



Strategic Plan 2021–2023

MISSION

The mission of CONNECT Summit County is to create a well-informed, stigma-free community with access to mental health resources for all.

TAGLINE

The people's voice for mental health.

2023 VISION

Our vision is to make Summit County a safe space for mental health.

We envision a community wherein all of Summit County is a safe space for mental health; a place where residents, workers, and visitors feel welcomed, accepted, supported, and empowered.

By encouraging an ongoing conversation through education, programming, and awareness, CONNECT Summit County engages the community in increased understanding of mental health issues. This understanding leads to the elimination of stigma and to an environment wherein community members freely seek the services they need.

By identifying gaps in services and access, CONNECT Summit County is uniquely positioned to bring together multiple governmental and community entities, fostering solutions and services that benefit all those who face challenges with mental health.

VALUES

Empowered Grassroots Organization

We are a group of ordinary people who are concerned about the mental health challenges facing our community. We are individuals, family members, loved ones, and friends of people struggling with mental illness. We are people who recognize the serious challenges facing our community and leverage our collective voice to make lasting and systemic change in our community.

Thoughtfully Nimble

We do not wait for others' endorsement or permission to act. By operating as a lean organization without a prohibitive structure, we can make decisions quickly to be responsive to the ever-changing needs of mental health in our community. We are not afraid to make mistakes because we know there will be many stumbling blocks along the way.



Forward-Thinking

We are focused in the present and moving toward the future, bringing our collective vision to fruition. As long as we are continuously listening to the feedback from the community and community partners, we know that we can move forward to make a lasting positive impact.

Respectful Irreverence

We serve as a watchdog organization that is not afraid of speaking truth when we see injustice. By assuming good intentions of others, we strive to elevate the level of thinking to see greater possibilities. We engage in difficult conversations and are never silent about hard things.

Unwavering Compassion

We listen to the needs of the community regardless of where the conversation is generated. By striving to always be an open and welcoming organization, we can address challenges from all angles. We accept individuals for who they are and we treat everyone with kindness and respect.

Expansive Connection

We believe in the power of connection. When individuals and organizations feel as though they are part of something larger, they can together make the transformative change that the community deserves. Our focus is to remove barriers and increase visibility so that everyone can see themselves as part of the solution and feel supported.

BACKGROUND

The mental health services landscape in Summit County has evolved rapidly over the last few years. In 2016 CONNECT Summit County was the precipitator of the public discussion of mental health issues in Summit County and has helped keep mental health in the public consciousness through programs such as Mental Health Awareness Month. In 2017, a community coalition—the Summit County Mental Wellness Alliance—was formed to address the County's serious mental health (and substance abuse) challenges. CONNECT Summit County was one of the founding members of the Alliance.

As the local government body responsible for public health, the Summit County Council has adopted the Summit County Mental Wellness Strategic Plan. The Alliance prepared this plan with important support from the Summit County Health Department. The Park City City Council has also adopted the Summit County Mental Wellness Strategic Plan. In Summit County, there are mental health service providers in private practice and many that work through various nonprofit organizations.

According to 2019 U.S. Census Bureau estimates, the population of Summit County has reached just over 42,000 citizens. The National Alliance on Mental Illness states that one in five adults in the United States will experience mental illness in a given year, and approximately one in five



youth aged 13–18 will experience a severe mental disorder at some point during their lifetimes. Extrapolating by population for the Summit County community, this means that about 8,000 of our residents could be suffering from a mental health condition at any given time. This does not include the significant ripple effect on their families and friends.

In these extraordinary circumstances, CONNECT Summit County is uniquely positioned to address the need in the community for access to mental health resources both immediately and going forward. Since its establishment in 2016, CONNECT has focused on mental health awareness and education. CONNECT Summit County’s mission—to create a well-informed and stigma-free community with access to mental health services for everyone—has perhaps never been more relevant than it is now.

CORE STRENGTHS

As CONNECT Summit County developed this strategic plan, we stayed focused on our core strengths and how we could best help address emerging community needs.

CONNECT Summit County's greatest strength comes from our knowledge of mental illness on the ground—initially from the experience of families struggling to find mental health services in Summit County, and complemented by our extensive knowledge about existing service providers and our expertise in presenting timely programming on mental health issues of particular concern to the community.

This competence allows us to identify and respond to community needs. To date we have done this in many ways:

- CONNECT Summit County has firmly established Mental Health Awareness Month as a signature program. Mental Health Awareness Month events include educational speakers, panels, and discussions throughout the month of May.
- CONNECT Summit County has created an online comprehensive and fluid directory of mental health services along with mental health tool kits that help people self-navigate.
- CONNECT Summit County has developed a Navigation and Peer Support program to help people find the mental health services appropriate to their needs.
- CONNECT Summit County took the lead in successfully advocating to the County Council for increased spending on mental health in their 2018 budget.
- CONNECT Summit County has identified the additional challenges of equity and continues to demonstrate commitment to our local workforce.
- CONNECT Summit County has shifted from presenting our signature in-person events to offering timely, relevant, and well-attended online support groups and events that address community members’ specific mental health needs due to COVID-19.
- CONNECT Summit County has successfully elevated the conversation around and awareness of mental health and has stewarded a community-wide anti-stigma campaign.



- CONNECT Summit County has demonstrated cultural competence by hiring a Spanish-speaking Promotor Comunitario, securing a memorandum of understanding with Latino Behavioral Health Services, convening an ad hoc Latino Behavioral Health Provider Capacity committee, and bringing together providers who serve Spanish-speaking community members.

CONNECT Summit County has a strong history of collaboration and partnerships to promote shared goals. CONNECT's numerous partners include University of Utah Behavioral Health Plans, Jewish Family Service, Christian Center of Park City, University of Utah Psychiatry Department, Park City Library, Summit County Library, Summit County Mental Wellness Alliance, Park City Education Foundation, Intermountain Park City Hospital, Summit County Health Department, Park City Community Foundation, Communities that Care, Park City Chamber of Commerce/Convention and Visitors Bureau, and individual mental health professionals in Summit County.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

This strategic plan identifies how CONNECT Summit County, a grassroots nonprofit organization founded in 2016, will pursue this mission over the next three years.

From 2021–2023, we will seek to achieve measurable progress in the following areas:

1. Build capacity for CONNECT Summit County to run and manage growth now and into the future.

(1) Operations; (2) Board Governance; (3) Development

2. Make an impact through CONNECT Summit County’s programs.

(1) Analysis; (2) Awareness; (3) Access; (4) Action

GOALS*

1.1.1	High Level of Staff Management
1.2.2	Increase Governance Capacity
1.3.3	Development Plan
1.3.4	Explore Additional Sources of Funding
2.1.1	Make Decisions Based on Data
2.1.2	Serve as a Go-To Convener
2.1.3	Community Mapping
2.2.4	Peer Programming
2.3.5	Reduce Stigma
2.4.6	Leverage People for Advocacy

**See the 2021 work plan for objectives and tactics*



STRATEGY 1: CAPACITY BUILDING

Build CONNECT Summit County's capacity to run the organization and manage growth now and into the future.

INITIATIVE 1.1: OPERATIONS

Implement and improve current internal processes to function as a well-oiled machine.

Goal 1.1.1: Achieve High Level of Staff Management

Establish best practices to manage staff to achieve optimum performance while adhering to CONNECT Summit County's culture of positive mental health and maintaining high professional standards.

INITIATIVE 1.2: BOARD GOVERNANCE

Develop and maintain an engaged and motivated board with a high level of integrity.

Goal 1.2.2: Increase Governance Capacity

Build board recruitment and committee structures to strengthen CONNECT Summit County's governance.

INITIATIVE 1.3: DEVELOPMENT

Transition from a culture of fundraising to a culture of philanthropy to build the capacity of our organization and have sufficient funds to carry out our mission.

Goal 1.3.3: Create a Development Plan

Formalize a development plan to strengthen CONNECT Summit County's philanthropic efforts to meet program objectives and foster a sustainable organization.

Goal 1.3.4: Explore Additional Sources of Funding

Strengthen CONNECT Summit County's financial support through increased philanthropic capacity and efforts.

STRATEGY 2: IMPACT

Make an impact through CONNECT Summit County's initiatives.

INITIATIVE 2.1: ANALYSIS

Be the uncensored voice of the people to advocate for resources that will support our community members' mental health. By investing in collecting complex data information via open-source data, community assessments, and feedback surveys, we may analyze a complete picture of the system of care and transform awareness to action. As a data-driven organization, we will make the information available to everyone in the organization as well as to community members who want to use the information to inform their decisions.



Goal 2.1.1: Data

Create, monitor and analyze consistent and comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data collection and feedback systems that identify, quantify and track current trends and progress toward community outcome goals.

Goal 2.1.2: Convener

Achieve and maintain the undeniable position as the go-to convener by focusing on facilitating high-level coordination to eliminate duplication of services and providing transparent communication so that all mental health direct services and resources are utilized by the public.

Goal 2.1.3: Community Mapping

Catalog mental health resources in Summit County and update the map on how to navigate these resources for both the system of care and for individuals.

INITIATIVE 2.2: ACCESS

As our name CONNECT Summit County connotes, we are a leader in making connections between community members and the resources available to them. By focusing on peer programming, CONNECT is in a natural position to continue making sure people feel important and have a sense of belonging within our organization. We will continue to ensure that aspect of our programming evolves by creating meaningful opportunities for our volunteers. CONNECT Summit County also will continue to seek opportunities to advance our goal of mental health for everyone by connecting people to the resources they need.

GOAL 2.2.4: Peer Programming

Develop peer support programs through trained volunteer ambassadors. Peer programming empowers everyone to find appropriate mental health services and support in a timely and effective manner, thus reducing much of the frustration and failure that often accompanies this process. By providing a better understanding of mental illness, CONNECT Summit County will continue to drive transformative change in our community so that we become an inclusive, compassionate, and understanding community that is a safe space for everyone to live, work, and recreate.

INITIATIVE 2.3: AWARENESS

One of the ongoing challenges CONNECT faces in Summit County is dissolving the stigma associated with mental illness. Social stigma surrounding mental illness is all too frequently the result of misinformation and lack of awareness or understanding. By deploying people from our community as mental health ambassadors, we will empower them to share personal stories—through virtual and in-person events, social media posts, digital and traditional advertising, and grassroots activities. Through these connections we hope to reduce isolation and lower barriers to reaching out for help that those who are suffering may experience.



GOAL 2.3.5: Reduce Stigma

Create a communications plan that includes a campaign to promote ongoing clarity about CONNECT Summit County's role and importance in the community. The plan will include an elevated public-relations strategy, an annual targeted stigma-reduction campaign, and a focus on storytelling and impact.

INITIATIVE 2.4: ACTION

Empower those around us through listening to the needs of the community. By enlisting more supporters, we are fostering passionate people to identify the gaps in services and to advocate for better services. This program develops a pool of mental health advocates who are well-informed and equipped to do advocacy work around identified issues/needs that will lead to systemic change in Summit County. We are also able to receive feedback on gaps in services, barriers to access, and emerging needs in the community from the real-life experiences of lay people who navigate the mental healthcare system.

GOAL 2.4.6: Advocacy

Leverage the power of the voice of the people to address unmet needs by increasing advocacy efforts and mental health public policy. CONNECT Summit County will visibly engage community partners, brand ambassadors, volunteers, and others to show up at public meetings when necessary.

This strategic plan for 2021–2023 was adopted on December 14, 2020; the Board of Directors will review it annually.