ACF's Strategic Plan includes five strategic goals that together support the agency’s mission to promote the economic and social well-being of children, youth, families, individuals, and communities by providing federal leadership, partnership, and resources for the compassionate and effective delivery of human services. Each goal intentionally cuts across ACF programs and populations, rather than being office-specific, to reflect the interrelatedness of our programs and to ensure we are collaborating across our agency in order to move the needle for those we serve. Specific objectives appear in a bulleted list underneath each goal. This plan is envisioned as a living document that will drive action and change. As shown in the graphic above, Strategic Goal 1 is intended to be an explicit part of each of the other four goals, since advancing equity must be central to everything we do and how we do it.

Strategic Goal 1: Advance equity by reducing structural barriers including racism and other forms of discrimination that prevent economic and social well-being

- Center and integrate the perspectives and experiences of program participants in the design, management, evaluation, and decision-making of ACF programs and operations.
- Identify and close gaps in program outcomes for historically underserved and/or marginalized populations across all ACF programs.
- Eliminate systemic barriers to funding access that applicants to grants and contracts face (e.g., limited staff with knowledge of the application process).
Strategic Goal 2: Take a preventative and proactive approach to ensuring child, youth, family, and individual well-being

- Increase access to supportive, upstream prevention resources and services, particularly evidence-based, culturally relevant, and community-based approaches (e.g., effective child-centered parenting strategies, social and economic supports, access to high-quality early childhood programs).
- Improve outreach, engagement, and connections to identify and reach those who may be eligible for ACF services and programs but are not receiving them.
- Empower individuals to determine what supports they need in order to thrive and gain independence.
- Use data and lived experiences to predict and preempt needs.

Strategic Goal 3: Use whole-family, community-based strategies to increase financial stability and economic mobility

- Expand the reach of initiatives that intentionally combine support for parents and caregivers (e.g., financial capability services, workforce training, parent education, social-emotional supports) with services for children and youth, including accessible, high-quality early childhood programs.
- Ensure that programs are focused on the multi-generational linkages between child and caregiver.
- Build capacity and infrastructure at the community level (e.g., through funding, guidance, training, partnerships) to create environments where children, youth, families, and individuals can collectively thrive.

Strategic Goal 4: Support communities and families to respond to acute needs and facilitate recovery from a range of crises and emergency situations

- Ensure that crisis support is trauma-informed, culturally specific, gender-responsive, timely, and tailored to community needs.
- Foster resiliency (e.g., economic, social/emotional) among children, youth, families, individuals, and communities to support them in weathering and recovering from emergencies.
- Encourage and support ACF grantees to exercise authority and discretion during times of crisis to use funds strategically, equitably, and efficiently and to share data, information, and resources across systems and service sectors.

Strategic Goal 5: Enable and promote innovation within ACF to improve the lives of children, youth, families, and individuals

- Establish structures, processes, and tools that incorporate innovation into the culture and operations of ACF.
- Improve employee job engagement, experience, capacity, and well-being, especially during high-pressure periods or emergencies.
- Strengthen evidence-building activities and expand access to and use of data to improve the design and delivery of all ACF programs.
- Bring an equity lens to recruitment, hiring, advancement, and employee satisfaction, recognizing variations in experience across identity groups.