined with a well-structured strategic plan, it serves as a powerful driver of employee motivation, performance, and loyalty.



The creation of the first strategic plan for Probation has been a journey. A journey of learning, skill development, engagement, discovery, the relinquishing of power and control, but most importantly extending trust and empowerment. This strategic plan represents the collective work of all Probation. While time consuming, sometimes frustrating, and often exhausting, the results include a compilation of agreements, concessions, consensus, and commitment for the future. The outcome can best be described as the foundation necessary to achieve greatness by focusing on communication, leadership, a shared belief around decision making, business practices, and staff. Most importantly, we recognize that the makeup of an individual does not define the individual, but rather compels us to recognize and value individuals as uniquely different.



State Probation Administrator Deborah Minardi welcomes guests to the swearing-in ceremony of new Nebraska Probation Officers, October 2023.

For today, tomorrow, and the unforeseen future, Probation has an operational foundation based on organizational ownership resulting in systemic leadership and a unified strategic plan.

No matter the challenge, this foundation and plan will drive the organization on our path to excellence and in service to the courts, our clients, and safer communities.

Deborah A. Minardi
Nebraska State Probation Administrator

DR. ROBIN JENKINS

Organizations thrive when they create enabling, productive environments. Catalyzed by the presence of experienced, wise, and inclusive leadership at multiple levels, these situations provide the foundation for future achievements. In these circumstances, executive leaders demonstrate vision supporting and nurturing inspiration, engagement, and empowerment. And by including those in newly shared leadership roles into the strategic thinking process, futures are created establishing the groundwork for well-designed strategy.

As an invited partner, I have witnessed a significant part of Nebraska Probation's first agency-wide strategic planning journey. It has been a remarkably positive experience. The plan evolved through a series of thoughtfully considered and well executed shifts in how leaders envision the future of the organization. Today's criminal and juvenile justice organizations are extraordinarily complex, open systems relying on a multitude of internal and external partnerships to achieve their goals. Because of their complexities – and the reality that contemporary justice systems are compelled to work in ways not heretofore contemplated in their founding principles – leaders are required to expand their conceptualizations of how to engage and ensure thoughtful, deliberate, purposeful, strategic leaders throughout organizations. By doing so, these activities also energize and motivate employee performance. Top-down, wholly centralized decision-making, while still somewhat of a factor based on various risks and political circumstances, hampers criminal and juvenile justice organizations requiring more agile and tailored leadership at every level.

Today's workforce is different than prior generations. The social, economic, psychological, educational, and public health challenges facing the courts are also remarkably unlike those observed in preceding decades. These conditions require innovative, collaborative, and strategic leadership approaches. As Retired General Stanley McChrystal is fond of saying, "we must adapt to win in the 21st century (and beyond)". Adaptation requires a willingness for executive leaders to invite new, reimagined leadership practices at multiple organizational levels to the table to mutually define complex challenges and consider adaptive strategies for dealing with them.

The Nebraska Strategic Plan embodies shared core principles, mutually reinforcing values, a clear and aligned mission, along with smartly prioritized goals and strategies. It defines success for each priority. It recognizes and honors the organization and those who receive its services. The Plan is the first of its kind for Probation. Led by Administrator Deb Minardi, the agency is evolving into a shared culture of ownership defined by strategic, integrated leadership teams spanning the entire organization. Teams share visioning responsibilities, strategic thinking, goal prioritization, and collaborative ownership of organizational outcomes. These shifts predict higher quality outcomes through a new culture of strategic, integrated leadership processes, communications, use of data for continuous learning, and feedback across organizational layers and partnerships.

Strong leaders recognize that creating and sustaining excellence comes with a certain vulnerability. This means scaling back centralized control and decision-making by engaging other organizational leaders closer to the day-to-day work in strategic thinking and doing. The Strategic Plan exemplifies Probation's new model of Organizational Ownership couched in implementation and organizational development science, and the unflinching commitment to bring evidence-informed practices into daily business operations and use. It is a remarkable accomplishment and one to be fully appreciated for its forward thinking. The Plan sets a sturdy foundation and guiding framework for future generations who will lead and work in Nebraska Probation. By shifting Probation's culture to one reflecting a more deliberate shared purpose, collaborative leadership structure characterized by strategic and critical thinking, the organization is well-poised to adapt to today's and future challenges.



Robin Jenkins, PhD

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HISTORY & BACKGROUND

A statewide Nebraska probation system originated in 1957 with the passage of legislation granting the Nebraska District Court Judges Association general supervision responsibilities over probation in the district courts.

The probation system is organizationally aligned with the judicial branch of government. The probation system served primarily adult felons, with courtesy supervision of misdemeanants from the county courts. In 1971, legislation was passed creating the Office of Probation Administration which included district, county and some juvenile courts. In 1985 the legislature passed a bill making probation a unified system which provides services to all district, county, and juvenile courts.

The duties of a probation officer are determined by laws enacted by the Legislative body which created the Office of Probation Administration. The law specifies that the Probation Administrator, and such other employees as needed to operate the system, are directly responsible to the Nebraska Supreme Court and encompassed within the Supreme Court's Strategic Agenda. Evidence-based practices and principles, which have been proven to be effective via research and meta-analysis, are the tools used by officers to complete their statutory duties to reduce recidivism for adult and juvenile justice involved individuals.

A definitive listing of all laws enacted by the Legislature, we note our responsibilities regarding juveniles are found in Chapter 43 of Nebraska Revised Statutes, whereas our services for adults may be found in Chapter 29 of Nebraska Revised Statutes.

NEBRASKA SUPREME COURT **STRATEGIC AGENDA**

for Probation (Public Safety)



The Nebraska Judicial Branch continues its six overarching goals for the 2023-2025 strategic agenda. This document identifies those goals and their respective objectives and initiatives. It is essential that in the twenty-first century, the provision of justice is sustained and maintained through a system of impartial, fair, and accessible courts and related services in order to achieve community safety, promote the general welfare, and encourage civility among people. The six overarching goals of the Nebraska Judicial Branch are:

- Goal 1:** Providing access to swift and fair justice.
- Goal 2:** Protecting children and vulnerable adults.
- Goal 3:** Addressing community safety.
- Goal 4:** Being accountable to the public.
- Goal 5:** Strengthening communication with citizens and government.
- Goal 6:** Regulating the legal profession.

Goal 3: Addressing Community Safety

Courts are required by statute to determine the appropriate sanctions or disposition for individuals who violate the law. When a court determines probation to be the most appropriate action, it must ensure that the individual not only is held accountable but also is offered rehabilitative services designed to reduce or eliminate future criminal or delinquent activity.

Taken from: <https://supremecourt.nebraska.gov/sites/default/files/publication-report-files/Strategic-Agenda-2023-2025.pdf>

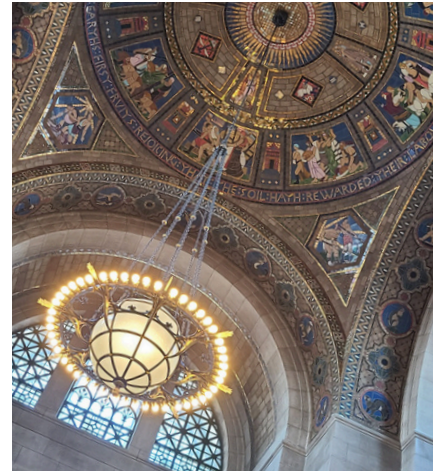
TEAM ROLES

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM (ELT)

The ELT (Administrative Leadership) leads organizational ownership of Probation's vision and mission by setting and clarifying operational parameters, direction, and outcomes.

SYSTEMIC LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)

The SLT (Chief Probation Officers, and Administrative Leadership) carries out the vision and mission by incorporating collective thinking, creating alignment and effective communication while we establish system priorities and move them across our organization, bringing out the best in those we lead.



ADVANCED COACHING 4 EXCELLENCE CHIEFS

The Advanced Coaching 4 Excellence Chief Probation Officers (supported by the Assistant Deputies) carry out Probation's vision and mission by acting as bridges between the Integrated Leadership Team, the Systemic Leadership Team, and the Executive Leadership Team, and between the Executive Policy Committee and the Systemic Leadership Team. As part of the Systemic Leadership Team and Executive Policy Committee, we serve as feedback loops and fortify the direction of the strategic plan and the connection to our guiding documents. We are Advanced Coaching 4 Excellence leaders who connect dots and ensure transparent communication flows to other Chiefs and invite input to inform our direction. We function as the champions of Advanced Coaching 4 Excellence and Evidence-based practices on the systemic leadership team. Above all, we ensure strategic plan priorities have clarity, capacity, and are well resourced.

INTEGRATED LEADERSHIP TEAM (ILT)

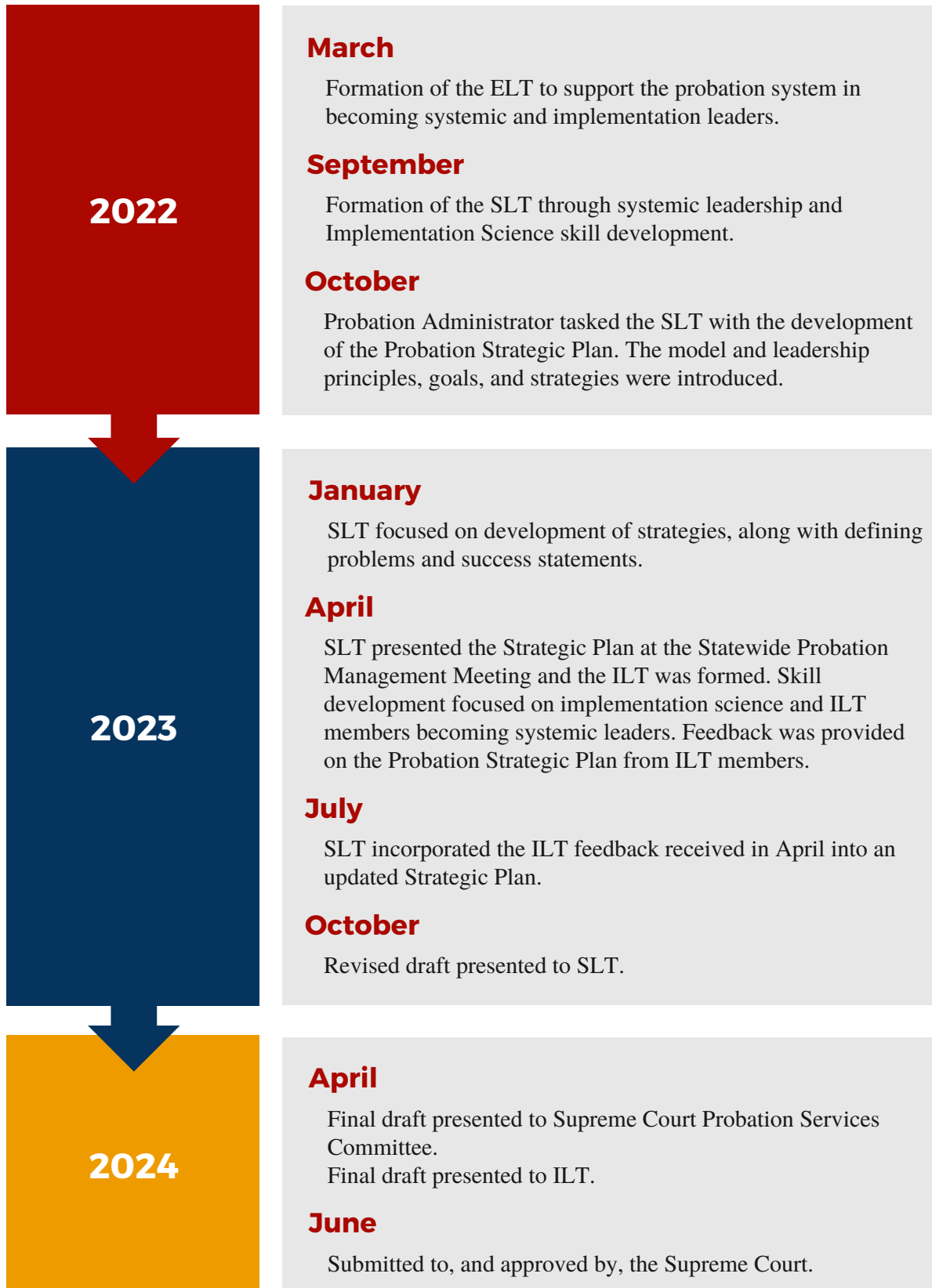
The ILT (system-wide management), as system owners, promote and support the advancement of priorities within Probation's strategic plan, the leadership and vision and mission of Probation. We support readiness and effective implementation by serving as the bridge for communication, between the leadership teams (including Executive Leadership Team, the Systemic Leadership Team, and the Integrated Leadership Team) and staff and stakeholders.

ADVANCED COACHING 4 EXCELLENCE INTEGRATED LEADERSHIP TEAM (AC4E ILT)

The Advanced Coaching 4 Excellence Integrated Leadership Team are leaders (Chiefs, Trainers, Technical Assistants, Administration) from around the state who come together to nurture continued readiness, navigate challenges, and plan for emerging issues for all staff related to the implementation and fidelity of Advanced Coaching 4 Excellence in alignment with our strategic plan. We promote the sustainability of Advanced Coaching 4 Excellence and encourage change through risk, need, and responsibility focused practices. As champions of Advanced Coaching 4 Excellence, we strive to serve as conduits to ensure the continuity of statewide communication.

STRATEGIC PLAN TIMELINE

STRATEGIC PLANNING THROUGH THE LENS OF IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE



SYSTEMIC LEADERSHIP TEAM

STRATEGIC PLAN AUTHORS

Name	Organization
Eric Asboe	Administrative Fiscal Analyst, Judicial Branch
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Joe Budnick	Chief Probation Officer, District 10
Gene Cotter	Deputy Administrator, Operations
Jeff Curry	Chief Probation Officer, District 3A
Hazel Delgado	Director of Research and Data, Operations Division
Bob Denton	Deputy Administrator, Adult Probation Services Division
Darren Duncan	Chief Probation Officer, District 12
Lonnie Folchert	Chief Probation Officer, District 11
Bev Hoagland	Chief Probation Officer, District 3J
Jeff Jennings	Chief Probation Officer, District 2
Marc Kohmetscher	Chief Probation Officer, District 9
Patty Lyon	Chief Probation Officer, District 6
Lindsay Meyer	Juvenile Justice Reform Specialist, Juvenile Probation Services Division
Deb Minardi	State Probation Administrator
Kimberley Mundil	Assistant Deputy Administrator, Rehabilitative Services
Sara Quiroz	Assistant Deputy Administrator, Juvenile Probation Services Division

SYSTEMIC LEADERSHIP TEAM

STRATEGIC PLAN AUTHORS

Name

Jacey Rader

Carrie Rodriguez

Kari Rumbaugh

Tara Sprigler-Price

Chad Stevens

Melanie Stormer

Damon Strong

Shane Stutzman

Mary Visek

Kelli Wood

Organization

Assistant Deputy Administrator, Operations Division

Chief Probation Officer, District 5

Deputy Administrator, Juvenile Probation Services
Division

Chief Probation Officer, District 8

Director of Human Services, Operations Division

Chief Probation Officer, District 1

Chief Probation Officer, District 4A

Assistant Deputy Administrator, Adult Probation
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Chief Probation Officer, District 4J

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VISION

Inspiring Hope
Empowering Individuals
Strengthening Communities

MISSION

We, the leaders in community corrections, juvenile and restorative justice are unified in our dedication to delivering a system of seamless services which are founded on evidence-based practices and valued by Nebraska's communities, victims, offenders and courts. We create constructive change through rehabilitation, collaboration, and partnership in order to enhance safe communities.

EAST ENTRANCE
**JUVENILE
SERVICES**

WEST ENTRANCE
**ADULT
SERVICES**



LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

1

INDIVIDUALS AND STAKEHOLDERS ARE VALUED, HEARD, AND SUPPORTED THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION.

2

PRIORITIZE A CULTURE OF LEADERSHIP.

3

UNDERSTAND AND USE IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE PRINCIPLES THROUGHOUT THE ORGANIZATION.

4

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES ARE FOUNDATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING POSITIVE OUTCOMES.

5

NURTURE AND DEVELOP STAFF.

6

EMBRACE THE INDIVIDUALITY OF JUSTICE-INVOLVED PERSONS.

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE 1:

INDIVIDUALS AND STAKEHOLDERS ARE VALUED, HEARD, AND SUPPORTED THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION.



GOALS & STRATEGIES:

Goal: Individuals and stakeholders are valued, listened to, and supported through effective communication.

In our interactions and routines as a system, we miss communication opportunities to build system and staff readiness, alignment with our vision and mission, and receive feedback on fit and feasibility. Lack of communication creates disengaged staff who feel their input is neither heard nor valued. Success is achieved when communicating the “why”, or purpose, becomes part of our regular and ongoing interactions; we build buy-in for the goals we are trying to achieve; we are on the same page moving in the same direction.

-
- **Strategy 1.1:** Create a system of regular, ongoing, consistent feedback from people affected by, or from, implementation efforts.
 - **Strategy 1.2:** Create opportunities for intentional dialogue, shared thinking, and receive intentional feedback.
 - **Strategy 1.3:** Effectively use information gathered from feedback to improve the organization.
 - **Strategy 1.4:** Modernizing Information Technology (IT) integration as a tool that we use to gather, communicate, and present information.

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE 2:

PRIORITIZE A CULTURE OF LEADERSHIP.



GOALS & STRATEGIES:

Goal: Develop individuals who possess the skills to lead and influence others. Effective leadership is critical to a successful organization.

Probation currently lacks a structured leadership program which promotes retention, alignment with our vision and mission, and creates systemic leadership to provide opportunities for growth and advancement. Developing leaders within our organization will have a positive impact on the organizational climate and culture. It will create leaders across the organization who have the skills and abilities to support the fulfillment of the organization's vision and mission, while building leadership succession planning and sustainability.

-
- **Strategy 2.1:** Create a leadership program designed for current managers and leaders.
 - **Strategy 2.2 :** Create a leadership program designed for individuals interested in becoming future leaders.
 - **Strategy 2.3:** Create a leadership program designed for systemic leaders.

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE 3:

UNDERSTAND AND USE IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE PRINCIPLES THROUGHOUT THE ORGANIZATION.



GOALS & STRATEGIES:

Goal: Understand and use Implementation Science principles throughout the organization.

Currently, Nebraska Probation does not understand, or use, Implementation Science as the foundation for how we make decisions. As a result, we do not maximize our system's potential. Successful application of Implementation Science by Nebraska Probation will ensure fit and feasibility of implemented items leading to better outcomes.

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- **Strategy 3.1:** Institutionalize Implementation Science across the system as a standard operating practice.

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE 4:

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES ARE FOUNDATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING POSITIVE OUTCOMES.



GOALS & STRATEGIES:

Goal: Positive outcomes are achieved through correctly employed use of evidence-based practices and strategies.

While Nebraska Probation began utilizing evidence-based best practices in 2006, it has lacked focus on proper implementation and fidelity to evidence-based practices. This strategic goal recognizes alignment with evidence-based practices in both juvenile and adult justice will lead to better outcomes for the individuals involved with probation. To become a fully functioning evidence-based system, data and outcome measures must be identified, defined, and understood by staff. Probation must prioritize aligning best-practice case management research with determined essential data to measure positive outcomes. Clear definition of expectations and consistent entry of information ends unnecessary distraction and practice.

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- **Strategy 4.1:** Implement justice reform based on research, evaluation, and data.
 - **Strategy 4.2:** Update the Standardized Model to incorporate behavioral health and best practices for service provision.
 - **Strategy 4.3:** Complete a meaningful examination of the current case management system to decide focused and essential entries.
 - **Strategy 4.4:** Create and implement a sustainability plan for Advance Coaching for Excellence (AC4E).
 - **Strategy 4.5:** Ensure continuous fidelity of Evidence-Based Practices (EBP).
 - **Strategy 4.6:** Examine and enhance current practices related to engaging families and community supports of justice-involved individuals based on best practice guidance.

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE 5:

NURTURE AND DEVELOP STAFF



GOALS & STRATEGIES:

Goal: Provide support and opportunities for professional development.

Nebraska Probation has not fully committed to building leadership skills amongst its staff. It is vital that Nebraska Probation invests in its workforce development system to have diversified staff who are skilled and competent. Properly resourced staff creates effective functioning across the state. A successful workforce development system notes and applies best practices in recruitment, hiring, on-boarding, training, skill development, coaching, and feedback of all staff, which increases system investment and employee retention.

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- **Strategy 5.1:** Implement the workload study.
 - **Strategy 5.2:** Examine and update the New Probation Officer Training (NPOT) Academy.
 - **Strategy 5.3:** Modernize Human Resources (HR) practices.
 - **Strategy 5.4:** Diversity and equity related to implementation of the vision and mission.

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE 6:

EMBRACE THE INDIVIDUALITY OF JUSTICE-INVOLVED PERSONS.



GOALS & STRATEGIES:

Goal: Understand and use principles of diversity, human behavior, learning, and brain development to ensure an individualized response to optimize success.

Current Nebraska Probation practices do not consider how responsivity factors can impact a justice-involved persons' risk and ability to be successful on probation. This strategic goal recognizes the importance of the unique characteristics and needs of the individuals we serve. We understand probation must meet people where they are and support them in becoming the best version of themselves: doing so will lead to successful outcomes for the individual and the system.

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- **Strategy 6.1:** Create a new emerging adult justice system approach which includes best-practice standards.
 - **Strategy 6.2:** Develop and implement adolescent development education to ensure best practice case management approaches.



NEBRASKA PROBATION SYSTEM

Strategic Plan 2024-2029

**Approved by the
Nebraska Supreme Court:**

June, 2024