

ADVANTAGES OF SOUTHEAST AR, INC.  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

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Revised: October 23, 2020

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## **Program Overview**

Advantages of Southeast AR, Inc. has been providing services to individuals with developmental delays/disabilities for 49 years. The agency provides center-based and community-based services. The central administration office is located in Monticello, AR. The service area of Advantages, Inc. covers fourteen (14) Arkansas Counties for Waiver, three (3) counties for Adult Development and five (5) counties for preschool. The waiver department, administration, adult development, and children's services each operate under the corporate name; however, the preschools and adult development programs have a service name they use. The division names and service counties are as follows:

### Advantages of Southeast AR, Inc.:

Waiver: Ashley, Arkansas, Bradley, Chicot, Cleveland, Calhoun, Dallas, Desha, Drew, Grant, Jefferson, Lincoln, Phillips, Union.

Administration Office: located in Monticello, Drew County; serves all program areas.

### Discovery Skills Center, (DSC):

Adult Development: Drew, Lincoln, & Bradley Counties  
Center Location: Monticello

### Discovery Children's Centers, (DCC):

Preschool: Drew, Lincoln, Bradley, Union, & Ashley Counties  
Center Locations: Monticello, Hamburg, & Star City

The Discovery Children's Center in Monticello has an existing debt of approximately \$2.1 million. The facility serves children in Drew and Bradley County.

The Discovery Children's Center in Hamburg was purchased in February 2019. Although the building has amenities needed to provide services, there are some issues with accessibility that the agency is working to eliminate as budget funds are available.

The Discovery Children's Center in Star City, completed a \$100,000 remodeling project and began serving children at the new site in July, 2016. No debt was acquired; the cost was paid

for through existing reserve funds. After a fire in July 2019, new construction was started and the new construction will be connected to the existing building with a license capacity of 72. Operations are expected to resume in this location on November 2, 2020.

The Administration Office is located in Monticello and houses human resources, information technology, and accounts payable/receivable. The executive director and specialist staff are housed in the Monticello preschool building.

Advantages, Inc. considered the expectations of persons served and other stakeholders when developing the Strategic Plan. The Plan addresses the competitive environment, financial threats and opportunities, our capabilities to continue services through accessing our regulatory and legislative environment, consideration of area needs and demographics, planning for the use of information technology to support our operations, and developing an efficient method of service delivery to enhance our overall performance. The Strategic Plan is a work in progress, to be analyzed regularly and revised as needed. The management team reviews progress quarterly as indicated in progress notes and meeting minutes. However, due to COVID-19 and the temporary closure of several departments, quarterly meetings have not been held as normal.

Due to the magnitude of on-going Medicaid reform and the impact it may cause, the Strategic Plan will cover no more than 1 fiscal year. The executive director and management staff will continue to advocate for consumers and families during the Medicaid transformation process, and will take a proactive approach to monitoring our internal policies and procedures, and adjust accordingly with reform.

Strategic Plan Revisions: October 2012, July 2013, July 2014, July 2015, July 2016, July 2017, August 2018, June 2019, October 2020

### **State Advocacy Efforts**

Advantages, Inc. is a member of the Developmental Disabilities Provider Association, DDPA. The Association has DDPA members sitting on various Medicaid Transformation committees and providers are assisting with the design and payment structure for services to the Developmentally Disabled. The Association is committed to insuring the quality of services provided to our consumers and families. The executive director is a member of DDS Human Development Center Strategic Team and the DDS Populations sub-committee. The executive director forwards information to the Board as it is received and briefs the Board regularly at meetings.

## Service Areas and Demographics:

All service counties are located in southeast Arkansas. 2010 Census data indicates the following demographic information:

County	Population 2000	Population 2010	White	Black	Hispanic	High School	Bachelor's +	Disabled	Unemployment Rate	Food Stamps	Families Below Poverty Level	Median Income
Arkansas	20749	19019	73%	24%	3%	79%	14%	13.5%	8.1%	25%	19%	37230
Ashley	24209	21853	71%	26%	5%	81%	13%	14.7%	12.4%	29%	19%	34934
Bradley	12600	11508	69%	28%	14%	69%	13%	14.7%	10.8%	30%	21%	29908
Calhoun	5744	5368	76%	22%	3%	78%	7%	15%	9.6%	17%	12%	32450
Chicot	14177	11800	44%	54%	5%	69%	13%	17.8%	10.2%	38%	34%	21676
Cleveland	8571	8689	87%	12%	2%	86%	14%	13.3%	7.6%	24%	15%	36957
Dallas	9210	8166	56%	42%	3%	80%	12%	17.6%	10.7%	27%	18%	29602
Desha	15341	13008	50%	48%	5%	73%	14%	14.6%	10.8%	34%	28%	29051
Drew	18723	18509	70%	28%	3%	81%	19%	12.6%	11%	27%	24%	32558
Grant	16464	17853	95%	3%	2%	85%	15%	23%	7%	15%	9%	51589
Jefferson	84278	77435	43%	55%	2%	82%	17%	13.7%	9.6%	30%	23%	35998
Lincoln	14492	14134	68%	30%	3%	73%	9%	15.5%	9.6%	23%	26%	35737
Phillips	26445	21757	36%	63%	2%	71%	12%	15.7%	11%	50%	32%	27361
Union	45629	41639	65%	33%	4%	81%	16%	14%	8.9%	19%	21%	36464

### Analysis of the Changes Between 2000 and 2010 Census

County	Population 2000	Population 2010	Population +/-	Median Income 2000	Median Income 2010	Median Income +/-
Arkansas	20749	19019	-8.3%	37295	37230	-.1%
Ashley	24209	21853	-10%	36079	34934	-3.2%
Bradley	12600	11508	-8%	30621	29908	-2.3%
Calhoun	5744	5368	-6.5%	34908	32450	-7%
Chicot	14177	11800	-17%	24809	21676	-12.6%
Cleveland	8571	8689	+1.37%	39567	36957	-6.6%
Dallas	9210	8166	-11%	31608	29602	-6.34%
Desha	15341	13008	-15%	27555	29051	+5%
Drew	18723	18509	-1.15%	34919	32558	-6.7%
Grant	16464	17853	+8.4%	45165	51589	+14%
Jefferson	84278	77435	-8%	38018	35998	-5%
Lincoln	14492	14134	-2.4%	34820	35737	+2.6%
Phillips	26445	21757	-17.7%	26436	27361	+3.5%
Union	45629	41639	-8.7%	38616	36464	-5.6%

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Only Cleveland and Grant Counties gained population between the 2000 and 2010 census. Grant County is a bedroom community of Little Rock. Many people commute to Little Rock, therefore, the median household income is higher than most. High crime rates and poor performing school districts have driven population growth in both Cleveland, (Pine Bluff S.D.) and Grant County. Cleveland County is 20 miles south of Pine Bluff. Salaries have not increased (except for mandatory minimum wage increase) due to a loss of jobs in the Pine Bluff and surrounding areas. All other counties in our service area lost population over the past ten years. There is a high percentage of unemployment and families at risk of food insecurity on a daily basis. On average 35% of the population in the Advantages service area qualify for some type of Medicaid funding.

Population continued to drop in Southeast AR, with the largest drop in 2015-2016 of 895 residents in Jefferson County. Low performing school districts, loss of blue-collar jobs, and problems with the local government within Pine Bluff are key reasons for the population shift in Jefferson County. With the June 2019 announcement of plant closure by Georgia-Pacific in Crossett approximately 530 jobs were lost and this had an effect on Ashley and Drew counties.

The service area for Advantages covers the southeast quarter of the State. The area is very rural and mostly forest and farm land. There have been no new larger employers moving into the SE area other than a casino in Jefferson County; therefore, families continue to move to more populous areas of the State.

Southeast Arkansas is the poorest area of the state. Poverty, unemployment and poor performing schools make it hard for this area to thrive. Job losses usually results in a location change of families from the counties affected. As previously stated, all counties lost population except for Cleveland and Grant.

Southeast Arkansas is also considered the unhealthiest area of the state. Reasons for the rating include high poverty and accessibility to medical care. Many of the areas do not have a medical clinic; therefore, people must travel to neighboring towns or counties for treatment. A lack of affordable private insurance further complicates accessibility to medical care. In response, the State received approval from the Federal Government to expand Medicaid under what was called the *Private Option*. The Private Option met the criteria set forth in the Affordable Care Act. Although the Private Option offers insurance coverage for the uninsured, the southeast area of the state still has an accessibility issue not only for specialists, but for primary care physicians, and for transportation. Advantages, Inc. absorbs a lot of the cost for insurance for our employees. Currently there are no provisions to subsidize what Advantages, Inc. absorbs for employee insurance costs above a 32% fringe rate.

An analysis of the religious makeup of the State reveals that most citizens are protestant. In the Advantages service area, most practice one of the following: Baptist, Church of Christ, African Methodist Episcopal (AME) or Assembly of God. There are no known Jewish synagogues or mosques located in Southeast AR, and very few Catholic churches.

The management team is monitoring the growth in the Hispanic population in southeast Arkansas in order to plan for staffing and program needs. Currently we serve so few where Spanish is the primary language in the home, that we have been able to provide translation services through current employees and seldom have the need for a paid or volunteer interpreter. The agency has worked to translate enrollment information to support this population. The implementation of the Therap Data System allows for immediate translation of all required documentation and reports.

## **Financial Threats and Competitive Environment:**

### **Competition**

There are four (4) EIDT (early intervention day treatment) centers in our preschool service area: CB King, McGehee; Carousel School, Crossett; York Williams, Dermott; and Kids First, Warren. Additionally, there are three (3) ABC programs that operate in Monticello. The Hamburg, Crossett, Star City and Warren School Districts each operate an ABC program in their respective counties. The Head Start program offers preschool services for children 3-5 and the Early Head Start program offers services for children under age 3. The availability of a variety of services is good for the community; however, each source presents competition for Advantages.

The ruling to combine DDTCS and CHMS centers to form EIDT centers went into effect in 2018. However, still at this date, the standards have not been promulgated. Also, the state determined in 2018 that children who do not receive at least one therapy could not be eligible for EIDT programs and that these children would have to be dismissed from EIDT programs June 30, 2019. There is litigation pending that has caused DHS to extend that dismissal date until August 1, 2019 or until a hearing is held and a verdict rendered. This rule reduced each EIDT center by about 40% causing a loss of jobs and causing a negative impact on our financials for each EIDT. To date, litigation is still pending, and children have also been dismissed from services. DHS did not sign a MOU with the Arkansas Department of Education and thus removed the education portion of services from EIDT centers. Education services will now be provided by the Southeast Arkansas Educational Cooperative.

There are three (3) adult development programs in our service area: CB King, (McGehee), First Step, (Fordyce) and Jenkins, (Pine Bluff).

Several DDS Community and Employment Support providers serve consumers in the same fourteen counties that Advantages serves. Additionally, DDS regulations allow for anyone to become "Certified" and provide waiver services, as long as they meet the certification requirements; therefore, there are many independent service providers in our catchment area as well.

Although each program is unique and has various qualifying standards, those offering a wide variety for choice in placement which can affect Advantages' financial stability.

### **PASSE Model**

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M:Sandy\Carf\StrategicPlan16-17;June,15;July16;July17;August18;June 19;Oct 20

The PASSE system was developed as a way to meet each division's budget cuts ordered by the Governor. The cuts are needed to meet the State's increasing matching obligation under the ACA. DDS had to cut \$250 million from its 2017 annual budget and continue through the next several state fiscal years to maintain the cuts.

The Stephens Group was retained to assist the Legislative Health Task Force to identify waste within the Medicaid System and duplicative service models within the agency's individual divisions.

The state DHS Director completed studies within the operations of DHS and its inherent silos that are in place. Although all the separate divisions are under the DHS each division has their own HR, CFO, contracting officer, legal, purchasing, and IT department. The legislature has been very critical of some big contract expenses that never had outcome measures attached and the State never saw benefits from the contract.

CMS declared that the current operating system which allows a DDS licensed provider to offer both case management and provider implantation services for the same individual does not meet the standard of "conflict-free case management". The state's standards require that the same agency employee cannot supply both services for the same person and has used that policy to meet the very broad definition of "conflict-free". CMS approved the waiver renewal with the implementation of the PASSEs. After much discussion with DHS and DDS officials it has been decided that conflict-free case management issue will be completely resolved with the implementation of the PASSE. Under a PASSE plan, the consumer is attributed to a PASSE after an independent assessor has determined a tier rating for services. This eliminates the same agency setting the plan amount for the needed services. DDS planned to begin this transition process in July, 2017. However, it was pushed back and became fully operational in March of 2019. Since its inception in March, there has been conflict between providers and the PASSEs, families served and the PASSEs, legislators and the state and the PASSEs. The issues seem to finally be slowing down as people are growing used to the new system.

At this point in the state's FY, our waiver services have moved to a blended managed care system. This system in Arkansas is known as a PASSE, (Provider led Arkansas Shared Savings Entity). This is a system that is 51% provider owned and 49% managed care company (insurance) owned. Individuals will be attributed to a PASSE by the state and will select a service provider from the PASSE in which they are attributed. The provider of choice, under the PASSE, will be paid a per person per tier pre-set rate for services and must provide services for that global payment rate. It is not a fee for service rate. Providers who "buy in" to a PASSE can get a portion of the plan savings, if there are any savings. We are currently in Phase II of the PASSE system and it has been problem after problem. Providers are not receiving payments in a timely manner, if at all. Care coordinators are ill-trained and ill equipped to handle the caseloads they are assigned. Care is being reduced compared to what was provided when waiver providers were assigned case management duties. Most providers are still completing basic care coordination duties without compensation to ensure that our consumers have what they need to thrive. Not much has changed in the last year regarding care coordination. With the

pandemic, care coordinators were not allowed to make visits to the members, while providers still continued with continuity of care services.

Advantages, Inc. invested in and joined the provider led PASSE (Summit Community Care). Advantages joined all PASSE's that operate in our service area, but only invested in the one.

### **ACA Employer Mandates:**

October, 2020, is open enrollment for the next plan year. There have been several unsuccessful attempts to repeal or adjust the current ACA mandates. We will continue on as in previous years with following the insurance mandates.

The FY21 budget was set using current insurance costs plus an upcharge to try and cover additional members or the cost of a penalty. The most recent quote we received was an increase of 18% over last year's premium due to two high claims.

### **Medicaid Transformation – Service Model and Payment Structure**

There is nothing new currently on the table for cuts this year; however, changes in eligibility, reimbursement rates, qualifying hours of service, and staffing criteria will all impact the financial stability of Advantages, Inc.

### **Supported Employment- Employment First Initiative**

Advantages, Inc. does not have a work activity program and no longer holds a wage and hour certificate which affects our ability to attract younger consumers to the adult program. The economic distress of the area played a role in eliminating this service. Several factories and industries closed in the past 10 years, with Georgia Pacific laying off approximately 530 people last October being the most recent, and Monticello is home to the University of Arkansas-Monticello. The loss of jobs and a large number of students looking for work also added to the pressure of local employers to hire the non-disabled rather than hire our consumers. In addition, the federal government is considering stricter procedures to access the financial support for sheltered workshops. However, providers are currently working with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS), to expand supported employment within the State under the Arkansas Works program.

ARS received a grant to develop what is known as the Employment First Initiative to take the place of supported employment. Governor Hutchison is very supportive of the initiative and has vowed to support legislation that gives employers incentives for participating in the program.

Advantages, Inc. continues to receive consultation services through DDS and ARS to implement Supported Employment. The local school districts should begin implementing employment skills into the students IEP's. Once this happens and Advantages, Inc. begins operating in supported

employment, we plan to become a training site for the local high schools. To date we have successfully placed one individual in part time employment and billed those services through ARS.

### **Health Information Technology (HIT)**

A big issue with HIT is a lack of infrastructure in rural areas of the state. Although DDPA and DHS/DDS are seeking funding opportunities to assist with infrastructure development and assist providers with start-up costs for the purchase of technology equipment and upgrades, funding appears to have been set aside because of the directive to reduce Medicaid costs.

Advantages, Inc. entered into a contract with Therap for electronic data support in June, 2016. Implementation goals are in place. A “Go Live” date of September 1, 2016 for DCC-Monticello and DSC was set and met. We have since added Crossett and Star City as live operations and July 1, 2018 was the “Go Live” date for our waiver department. We continue to use Therap as our documentation system.

### **Financial Opportunities:**

New and expanded children’s programs are being considered at the Federal level that may bring a financial risk or opportunity. The programs include the expansion of Head Start, the federally-funded Pre-K, and ABC, for all children 3-5, regardless of economic standing, and the approval of funding to begin Early Head Start programs for children birth-2.

The Employment First Initiative would bring a new funding source if the legislature grants funding through the Medicaid program. The agency has certified Job Coaches and has added Supported Employment to our License in hopes that the initiative receives adequate funding.

### ***Service Area Needs***

The primary need for the areas serviced is employment. Employment opportunities will feed the education programs and push the local economy upward. Jobs and education should bring industry back to southeast Arkansas.

Unemployment and poverty play a part in the development of a child. There remains a need for children’s services from all available sources. Advantages, Inc. could meet any personnel needs due to an expansion of children’s services.



Current Statistical Information for Areas Served by Discovery Children’s Centers:

County	Poverty Rate 2018*	Median Income 2018*	Co. Unemp Rate June, 2020	State Unemp Rate June, 2020
Ashley	17.9%	\$36,352	10.7%	8.0%
Drew	19.2%	\$33,092	7.6%	8.0%
Lincoln	27.6%	\$32,369	7.1%	8.0%
Bradley	23.5%	\$34,665	6.1%	8.0%
Desha	32%	\$26,519	9.1%	8.0%

\*Most recent data available at time of report.

There have been no major job developments in the past FY. Advantages, Inc. is one of the top 10 employers in our county per the Monticello/Drew County Chamber of Commerce.

There are no plans in place for a transit system and none of the counties we serve have a taxi service. Drew County recently acquired an Uber service. Individuals must have their own mode of transportation or rely on friends and family to meet their transportation needs. There is a Medicaid transportation provider in Pine Bluff (SEAT) that serves our catchment area to assist with medical transportation.

Southeast AR lacks physicians that can diagnose and treat autism spectrum disorders. Currently, families must go to Little Rock for a diagnosis and the wait time for an appointment is anywhere from 9 to 12 months.

The agency cannot do much about some of the needs mentioned, other than what is already in the Strategic Plan, which is to continue to be an active advocate for services, remain on subcommittees that are working on the systems change, and apply for grants for expanded children’s services. Our commitment is to provide quality services in our 14-county service area. Funds will be made available to expand any service model and there is a workforce readily available to meet expansion needs.

**Expectations of Persons Served and Other Stakeholders:**

Advantages, Inc. understands that consumers have a choice of providers and that we must offer quality services and good customer service. We are dedicated to maintaining qualified and well-trained staff, clean and accessible buildings, maintaining adequate quantities of program supplies, operating a safe vehicle fleet, offering competitive salaries and benefits, and promoting a safe work environment for employees. An annual survey of consumers, employees and other stakeholders will be conducted each spring and results will be analyzed for inclusion in the development of improvement plans.

The agency will remain consistent in adopting policies and procedures, analyzing and understanding the environment and organizational competencies, identifying threats and

opportunities by setting goals and strategies that are insurance outcomes that will enable the agency to achieve, sustain, and advance its mission.

The agency will establish a foundation for success through Strategic Planning focused on taking advantage of strengths and opportunities while addressing weaknesses and threats in the following areas:

1. Expectations of persons served.
2. Expectations of other stakeholders.
3. The competitive environment.
4. Financial Opportunities.
5. Financial Threats.
6. The agency's capabilities.
7. Service area needs.
8. Demographics within the service area.
9. The agency's relationships with external stakeholders.
10. The regulatory environment.
11. The legislative environment.
12. The use of technology to support:
  - a. Efficient operations
  - b. Effective service delivery
  - c. Performance improvement
13. Information from the analysis of performance.

The agency conducted a satisfaction survey in the fall that included employees, individuals served, guardians, parents, and Board Members. Results were used to change policies, improve business practices, and set agency goals.

## **Financial Strength**

The FY19 audit was completed by Searcy and Associates, Inc. in October, 2019. The audit did not receive any written deficiencies.

The FY20 audit will not be conducted until October, 2021 and the FY20 year-end statement cannot be completed until all outstanding debt has been paid. However, the Agency's unaudited financial report ending June 30, 2020, had a year-to-date Change in Net Assets of \$585,000.

Advantages, Inc. assumed debt in 2012 in the amount of \$2.5 million from USDA and \$500,000 from Commercial Bank for the construction of the new preschool. The agency made additional payments to Commercial Bank loan throughout the construction period and paid the loan off during FY14. The estimated balance of the USDA loan as of June 30, 2020 was \$2.21 million.

<b><u>Fiscal Year End Fund Balances (unaudited)</u></b>	<b>\$10,961,996.00</b>
Cash Balances, June 27, 2020	
Union Bank, Operating Account:	\$3,832,745.00
Union Bank, Matching Fund Account:	142,358.00
Simmons Bank:	202,520.00
Union Bank, Payroll Account:	95,020.00
USDA Grant Account:	82,220.00
ASFCU Account:	103,500.00
CDs (Parkway, CB&T, UBT)	6,503,633.00

Each Division has their own budget that is tracked monthly. A plan is in place to address shortfalls in any one division, or agency-wide.

The Administration, Children’s Centers, and Adult Development staff did not receive stipends or COLA increases for FY21. This was due to the continued increase in minimum wage and the temporary closure of all center based sites for months during the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Strategic Planning has enabled the management team and Board of Directors to take pro-active budgetary action to ride out the financial storm created by Covid-19.

### **Corporate Responsibility**

The Board of Directors and management staff of Advantages, Inc. understands the importance of the Agency’s responsibility for being a part of our community. Management staff continues to be involved in community activities and organizations. Efforts will continue to involve staff and consumers in community activities and events. Advantages, Inc. is either a member of, or have employees who are a member of the following organizations:

1. Chamber of Commerce: Ashley and Drew County
2. Kiwanis: Ashley and Drew County
3. Developmental Disabilities Provider Association
4. SEARK Miracle League
5. Monticello and Drew Central Parent Association
6. Monticello and Drew County Baseball Leagues
7. Junior Auxiliary
8. Monticello Parks & Recreation Committee
9. Hope Place

### **Service Provisions**

## ***Preschool***

Developmental screenings are conducted prior to entry into the Preschool program. If the child has a delay in two or more areas of development and qualifies for one therapy, the child can be admitted into our EIDT program. The areas of evaluation are: gross motor, fine motor, cognitive, language, self-help, and social/emotional.

An individual plan is developed for the child based on the results of the evaluation. This plan will address the child's needs and weaknesses. Evaluations are administered regularly to insure the child is meeting typical childhood milestones. The primary goal of Advantages is to reduce or eliminate the level of delay in each child before he/she enters the public school system. Aside from Day Habilitation services, Advantages provides services in the following areas:

- Therapy: Physical, Occupational, Speech
  - Individual Therapy
  - Evaluation Services
- Developmental Preschool Services
  - Evaluation Services
  - Preschool Services
- Transportation
- Service Coordination
- Referral Services
- Meals

## ***Adult Development***

Instruction in independent living skills and basic employment skills are the focus of our Adult Development Program. An adult consumer must have a diagnosis of: Intellectual Disability, Cerebral Palsy, Autism, Seizure Disorder, or another diagnosis that severely inhibits their ability to function normally in their living setting.

Enrollment requires a current psychological and developmental profile that can be used to develop a Program Plan. Skills focus on the daily living skills needed to function at the greatest level of independence in the least restrictive environment.

Aside from Day Habilitation services, Advantages also provides services in the following areas:

Meals                      Transportation                      Evaluation                      Referral Services

## ***Waiver***

Waiver consumers have a choice as to service provider. If Advantages is selected to perform the functions, we complete all required DDS documentation needed to provide services.

Activities include, staffing according to the needs assessment and schedules set by the programming team, and assistance with treatment plan development.

The goal of Advantages is to allow the waiver consumer services in the least restrictive environment, assist them in exercising their rights, assisting with community integration activities, and advocating for them when necessary.

Advantages, Inc. provides Medicaid Waiver Services in the following areas:

- Non-Medical Transportation (reimbursement provided for by the PASSEs)
- Medical Transportation (if services cannot be accessed- Private Pay Reimbursement by Consumer)
- Referral Services
- Supplies
- Evaluation

### ***Children's Autism Waiver***

The Children's Autism Waiver is a program offered through UAMS-Partner's for an Inclusive Community. Criteria and standards are set by Partner's. Children must be no older than 5 when they enter the program to allow for 2 full years of intense intervention. Parents must commit to 20 hours of one-on-one time in addition to the paid staff intervention. To date we have had no one interested in the children's Autism waiver.

### ***Organizational Capabilities***

Advantages will review components of the strategic plan on an annual basis and will review and determine the organization's capabilities to meet the established goals as reflected in the strategic plan. Revisions to the plan will be made as needed.

### ***Regulatory Environment***

Federal & State legislation directly affects the criteria that providers must meet. Both have implemented stricter regulations and unfunded mandates that providers must meet to be licensed.

Advantages, Inc. received a 3-year accreditation from CARF in March, 2018. Advantages, Inc. is committed to following the regulations required to maintain accreditation.

Advantages, Inc. and all service locations are subject to unannounced and frequent reviews by DHS/Childcare Licensing, DPSQA Licensing and Certification Unit, Hwy & Transportation Department, Medicaid Integrity Unit, and the Health Department.

Advantages, Inc. schedules inspections by the State Boiler Board, Fire Department, Fire extinguisher certification and other community regulatory agents as prescribed in each Licensing & Certification Agency's operating standards.

### ***Technology***

Advantages, Inc. utilizes technology to support the efficient and effective operations of the Agency. Advantages purchased an accounting software package that enables staff to efficiently track time and attendance for payroll purposes, and billing of service units. The system was implemented in phases and is expected to translate into dollars saved through efficient management of employee time and accurate billing of all service hours.

The IT Plan serves to guide the organization in maintaining a high level of privacy by incorporating methods of testing security and backup procedures.

### ***Agency Position***

Advantages, Inc. has a debt of approximately \$2.1 million through USDA. The USDA-RDA loan is for a period of 40 years.

### ***Annual Report***

Advantages will publish a Performance Report annually. The report will be posted on the Agency's website. Additionally, management staff will review and update as needed, the following plans: Risk Management, Technology, Accessibility, Strategic Plan, and Outcomes.