

PRIDE LINK STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2023



pridelink

INTRO

Founded in 2018, Pride Link is a 501c3 non-profit organization serving the LGBTQ+ community in Upstate, SC through health and wellness programs, social support, access to resources, and cultural competence education. When the founding board of Pride Link met for the first time to establish our purpose and direction, we set out with the following goals in mind over the next 3-5 years:

- Provide strong programming and resources
- Build and sustain strong community partnerships
- Secure adequate funding and sustainability
- Establish a home base for the LGBTQ+ community
- Create a positive community impact

With just over 2 years under our organizational belt, we have met some of these major goals and are well on our way to meeting others. We feel proud of the accomplishments we have made and, at the same time, recognize the breadth and depth of needs still going unmet by many in our community.

With the onset of COVID-19 in early 2020, we were faced with acknowledging our organizational limitations for sustained programming in this new virtual environment and decided to pause some programming to focus on building our next strategic plan to better situate the organization for longterm sustainability.

The plan outlined on page 7 was developed by the board and staff of Pride Link, guided by feedback from committees and community members, and facilitated by Pam Sugarman of Sugarman Consulting. Within the next several pages, you will find information about who we are, what we've done, the community needs that remain, and how we plan to respond.

Adopted by the Board of Directors in December 2020.

HISTORY

Pride Link founder, Ethan Johnstone, conducted an Upstate needs assessment of LGBTQ+ people in 2017 while attending graduate school for social work. Based on the findings of the study, the founding board of 6 met for 2 days of strategic planning in Ethan's living room to identify possible solutions to these needs. Pride Link was born as a result in July 2018. Pride Link received 501c3 non-profit status in November 2018 and launched a Programs Committee in December that same year. The organization set out to build partnerships with local businesses, healthcare providers, social service organizations, and other community partners in the area.

Our team quickly got to work on creating our first program, the Mobile Community Center (MCC) which launched in March 2019 to bring access to health care and support to LGBTQ+ people across the Upstate. The first MCC was hosted at the Caine Halter YMCA and has been hosted at 6 different locations across 5 counties. Planning for what would become Pride Link's LGBTQ+ Youth Group began in early 2019 through a collaboration of local therapists, faith leaders, and interest community members. This collaborative group met monthly between February and July and the Youth Group launched in August 2019 and has served over 40 youth. In January 2020 we hosted the LGBTQ+ Youth Summit, which we enthusiastically inherited from Upstate Pride who hosted the first iteration of the summit in 2018. This day long youth-driven conference was attended by more than 200 LGBTQ+ youth, their parents, educators, and providers.

In March 2020, with the onset of COVID-19, our top priority was to ensure the safety of our community, so we moved all programming to virtual. We began offering digital webinars and events to keep community members connected to support and resources, and we also initiated a COVID Relief Fund to offer financial assistance to people impacted by job loss and financial strain.

Pride Link currently has two employees, an 8-person board of directors, interns, and many volunteers. Pride Link considers the Upstate region to include the following counties: Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg, and Union.

VISION

We envision a thriving Upstate community where LGBTQ+ people are strong, safe, and successful.

MISSION

Pride Link's mission is to improve the quality of life for all LGBTQ+ people in Upstate, SC.

VALUES

Integrity

- We do the right thing, over the easy thing.
- We make ethical decisions.
- We speak up and take action about injustice.
- We welcome, and expect, being held accountable to our actions.
- We acknowledge when we make mistakes and commit to continuous growth.

Community

- We are led by those we seek to serve, particularly the most marginalized in the LGBTQ+ community including, but not limited to folks who are transgender, nonbinary, intersex, BIPOC, experiencing poverty, and living with disabilities.
- We build and sustain partnerships with other organizations and leaders to develop a connected, collaborative, and thriving Upstate.
- We create opportunities for people's sense of community to expand in ways that are important to them.

Equity

- We create and sustain meaningful engagement opportunities and leadership positions for LGBTQ+ people who hold multiple marginalized identities.
- We acknowledge the trauma of oppressive systems such as racism, white supremacy, sexism, misogyny, patriarchy, ableism, classism, and ageism.
- We commit to ongoing evaluation and dismantling of any internal structures within our organization that uphold oppressive systems.

WHAT WE'VE DONE

programs snapshot

Mobile Community Center (MCC)

The MCC is a space to access the support, physical and mental health services, and resources LGBTQ+ people need across the Upstate. We provide free medical and mental health services, referrals, community resources, and social support.

Outcomes

- 9 events in 5 counties
- 218 participants served, 160 total screenings/services
- Over 1,000 volunteer hours

Youth Group

We provide monthly groups and online engagement for 13-19 year-old LGBTQ+ youth to offer access to support, education, and resource connection.

Outcomes

- Over 40 total youth served
- Average of 15 per in-person meeting and 8 per virtual meeting

Youth Summit

The Youth Summit is a conference led by and for LGBTQ+ youth and their parents, educators, and providers for dialogue and learning about issues that affect LGBTQ+ youth.

Outcomes

- Over 200 attendees in January 2020
- 17 breakout sessions (8 youth speakers) and 2 keynotes (1 youth keynote)
- All youth speakers and 10 youth ambassadors paid for their expertise

Other Services

- Over \$18,000 directly to LGBTQ+ individuals for COVID-19 Relief
- \$2,000 in transgender hormone therapy assistance
- Almost 200 providers and students trained in LGBTQ+ cultural competency

WHAT THE DATA SAYS

Gaps in the Upstate

Economic & employment supports

- Job training and affirming employment connection
- Stable and gainful employment
- Access to public benefits
- Food security
- Financial literacy and stability

Housing

- Resources for homeless youth
- Safe shelters for adults
- Cultural competence and policy and access issues for existing housing services

Support for youth

- General social connection
- School policies and access issues
- Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSA)
- Support and education for families of LGBTQ+ youth

Support, access, services for specific groups

- LGBTQ+ people of color
- Transgender people
- Rural and isolated LGBTQ+ people
- Older LGBTQ+ adults

Other

- Cultural competence of social service, medical, mental health providers
- Physical space to go for community
- Inclusive local and regional laws and policies
- Information sharing about available community resources, policies, service navigation, etc
- Legal supports

Information was synthesized from national, regional, and local data.

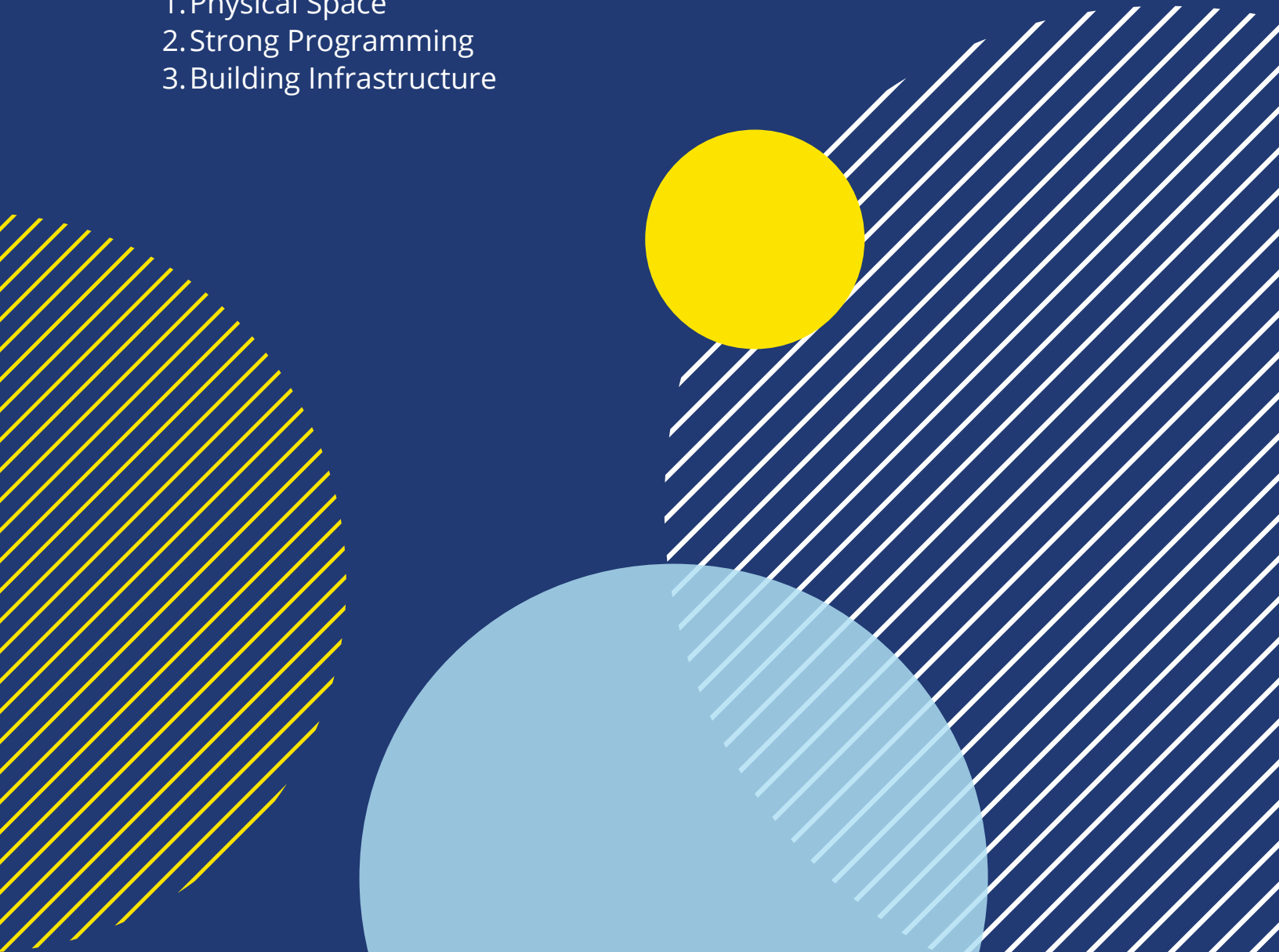
OUR PLANS

2021-2023

We are so excited to share our plans with you as we focus on 3 primary areas over the next few years. Take a look at the next page for more details.

3 KEY FOCUS AREAS:

1. Physical Space
2. Strong Programming
3. Building Infrastructure



SPACE

GOAL

- Pride Link will operate in a well-equipped, trauma-informed, publicly accessible space to meet the support, service, and access needs of LGBTQ+ people.

OBJECTIVES

- Lease a brick and mortar space for our Community Wellness Center.
- Operate as a shared resource model of programming to provide greater access to holistic services.

PROGRAMS

GOAL

- Pride Link will strengthen and expand current programming and add new relevant programming to meet the diverse needs of LGBTQ+ people.

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure LGBTQ+ community, including rural, isolated, and BIPOC, are aware of and have access to programs and services.
- Develop and utilize curriculum, presentations, outreach and training plans to build cultural competence among providers.
- Build strategic partnerships, engage in coalitions, and collaborate with community partners to ensure services are available to LGBTQ+ community.

INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL

- Pride Link will build its organizational capacity to support the programming, staffing, and funding needs to achieve our mission.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase our organizational capacity to provide high-quality, evidenced-based programs and services.
- Set programmatic goals and indicators, track and measure outcomes, and report these outcomes to the larger community.
- Increase our organizational capacity to secure adequate funding to support personnel, operating, and programmatic resources.