



*"Improving the quality of life for all  
citizens of St. Joseph County  
through collaborative efforts."*

**2021**

## **Annual Report to the Community**

Access to Healthcare

Adult Services Network

Child Death Review

Early Childhood Workgroup/  
Great Start Collaborative

Housing Task Force

Project Connect Committee

Substance Abuse Task Force

Task Force on Family Violence



ST. JOSEPH COUNTY  
**HUMAN SERVICES  
COMMISSION**

# 2021 HSC Members

## Executive Committee

### **Chair, Kathy Olsen**

Quality Assurance & Project Coordinator / WDB  
Liaison, Michigan Works! Southwest

### **Vice Chair, Rebecca Burns**

Health Officer, BHSJ Community Health Agency

### **Past Chair, Michelle Williamson**

CEO, Community Action Agency

### **Member at Large, Charles Rose**

Director, Department of Health & Human Services

### **Member at Large, Kris Kirsch**

Exec. Director, CMH & SAS

### **St. Joseph County Commission, Fiduciary**

Kathy Pangle, County Commissioner

## HSC Body

### **Penny Brockway**

SJC Superintendent's Association Colon Community  
Schools

### **Lindsay Harrison**

Three Rivers Health

### **Teresa Belote**

Superintendent of Schools, SJC ISD

### **Stephanie Zann**

Great Start Collaborative Coordinator

### **Kelli Tackett**

Executive Director, Keystone Place, Inc.

### **Kevin Kane /Judge David Tomlinson**

St. Joseph County Juvenile Court

### **Tonya Howden**

V.P. of Student Services, Glen Oaks Community College

### **Stacy Linihan**

Covered Bridge Healthcare

### **Pamela Riley**

Executive Director, SJC Commission on Aging

### **Keith Knox**

Aetna Better Health of Michigan

### **Allen Balog**

St. Joseph County Transportation Authority

### **Matie James**

Citizen Representative

### **Deborah Hackworth**

Director, Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services

### **Kelly Hostetler**

St. Joseph County United Way

### **Tami Farnum**

Supportive Services for Veteran Families

## *Message from the 2021 Human Services Commission Chair*

### *Greetings!*

*As Chair of the St. Joseph County Human Services Commission, I want to thank all the task force and workgroup members for their work and commitment to St Joseph County.*

*Our task forces and workgroups strive to enhance and fill gaps in human services within our community, making our community stronger.*

*This year's annual report highlights their accomplishments during 2021. We have continued to take great strides this year as we grow SJC Resources Google group. The task forces have also been instrumental in keeping the Resource Guide updated. Both are products of the St. Joseph County Human Services Commissions' workgroups and task forces.*

*Please join us as we celebrate our progress and move into 2022!*

*Kathy Olsen, Michigan Works! SW*

## **Mission & Vision**

The **MISSION** of the SJC HSC is to "coordinate and leverage collaborative efforts to improve the quality of life for all citizens."

Our **VISION** is to facilitate "seamless and efficient access to services that support individual, family, and community needs."

## **The Purpose of the HSC**

The St. Joseph County Human Services Commission (HSC) was established by the St. Joseph County Commission in 1995 as the single multi-purpose collaborative for St. Joseph County. Their resolution authorized SJC Human Services Commission to:

- Forge alliances
- Create a shared vision
- Mobilize resources for services to families whose needs are being met by multiple agencies

Currently HSC is comprised of 18 member agencies working together to coordinate health and human services across systems. HSC fosters collaboration and relationships among agencies to prevent duplication of services and provide better service to our citizens.

The HSC does this work through established task forces and workgroups.

To learn more about the work of the HSC, contact Collaborative Coordinator Laura Brott, at 269-625-1820 or [BrottL@michigan.gov](mailto:BrottL@michigan.gov).

## "Connection" Tools at your Fingertips

*"Our agency appreciates all the resource tools and services the HSC provides for our county. We use them virtually every day." - SJC Resources Google Group member*



With over 537 frontline workers across the county in this email chain, the **SJC Resources Google group** continues to meet non-traditional needs countywide.

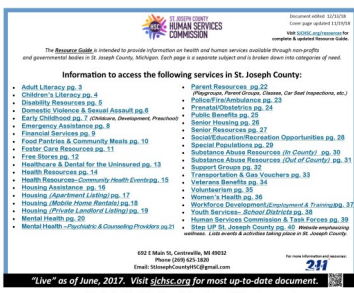
*"Needs are met quickly without the hindrance of paperwork!"*  
-SJC Housing Task Force member



Due to COVID transmission risks and low vaccination rate, in lieu of a large in-person Community Resource Roundtable, **Virtual Lunch and Learns** provided front line workers opportunities to learn about services other agencies are providing and the faces that provide these services. Based on convenience, we will continue this format but also bring back the in-person Community Resource Roundtable to provide a snapshot of the services available in our county while networking with those that provide them. In 2021, 80 front line workers attended the Virtual Lunch and Learn about helping persons experiencing homeless or nearly homeless access services and 50 attended another event introducing the Meet the Need platform.



**St Joseph County Human Services Commission** is on Facebook! This is one more avenue to connect to the public and push information out about the many events and resources in St. Joseph County. The page has **1,297 page followers** and helps push changing service information out to the public.



St Joseph County's comprehensive **Resource Guide** is located on the HSC website. This is a live document regularly updated with current services. Popular pages include food resources, free store hours, and parent resources.

*"I sure appreciate this county's grassroots effort to collect information about the services available and share the information with frontline workers and the public"*  
- SJC Resources Google Group member



The HSC calendar of supportive events and services includes community events, food pantry and free store hours, support & recovery groups, and much more. Users can add events directly to their calendars from the site.

*"I am on this calendar ALL the time. Thank you!!"*  
- SJC Task Force on Family Violence member

The HSC website was accessed by over 2,700 users in 2021.

**Add the HSC website onto your mobile phone home screen or add as a favorite on your desktop!**







The **SJC Resources Google Email Group** was originally created among the task forces and workgroups in November 2016. It has grown to 537 caring individuals and professionals working on the front lines in St. Joseph County across many human services agencies, groups, and faith based organizations. The group email service is used to share agency updates, upcoming events, and request help finding a service or meeting a need.\*

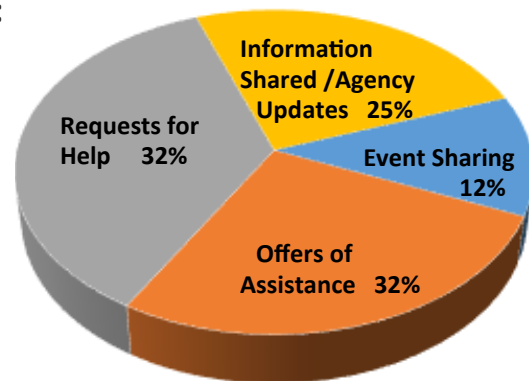
#### 478 total Google Group posts during 2021:

**Offers of Assistance 153 posts**

**Requests for Help 151**

**Information Shared & Agency Updates 119**

**Event Sharing Posts 55**



#### \* In 2021, within the Google group there were:

- 76 requests and offers for household goods
- 50 requests and offers for clothing
- 142 requests and offers for miscellaneous items (medical equipment, food, car seats & more)
- 55 requests for housing or available housing postings

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**“This resource group is truly a blessing to all the families in St. Joseph County.”**

-DHHS CPS staff, member of SJC Resources Google Group

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***Front line workers in St. Joseph County can  
request to join the SJC Resources email group by emailing  
[BrottL@michigan.gov](mailto:BrottL@michigan.gov)***

# St. Joseph County Housing Collaborative



The St. Joseph County Human Services Commission (HSC) collaborated with municipalities, chambers of commerce, businesses, developers, and agencies to create a county-wide housing plan to address the lack of housing in St. Joseph County.

The housing plan, completed in 2021, focuses on improving existing housing stock in our county as well as increasing the housing in our community. The St. Joseph County Housing Collaborative committee formed late in the year to start moving the work of the plan forward. The group is currently investigating housing construction and revitalization projects slated for 2022 and forming short term goals.



ST. JOSEPH COUNTY  
**HOUSING**  
COLLABORATIVE

SJC Commission on Aging • Community Action Agency • Hope United • Keystone Place •  
• St Joseph County Government • St Joseph County Human Services Commission  
• SJC Housing Taskforce Chair • Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce • City of Sturgis •  
Huss Project • Three Rivers Area Chamber of Commerce • Michigan Works! SW  
The Village of Mendon /Mendon Housing Initiative • Citizen Representative •  
Sturgis Area Community Foundation • City of Three Rivers • W.E. Upjohn Institute

## Drive-Thru Project Connect 2021



Project Connect is a collaboration of the St. Joseph County Human Services Commission, its task forces, and other agencies serving St. Joseph County. The 15th Annual Project Connect was turned into a drive-thru event due to COVID transmission concerns.

### **2021 Project Connect:**

- Served 330 Households.
- 47 agencies providing resource information for: utilities and housing, education, legal aid, health & wellness, addiction recovery, family services, aging adults, employment, and transportation.
- Distributed both fresh food and commodities boxes to all participants.
- 330 Community help cards with phone numbers for agencies distributed.
- Laundry detergent and hygiene packs distributed.
- Vaccinations provided.
- Over 11,000 people reached with resource information through Facebook posts .

### **Project Connect Planning Committee**

Chair: Laura Brott, SJC Human Services Commission  
BrottL@michigan.gov

Chuck Asher, Community Action  
Michelle Boudreau, South Michigan Food Bank  
Rod & Betty Detweiler, Firm Foundations Ministries  
Jill Gunn, Hope United

Marsha Keefer, South Michigan Food Bank  
Cindi Pennington, KMG Prestige  
Susan Pyles, DHHS– MYOI Program  
Amanda Schemmel, Covered Bridge Healthcare  
Stephanie Zann, SJC Great Start Collaborative

## Access to Health Care

**Chair: David Shannon, Three Rivers Health**

*dshannon@trhealth.org*

### Participating Agencies:

- Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services
- Ascension Borgess Hospital
- BHSJ Community Health Agency
- SJC Intermediate School District
- Three Rivers Health
- Thurston Woods Village
- SJC Human Services Commission
- Covered Bridge Healthcare
- SJC Commission on Aging
- Bethel Baptist Church
- St. Joseph County United Way

### Collaboratively accomplished:

- ◆ Relayed COVID information to the healthcare workers, the public, and at-risk populations during the pandemic regarding CDC recommendations, testing sites, and vaccinations.
- ◆ Shared information regarding access to new health services in the county.
- ◆ Collaborated to efficiently provide vaccine and raise the level of vaccination in St. Joseph County. The group utilized a grant obtained through St Joseph County United Way to provide \$30,000 in incentives for vaccination and vaccine hesitancy education.
- ◆ Increased community access to health services by providing outreach to hard-to-reach populations including the homeless, prisons, Amish, Hispanic, and others through mobile health services.
- ◆ Organized daily health presentations at the St. Joseph County Fair's Community Tent featuring these topics: Early childhood programs, substance abuse prevention, prevention strategies for the elderly, women's health, and mental health awareness with a focus on PTSD.



## Adult Services Network

**Co-Chair: Nicole Notestine, St. Joseph County Commission on Aging, *nnotestine@sjcoa.com***

**Co-Chair: Alexis Flowers, CMH *aflowers@stjoecmh.org***

### Participating Agencies:

- Absolute Homecare
- Aetna Better Health of Michigan
- Area Agency on Aging 3C
- Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse
- Home Joy
- Department of Health & Human Services
- Disability Network of Southwest Michigan
- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services
- Fairview Rehabilitation Community
- Edgewood Healthcare
- Promedica-Heartland Hospice
- Safe Haven
- SJC Human Services Commission
- SJC Veterans Services
- SJC Commission On Aging
- Skaggs Assisted Living
- Beacon-Three Rivers Home Health and Hospice

### Collaboratively accomplished:

- ◆ Services to Victims of Elder Abuse Program 2020/2021
  - 18 participants served
- ◆ 50 community partners involved in the ASN google group and 12 regularly attended the monthly meetings
- ◆ Collaborated with the Human Services Commission to update the Community Resource Guide pages pertaining to Seniors and Senior Health.
- ◆ Organized an outdoor job fair promoting open job positions in healthcare
- ◆ Assembled 140 Senior Resource folders to give out at fresh food distributions throughout the county.

“

The Adult Services Network provides opportunities to discuss issues affecting the older and vulnerable adult population in St. Joseph County and to identify programs to implement.

Nikki Notestine, Adult Services Network Co-Chair

”

## Child Death Review

**Chair: Holly Cerny, Constantine Public Schools, [hcerny@constps.org](mailto:hcerny@constps.org)**

**Vice Chair: Matthew Deming, DHHS, [Demingm2@michigan.gov](mailto:Demingm2@michigan.gov)**

### Participating Agencies:

- BHSJ Community Health Agency
- Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services
- Michigan Public Health Institute
- Michigan State Police
- SJC Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- SJC Human Services Commission
- SJC Intermediate School District
- Sturgis Fire Department
- Sturgis Hospital
- Sturgis Pediatrics
- Sturgis Police Department
- Three Rivers Health
- Three Rivers Police Department

This interdisciplinary team of medical staff, law enforcement, and other professionals review child deaths within St. Joseph County to determine if these deaths of 0-18 years olds were preventable. When appropriate, they suggest community-wide prevention education to prevent future deaths.

- ◆ 7 cases were reviewed in 2021.
- ◆ Un-safe sleep habits, suicide, and a vehicular accident contributed to preventable deaths of children reviewed in 2021.

## Great Start Collaborative/Early Childhood Workgroup

**Chair: Stephanie Zann, Great Start Collaborative/ISD, [szann@sjcisd.org](mailto:szann@sjcisd.org)**

- Aetna Better Health of Michigan
- Area Preschool Providers
- BHSJ Community Health Agency
- Burr Oaks Schools
- Centreville Public Schools
- Southwest Child Care Resources
- Colon Schools
- Community Action
- Community Mental Health & SAS
- Constantine Public Schools
- Council for Prevention of Child Abuse/Neglect
- Covered Bridge Healthcare
- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services
- Foster Parent Liaison
- Kinship Care
- Mendon Schools
- Michigan Alliance for Families
- Nottawa Community School
- SJC Human Services Commission
- SJC Intermediate School District  
Great Start Readiness Program  
Early Headstart & Childcare Partnerships  
Early On  
Special Education  
Parent Coalition
- SJC Probate Court
- Sturgis Pregnancy Helpline
- Three Rivers Schools
- United Way

### Collaboratively accomplished:

The SJC Great Start Collaborative/Early Childhood Workgroup continued implementing its 4-year strategic plan.

- ◆ Awarded \$33,000 in Trusted Advisor Grants to focus on building early literacy skills.
- ◆ Continued the Talk, Read, Sing community campaign with 3 new community partners.
- ◆ Distributed 320 Ready Calendars to support school readiness skills at home.
- ◆ Screened 134 children with the Ages and Stages Questionnaire online system
- ◆ Offered 5 Conscious Discipline classes and offered ten hours of professional development from a master trainer in Conscious Discipline to the community.
- ◆ Held 6 Book-Walks in local parks, three Musical Storybooks performances, and one Jim Gill Community Concert for families.
- ◆ Held summer outdoor playgroups each week in Three Rivers and Sturgis. Offered virtual Music Together classes with the Three Rivers Library.
- ◆ Distributed 250 Welcome Baby Bags to new parents thru Three Rivers Hospital and Bronson Hospital as a collaboration grant from the Sturgis Foundation, with St. Joseph County Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Council.



## Housing Task Force/Local Planning Body of Balance of State Continuum of Care

**Chair: Jan Reed, Department of Health and Human Services, [Reedj4@michigan.gov](mailto:Reedj4@michigan.gov)**



- Balance of State Continuum of Care
- Battle Creek VA
- Community Action
- Community Mental Health & SAS
- Covered Bridge Healthcare
- Disability Network
- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services
- Elm Tree Apartments
- Fair Housing Center SWM
- Habitat for Humanity
- Hope House
- Hope United
- Integrated Services
- KeyStone Place
- KMG Prestige
- Michigan State Housing Development Authority
- Michigan Works! SW
- SJC Commission On Aging
- St. Joseph County Government
- SJC Intermediate School District
- SJC Human Services Commission
- SJC Realtor/Renter Association
- St. Joseph County Transportation Authority
- Salvation Army
- Senior Services
- Sturgis Neighborhood Program
- True North
- United Community Assistance Program (UCAP)
- Woda Management
- City of Sturgis
- Sturgis Episcopal Church– Friday Friendship Meal

### 2021 Statistics

- ◆ 134 homeless people on Point-In-Time Count Day
- ◆ 537 literally homeless persons served in St. Joseph County
- ◆ 698 Households served with homeless prevention financial assistance, equaling \$2,802,809. (This includes rent, utilities, and security deposits.)
- ◆ 44 Households with 28 children served by rapid rehousing programs equaling \$361,650.
- ◆ Over 150 cases coordinated through Interagency Services Team with focus of minimizing barriers to help people get housed and stay housed
- ◆ Used Mental Health grants to house 41 households with severe and persistent mental illness
- ◆ 330 families impacted through drive-thru Project Connect

### Collaboratively Accomplished:

- Oversight to our county's Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (Keystone Place); money received, spent, and outcomes to assure a comprehensive community-wide service and housing delivery system.
- Coordinated with HSC to provide Lunch & Learn training to agencies on how to access homeless and homeless prevention services.
- Provided presentation of homeless services to Sturgis City Commission

## Task Force on Family Violence

**Chair: Deborah Hackworth, [deborahh@dasasmi.org](mailto:deborahh@dasasmi.org)**  
**Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services**



Annual Candlelight Vigil  
"Remember My Name"

### Participating Agencies:

- Aetna Better Health of Michigan
- Area Agency on Aging
- Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services
- Covered Bridge Healthcare
- Department of Health & Human Services
- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services
- Great Start Collaborative
- Hope House
- Riverside Church
- SJC Human Services Commission
- SJC Sheriff's Department
- SJC Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- Sturgis Pregnancy Helpline
- Three Rivers Pregnancy Helpline

### Collaboratively accomplished:

- ◆ Held annual Domestic Violence Candlelight Vigil – approximately 40 attendees.
- ◆ Continued to compare emergency response calls to DASAS with cases submitted to Prosecuting Attorney's office.
- ◆ Community partner presentations at meetings to learn about and discuss systematic practices and effects on survivors.
- ◆ Maintained Task Force Facebook page to push out more information to public about healthy relationships.
- ◆ Task force was instrumental in promoting prevention education throughout the year.



## Substance Abuse Task Force

**Chair: Mikayla Finnerman and Mark Olsen**

**Community Mental Health & SAS**

[mfinnerman@stjoecmh.org](mailto:mfinnerman@stjoecmh.org)

[molsen2@stjoecmh.org](mailto:molsen2@stjoecmh.org)



### *Participating Agencies:*

- Aetna Better Health of Michigan
- BHSJ Community Health Agency
- Celebrate 1 Church/Destiny Church
- Covered Bridge Healthcare
- Department of Health & Human Services
- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services
- Great Start Collaborative
- St. Joseph County Community Corrections
- SJC Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse
- SJC Human Services Commission
- St. Joseph County Probation Division
- St. Joseph County Transportation Authority
- Riverside Church
- NuVision Withdrawal Management at Three Rivers Health
- South West Michigan Behavioral Health
- Recovery Resource Center

### *Collaboratively accomplished:*

**Held 5 campaigns in FY 20/21: Methamphetamine, Underage Alcohol Use, and Underage Marijuana Use, RX Drug Misuse, Vaping**

- ◆ Grew email database to reach over 600 community members and front line workers.
- ◆ Social Media interactions: over 5000 people reached on Facebook. Joeinsider.com ads reached 14,000 views per month.
- ◆ Expanded community sectors representation on Task Force.
- ◆ Established a “Go-To” person within Hispanic community.
- ◆ **Alcohol/ Compliance Checks (to prevent distribution of products to individuals under age of 18)**
  - ◆ Provided education to 74 alcohol/tobacco retailers.
  - ◆ Completed 21 retailer alcohol compliance checks (20 passed).
  - ◆ Completed 49 tobacco retailer compliance checks (49 passed).
- ◆ **Opioid / RX Drug Mis-Use Campaign**
  - ◆ Campaign flyers reached 5,186 people on Facebook.
  - ◆ Held Naloxone Training for the public. All fire departments in St. Joseph County are trained and re-stocked with kits.
  - ◆ 825 pounds of medication collected at drop off locations.
- ◆ **Methamphetamine Campaign**
  - ◆ 2021 Voices of Hope and Recovery Event for Meth Campaign– 39 in-person attendees / 529 watched live stream.
- ◆ **Underage Drinking Campaign**
  - ◆ Facebook posts reached 13, 518 people.
  - ◆ Virtual underage drinking presentation had 461 viewers.
- ◆ **Underage Marijuana Use Campaign**
  - ◆ Facebook posts reached 9,095 people.
  - ◆ County Fair presentation– 13 attended / 775 individual interactions at educational booth.
- ◆ **Vaping Campaign**
  - ◆ Reached 13,581 people through Facebook posts.
  - ◆ Presentation at White Pigeon High School—12 persons attended.
  - ◆ Ran 90 fifteen second commercials on radio.
- ◆ **Continued Prime For Life curriculum**
  - ◆ Served 119 individuals in Saturday Prime for Life classes.
  - ◆ Served 12 Juvenile Day Treatment Center students in program.
  - ◆ Offering virtual Spanish class option.



## Strategic Planning

*Much of our strategic plan for 2017-2021 focused on changes internally to strengthen communication within our collaborative as well as communication with other bodies and agencies in SJC. The end result is residents receiving services because both the frontline workers serving them know what is available in our county and residents know how to access these services.*



## Strategic Plan Items Accomplished in 2021

*HSC addressed the lack of housing in St. Joseph County by collaborating with municipalities, chambers of commerce, and agencies to develop a community master housing plan under the guidance of the South Michigan Planning Council. The plan was completed in 2021 and a workgroup formed.*

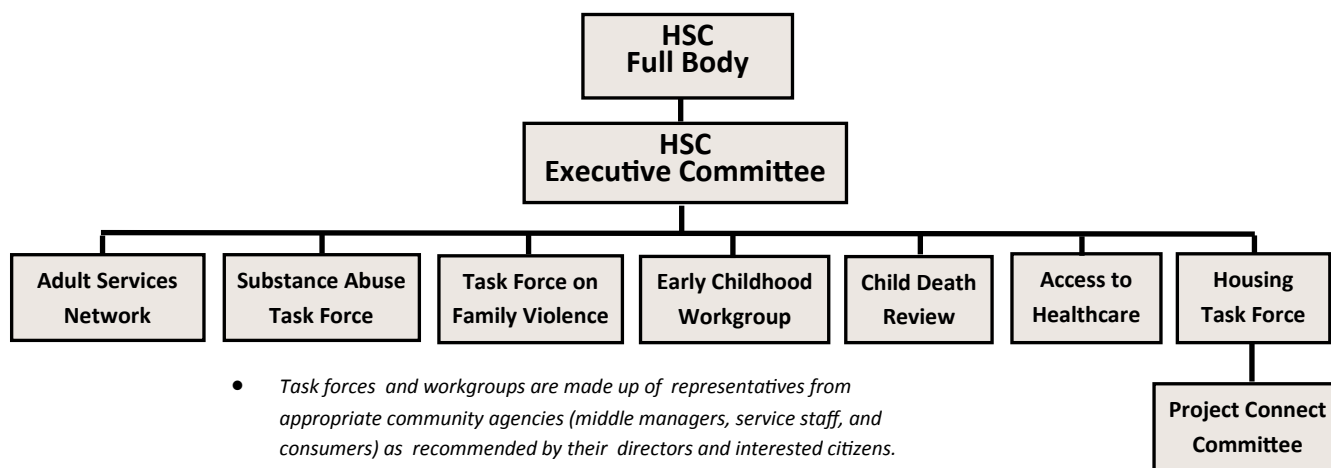
*In 2021, the HSC's website of connection tools (including the community resource guide and community help card) along with its Facebook page and SJC Resources Google Group were an integral part of keeping the community informed of service changes and availability during the Pandemic.*

## Focus for 2022

*Housing continues to be a priority. The newly formed Housing Plan work group will start work on the county-wide housing plan. The HSC will also continue to build its network with community groups and marketing its resources website to agency workers and the public, county-wide.*

*The St. Joseph County Human Services' Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 can be viewed at [www.sjchumanservices.com](http://www.sjchumanservices.com)*

## SJC Human Services Commission—Organizational Diagram



- Task forces and workgroups are made up of representatives from appropriate community agencies (middle managers, service staff, and consumers) as recommended by their directors and interested citizens.
- The HSC provides feedback to the workgroups on their goals and activities, and offers assistance and resources as needed and available.

To get involved in the HSC work groups, contact Laura Brott, 269-625-1820 or email [BrottL@michigan.gov](mailto:BrottL@michigan.gov)