



Board Retreat - May 29th, 2026

Strategic Priorities: Development, Current State and Progress

Background

The pandemic shaped how Neighbors Link understood the needs of immigrant communities in Westchester. With this experience fresh in its mind, Neighbors Link's Board of Directors embarked on a community-centered planning process to prepare its new Strategic Priorities. The Board included the following key elements into the process:

- Community needs assessment: Neighbors Link drew on our direct knowledge of client needs and barriers that surfaced during COVID 19.
- Staff input: Staff across departments were engaged in identifying opportunities for growth and impact. Their on-the-ground experience was integral to shaping priorities that were both ambitious and grounded in meeting community needs.
- Stakeholder engagement: Neighbors Link consulted with key stakeholders to understand where the organization could have the greatest impact and how it could best leverage its expertise and experience.

The result is a five-year roadmap driven by three complementary Strategic Priorities, each designed to strengthen the organization's capacity to deliver its mission in a rapidly changing environment.

Lastly, we made a decision in 2022 to develop Strategic Priorities rather than a strategic plan. We felt that a more traditional strategic plan can limit an organization to a particular set of "how" — locking in tasks and activities that may no longer make sense in a rapidly changing environment. Through these priorities, we created the opportunity to stay nimble. The *what* and *why* are clear and anchored. The *how* can evolve and adapt based on community needs. This has allowed us to move quickly when opportunities, like supporting new arrivals in 2023, emerged and to be flexible when the external environment changes.

Strategic Priorities

Neighbors Link has identified three Strategic Priorities that will guide the organization through 2027. These priorities were selected because they address the most pressing needs in the communities we serve and because they reflect where Neighbors Link is uniquely positioned to make a difference.

Strategic Priority 1: Enable clients' unfettered participation in the digital economy and digital education.

To address the inadequate access to information technology experienced in the communities we serve, including the ability of the client population to leverage the internet, computers, and telephones, Neighbors Link will undertake to improve digital literacy and provide pathways to accessibility, affordability, and digital skills.

Strategic Priority 2: Empower Economic Mobility of Clients

Neighbors Link will enhance client access to improved career pathways through acquisition and development of skills, expanded educational achievement opportunities, and expanded work force development opportunities. Because mental health wellbeing is key to personal development and advancement, Neighbors Link will help address clients' mental health needs through its resources as well as those of partner organizations.

Strategic Priority 3: Strengthen the organization as it grows

In order to ensure that the organization has the tools and resources it needs for future sustainability and strength, Neighbors Link will invest additional resources in the following: (1) internal technology and infrastructure capabilities; (2) human resources management, including employee mental health wellbeing and training and development; (3) increased capabilities for analysis of program outcomes; and (4) long-term internal financial planning and investment.

Subsequent to the development of our strategic priorities, Neighbors Link embarked on a successful \$8.5 million fundraising campaign and tailored the messaging of the campaign to include elements of the strategic priorities as well as immigration legal services.

Strategic Priorities Progress

The following provides a high-level update on progress on each Strategic Priority as of December 2025.

In 2023, we launched our Careers and Pathways department. In 2025, we served 1,028 total individuals with these new programs.

Priority 1: Digital Inclusion

Program outputs have grown consistently year over year, demonstrating strong demand and sustained delivery capacity:

- 2023: 300 people served; 145 laptops distributed
- 2024: 372 people served; 172 laptops distributed
- 2025: 349 people served; 173 laptops distributed

Additional highlights include:

- **New curriculum:** Topics expanded to include resume building, digital tools, marketing for small businesses and protecting against scams.
- **Assessment tools:** In 2024, pre- and post-student evaluations were launched to measure learning outcomes; In 2025, we expanded sample size.
- **Programmatic crossover:** Digital literacy is now integrated into the Adelante Juntos program

Priority 2: Economic Mobility

This priority has seen dramatic growth:

- 2023: 127 people served

- 2024: 643 people served
- 2025: 761 people served

Key developments include:

- **New staff:** A Workforce Development Coordinator was hired in 2025 to expand program capacity
- **Career exploration:** Information sessions introduced for high-demand fields including Home Health Aide, Certified Medical Assistant, and Green Economy Jobs
- **Expanded partnerships:** New and deepened relationships with Westchester Community College (WCC), Women's Enterprise Development Center (WEDC), Southern Westchester BOCES, and Mercy University
- **Barrier removal:** Contextualized ESL programming and scholarships are in place to reduce access barriers
- **Business Center:** 209 individuals received personalized job search support.

Priority 3: Organizational Growth

Significant investments in organizational infrastructure have been made, including:

- **New headquarters:** A move to a new headquarters facility was completed in August 2025, expanding space and operational capacity
- **HR systems:** A Professional Employer Organization (PEO) has been implemented to strengthen HR management, benefits, and compliance
- **Leadership development:** Training focused on conflict management and communication has been delivered to the leadership team and supervisors
- **Technology Integration:** The Community Law practice successfully transitioned to LegalServer, a new case management system which will increase efficiency
- **AI Readiness:** The Deputy Director completed a 10-hour professional training on AI implementation best practices so that we can strategically evaluate emerging AI tools in support of our mission.

Supporting Mental Health

Mental health support — for both clients and staff — has been a consistent thread across the Strategic Priorities. Progress as of 2025 includes:

For Clients:

- Mental Health First Aid Training launched in partnership with Bedford Central School District
- Psychoeducation program for parents in partnership with RDC Center for Counseling and Human Development
- House Calls peer-to-peer support program with a trained facilitator
- Golden Door Program – Our partnership with Open Door Family Medical Center which connects clients to group therapy services that incorporate a range of therapeutic approaches, including art therapy.

For Staff:

- Two "employee choice" mental health days implemented annually
- Dedicated wellness room in new headquarters
- Special stress management workshop delivered by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker

- 2025 Staff Retreat: "Stronger Together: Reconnect, Recharge and Realign" focused on mental health and collective well-being.
- Received proposal for trauma informed group sessions led by a team of experts.

For Clients and Staff:

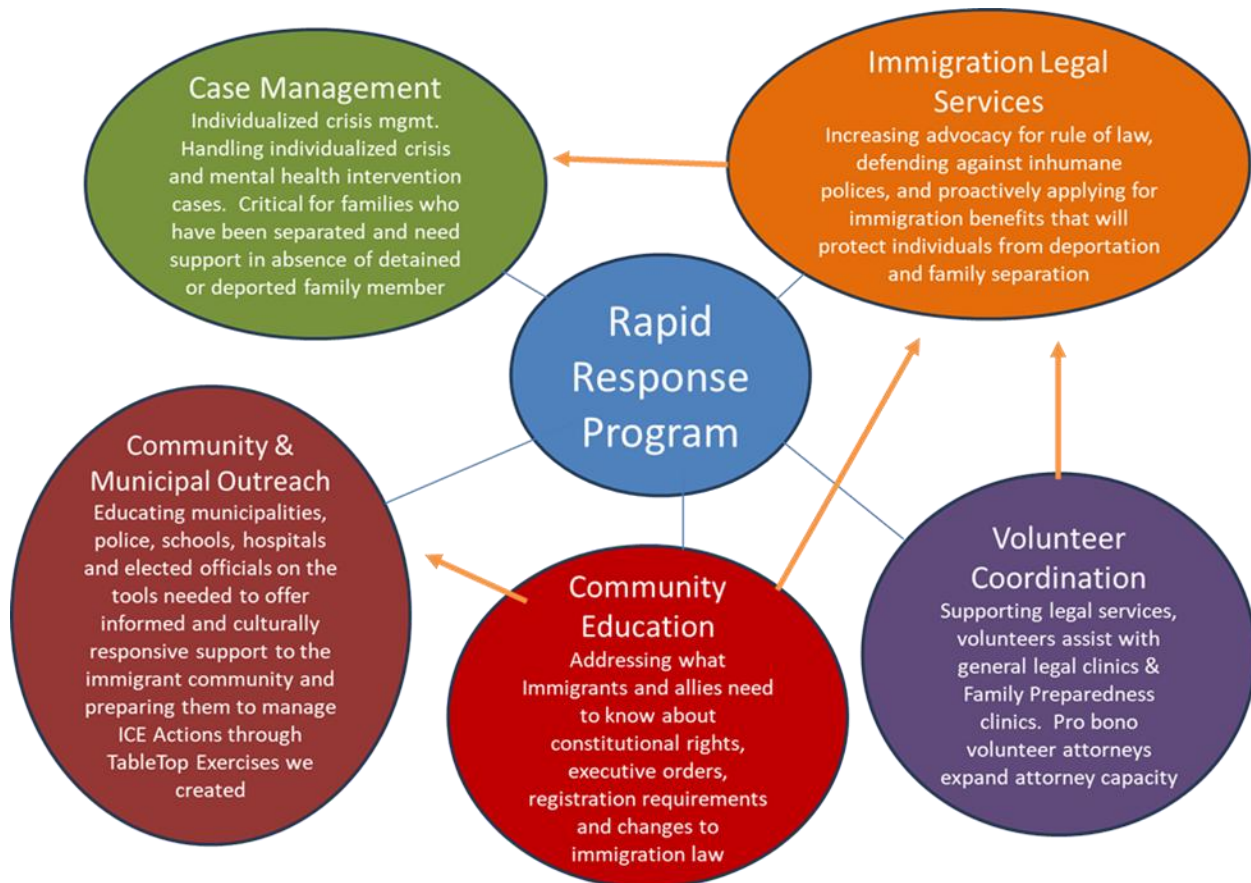
- Expanded list of volunteer mental health providers to support increased referrals
- Additional internal subject matter expertise developed

Rapid Response Model

One of the defining characteristics of Neighbors Link's approach to its work is its commitment to operating as a responsive and nimble organization.

Since 2022, Neighbors Link has continued to deliver on critical mission-driven work in addition to focusing on our three strategic priorities. The Strategic Priorities have provided a steady roadmap for decision making and resource allocation. In addition, in the current environment, the organization continuously gathers feedback from clients and partners, and adjusts programming to respond to emerging needs. This is reflected in the Neighbors Links Rapid Response Program.

Neighbors Link Rapid Response Program



How the Rapid Response Model Works

Neighbors Link has an in-house **immigration legal practice** (Neighbors Link Community Law Practice) comprising 23 lawyers and paralegals. The **Immigration legal services** provided by our legal services staff are supported by **volunteers** to increase our capacity to reach more community members with life-altering legal support. Our **legal team** refers families with urgent crises to our **client support services department**, which can help address those needs quickly through individualized case management. Our **community education efforts** support the provision of immigration legal services by ensuring that community members are educated consumers of immigration legal services, and that they understand shifting policies and available relief. Our community education efforts are furthered by offering **specialized training and best practices to community leaders and municipalities** to ensure necessary resources and policies are in place to defend and protect the rights of their immigrant residents. Our Executive Director has convened strategic groups of stakeholders with municipalities (including mayors/supervisors, elected officials, superintendents of schools, and the local chief of police) and educational institutions, hospitals, and other immigrant service providers to conduct tabletop exercises and establish coordinated policies for responding to potential large-scale ICE raids and encounters.