



“Improving the quality of life for all citizens of St. Joseph County through collaborative efforts.”

2023

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**

2023 HSC Members

Executive Committee

Chair, Kathy Olsen

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

Vice Chair, Cameron Bullock

Executive Director, Pivotal

Past Chair, Rebecca Burns

Health Officer, BHSJ Community Health Agency

Member at Large, Stacy Linihan

Director, Covered Bridge Healthcare

Member at Large, Charles Rose

Director, Department of Health & Human Services

Member at Large, Stephanie Zann

Director, GSC, Help Me Grow St. Joe

St. Joseph County Commission, Fiduciary

Rick Shaffer, County Commissioner

HSC Body

Hope Bailey

Vice President of Nursing, Three Rivers Health
Beacon Health System

Allen Balog

Director, St. Joseph County Transportation Authority

Teresa Belote

Superintendent of Schools, SJC ISD

Lynn Coursey

Community Development Coordinator, Goodwill
Industries of Southwestern Michigan

Christian Garcia

Aetna Better Health of Michigan

Deborah Hackworth

Director, Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services

Anita Harper

Executive Director, Keystone Place, Inc.

Tonya Howden

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

Matie James

Citizen Representative

Courtney Iobe

Director, Community Action Agency

Kevin Kane / Judge David Tomlinson

St. Joseph County Juvenile Court

Rachel Kowalski

SJC Superintendent's Association Colon Community Schools

Lindsay Richardson

Executive Director, Sturgis Area Community Foundation

Pamela Riley

Executive Director, SJC Commission on Aging

Luis Rosado

St. Joseph County Commissioner

Message from the 2023 Human Services Commission Chair

Greetings!

It's time to celebrate another year of the dedicated efforts and accomplishments of the St. Joseph County Human Services Commission. We especially want to thank the task force and work group members for their commitment and dedication in enhancing and filling gaps in human services within our community.

We have continued to take great strides as we grew the SJC Resources Google Group, building and strengthening community connections to address immediate needs; and the task forces have been instrumental in keeping the valuable Resource Guide updated. Additionally, there has been a renewed focus on addressing the need for more affordable housing throughout the county.

The 2023 annual report highlights the past year's accomplishments of the St. Joseph County Human Services Commission, its task forces, and work groups.

Please join us as we celebrate our progress and move into 2024!

Best regards,

Kathy Olsen, Michigan Works! Southwest

2023 Chair, St. Joseph County Human Services Commission

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 20 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.

“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

*“Covering multiple counties in our region, I’ve noticed that St. Joseph County really has it together for resource connection among agencies and is a “best practice” model for other counties!”
SJC Resources Google Group member*



With over 480 front line workers across the county in this email chain, **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*



The **Community Resource Roundtable** quickly connects current agency and organization staff, providing a snapshot of services available in the county and the faces that provide these services. Over **90** front line workers attended the roundtable in 2023.

“The round table is such a great event! I learn so much and I am able to pass this information on to those I serve.”

“Your county works so well together! Your communication and how you partner together is stellar! You don’t see that in every county. -Roundtable attendees



St Joseph County Human Services Commission on Facebook 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 1,768 page followers. Popular posts include monthly food distribution locations and Thanksgiving meals.



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

*“I sure appreciate this county’s grassroots effort to collect information about the services available and share the information with front line 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 own 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 1000 users each month in 2023.

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

www.sjcHumanServices.com



Housing Coordinator Hired



Clayton Lyczynski II of Three Rivers was hired in July 2023 to the newly created position of St. Joseph County Housing Coordinator.

Clayton is responsible for coordinating efforts to move the work of the St. Joseph County Housing Plan forward. The multi-pronged housing plan developed by the Southcentral Michigan Planning Council in 2021, focuses on three goals:

- Maintaining a diversity of housing options for all residents of St. Joseph County.
- Increasing available housing in the county for those who need options with less maintenance.
- Collaboration to better promote the county's amenities to potential residents.

Lyczynski brings a wealth of personal, educational, professional, and governmental experience to this position. He has lived in a variety of housing types within cities, townships, and villages throughout St. Joseph County over the past 40+ years; and has been a home owner in the city of Three Rivers for the last 20 years. Lyczynski attended White Pigeon and Three Rivers High Schools, Sturgis Public Schools CTE Program, and Glen Oaks Community College where he received an Associates of Applied Science Technology with a Certificate in Computer Aided Drafting and Design. He has spent his career working in the real estate and insurance industries, as well as developing his leadership and communication skills while managing and leading multiple organizations.

Over the last 5 years, Lyczynski has been actively serving our community as a Chamber Ambassador (current Ambassador of the Year), Master Planning Committee Member (City of Three Rivers, which included a housing plan like the St. Joseph County Housing Plan), City Commissioner, Commission on Aging Board member, and private consultant for housing development plans.

Kathy Olsen, Chair of the Human Services Commission, stated, "We are excited to have Clayton on board. With Clayton's passion and existing community relationships, he will be instrumental in 'connecting the dots'"

The [SJC Resources Google Email Group](#)

was created among the task forces and workgroups in November 2016 and has grown to over 480 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.

Front line workers in St. Joseph County can request to join the SJC Resources email group by emailing BrottL@michigan.gov

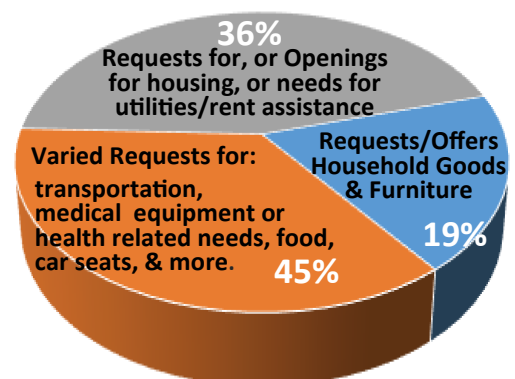
551 Google Group posts during 2023:

Requests for Help 171

Offers of Assistance 217

Information Shared & Agency Updates 98

Event Sharing Posts 65



2023 Project Connect & Veteran Stand Down

Project Connect is a collaboration of the SJC Human Services Commission, its task forces, and other agencies serving St. Joseph County. The 16th Annual Project Connect was held October 6, 2023 at the Centreville Fairgrounds in Centreville. It was held in conjunction with a Veteran Stand Down.

Event Impact:

- 200 households attended
- 529 persons were Impacted (includes household members not present)
- 87% of attendees reside within St. Joseph County
- 100 out of 107 households completing an exit survey indicated they connected at the event to a resource to help with their current needs
- 97 new households attended that did not attend in 2022
- 58 veterans attended
- Average household size was 3 persons
- Average age of attendee was 56-65 years old
- 14% of households had less than 12 years of education
- 16 households currently homeless
- 2 households in process of being evicted
- 35 attendees currently unemployed
- 28% of attendees sought food assistance
- 12% of attendees sought healthcare assistance

Project Connect is a community resource fair for individuals and families who are low income, homeless, and/or veterans to give them a hand up and improve their quality of life. Free items, services, information, and help is available on site at this one-day event.

At 2023 Project Connect:

- 38 rides provided to and from event by SJCTA, Pivotal, or Grace Sturgis
- 400 meals served
- 82 service agencies participated
- 200 hygiene kits provided
- 200 community help cards distributed
- 250 commodities boxes and 200 fresh food boxes distributed
- 43 shots administered
- 212+ health screenings provided

2023 Project Connect & Stand Down Planning Committee

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

Angela Anderson, Community Action
Joshua Reetz, Community Action
Laura Jones, Community Action
Bethenie Letts, Community Action
Stephanie Belote, Community Healing Center
Jordan Brinker/ Maria Williams, US Department of Veterans Affairs
Michelle Boudreau, South Michigan Food Bank
Holly Cerny, Pivotal
Marci Goodman, St. Joseph County Transportation Authority
Jill Gunn, Hope United
Aimnee Mullendore, BHSJ Community Health Agency
Lynette Page, Michigan Works! SW
Susan Pyles, DHHS- MYOI Program
Amanda Johnson, Covered Bridge Healthcare
Stephanie Zann, Help Me Grow St. Joe, Great Start Collaborative



Access to Health Care

Co-Chair: Rebecca Burns, BHSJ Community Health Agency

burnsr@bhsj.org

Co-Chair: Kris Dewey, BHSJ Community Health Agency

Deweyk@bhsj.org

Participating Agencies:

- Aetna Better Health of Michigan
- Ascension Borgess Hospital
- Beacon- Three Rivers Health
- BHSJ Community Health Agency
- Covered Bridge Healthcare
- Pivotal
- SJC Human Services Commission
- SJC Commission on Aging
- SJC Intermediate School District
- St. Joseph County United Way
- St. Joseph County Transportation Authority



Collaboratively accomplished:

- ◆ Shared information regarding access to new health services in the county.
- ◆ Collaborated with Sturgis Area Community Foundation and iEval to provide information for a Quality of Life Dashboard.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Supported the Health Department's work of the Community Health Improvement Plan to improve Mental Health and Maternal Infant Health. Pivotal has been working hard to improve services and promote the CCBHC model. Group members shared the availability of mental health treatment for any insurance on social media. GSC coordinated with community partners to offer playgroups and group members also promoted playgroups on social media.
- ◆ Discussed and researched starting a county-wide medical bus transportation loop. Upon investigation, a feasibility study determined the transportation authority was doing an adequate job meeting the needs of persons calling for door to door service and did not feel a countywide medical loop was necessary.

Adult Services Network

Co-Chair: Amanda Johnson, Covered Bridge Healthcare,
Amanda @sjccbh.org

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

Participating Agencies:

- Absolute Homecare
- Aetna Better Health of Michigan
- Area Agency on Aging 3C
- Beacon-Three Rivers Home Health and Hospice
- Birch Meadows
- CentricaCare
- Covered Bridge Healthcare
- Department of Health & Human Services
- Disability Network Southwest Michigan
- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services
- Edgewood Healthcare
- Fairview Rehabilitation Community
- Home Joy
- Pivotal
- Safe Haven
- SJC Human Services Commission
- SJC Veterans Services
- SJC Commission On Aging

Collaboratively accomplished:

- ◆ Services to Victims of Elder Abuse Program 2022/2023
 - 28 St. Joseph County 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 St. Joseph County Community Resource Guide pages pertaining to Seniors and Senior Health.
- ◆ Organized a 2023 Senior Resource Fair.
 - 32 agencies participated
 - 180 participants served

“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.

Amanda Johnson, Adult Services Network Co-Chair



Child Death Review

Co-Chair: Brian Stears, St. Joseph County Sheriff's Department, StearsB@stjosephcountymi.org

Co-Chair: Madonna Hilarides, BHSJ Community Health Agency, hilaridesm@bhsj.org

Participating Agencies:

- BHSJ Community Health Agency
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services
- Michigan Public Health Institute
- Michigan State Police
- Pivotal
- SJC Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- SJC Human Services Commission
- SJC Intermediate School District
- St. Joseph County Sheriff's Department
- Sturgis Fire Department
- Sturgis Hospital
- Sturgis Pediatrics
- Sturgis Police Department
- Three Rivers Health– Beacon Health System
- Three Rivers Police Department

This interdisciplinary team of medical staff, law enforcement, and other professionals reviews 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.

- ◆ 6 cases were reviewed in 2023.
- ◆ 6 deaths were considered preventable (sleep related infant death, transportation-related fatalities, acute intoxication, and suicide).

Great Start Collaborative/Early Childhood Workgroup

Chair: Stephanie Zann, Great Start Collaborative/ISD, szann@sjcisd.org

- Aetna Better Health of Michigan
- Area Preschool Providers / Child Care Programs
- BHSJ Community Health Agency
- Community Action
- Council for Prevention of Child Abuse/Neglect
- Covered Bridge Healthcare
- DHHS
- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services
- Kinship Care
- Local School Districts
- Michigan Alliance for Families
- Pivotal
- Pregnancy Helpline of Three Rivers
- Southwest Child Care Resources
- SJC Human Services Commission
- SJC Intermediate School District
Great Start Readiness Program
Early Headstart & Childcare Partnerships
Early On
Special Education
Family Coalition
- SJC Probate Court
- Sturgis Pregnancy Helpline

Collaboratively accomplished:

The SJC Great Start Collaborative/Early Childhood Workgroup completed an update to its 4-year strategic plan.

- Continued the Talk, Read, Sing community campaign.
- Distributed 300 Ready Calendars to support school readiness skills at home.
- Offered 8 Conscious Discipline classes. Created the Parenting Your Teen course with the Child Abuse/Neglect Prevention Council.
- Continued the implementation of Help Me Grow St. Joe.
- Screened 310 children with the Ages and Stages Questionnaire online system.
- Held 6 Book-Walks, in partnership with the Three Rivers Library, throughout the summer at The Huss Project and Skidmore Park.
- Continued the Trusted Advisor work focused on building early literacy skills with 4 Musical Storybooks and Music Together family classes in partnership with Three Rivers Library, Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, and The Huss Project.
- Coordinated with community partners to offer playgroups at the Three Rivers and Sturgis libraries and the Huss Project.
- Distributed 275 Welcome Baby Bags to new parents thru Beacon-Three Rivers Hospital and Bronson Hospital as a collaboration with grant from the Exchange Club of Sturgis and support, parenting tips, and local community resources from the St. Joseph County Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Council.
- Hosted the "Celebrating Babies" community event for pregnant mom's and those parenting children under 1 year along with BHSJ Health Department, with 10 exhibitors.
- The Great Start Collaborative (GSC) Joined the Region 8 Literacy Hub initiative, collaborating with Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, and VanBuren counties to develop regional literacy based projects encouraging family engagement.



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

Chair: Laura Brott, St. Joseph Count Human Services Commission, stjosephcountyhsc@gmail.com



Participating Agencies:

- Balance of State Continuum of Care
- Battle Creek VA
- Community Action
- 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
- Neighborhoods Inc., Battle Creek
- Pivotal
- SJC Commission On Aging
- St. Joseph County Government
- SJC Intermediate School District
- SJC Veteran Services
- SJC Human Services Commission
- SJC Realtor/Renter Association
- St. Joseph County Transportation Authority
- Salvation Army
- Milestone Senior Services
- Sturgis Neighborhood Program
- United Community Assistance Program (UCAP)
- Woda Management
- City of Sturgis
- Sturgis Episcopal Church– Friday Friendship Meal

2023 Statistics

- ◆ 61 persons counted experiencing literal homelessness on 2023 Point-In-Time Count Day
- ◆ 326 literally homeless adults served in St. Joseph County in 2023
- ◆ 112 literally homeless children served in St. Joseph County in 2023
- ◆ 170 households served by homeless prevention programs, equaling \$152,747.00. (This includes rent and utilities.)
- ◆ 15 households with a total of 16 children were served by rapid rehousing programs equaling \$31,384.00
- ◆ 200 families impacted through 2023 Project Connect (529 total persons in households)

Collaboratively Accomplished:

- Oversight to our county's Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (Keystone Place then Neighborhoods Inc.); money received, spent, and outcomes to assure a comprehensive community-wide service and housing delivery system.
- Researched free P.O. Boxes for homeless individuals and now have a system in place to assist persons experiencing homelessness secure a P.O. Box.

Task Force on Family Violence

Chair: Deborah Hackworth, deborahh@dasasmi.org

Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services



Annual Candlelight Vigil

Participating Agencies:

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

Collaboratively accomplished:

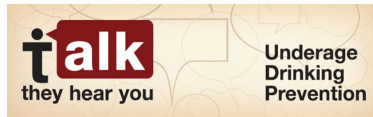
- ◆ Held annual Domestic Violence Candlelight Vigil – approximately 50 attendees.
- ◆ Maintained Task Force Facebook page to push out more information to public about healthy relationships.
- ◆ Task force was instrumental in promoting prevention education throughout the year.

Substance Abuse Task Force

Chair: Mikayla Finnerman and Mark Olsen, Pivotal

mfinnerman@pivotalstjoe.org

molsen2@pivotalstjoe.org



Participating Agencies:

- Aetna Better Health of Michigan
- BHSJ Community Health Agency
- Destiny Church
- Covered Bridge Healthcare
- Department of Health & Human Services
- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services
- Great Start Collaborative
- St. Joseph County Community Corrections
- Pivotal
- SJC Human Services Commission
- St. Joseph County Probation Division
- St. Joseph County Transportation Authority
- Riverside Church
- Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health

Collaboratively accomplished:

Held 5 campaigns in FY 22/23: Methamphetamine, Underage Alcohol Use, Underage Marijuana Use, RX Drug Misuse, Underage Vaping

- ◆ Grew email database to reach over 600 community members and front line workers.
- ◆ Social Media interactions: over 6,000 people reached on Facebook. Joeinsider.com ads reached 12,000 views per month.
- ◆ Expanded community sectors represented on Task Force.
- ◆ Created a Spanish Facebook page and established a Spanish speaking person to manage the page.
- ◆ Increased school appearance with Too Good For Drugs program.
- ◆ **Alcohol/ Compliance Checks (to prevent distribution of products to individuals under age of 18)**
 - ◆ Provided education to 72 alcohol/tobacco retailers.
 - ◆ Completed 30 retailer alcohol compliance checks (29 passed).
 - ◆ Completed 72 tobacco retailer compliance checks (70 passed).
- ◆ **Opioid / RX Drug Mis-Use Campaign**
 - ◆ Campaign flyers reached 10,000 people on Facebook.
 - ◆ 40 individuals viewed virtual presentation about RX overdose.
 - ◆ All police and fire departments in St. Joseph County are trained and re-stocked with Narcan kits.
 - ◆ Held Naloxone trainings for 269 people with 208 Narcan kits distributed.
 - ◆ 1,900 pounds of medication collected at drop off locations.
- ◆ **Methamphetamine Campaign**
 - ◆ 2023 Voices of Hope and Recovery Event for Meth Campaign– 74 in-person attendees.
- ◆ **Underage Drinking Campaign**
 - ◆ Facebook posts reached 10,000 individuals.
- ◆ **Underage Marijuana Use Campaign**
 - ◆ Facebook posts reached 9,000 individuals.
 - ◆ County Fair presentation– 800 individual interactions at educational booth.
- ◆ **Underage Vaping Campaign**
 - ◆ Reached 15,000 individuals through Facebook posts.
 - ◆ Presentations to Colon MS, Colon HS ,and Sturgis football teams.
 - ◆ Ran 90 thirty second commercials on both WBET and WTHD radio.
- ◆ **Continued Prime For Life Curriculum**
 - ◆ Served 106 individuals in Saturday Prime for Life classes.
 - ◆ Served 161 individuals in the 12 hour Saturday Prime for Life classes.
 - ◆ Served 8 Juvenile Day Treatment Center students in program.
 - ◆ Created all posts and flyers in Spanish and English. Offered a virtual training option in Spanish in Kalamazoo.



Strategic Planning

Much of our strategic plan for 2023 focused on strengthening communication within our collaborative as well as communication with other bodies and agencies in St. Joseph County. The end result is that 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 2023

HSC continues to address the lack of housing in St. Joseph County by collaborating with municipalities, chambers of commerce, and agencies to follow a community master housing plan developed under the guidance of the South Michigan Planning Council. HSC requested the County hire a full time housing Collaborative Coordinator to lead the work of the housing plan and the County consented.

A housing coordinator starting in July, 2023 for two years. He has been busy building connections within the community.

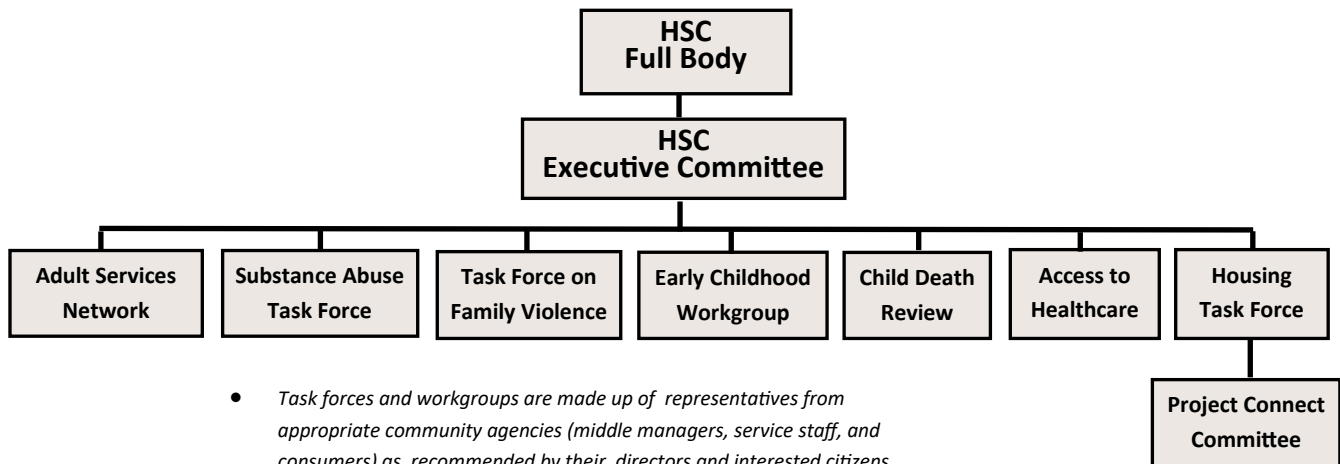
In 2023, the HSC's website of connection tools (including the community resource guide and community help card) along with its Facebook page and SJC Resources Google Group were an integral part of informing the community of services and events.

Focus for 2024

Housing continues to be a priority. The Housing Collaborative will continue with the new Housing Coordinator to 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 throughout the county.

The St. Joseph County Human Services' Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 can be viewed at: 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