

Ascension Saint Joseph Joliet

**Implementation Strategy for the TY2022 CHNA
Will County, Illinois**



Ascension

The purpose of this implementation strategy is to describe how the hospital plans to address prioritized health needs from its current Community Health Needs Assessment. The significant health needs that the hospital does not intend to address are identified and a rationale is provided. Special attention has been given to the needs of individuals and communities who are more vulnerable, unmet health needs or gaps in services, and input gathered from the community.

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The TY22 Implementation Strategy was approved by the Ascension Illinois Joint Hospitals Board on September 27, 2023 (2022 tax year), and applies to the following three-year cycle: July 2023 to June 2026 (FY 2024 - FY 2026). This report, as well as the previous report, can be found at our public website.

We value the community's voice and welcome feedback on this report. Please visit our public website (<https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>) to submit your comments.

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Introduction

As one of the leading non-profit and Catholic health systems in the United States, Ascension is committed to delivering compassionate, personalized care to all, with special attention to persons living in poverty and those most vulnerable.

Ascension Saint Joseph Joliet

As a Ministry of the Catholic Church, Ascension Saint Joseph is a non-profit hospital that provides medical care to Joliet and the surrounding communities. Ascension Saint Joseph is part of Ascension Illinois which operates 15 hospital campuses and 230 sites of care. The organization includes more than 600 providers as part of Ascension Medical Group, as well as 17,000 associates.

Ascension Saint Joseph Joliet has been meeting the health needs of Joliet and the Will County area for over 130 years. Founded by the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart, the Medical Center continues to carry out its mission. Located in the heart of the southern suburbs, 480- bed Saint Joseph Joliet provides many advanced health care services including Neurosurgical Services, Open-Heart Surgery Program, Robotic Surgery, Advanced Orthopedic Care, Cancer Care, Level II Emergency/Trauma Center, Family Birthing Suites, Level II Special Care Nursery, Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, Rehabilitation Services, Behavioral Health Services and Sleep Disorder Center.

For more information about Ascension Saint Joseph Joliet, visit healthcare.ascension.org.

Overview of the Implementation Strategy

Purpose

This implementation strategy (IS) is the hospital's response to the health needs prioritized from its current Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). It describes the actions the hospital will take to address prioritized needs, allocate resources, and mobilize hospital programs and community partners to work together. This approach aligns with Ascension Saint Joseph Joliet's commitment to offer programs designed to address the health needs of a community, with special attention to persons who are underserved and vulnerable.






IRS 501(r)(3) and Form 990, Schedule H Compliance

The CHNA and IS satisfy certain requirements of tax reporting, pursuant to provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, more commonly known as the Affordable Care Act (ACA). As part of the ACA, all not-for-profit hospitals are required to conduct a CHNA and adopt an implementation strategy every three years. Requirements for 501(c)(3) Hospitals Under the Affordable Care Act are described in Code Section 501(r)(3), and include making the CHNA report (current and previous) widely available to the public. In accordance with this requirement, electronic reports of both the CHNA and the current implementation strategy can be found at <https://healthcare.ascension.org/CHNA> and paper versions can be requested at Ascension Saint Joseph's Administration Office.

Process to Prioritize Needs

Included in Code Section 501(r)(3) is the requirement that hospitals must provide a description of the process and criteria used to determine the most significant health needs of the community identified through the CHNA, along with a description of the process and criteria used to determine the prioritized needs to be addressed by the hospital. Accordingly, Ascension Saint Joseph Joliet used a phased prioritization approach to identify the needs with the hospital community. The first step was to determine the broader set of identified needs. Through the CHNA assessment, identified needs were then narrowed to a set of significant needs which were determined most crucial for community stakeholders to address.

Following the completion of the CHNA assessment, significant needs were further narrowed down to a set of prioritized needs that the hospital will address within the implementation strategy. To arrive at the prioritized needs, Ascension Saint Joseph Joliet used the following process and criteria: review of additional primary and secondary data collected during the CHNA assessments for the hospital's primary service area, followed by the use of the five criteria below to prioritize the significant needs:

	<p>Scope of Problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How severe or prevalent is this issue in the community? • How many are impacted?
	<p>Disparities & Equity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there health disparities that exist? • Can we address those in an impactful way?
	<p>Feasibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is our capacity to make progress (staffing resources, financial resources, other support, etc.)? • Are there known interventions that exist?
	<p>Momentum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there community readiness and/or political will to address this issue?
	<p>Alignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have community partners that we can align with on this issue? • Do we need to build new relationships?

Preliminary community need prioritization recommendations were presented to a group of internal and external stakeholders for their review at a meeting held in August 2023. Recommendations were discussed and voted upon to determine the prioritized needs for the hospital community.

Needs That Will Be Addressed

Following the completion of the current CHNA, Ascension Saint Joseph has selected the prioritized needs outlined below for its TY22 implementation strategy. Ascension has defined “prioritized needs” as the significant needs which have been prioritized by the hospital to address through the three-year CHNA cycle:

- **Access to Care** (*Access to Care*): Data from the community input survey respondents listed lack of resources or access to resources as a top concern. Nearly 22 percent of survey respondents

report seeking emergency department care when in need of healthcare instead of through primary care physician or community clinic. Stakeholders provided feedback that improvement is needed in the area of literacy, including health literacy, among socially vulnerable populations. Health insurance is the primary way that individuals access the healthcare system in the United States with 91% having insurance in Will County. Populations with lower insured percentages include males, African-American/Black, Asian, and other races as well as those with Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. The geographic locations for those most uninsured are the following zip codes: 60432, 60433, 60484. The 60432 and 60433 zip codes are federally designated as a health professional shortage area. The provider ratios per population in Will County for primary care, mental health and dental care are worse than state ratios, which increase access to care issues for those who are uninsured and those with higher health related social needs. There are 91 dentists in Will County that accept Medicaid, which equals a rate of less than one dentist per 1,000 population of Medicaid beneficiaries.

- **Access to Food and Nutrition** (*SDoH - Food Insecurity*): 33% of adults in Will County are obese, which is slightly higher than state & national percentages. 26% of adults report no leisure-time physical activity. 7% of the population are low income and also do not live close to a grocery store compared to 5% in the rest of Illinois. 16% of adults report fair or poor health in Will County. 10% of adults aged 20 and above have been diagnosed with diabetes, which is similar to state percentages. Data from the community input survey respondents listed lack of resources or access to resources as a top concern. Stakeholder feedback indicated there is a need for increased and continued advocacy for funding human services and socially vulnerable.
- **Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse** (*Mental & Behavioral Health*): Data from the community input survey respondents ranked depression/anxiety disorders, tobacco use and other mental health issues at the top concern in their home. Within the community, survey respondents ranked illegal drugs and prescription drug misuse at the most common concerns. Concerns over lack of local mental health services within the county was also a concern. The rate of Will County population to mental health providers is 680 population to one provider. This is significantly less than the Illinois ratio and national ratio. Adults who report excessive drinking (21%) is less than state and national percentages, however, alcohol-impaired driving deaths in Will County are much higher at 31% compared to Illinois and the United States.
- **Workforce Development** (*SDoH - Education*): Data from the community input survey respondents listed lack of good paying jobs as a top concern. Stakeholders also provided feedback that there is a need for increased educational opportunities, jobs, workforce and employment opportunities in the county. Stakeholders also shared there is a need to re-build, stabilize and grow the public health and health care workforce as well as diversify. Poverty is a key driver of health status. Populations with the highest poverty include zip codes 60433, 60432, 60436 as well as persons who are African-American/Black, Other Race or of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity. There was a higher unemployment rate among: males, Hispanic/Latinx population, Black or African American population and in the 16-19 years age group. Also in zip codes 60433, 60484, 60468.

Ascension Saint Joseph understands the importance of all the health needs of the community and is committed to playing an active role in improving the health of the people in the communities it serves. For the purposes of this implementation strategy, Ascension Saint Joseph has chosen to focus its efforts on the priorities listed above.

Needs That Will Not Be Addressed

Based on the prioritization criteria, the health needs identified through the CHNA that Ascension Saint Joseph does not plan to address at this time include:

- **Stabilizing the Built Environment** (*SDoH - Housing & Transit*): This need will not be addressed in the Implementation Strategy, but we will continue to support through advocacy and community partnerships. Additionally, focusing on access to care services for the community will improve overall health including persons experiencing homelessness. Saint Joseph Joliet will continue to partner with the Will County Continuum of Care Coalition to develop strategies to reduce persons experiencing homelessness and coordinate health care treatment.

While these needs are not the focus of this implementation strategy, Ascension Saint Joseph may consider investing resources in these areas as appropriate, depending on opportunities to leverage organizational assets in partnership with local communities and organizations. Also, this report does not encompass a complete inventory of everything Ascension Saint Joseph does to support health within the community.

To find a list of resources for each need not being addressed, please refer to the Saint Joseph's TY2022 CHNA: <https://healthcare.ascension.org/CHNA>.

Acute Community Concern Acknowledgement

A CHNA and Implementation Strategies (IS) offer a construct for identifying and addressing needs within the community(s) it serves. However, unforeseen events or situations, which may be severe and sudden, may affect a community. At Ascension, this is referred to as an acute community concern. This could describe anything from a health crisis (e.g., COVID-19), water poisoning, environmental events (e.g., hurricane, flood) or other event that suddenly impacts a community. In which case, if adjustments to an IS are necessary, the hospital will develop documentation, in the form of a SBAR (Situation-Background-Assessment-Response) evaluation summary, to notify key internal and external stakeholders of those possible adjustments.

Written Comments

This IS has been made available to the public and is open for public comment. Questions or comments about this implementation strategy can be submitted via the website:

<https://healthcare.ascension.org/chna>.

Approval and Adoption by

To ensure the Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet's efforts meet the needs of the community and have a lasting and meaningful impact, the TY22 implementation strategy was presented and adopted by the Ascension Illinois Joint Hospitals Board on September 27, 2023. Although an authorized body of the hospital must adopt the IS to be compliant with the provisions in the Affordable Care Act, adoption of the IS also demonstrates that the board is aware of the IS, endorses the priorities identified, and supports the action plans that have been developed to address prioritized needs.

Action Plans

The IS below is based on prioritized needs from the hospital's most recent CHNA. These strategies and action plans represent where the hospital will focus its community efforts over the next three years. While these remain a priority, the hospital will continue to offer additional programs and services to meet the needs of the community, with special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable.

STRATEGY: Community Wellness & Outreach	
Hospital(s) Name(s) Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet	
Prioritized Health Need Access to Care (<i>Access to Care</i>)	
Strategy Provide access to health screenings and health education in the hospital community.	
Strategy Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Wellness Programs Local Community Based Organization (CBO) Support and Partnerships Medical Mission at Home 	
Objective By June 30, 2026, there will be increased access to health screenings and education for the community.	
Target Population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target Population: SJ-J community residents Medically Underserved Population: Uninsured and underinsured individuals, high risk populations 	
Collaborators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborators: Community Based Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, Park Districts, Educational Institutions, 	
Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-kind staff time, funding/cash donations to community organizations, education collateral, training, screenings, other materials or clinical services. 	
ACTION STEPS:	ROLE/OWNER
Appoint internal lead for this strategy.	Ascension Saint Joseph -Joliet, Community Benefit, Community Health
Identify internal resources for supporting community wellness programming	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Health
Identify external partners serving low-income and/or at risk persons that need community health screening and health education services	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Health, VNA, Will Grundy Medical Clinic, Aunt Martha's

Promote availability of health screenings and health education events within target audiences and community partners	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Health
Monitor work, evaluate progress, report outcomes	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Health, Community Benefit
Output(s) and/or Outcome(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: FY23 Data ● Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase number of community health education occurrences from baseline ○ Increase number of community screening opportunities from baseline ● Data Source; Data Owner: CBISA, Community Health 	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
The anticipated impact of these actions is to increase screenings and wellness activities in the community.	

STRATEGY: Insurance & Social Care Enrollment Services	
Hospital(s) Name(s) Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet	
Prioritized Health Need Access to Care (<i>Access to Care</i>)	
Strategy Provide access to free education and enrollment services for health insurance and other benefits.	
Strategy Source Advocatia	
Objective BY June 30, 2026, there will be an increase of enrollment services from FY23 baseline.	
Target Population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Target Population: Adults, children, and immigrants ● Medically Underserved Population: Uninsured and underinsured individuals 	
Collaborators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborators: Community Based Organizations, Faith-Based Organizations, ● Consultants: Advocatia 	
Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In-kind staff time, funding/cash donations to community organizations, education collateral, training, screenings, other materials. 	
ACTION STEPS:	ROLE/OWNER
Appoint internal lead for this strategy	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Benefit, Community Health
Promote awareness of services via flyers, social media, Ascension, Community Benefit and Community partner newsletters with target audiences, both internal and external	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Benefit, Community Health

Identify external partners that can connect to populations needing education and enrollment in insurance or other social needs programs.	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Benefit, Community Health
Monitor work, evaluate progress, report outcomes	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Benefit, Community Health
Output(s) and/or Outcome(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: FY23 Data ● Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase persons enrolled in health care coverage from baseline ○ Increase persons educated on enrollment coverage from baseline ○ Increase persons enrolled in social needs programs (SNAP, WIC, utility assistance, others) from baseline. ● Data Source; Data Owner: Advocatia 	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
The anticipated impact of these actions is to increase access to healthcare and social services for individuals who are underinsured or uninsured.	

STRATEGY: Food Access Partnerships & Food Insecurity Data Collection
Hospital(s) Name(s) Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet
Prioritized Health Need Access to Food and Nutrition (<i>SDoH - Food Insecurity</i>)
Strategy Increase food access for food insecure individuals within the hospital community.
Strategy Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health Related Social Needs (HRSNs) Screenings ● Micro Pantry ● Mobile Food Pantries
Objective By June 30, 2026, there will be an increase of food access programs for the hospital community including Ascension associates, patients, and the community at-large.
Target Population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Target Population: Older adults, children, and immigrants; individuals experiencing homelessness or poverty. ● Medically Underserved Population: Individuals experiencing food insecurity
Collaborators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborators: Northern Illinois Food Bank, ● Consultants: Touchpoint, Ascension Illinois Food Access and Nutrition Workgroup

Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-kind staff time, funding/cash donations to support programs, education collateral, training, other materials. 	
ACTION STEPS:	ROLE/OWNER
Appoint internal lead(s) for strategy.	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Benefit, Community Health
Participate in Ascension Illinois Food Access and Nutrition Workgroup	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Health
Partner with food bank or other partners to increase mobile food banks within hospital community	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Health
Promote mobile food banks with target populations	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Health
Providing funding and support for mobile food banks	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Health
Continue to identify food resources for micro pantry via hosted food drives, donations and other methods	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Health; Touchpoint
Review SDoH data collected in EHR system related to food needs	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Benefit, Community Health
Refine programs based on new data sources from EHR	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Benefit, Community Health
Monitor work, evaluate progress, report outcomes	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Benefit, Community Health, Touchpoint
Output(s) and/or Outcome(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline: FY23 Data Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase total number of individuals served by food access programs from baseline Increase total number of meals provided from baseline Increase total pounds of food provided from baseline Increase cash donations provided to food access organizations from baseline Data Source; Data Owner: CBISA, Northern Illinois Food Bank, EHR 	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
The anticipated impact of these actions is to increase access to food for those in need.	

STRATEGY: Mental Health Education
Hospital(s) Name(s) Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet
Prioritized Health Need Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse

Strategy Mental Health Education and Awareness	
Strategy Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training • C3 Mental Health Awareness Training • Other MH Trainings 	
Objective By June 30, 2026, there will be an increase in the MH training participants of FY23 baseline.	
Target Population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target Population: community residents, including ASJ associates and physicians, those working with teen students in junior high and high school. • Medically Underserved Population: Teen and Adult individuals experiencing mental health issues. 	
Collaborators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborators: Community-based organizations, Faith-based institutions, Schools, First Responders, Government, Business community • Consultants: Americorps; Ascension BH Service Line Services 	
Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and mental health education; funding for consultants and materials. 	
ACTION STEPS:	ROLE/OWNER
Appoint internal lead for this strategy	Ascension Saint Joseph -Joliet; Community Benefit, Community Health
Promote awareness of the MH trainings via flyers, social media, Ascension and Community Partner newsletters	Ascension Saint Joseph -Joliet, Community Benefit, Community Health
Identify internal staff that need MH training	Ascension Illinois: Community Benefit, Community Health
Identify external partners that need MH training	Ascension Illinois: Community Benefit, Community Health
Establish calendar of MH trainings for virtual and/or hybrid offerings including dates, times, and locations	Ascension Illinois: Community Benefit, Community Health
Promote availability of MH training within target audiences	Ascension Illinois: Community Benefit, Community Health,
Host MH training for internal and external partners	Ascension Illinois: Community Benefit, Community Health
Monitor work, evaluate progress, and report outcomes	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Health
Output(s) and/or Outcome(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline: FY23 Data • Target: Increase the total number of individuals that received MH training from baseline. • Data Source; Data Owner: Mental Health First Aid; C3 MHAT; Other Trainings; Americorps; BH Training Facilitators 	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	

The anticipated impact of these actions is increased access to Mental Health education and resources.

STRATEGY: Access to Substance Use Disorder Resources	
Hospital(s) Name(s) Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet	
Prioritized Health Need Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse	
Strategy Provide a warm hand-off program for patients in need of access to SUD treatment. Develop a partnership with Joliet Fire Department and Thriveworks.	
Strategy Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm Hand-off Program • Community Health Collaborations 	
Objective By June 30, 2026, provide warm hand-off services for SUD patients that present in the ED and medical floors. By June 30, 2023 develop partnership with Joliet Fire Department and Thriveworks to increase access to mental health services for underserved residents.	
Target Population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target Population: ASJ - Joliet community residents in need of substance use disorder services and resources. • Medically Underserved Population: Individuals experiencing mental health issues; persons experiencing poverty and/or homelessness. 	
Collaborators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborators: Ascension Illinois Behavioral Health; Other SUD community providers; Emergency Medicine; Care Management; Joliet Fire Department, City of Joliet • Vendors: Family Guidance Center; Thriveworks 	
Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborator space within or near Emergency setting; funding for partnership. 	
ACTION STEPS:	ROLE/OWNER
Appoint or re-appoint an internal lead for each strategy.	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet; Emergency Medicine; Care Management
Evaluation and update workflows (as necessary) that allow for warm-handoffs.	Ascension Saint Joseph - Chicago, Emergency Department, Ascension Illinois Behavioral Health Service Line; Vendors
Initiate partnership between hospital, fire department and vendor.	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet; Strategy Lead(s)

Establish agreement for partnership.	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet; Strategy Lead(s)
Monitor work, evaluate progress, and report outcomes	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet; Strategy Lead(s), Community Benefit
Output(s) and/or Outcome(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: TBD (FY23 Baseline for Warm Hand Off; no baseline for Thriveworks partnership) ● Target: Increase from baseline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ # of patients screened for Substance Use Disorders treatment ○ # of patients provided treatment ○ # of vouchers provided ○ # of vouchers redeemed ● Data Source; Data Owner: 	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
The anticipated impact of these actions is increased access to substance use disorder services and community resources for individuals in need.	

STRATEGY: Workforce Development Programs & Partnerships	
Hospital(s) Name(s) Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet	
Prioritized Health Need Workforce Development (<i>SDoH - Education</i>)	
Strategy Increase educational opportunities and workforce development programs within the community.	
Strategy Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community Collaborations and Partnerships ● Internship Programs ● Scholarships 	
Objective BY June 30, 2026, there will be an increase of workforce programs within the community.	
Target Population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Target Population: Young adults, teens, Ascension associates ● Medically Underserved Population: Persons experiencing poverty, persons otherwise vulnerable; historically marginalized communities. 	
Collaborators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborators: Will County Workforce Investment Board, Will County Heros, Will County Center for Economic Development (CED), local colleges and universities, local middle and high schools ● Consultants: Ascension Human Resources 	
Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In-kind staff time, funding/cash donations to support programs, education collateral, training, other materials. 	
ACTION STEPS:	ROLE/OWNER

Appoint internal lead(s) for this strategy	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Benefit, Community Health
Form internal committee focused on workforce development	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Health, Nursing, HR, Volunteer Services, Other Allied Health
Identify community partners (new and existing) to collaborate on workforce development initiatives.	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Health, internal committee
Implement workforce development programs	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Health, internal committee
Provide community investments for scholarships	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Investment Review Committee
Monitor work, evaluate progress, report outcomes	Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet, Community Benefit, Community Health
Output(s) and/or Outcome(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline: FY23 Data ● Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase number of individuals participating in workforce development programs or partnerships ● Data Source; Data Owner: CBISA, Other data sources TBD 	
ANTICIPATED IMPACT	
The anticipated impact of these actions is increased workforce opportunities for adults and youth within the hospital community.	

Evaluation

Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet will develop a comprehensive measurement and evaluation process for the implementation strategy. The Ministry will monitor and evaluate the action plans outlined in this plan for the purpose of reporting and documenting the impact these action plans have on the community. Ascension Saint Joseph - Joliet uses a tracking system to capture community benefit activities and implementation. To ensure accountability, data will be aggregated into an annual Community Benefit report that will be made available to the community.