

A VISION FOR OUR FUTURE

2021 - 2023 Strategic Plan
Executive Summary



A VISION FOR OUR FUTURE

A Vision for Our Future is the three-year strategic plan for the Autism Society of America. Given the change in organizational leadership, an unprecedented worldwide pandemic and the ambitious plan of the past, the Autism Society's Board of Directors and administration were determined to produce a plan that is realistic, achievable and fundable, and that builds a solid foundation for the future of the Autism Society.

To develop this plan, the Autism Society sought volunteers to serve on either the Strategic Planning Committee and/or Task Force Committees. The task forces were developed based on specific areas of focus and included: **Marketing and Branding, Database and Technology, Advocacy, National Programs, Affiliate Relations, and Finance.**

The work of the task forces included: reviewing the achievements from the previous Strategic Plan (2016- 2020); assessing the current need and opportunities in the Autism community; and revising the overall mission, vision and values of the Autism Society.

A Vision for Our Future is the work of more than 150 people and more than 20 affiliates. As the work of the plan is undertaken, scores of additional people will collaborate to help the Autism Society improve the lives of all affected by Autism.

The Autism Society of America is extremely grateful to all of the individuals who selflessly gave of themselves to help create this forward-thinking strategic plan. Their efforts will help ensure a bold and bright future for the Society and our stakeholders.

MISSION, VISION AND CORE VALUES

Authenticity and consistency between The Autism Society's mission and its vision are critical to the development of **A Vision for Our Future**.

THE PROPOSED MISSION OF THE AUTISM SOCIETY IS:

Our purpose is to create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully.

THE PROPOSED VISION OF THE AUTISM SOCIETY IS:

Creating a world where everyone in the Autism community is connected to the support they need, when they need it.

THE PROPOSED CORE VALUES ARE:

DIGNITY

Where the value and self-determination of every individual is upheld.

EQUITY

Where everyone with Autism achieves the highest possible quality of life.

INCLUSION

Where every person is integrated into society without barriers or exceptions in a collaborative environment.

DIVERSITY

Where everyone is respected for their unique and individual differences.

INTEGRITY

Where we conduct ourselves with honor, truth and respect in our thoughts, words and actions.

INITIATIVES

MARKETING AND BRANDING

The Autism Society of America (The Society) will develop, implement and establish a brand that reflects its identity and purpose, creates loyalty among our affiliate network, and is supported through a growth-driven marketing plan. This effort will include research and discovery, brand development, a new website, and database integration.

Brand Development will include new visual components (logos, brand guidelines, etc.) and new marketing material templates. The new brand will be incorporated into a new website launch, creating a long-term Content Management System (CMS) with advanced technological features for growth, expansion and future integrations.

The work will also incorporate developing the **Autism Source™ Database**, an authoritative source for all Autism-related services domestically, with potential to expand internationally. The database will offer a modernized user experience that integrates with the existing Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform.

DATABASE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Society will develop and implement a cost-efficient, long-term **Systems Architecture Blueprint** to effectively streamline and utilize data. The project will encompass a **Digital and Structural Audit** of our current systems architecture and data capabilities. We will also identify **Network-Wide Solution Opportunities** that encompass the highest priority functionality. Finally, we will create a **Three-Year Implementation Plan**, and pursue **Network-Wide Adoption**.

ADVOCACY

The Society will create the **Autism Center for Empowerment, Advocacy and Justice (ACEAJ)** to address important issues surrounding the safety, education, employment and well-being of individuals with Autism.

The Society will assist state and local affiliates to serve as **state advocates** more effectively. The Society will expand on the recently created state advocacy toolkit that will be a regular part of national support to the affiliates.

The Society will advocate for resources necessary to build **Law Enforcement and First Responder Training, Safety Training and Employment** programs that can be coordinated nationally and implemented by state affiliates.

INITIATIVES CONTINUED

NATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Society will develop several national programs including: **Law Enforcement and First Responder Training, Water and Wandering Safety, Employment and Vaccine Education** that are significant to the lives and well-being of individuals with Autism and can be replicated across the local affiliate network.

Vaccine Education Initiative (VEI)

People with Autism and other developmental disabilities and their families are disproportionately impacted by the ongoing public health and economic emergency caused by COVID-19. The Autism Society of America believes that increasing vaccine confidence is a crucial step towards improving the lives of people with Autism, their families and communities as we all work towards ending the pandemic. Through its **Vaccine Education Initiative (VEI)**, the Autism Society is committed to increasing vaccine education, confidence, and access through grassroots efforts. These efforts include disseminating toolkits in collaboration with the CDC, facilitating support groups, educational programs, and events in local communities, training community providers to create sensory-friendly vaccine sites.

AFFILIATE RELATIONS

Our initiatives for Affiliate Relations are intended to strengthen our affiliates to allow them to best serve their communities, expand into unserved areas with meaningful and impactful services, and create new affiliates in areas that are lacking in access to programs and services.

Operate as an Affiliate Support Service

The Society will more effectively provide support services over time and based on the diverse needs of the affiliates to include: **onboarding support, training programs, an affiliate portal, regular and effective communication as a support service, platform for effective resource sharing and toolkits and/or templates.**

Grow Existing Affiliates

The Society will undertake an assessment and may recommend restructuring of affiliates (e.g., combining affiliates) or expansion of an affiliate's geographic area.

INITIATIVES CONTINUED

Add New Affiliates

The Society will assess geographic gaps in coverage and **evaluate new territories and markets** using metrics such as population density, fund development capabilities and needs assessment. **The Society will develop a model for starting new affiliates that is replicable and promotes affiliate sustainability.**