

**Strategic Framework**

**2018 - 2021**

This document outlines the American Counseling Association's plan to address issues of critical and strategic importance over the course of the next four years. In addition to our essential ongoing work, we will prioritize initiatives and dedicate extraordinary resources and attention to addressing these issues and achieving the outcomes identified below.

<b>Strategic Drivers</b>			
<b>Advocacy</b>	<b>Practice Support</b>	<b>Relevance</b>	
Give voice and representation to counselors, the profession, and consumers	Counselors have the resources they need to be successful in the practice of professional counseling	Recognized leadership and credibility with current and emerging counselors, the mental health arena, the media, public policymakers, and consumers	
<b>Initiatives</b>	<b>Initiatives</b>	<b>Initiatives</b>	
1.1 Working to advance and ensure that licensed professional counselors enjoy seamless portability of their licenses when: moving to other states; practicing across state lines; and engaging in tele-counseling 1.2 Working to ensure equitable, consistent, and adequate reimbursement for appropriately educated, trained, and licensed professional counselors in all practice settings 1.3 Promoting holistic wellness, prevention, and empowerment that can be achieved through quality counseling services for every human being 1.4 Engaging in proactive leadership demonstrated by supporting human rights and social justice issues by advocating for initiatives that reduce the challenges and barriers faced by clients, students, counselors, and communities 1.5 Advocating for adequate funding and initiatives for programs that support clients, students, counselors and communities in areas that include but are not limited to: education; human services; shelter; food insecurity; career preparation; mental health; addictions; civil and human rights; rehabilitation; veterans' issues; bullying; and, anger management	2.1 Developing the best possible resources internally and with partners resulting in the creation of programs, products, and services that support successful counseling practice 2.2 Developing new research-based tools that are affordable and accessible 2.3 Expanding ethics-focused resources in support of protecting those who seek counseling services 2.4 Delivering practice support, technical assistance, information, and resources in formats that are easily accessible by members and other professional counselors 2.5 Creating cost effective services for those in all counseling settings and specialties 2.6 Providing new professionals and counselors in training with tools and services that result in meaningful and rewarding jobs 2.7 Creating communities of counseling specialties that facilitate professional peer-to-peer discussions leading to exemplary practice	3.1 Building a diverse, inclusive, and engaged pipeline of counselors who will serve well into the 21 <sup>st</sup> century 3.2 Raising awareness among the public and consumers about the benefits provided by the counseling profession 3.3 Recognition by the media, public policy officials, the not-for-profit community, and the public as the voice of the counseling profession 3.4 Recognition as an incubator of ideas and research that benefit the work of practicing professional counselors	
<p><b>Ongoing Work</b></p> <p>Critical functions that require 95% of current resources (staff time, budget)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Operations (risk management, facilities management, finance, accounting, HR, IT)</li> <li>• Money (business development, product management and sales, revenues and fees, budgeting/accounting, external economic forces, fundraising)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance (development/evaluation, planning, board of directors)</li> <li>• Member Engagement (volunteer engagement, Division/Branch relations)</li> <li>• Customer Services (event planning, professional development, continuing education, publishing)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach (alliances/partnerships, marketing and communications, public policy, ethical and professional standards, government relations, public relations, support and evidence-based research)</li> </ul>

	<b>Initiatives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Advocacy</b>	1.1 Working to advance and ensure that licensed professional counselors enjoy seamless portability of their licenses when: moving to other states; practicing across state lines; and engaging in tele-counseling	<p>1.1.1 Realizing that this is an evolving process, the research and exploration of options to achieve true portability of counselor licensure will lead to the Governing Council adopting a set of recommendations for 2018-2019</p> <p>1.1.2 Through proactive organizational leadership, actively promote portability of counselor licenses. The Board’s recommendations will be operationalized during 2019-2022</p> <p>1.1.3 Professional counselors will utilize licensure portability so that they can transition to working in other states with as few regulatory burdens as possible, when they choose to practice across state lines, and when engaging in tele-counseling</p>
	1.2 Working to ensure equitable, consistent, and adequate reimbursement for appropriately educated, trained, and licensed professional counselors in all practice settings	<p>1.2.1 Professional counselors will be included as providers under all private and public insurance programs</p> <p>1.2.2 Licensed counselors will be appropriately represented on insurance panels and be recognized as mental health professionals at the same (or higher) level as those in the sister professions such as psychology, social work, and marriage and family therapy</p> <p>1.2.3 ACA members and other professional counselors will be viewed as subject matter experts</p> <p>1.2.4 ACA members and other professional counselors will have the skills to advocate for licensure portability</p>
	1.3 Promoting holistic wellness, prevention, and empowerment that can be achieved through quality counseling services for every human being	<p>1.3.1 Individuals, couples, and families who can benefit from professional counseling will be able to work through life’s challenges and live more productive lives</p> <p>1.3.2 Promoting the utilization of wellness and prevention strategies that can be used with clients and in communities to reduce barriers and increase health</p> <p>1.3.3 Examining, promoting, and advocating for cutting edge counseling research and approaches which advance innovation and creativity within the counseling profession</p>
	1.4 Engaging in proactive leadership demonstrated by supporting human rights and social justice issues by advocating for initiatives that reduce the challenges and barriers faced by clients, students, counselors, and communities	<p>1.4.1 By creating campaigns, joining coalitions, or partnering with organizations, ACA informs communities and other constituencies of the work done by professional counselors and how they benefit from such services</p> <p>1.4.2 Proactively engaging in human rights and social justice initiatives that impact clients, counselors, and the communities that they serve and inform the membership about these initiatives and how they can become involved</p>
	1.5 Advocating for adequate funding and initiatives for programs that support clients, students, counselors, and communities in areas that include but are not limited to: education; human services; shelter; food insecurity; career preparation; mental health; addictions; civil and human rights; rehabilitation; veterans’ issues; bullying; and, anger management	<p>1.5.1 Working at various levels of government and with Non-Governmental Organizations so that more people can understand the benefits of professional counseling and the importance of promoting mental health wellness</p> <p>1.5.2 Working at various levels to promote prevention, mental health wellness, and human rights for clients and the communities that professional counselors serve</p> <p>1.5.3 Training counselors how to teach their clients advocacy skills so that clients can address self-advocacy issues and concerns and barriers that surface at the community, institutional, and environmental levels</p>

<b>Practice Support</b>	2.1 Developing the best possible resources internally and with partners resulting in the creation of programs, products, and services that support successful counseling practice and research	<p>2.1.1 Professional counselors and counselor educators will recognize ACA as the preeminent knowledge resource hub for the counseling profession</p> <p>2.1.2 Engagement with ACA by members and non-member counselors will be demonstrated through increases in sales, attendance at live and virtual events, and support of volunteer activities at the leadership and committee levels of the organization</p> <p>2.1.3 High-quality, member-generated content is widely accessible to ACA members and the public</p>
	2.2 Developing new research-based tools that are affordable and accessible	2.2.1 Utilization of tools establishes ACA as the “go to” source in which counselors see great value
	2.3 Expanding ethics-focused resources in support of protecting those who seek counseling services	2.3.1 Demonstrating to public policymakers, legal entities, and insurance companies that ACA members practice at high standards and can be trusted to provide the best possible service to those in need of professional counseling
	2.4 Delivering practice support, technical assistance, information, and resources in formats that are easily accessible by members and other professional counselors	<p>2.4.1 Greater awareness and participation, utilization, and appreciation of existing services and products</p> <p>2.4.2 Allowing counselors and counselor educators to access cutting edge information in a timely and affordable manner which, in turn, increases revenues</p> <p>2.4.3 Development of new resources to meet identified needs not currently served through existing offerings</p>
	2.5 Creating cost effective services for those in all counseling settings and specialties	2.5.1 Counselors in all practice settings will recognize ACA as a one-stop shop for the needs they have regardless of the size and scope of their practice
	2.6 Providing new professionals and counselors in training with tools and services that result in meaningful and rewarding jobs	2.6.1 When those seeking new career opportunities view ACA as supportive of that endeavor, we will establish more connectedness with current members and attract an entirely new cadre of professional counselors, counselor educators, new, and established professionals who have not been as engaged with ACA
	2.7 Creating communities of counseling specialties that facilitate peer-to-peer discussions leading to exemplary practice	2.7.1 Establishes ACA as the “connector of people” who wish to discuss counseling ideas, theories, and practice, rather than simply being a publisher, conference organizer, or product development organization

<b>Relevance</b>	3.1 Building a diverse, inclusive, and engaged pipeline of counselors who will serve well into the 21 <sup>st</sup> century	<p>3.1.1 Demographics of counselor education programs reflect a more diverse student body and ultimately a more diverse and inclusive ACA membership</p> <p>3.1.2 Publications and professional development events will be tailored to a more diverse group of professional counselors</p> <p>3.1.3 More students and clients will be aware of the field of counseling as a career option and/or will engage the services of professional counselors when they see themselves reflected in the changing demographics of the counselor population</p>
	3.2 Raising awareness among the public and consumers about the benefits provided by the counseling profession	<p>3.2.1 Mental health professionals and the public think about ACA as the place to find out about counseling as a profession and a practice</p> <p>3.2.2 The ACA conference is recognized as the premier counseling event of the year and attracts an increasing number of attendees in person and virtually</p>
	3.3 Recognition by the media, public policy officials, and the public as the voice of the counseling profession	<p>3.3.1 During times of crisis, as well as non-crisis, professional counseling will be seen as an important resource to reach out to for consultation and information by many facets of society</p> <p>3.3.2 The number of contacts made by the media, government entities, and the public will increase each year</p>
	3.4 Recognition as an incubator of ideas and research that benefit the work of practicing professional counselors	<p>3.4.1 Information, products, and services that are the result of the incubator will demonstrate to practicing counselors, counselor educators, and researchers that ACA is committed to the enhancement and improvement of the counseling profession</p>