



Board of Directors Meeting Agenda

Thursday, April 23, 2026, 6:30 pm

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Roll Call & Welcome
- 3) Approval of Consent Agenda Items

----- CONSENT AGENDA -----

- 4) Approval of Minutes
 - a. March 2026 SWCAP Board Minutes
 - b. Committee Minutes
 - i. Personnel Committee
 - ii. Planning & Review Committee
 - iii. Membership Committee
 - iv. Finance Committee
- 5) Action Items
 - a. (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program Report February 2026
 - b. Head Start State Supplemental Grant Application
 - c. Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Program Options
 - d. Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Continuation Grant Application
 - e. Family Foundations Home Visiting Grant Application
 - f. Family Foundations Home Visiting Recipe 4 Success Grant Application
 - g. Head Start Annual Report
 - h. Head Start Self-Assessment Summary
 - i. Head Start Transportation Waiver

- 6) Other Items

-----END OF THE CONSENT AGENDA-----

----- REGULAR AGENDA -----

- 7) Board Discussion & Training Items
 - a. Items moved from the Consent Agenda
 - b. Financial Reports for March 2026
- 8) Program Reports & Executive Staff Reports
 - a. Senior Directors Report
 - b. Executive Directors Report – SWCAP Strategic Priorities
- 9) Next Board Meeting
 - a. May 28, 2026, 6:30PM
- 10) Adjournment

Mission:

“We work to mitigate the causes and conditions of poverty in Southwestern Wisconsin, building resilience and self-sufficiency by providing supportive services and collaborating with partners.”



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 26, 2026, 6:30 pm

1) Call to Order

The meeting of the Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program was called to order by the Board Chair, Carol Beals at 6:36 pm.

2) Roll Call & Welcome

Shyanne Cushman, Assistant Executive Director, called the roll.

Present: Carol Beals, Michael Britt, Mike Furgal, Roger Lange, Robert Laeser, Kelly Logan, Susan Nelson, Donna Peterson, Paula Schoenberg and Adam Stucki; quorum present.

Excused: Martha Boyer, Bob Frank, Ben Gruber, Amy Hardy and Mark Pinch

Absent: Clarissa Aide

Others present: Brett White, Chris Frakes, Courtney Messer, Shyanne Cushman, Tawny Hardyman of Head Start, Liani McCarthy of Wegner CPAs and Kelly Trumm and Tom Waltz of the Boscobel Housing Authority.

3) Approval of Consent Agenda Items

- a. A motion was made to approve 4a & 4b of the consent agenda. 5a, 5b, & 5c were moved out of the consent agenda. A motion was made to approve the SWCAP Board of Directors' Consent Agenda 4a & 4b Items by Roger Lange, second by Michael Britt. All present voted in favor; the motion was carried.

----- CONSENT AGENDA -----

4) Approval of Minutes

- a. February 2026 SWCAP Board Minutes
- b. Committee Minutes
 - i. Personnel Committee
 - ii. Planning & Review Committee
 - iii. Membership Committee
 - iv. Finance Committee

5) Action Items

- a. Head Start Corrective Action Plan—Action Items
- b. Reporting Health and Safety Incidents Policy—Action Items
- c. (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program Report January 2026

6) Other Items

-----END OF THE CONSENT AGENDA----- ----- REGULAR AGENDA -----

7) Board Discussion & Training Items

a. Items moved from the Consent Agenda

5a. Head Start Corrective

- i. Tawny Hardyman presented the Head Start Corrective Action Plan
- ii. A motion was made to approve the Head Start Corrective Action Plan by Paula Schoenberg, second by Adam Stucki. All present voted in favor; the motion was carried.

5b. Reporting Health and Safety Incidents Policy

- i. Tawny Hardyman presented a policy draft for Reporting Health and Safety Incidents
- ii. A motion was made to approve the Head Start Reporting Health and Safety

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Incidents Policy by Michael Britt, second by Roger Lange. All present voted in favor; the motion was carried.

5c. (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program Report January 2026

- i. Tawny Hardyman presented the USDA Child and Adult Food Care Program Report for January 2026. 2,440 total meals were served with a total reimbursement of \$7,287.25.
- ii. A motion was made to approve the USDA Child and Adult Food Care Program Report by Paula Schoenberg, second by Adam Stucki. All present voted in favor; the motion was carried.

b. Financial Reports for February 2026

- i. Liani McCarthy of Wegner CPA presented the February 2026 Financial Report along with listed transactions below, \$15,000 and over.

Transactions \$15,000 and over

Recurring

- Quartz \$84,041 – health insurance
- West Bend \$52,335 – business insurance
- Midwest Title Corp \$47,250 – for a HOME loan, which is reimbursed by DoA
- Crawford County Title Services \$42,500 – for a HOME loan, which is reimbursed by DoA
- Wegner \$30,950 – monthly accounting fees

Non-recurring

- Department of Administration \$129,043 - this was to pay back the loan payments that SWCAP received from individuals for their HOME loans that were originally reimbursed by DoA (no double receipt allowed!).
 - Neighborhood Housing Services \$35,000 - this was a cash loan to NHS for 2 months worth of expenses.
 - Grace Lutheran Church \$20,861 – payout of cash balance within this project, as SWCAP is no longer associated with it
- ii. A motion was made to approve the Financial Reports for February 2026 and all items of transactions of \$15,000 and over by Adam Stucki, second by Paula Schoenberg. All present voted in favor; the motion was carried.

c. Discussion Item: Boscobel Housing Authority

Kelly Trumm from the Boscobel Housing Authority presented on the Skyline Spec Homes for the Pine Shores Subdivision project for workforce housing, that started in March of 2025 with a closing date in April of 2026. Tom Waltz went over the cost of the Skyline homes and the contractor bids. Pictures of the interior and exterior of the finished home were displayed, along with expenses and additional notes on bid packets for future upgrades.

8) Program Reports & Executive Staff Reports

a. Senior Directors Report

Courtney presented an update with Inclusa/MTN changes; LIFT has not seen any reduction in rides. Our private pay rides have gone up. A lot of LIFT clients are leaving Inclusa and opting over to My Choice or ADRC.

Chris Frakes discussed the Whole Family Approach in Richland Center Head Start. Our employees are very excited to work with these families for 6-8 weeks and move forward with this plan for more families. Recruitment flyers were just handed out this week, and many families responded immediately.

b. Executive Directors Report

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Brett White talked about the draft of Strategic Priorities for 2026-2028. It is the “what” of what we plan to do. He also discussed the Operational Principles and Design, basically the “why” of why we plan to do these things. We will dig deeper into these files in future meetings.

Brett also explained that the nonprofit community Action agency, Newcap, Inc. in Green Bay, in which their board of Directors voted to close the doors and shut down within the next few months.

9) Next Board Meeting

- a. April 23, 2026, 6:30PM

10) Adjournment

- a. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Adam Stucki, second by Roger Lange. All present voted in favor; the motion was carried, meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm.

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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
Public Instruction

Total Meals: 2,557
 Head Start Meals: 1,975
 Infant-Toddler Meals: 582
 Total Reimbursement: \$7,574.50
 Head Start Reimbursement: \$5,832.37
 Infant-Toddler Reimbursement: \$1,742.13

Home-
Day
Care
Program

School
Nutrition
Program

Community
Nutrition
Program

Summer
Food
Program

Special
Milk
Program

Review

Other
Services

Logout

[Community Nutrition Program >](#)

[Claim Reimbursement >](#)

[Child and Adult Care Food Program >](#)

[View-Print Claim](#)

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
[Participation Reimbursement Information]

256801 - Southwest Wisconsin CAP INC

General Information		Payment	Amount
Program	Child Care Food Program (CCI)	+ Meal Reimbursement	7,296.04
Claim Date:	02/01/2026	- Advance	0.00
Non-needy Category:	0	- Meal Overpayment Rec.	0.00
Reduced Category:	0	= Meal Reimb. bal. due.	7,296.04
Free Category:	118	+ Cash In Lieu (CIL)	278.46
Total Number of Enrolled Children:	118	- CIL Overpayment Rec.	0.00
Number of Days of Service:	18	= CIL Reimb. bal. due.	278.46
		Total	7,574.50
		Voucher No.	2026001327
		Date Submitted:	03/26/2026
		Date Processed:	
		Date Paid:	

Total Reimbursable Meals Summary Based on Site(s) Participation Information

Total Breakfasts	Total AM Snack	Total Lunches	Total PM Snack	Total Suppers	Total Additional Snack	Total Lunches 2nd	Total Supper 2nd	Total Meals
854	0	913	790	0	0	0	0	2,557

Site Participation Information

Site No.	Non-Needy	Reduced Price	Free	Total Enrollment	Days Operating	ADA	Breakfasts	AM Snack	Lunches	Lunches 2nd	PM Snack	Suppers	Supper 2nd	Additional Snack
1854	0	0	12	12	7	9	59	0	59	0	0	0	0	0
6319	0	0	21	21	15	15	187	0	197	0	162	0	0	0
7521	0	0	27	27	15	20	276	0	234	0	248	0	0	0
8509	0	0	38	38	18	21	186	0	272	0	237	0	0	0
8516	0	0	14	14	13	10	124	0	125	0	120	0	0	0
801607	0	0	6	6	7	4	22	0	26	0	23	0	0	0

[CERTIFICATION]

I HEREBY CERTIFY to the best of my knowledge that this claim is true, correct, and in accordance with the terms of existing agreement, that records are available to support this claim, and that payment has not been received. Meal counts have been reviewed and analyzed to ensure accuracy. I acknowledge that failure to submit accurate claims will result in recovery of an over claim and may result in the withholding of payments, suspension, or termination of the program. I understand that the information on this claim is being given in connection with the receipt of federal funds and that deliberate misrepresentation or withholding of information may result in prosecution under applicable State and Federal statutes.

Preparer Name and Telephone No.: Deb Sander 1-608-553-1429



SWCAP Head Start
 Grant#: 05HP000495
 Grant Application

September 1, 2026 – August 31, 2027

SWCAP Head Start proposes to submit a continuation grant application in the amount of \$1,127,206.00 to serve 52 infants and toddlers ages 0 – 3. This grant employs 8 full-time Early Head Start teachers and portions of the salaries for 3 Family Advocates and 8 management staff. Additionally, funds will be paid to Snug as a Bug ChildCare Partner monthly at the rate of \$881.67 per enrolled child, to provide Early Head Start services to dually enrolled children.

SWCAP Head Start
 Grant: 05HP000495
 Program Options

SWCAP Head Start will provide services in center-based classrooms at the following locations. Early Head Start classroom services begin on September 1, 2026, and end on or before August 31, 2027, dependent upon location. Snow days are built into the program to ensure Early Head Start classrooms provide 1,380 hours of service. Snug as a Bug is the contracted childcare partner and provides Early Head Start center-based services to children at the Cuba City and Lancaster sites.

Location	# of children	Days/week	Hours/Day	Minimum Hours/Year
Boscobel #1	8	Mon – Fri	6.75	1380
Boscobel #2	8	Mon -Fri	6.75	1380
Muscoda	8	Mon – Fri	6.75	1380
Richland Center	8	Mon – Fri	6.75	1380
Snug as Bug— Cuba City	16	Mon - Fri	10	1380
Snug as a Bug— Lancaster	4	Mon – Fri	10	1380

SWCAP Head Start

Grant: Family Foundations Home Visiting Grant
Grant Application

October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027

SWCAP Head Start proposes to submit a continuation grant application in the amount of \$394,034.00 to provide home visiting services to children ages birth through three -years-old and pregnant women in the four-county service area of Grant, Iowa, Lafayette, and Richland counties.

This grant will pay a portion of the salaries for 8 home visitors and 5 management staff.

Grant: Family Foundations Home Visiting Recipe 4 Success
Grant Application

October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027

SWCAP Head Start proposes to submit a continuation grant application in the amount of \$8,850.00 to implement the Recipe 4 Success preventive intervention program related to overweight and obesity among families living in poverty. This grant features structured food preparation lesson to address the following 4 protective factors: healthy eating habits, toddler's self-regulation, parents' responsive feeding practices, and parents' sensitive scaffolding. This program is offered to enrolled families with children aged two-years-old.

SWCAP Head Start

Grant: Head Start State Supplemental Grant
Grant Application

July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2025

SWCAP Head Start proposes to submit a continuation grant application in the amount of \$102,444.00 to provide funding for:

2 Early Head Start Center-Based Floaters

2 Substitute Teachers

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Professional Memberships for staff

**Head Start 45 CFR Part 1303 Subpart F—1303.70(c)
Transportation Waiver Request Data Collection Form
2026 - 2027**

Current Grant Number: 05CH013431

Legal Name of Grantee: Southwestern WI Community Action Program, Inc.

Name, Title and Signature of Authorized Official Requesting Waiver: Tawny Hardyman Head Start Director

Phone Number: (608) 935-5422

Fax Number: (608) 935-1498

Email Address: t.hardyman@swcap.org

1. Proposed Number of Children to be Served

Head Start: 145 federal

Early Head Start: 74 federal

2. Number of Children Provided Transportation Services:

Head Start: 102

Early Head Start: 0

a. Using Grantee Owned or Leased Vehicles: 85

b. Through Grantee Contracted Transportation Services: 0

c. Through Arrangement at No Cost to Grantee: 17

3. Proposed Number of Children Who Will be Covered by Waiver:

Head Start: 145

Early Head Start: 0

4. Requesting Waiver Of:

 X 17 Child Safety Restraint Systems Requirement (45CFR 1303.71(d))

 X 85 Bus Monitor Requirement (45CFR 1303.72(4))

5. Waiver Request Applies to the Following:

Grantee

Delegate(s) (please list)

6. Grantee's Justification for Requesting a Waiver (attach no more than 5 pages)

Please explain fully as each request will be considered separately and waivers will not receive automatic approval.

If requesting waivers of both 45CFR1303.71(d), child safety restraint systems requirement, and 45 CFR1303.72(4), bus monitor requirement, you must provide justification for each requirement.

SWCAP Head Start will not be able to fully comply with the HSPPS transportation regulations due to staff shortages and the lack of qualified CDL drivers. SWCAP Head Start has had high staff turnover rates and a lack of qualified applicants to fill vacant positions. In addition to their classroom responsibilities, SWCAP teaching staff also take on the responsibility of driving the bus and/or the role of bus monitor. SWCAP assists staff in obtaining their CDL in many ways, including offering paid time to study for the CDL permit, covering the cost of testing, and providing time to practice driving after the CDL permit is obtained. Furthermore, all staff who have CDL also receive an additional pay stipend.

This program and local school districts in the service area have had difficulty hiring CDL licensed bus drivers. Local bus service agencies continue offering sign-on bonuses of \$1500.00 or more for qualified CDL bus drivers and are currently recruiting bus drivers. SWCAP Head Start explored hiring a local bus service agency to transport children and the contracted cost is \$100.00 per route, or \$200.00 per day. SWCAP Head Start operates in rural communities that include consolidated school districts. As a result, transportation routes are often one hour long and span a great distance to meet the needs of the low-income families in our service area. SWCAP Head Start has engaged community volunteer bus monitors in the past, but this has proven to be ineffective. We continue to look for ways to provide additional classroom assistants to assist with classroom and transportation duties. The approved transportation waiver will be used until all staff vacancies are full and staff have successfully obtained their CDL.

According to transportation records SWCAP predicts approximately 85 Head Start children will use transportation services in the next program year, as we strive for full enrollment. Of these 85 children more than half could drop from the program if SWCAP Head Start was unable to provide transportation services to the child and family. Transportation is one of the recurring top concerns noted by families on our community needs assessment. The increased 4K classes offered by local education agencies has decreased Head Start waiting lists. SWCAP Head Start will not have enough income eligible children to fill enrollment vacancies created by children who may drop due to lack of transportation. Currently we are using the safest methods available, within current funding and staff capacity limits, to transport children. Children riding on Head Start buses are transported in built-in, age-appropriate child restraint systems. Staff and bus monitor volunteers are trained in appropriate bus safety and active supervision procedures.

In addition, SWCAP Head Start is asking for a waiver of the child restraint system for up to seventeen (17) Head Start children attending a collaboration classroom housed within the local education system. The SWCAP Head Start collaboration with the local school district provides the opportunity for up to seventeen (17) children to be enrolled in both the school system 4K class and the Head Start program. The local school district provides transportation to and from the school building at no cost to our agency. The school system will transport children on school buses which do not have a bus monitor or child restraint systems. Collaborating with the local school bus system for transportation is a financial benefit to our agency. Additionally, this community-based approach helps to conserve local resources while providing quality programming for children and families.

SWCAP v2.0 - Strategic Priorities for 2026 - 2028

SWCAP v2.0 simply reflects the next step in the organizational change process that we've been undertaking over the past couple of years, which will continue and expand over the 2026-2028 time frame. Truthfully, this is an endless process, with older priorities phasing out and new ones being added over time. Over the next few years, we'll be concentrating upon:

- Solidifying the transition from programs to departments
- Capital stacks, recognizing that unrestricted revenue > gross revenue
- Understanding that impact > process > practices ("how we do things here")
- Real partnerships, joint ventures, strategic alliances can be giant impact multipliers
- Digitization of operations, administration and record-keeping
- We can't lose a little money on each transaction and then make it up in volume – we tried.
- Margins matter...Impact matters even more
- Mission defines success; Effort, numbers and compliance don't

We've continued to experience the abject failure of the federal budgeting process since February of 2025, so we know that uncertainty and change are constants. That said, waiting for something to happen before you grudgingly do just enough to quiet things down isn't a response; it's simply a reaction. Hoping that change will go away is not a strategy. It solves absolutely nothing, particularly if it feels like the "safest" option. History is the demonstration of such folly.

In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing.

The worst thing you can do is nothing.

Theodore Roosevelt

Over the '26 – '28 time frame, we'll prioritize the following...

1. Enhance revenue diversification and growth via earnings, income & grants (@ 10/10/80%)
2. Build sustainable partnerships and alliances
3. Implement strategies and support to catalyze long-term change in SWCAP's institutional & programmatic cultures
4. Actively manage the disposition of all SWCAP capital assets in support of both financial and impact-related interests
5. Make on-going security improvements to enhance staff and customer safety
6. Initiate capital planning and strengthening core IT assets and talent sufficient to build, maintain and expand both an electronic "front door" to all SWCAP services and the digitalization of operating processes and systems
7. Build HR as an integrative agent
8. Assess and update employee-related processes and standards
9. Optimize recruitment, training and compensation systems, including the establishment of standards of conduct
10. Plan and implement both a unified document management system and CRM (Empower) system throughout SWCAP

WHAT

And to initiate...

11. ROMA (or **alternative**) integration into SWCAP operational management and impact assessment systems
12. Whole Family Approach (WFA) integration across SWCAP services, programs and management functions as fundamental strategic priority
13. Systematic identification and implementation of customer service improvements throughout SWCAP practices and processes
14. Design, integrate and execute long-term intraorganizational performance standards and expectations, including the introduction and utilization of key performance indicators (KPI's) across programmatic and institutional practices
15. Implementation of SWCAP's Marketing Plan

Explanations & Rationales

1. Enhance revenue diversification and growth via earnings, income & grants (@ 10/10/80%)

SWCAP is over-reliant upon public resources (both federal and state). It is highly improbable that SWCAP as we know it could ever reach a point where public sector investment isn't most of our revenues, but we clearly need to diversify our capital sources and uses on an accelerated schedule. This is not a short-term undertaking; it takes years to meaningfully alter the capital structure of an organization by going out and developing multimillion-dollar pipelines of major gifts, planned giving, targeted solicitations, earned income and the odd grant. We have begun.

2. Build sustainable partnerships and alliances

I'm going to let you in on a poorly kept secret, one that every nonprofit organization publicly swears allegiance to but generally never tries... nonprofits **cannot** succeed without partners. That is truer today than it ever has been. This definition of "success", though, is intentionally fuzzy. How much we care, how hard we try, how long we've been doing this program, or that service are not measures of performance, though they often get used as if they were. Partners aren't people that go to meetings at the same time or that sign a letter of support for this or that proposal. A partnership is predicated on one very important quality: No one succeeds unless everyone succeeds. Partners share risks and losses. We don't win unless our partners win. This is where people start to lose interest. Frankly, our squeamishness about sharing risk is long past its expiration date. We have far more to gain than to lose. Far more.

Collaborations, joint ventures, strategic alliances, etc. are precisely what SWCAP has been and must continue to pursue, to develop, to fail and to succeed with as well. There are two simple reasons... 1) none of our work can be accomplished alone, no matter who we are or how powerful, brilliant or accomplished our organization thinks it is. Poverty is a much bigger and far more complicated issue than commonplace pundits, politicians and opinionated next-door neighbors seem to believe. It always has been, and 2) the primary challenge we face isn't money. The world is full of money; ours is the wealthiest

society that has ever existed, yet poverty persists. What we lack is coordination, cooperation and quality control. Absent these, far too many small groups constantly bump into one another on the way to their common objectives.

3. Implement strategies and support to catalyze long-term change in SWCAP's institutional & programmatic cultures

We gladly acknowledge that there has been some substantive change taking place in both the culture and expectations within SWCAP. This reflects a beginning, not a sustained transformation but forward motion, nonetheless. This process will remain a key priority as we enter the next stage of genuinely unlearning old habits, attitudes and behaviors.

4. Actively manage the disposition of all SWCAP capital assets in support of both financial and impact-related interests

SWCAP still possesses or occupies a large amount of facility space for its operations, but we have been actively trimming that number. As we move toward a more robust digital operating platform, we expect that it will allow us to further downsize our fleet of owned/leased properties. This will take years, but we'll persist in what we've started.

5. Make on-going security improvements to enhance staff and customer safety

Over the past year, we have made security improvements in some of SWCAP's facilities, particularly in Head Start buildings. Things like emergency building lock down doors and security cameras connected with recording devices and off-site data storage. This hasn't been cheap, nor will it be in the future, but it is necessary to protect our staff and the children with and for whom we work. We can't make these enhancements quickly enough, but we can and will continue to integrate higher-level safety features into all of our utilized capital assets as resources will allow. When resources don't exist then we'll use guerilla tactics to do all we can.

6. Initiate capital planning and strengthening core IT assets and talent sufficient to build, maintain and expand both an electronic "front door" to all SWCAP services and the digitalization of operating processes and systems

SWCAP is in the information business. For financial and accounting, personnel and human resources, facilities and infrastructure, service records and plans, we're in a digital world. Data management and utilization are essential processes today which require scalable, reliable, and networked infrastructure. We must vastly improve our data management, storage, and utilization practices. The most important type of infrastructure at SWCAP is no longer buildings or facilities; it's our networked data systems.

7. Build HR as an integrative agent

We established SWCAP's first dedicated HR office a couple of years ago. While it's taken time to get the right people in the proper spots, I doubt many would disagree that our efforts to give staff access to people both willing and capable of professionally addressing

the employment-related issues that everyone faces was in vain. Having people who genuinely care about the people they work with shouldn't be revelatory, but it has been. Long way to go, but we're finally underway.

8. Assess and update employee-related processes and standards

Making sure that everyone in the organization has the information they need is an elemental function. Likewise, making sure that employees genuinely have the skills, training, and capacity for their role is also vital. SWCAP must function transparently, equitably, and genuinely. So must each of us working here. If someone makes a mistake, that's OK. Learn from it and move on. If someone chooses not to decide when they can and should, that's a different issue.

9. Optimize recruitment, training and compensation systems, including the establishment of standards of conduct

How do we recruit, train, and compensate quality employees? How successful are we, really? Do we understand and communicate our expectations? Do our staff understand and fulfill their responsibilities? Based upon what standard? Is everyone clear on what success and failure look like? Do we even know?

10. Plan and implement both a unified document management system and CRM (Empower) system throughout SWCAP

There are two massive infrastructural needs facing SWCAP. First, we need to take enormous piles of paper, files, reports, etc. and consolidate them someplace where we can find and utilize them. Secondly, given that this is the 21st century, we must establish and utilize an integrated customer relationship management (CRM) system so that we can integrate personal/medical/financial information that can be streamlined and protected. Our obligation to customers to protect their personal information is clear and systemized when it involves health-related data. Well, while the other protection protocols needn't be as strict as those, our moral obligation is to treat everyone's data at our disposal as if it is of equivalent value. Now, this issue isn't cut and dried, as we're part of a system of public and private services that occasionally need to have access to the same information. How we design and execute this isn't clear, though it must be done. The process is underway and will be ongoing for the foreseeable future. We've started, but so much is yet to be done.

11. ROMA (**or alternative**) integration into SWCAP operational management and impact assessment systems

Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) is an established protocol for community action agencies/programs to use in assessing whether the services they provide work for their customers and communities. It honestly doesn't matter if we think we're doing good and helpful things. It matters if our customers do **and** it matters if we have an impact on people objectively. Not one measure; but both.

12. Whole Family Approach (WFA) integration across SWCAP services, programs and management functions as fundamental strategic priority

The Whole Family Approach (WFA) is a comprehensive strategy and practice that comes from the world of early childhood education, but it is applicable across SWCAP. It can appear complicated, but it's simply a process that both allows and creates an institutional focus on the multigenerational nature of who we serve and why we do so. We work with children, parents, grandparents, etc. But our purpose is to help families and communities get out of poverty while working locally and regionally to eradicate the causes of poverty. In a world where resources are packaged, distributed, and reported in very discrete categories over which we have no control, it's important to remember that we can't and don't fix people's problems. What we're trying to do each day is help individuals and families navigate their own futures.

13. Systematic identification and implementation of customer service improvements throughout SWCAP practices and processes

Currently, we as an organization do far too little to understand and improve the experience of people when they interact with SWCAP as an organization. Are we doing well? How do we know? What should we abandon, improve or expand? Why? No organization exists simply to exist. How do we assess our performance, learn from our mistakes, and concentrate on areas where we can make an outsized impact? These questions matter and need to be both asked and answered systematically.

14. Design, integrate and execute long-term intraorganizational performance standards and expectations, including the introduction and utilization of key performance indicators (KPI's) across programmatic and institutional practices

From year to year, organizations such as ours need to evaluate our own institutional performance, not for funders, but so that we understand what we genuinely have and have not accomplished. Often, these processes produce a litany of numbers, charts, graphs and the occasional picture as if to say that "this is our success story".

That's not even close to true. Organizational performance, particularly for those in the community action field, can only truly be assessed outside the walls of our buildings, classrooms, centers, clinics, etc. Success is impact. The efforts of our work on the lives and self-determination of individuals and families reflect performance. Measures like compliance, budget growth, number of programs or service awards – all of these reflect the process, not the value of what we do.

We will use intraorganizational performance standards and key performance indicators as part of our systems management process. But the true standard of our value lies in people, both outside and inside our organization.

We are very fortunate to work daily to make the lives of others tangibly better. It is hard, frustrating, infuriating and makes even the strongest person wonder why in the world they keep doing this. But someday, you get reminded. When a child giggles, the relief of an overstressed parent or the immensely valuable small victories that make an entire

family relax so much that others can feel it as well. Nobody who works at SWCAP makes much money or wins any social status contests, but most understand that what we do genuinely matters to real people in the real world. This is what impact is made of and to what we continue to aspire.

15. Implementation of SWCAP's Marketing Plan

The traditional perspective toward "marketing" is that it entails 'pushing' a consistent narrative, both internally and externally, that the sender hopes will provide a common and yet controllable premise that is widely accepted across multiple markets (i.e. funders, investors, customers, regulators, politicians, neighbors, regional organizations, etc.). There are a variety of challenges to this model of communication, not the least because it is ultimately impossible for any organization to control their own narrative in the real world, once it's out of their hands

Constantly saying the same thing over and over pales in comparison to consistently delivering on our own priorities. Nothing succeeds like learning what does and doesn't work and then changing your approach, if necessary. Welcome and acknowledge shortcomings. Everyone makes mistakes. Confident organizations don't try to control perceptions, it's literally impossible. Rather, they acknowledge facts, assess honestly, respond genuinely and then explain (both the bad and the good) what was learned.

We don't need to convince anyone that we're great. We simply have to be great. No acting required. If we are acting, then we're a far away from greatness.

SWCAP Operational Principles and Design

Fiscal years 2026-2028

The purpose of this document is to synopsise the rationale and decision-drivers associated with the implementation of SWCAP's 2026-2028 institutional operating priorities. It isn't a list of specific actions but is intended to reflect the strategic direction of the organization over that period.

WHY

Principles

There are specific principles associated with the process of executing a strategy of change within a nonprofit organization. While not an exhaustive list, some of these include:

1. **Direction is More Important than Speed** - If you're headed in the wrong direction, it doesn't matter how fast you're getting there. But if you're going in the right direction, get on with it.
2. **Be Here Now** – Most of us settle into habits and practices that we do repeatedly, waiting for some future event or date when “the answer” arrives magically. Nonprofits certainly do that with/to/for people we serve. While we wait for them to “progress” through our programmatic steps and objectives (which is far more about us than them) we tend to forget that their life is happening right now. **Immediacy matters to relevance because no one should spend their whole life getting ready to live theirs.**
3. **Thoughtful Opinions Held Loosely** – How do you respond when faced with facts that contradict your cherished beliefs? Do you update your knowledge with new information or do you flail about and attempt to rationalize or refute them so as not to upset your status quo? Human nature pushes each of us to disregard information that causes us **cognitive dissonance**. It requires effort to be firm enough in your convictions that you can be decisive in action, yet humble enough to genuinely accept that you may very well be wrong.
4. **Principles Drive Tactics and Behavior Defeats Intentions** – A tactic defines “what” and “how”. Sometimes that can be enough to get a result. But if we seek “impact”, we must also recognize strategy, or “why”. We're in the people business and our services are values-oriented, whether intentional or not. **What we mean to do isn't important. What we actually do is**, so do the right thing, not simply what we guess might work in the short-term or “how we do things around here”.
5. **Decide** – Making unpopular decisions comes with the territory; **electing to be a jerk about it is a choice**. There are three types of decisions: **right, wrong and none**. Of these, none is the greater evil and wrong may well be the higher good.
6. **Pros vs. amateurs** – Every tennis player follows the same rules and scoring. They play on the same court and use the same equipment. The basic elements of a tennis game are the same for everyone. But the game that each play's is fundamentally different. Professionals score points while amateurs lose them. The professional game is about positioning, control, spin, power and strategy. Amateur tennis is entirely different. Not in how it is played, but in how it is won. Mistakes are commonplace. Balls are constantly hit into the net, past the end line or over the fence. What this means is simple: **It is remarkable how much long-term advantage is gained by trying to consistently not fail rather than attempting to be demonstrably better than we actually are**. Constant improvement is required, which is why we must do our best every time, because we will improve.
7. **Our existence is immaterial; our relevance is not**. We're not special; the world will survive with or without us. So, win or lose, do the right thing simply because it is.

Current Circumstances

When the breadth of SWCAP's transition was first discussed, senior management held multiple conversations about which of our strategic interests should be addressed in the first phase, which we defined as the last half of '23 and all of '24. From that, we identified fifteen priorities upon which we focused.

During 2025, some legitimate accomplishments were attained in multiple program areas, though it remains clear that we've been more aggressive in our expectations than reality would allow. Multiple examinations have demonstrated that SWCAP still does not have the assets, resources or skills sets on hand to successfully execute the next stage of agency evolution that we've planned.

While nothing here can't be fixed, some of the reasons it'll take longer include:

1. The hidden impacts of being institutionally "too wide and far too shallow", that is, we do too many things averagely, when excellence, even in a limited number of domains, would serve our mission more effectively.
2. Most nonprofit organizations (including ours) have a programmatic tendency to focus on what funders are willing to pay for rather than targeting support for our own strategic priorities,
3. The fact that there aren't shared strategic priorities - either institutionally or programmatically - to speak of,
4. The cultural depth of tradition over principle and continuity over change, and
5. And an overwhelming fear of failure that precludes any intentional improvement.

Restructuring objectives

Consistent with our belief that SWCAP does too many different things without coordination, we've begun to consolidate our current programs into departments that will include either closely affiliated or strategically common characteristics. There is no obvious model that is clearly correct. Given these circumstances, we believe that it is appropriate and proper to refocus SWCAP's focus on the core intentions of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, that is to both ameliorate the effects of poverty and to address the local and regional causes of it. One mustn't conclude that everything we're paid to do is inherently related to either of those objectives.

The six groups that we currently operate are:

1. Energy Services, including weatherization;
2. Health & Wellness, including Community Health Partners, CCN & Food Security;
3. Family Development, including Head Start and Early Head Start;
4. Transportation, including on-demand & scheduled rides;
5. Household Stability, currently including Skills Enhancement, Work'nWheels & Home Buyer Assistance; and
6. Housing, focusing upon workforce and affordable housing via a variety of building technologies.

Some programs will change departments and some departments may change completely in the near future. Combined, they reflect a focus on fundamental needs and capacities – supporting families and young children with their health, heads, hearth and home.

Primary domains (nee groups/departments)

The rationale for a department versus program approach won't necessarily be obvious to everyone, but a fundamental element of establishing and enforcing long-term intraorganizational performance standards & expectations is that SWCAP will begin to overcome a very real problem...the inherent discontinuity between what individual programs concentrate upon and the strategic interests of the organization as a whole. SWCAP can no longer accept its institutional performance to be defined as the simple sum of its parts. We must concentrate on the outcomes and impacts of the organization as a whole. Currently, we are simply incapable of doing so, and the principal challenge lies in finding 1) staff with experience and applied knowledge and 2) reasonably reliable capital with which to plan longer term. This is a different approach than SWCAP has historically utilized and it requires folks comfortable in both service and strategy domains.

Department: Energy Services

The focus of this department currently lies in assisting homeowners throughout SW Wisconsin in saving money currently spent on energy consumption effected by inefficient systems or inadequate heat retention in their homes. We anticipate Energy Services to expand its portfolio of services into areas like water access & utilization, heat pump installations and on-site power systems.

Department: Health & Wellness

SWCAP is unusual in the sense that the organization has focused on the role that community health plays in perpetuating poverty in communities. This manifests itself in multiple ways (i.e. behavioral health, suicide prevention, reproductive health, primary care, care coordination, our Women, Infant & Children (WIC) programs, etc.). SWCAP plays an outsized role in each of these domains throughout SW Wisconsin and given the immense demand for such services, anticipates continuing to do so, primarily through negotiated partnerships and collaborative relationships

Even simple anecdotal evidence unveils the tremendous need for services such as these in rural communities and regions. Urban settings, with substantially more patient volume and resources, aren't keeping up with demand. Neither are we. No one is, nor will they. Sustainable health & wellness is a team endeavor. Those more interested in building small empires will fall short, sometimes spectacularly so, over time. That helps no one. SWCAP is fortunate to have affiliated relationships with other primary and specialty-care providers, upon which we continue to build a network of care predicated upon shared objectives and mutual principles. That sounds like an obvious idea but it's surprisingly challenging for far too many.

Department: Family Development

Head Start is often considered, by far too many, to be a publicly funded day care program. Even some within the program see it in such a light. That is patently false. At its best, Head Start (and affiliated services, like Early Head Start) are the first step in America's commitment to free, appropriate public education. In fact, given that 50% of mental development happens before age five (and an additional 35% by age 10), a very good argument can (and should be) made that Head Start is intended to serve as a premier educational program the serves as a cornerstone for lifelong learning. Or, when done poorly, reflects one of the most significant failures in our public education system. Both examples exist in communities across the country.

Senior management is unified in the belief that SWCAP's Head Start services must improve; not simply for strategic purposes (of which there are many), but because it is our moral obligation. We have some good staff who try hard and want to do better. We must remove the obstacles placed before them, which are numerous and from multiple sources. The challenges facing Head Start classrooms today have multiplied from the era of Sargent Shriver coordinating a panel of experts to design a comprehensive child development program, largely because the components of a disadvantaged childhood are so much more complex now than in 1964. And, in part, because Head Start, as a system, hasn't kept up with those changes sufficiently. We aren't interested in being the very best version of a 1970's federal program. We are fully committed to being a very effective 2030's fact-based childhood development service and catalyst. Time (and politics) will tell.

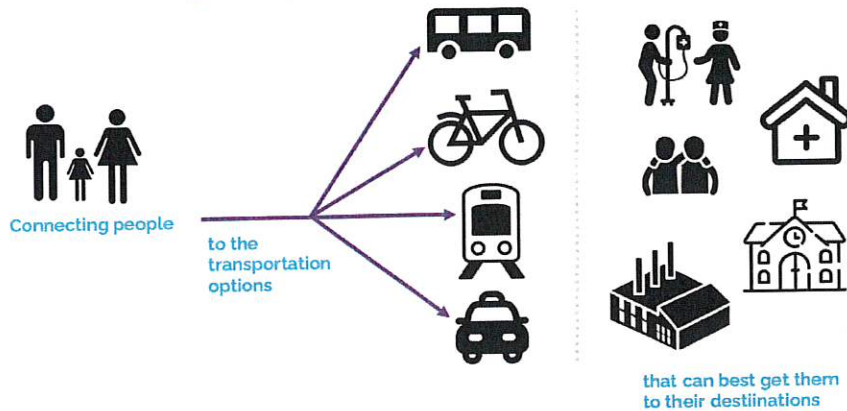
Another elemental challenge facing LMI families is the very real problem of ensuring adequate quantity and quality of food that their family can access affordably. In the recent past, with food inflation spiking so profoundly post-Covid, this has become an even greater challenge. SWCAP's Food Security program has continued to work diligently to assure that no one goes hungry. There are a variety of challenges associated with their work, but a significant problem lies simply in volume. SWCAP lacks adequate storage capacity to maintain necessary food volumes. Moreover, our current distribution system taxes our ability to comprehensively meet demand. And all of this within one of the most productive agricultural regions in the world. The definition of irony. It appears that SWCAP must reconsider how we receive, store, sort and distribute food to communities throughout our region. We need more capacity and we need it yesterday. Unfortunately, that isn't how our world works. We're resolved to rethink, redesign and remodel our Food Security efforts to prepare for future needs, which as of now appear to be greater than we've faced thus far with substantially less policy-level support.

Department: Transportation

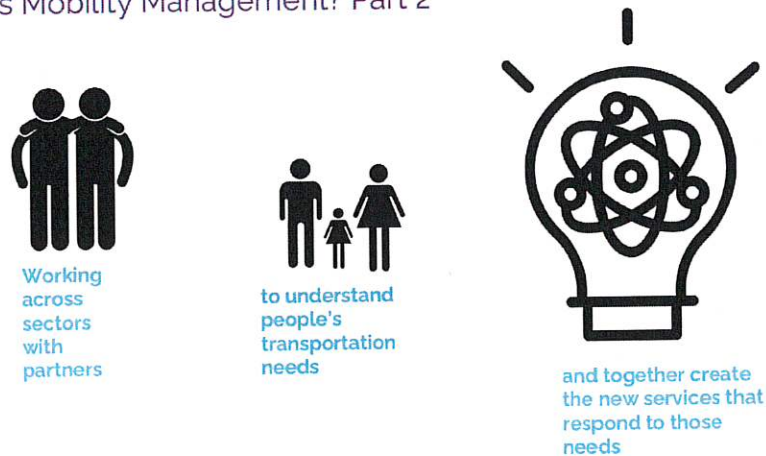
SWCAP is an outlier in another realm; transportation, or LIFT as we call it. The folks involved in that department already do a remarkable job of coordinating and availing rides to people throughout the region. While this is exceptionally important to LMI families living in this rural area, by itself it is insufficient. Our rural communities are spread across a geographically large area and we're well aware that our current one-size-fits-all model is inadequate to the existing need for multiple transportation options. Consequently, we feel a very strong need to explore and perhaps experiment with more of the tools associated with mobility management, which can include easing access to safe and reliable personal transportation options at an affordable price point. How that gets sustainably accomplished in a rural region with a low population density and limited family incomes is the very real question.

As you can see on the diagrams on the top of the next page, mobility management stands back from offering a single approach to getting people from points A to B; rather it examines a variety of potential transportation models and seeks to integrate as many as locally possible to provide a system, not just a model, of transportation across a defined region. Are public bikes, scooters, pay-per-ride vehicles, etc. a viable option? What about a local ride hailing service? Or strategically located cars paid for by the hour? Scheduled van routes? What about organized ride sharing? Sub-regional hyper efficient taxis? All mobility management questions in search of answers.

What is Mobility Management? Part 1



What is Mobility Management? Part 2



While few people recognize the interconnected nature of infrastructure in general terms, transportation systems are horribly misunderstood. For most of us, the only time we think about them is when DOT has a lane blocked and we gripe about the traffic. Then, once we get past the crew laying down new road or maintaining a bridge or just sitting there doing what appears to be absolutely nothing, we move on and don't think about it until the next slow-down. For most Americans, roads equate to transportation. But roads are just one piece of that very large pie, which means that transit is larger than the eye can see, and even more challenging in rural regions.

Mobility management is a systems-level approach. Providing rides in and of itself, is not. Mobility management focuses upon the network of infrastructure and relationships necessary to safely get a person where they need to be, and then back again. Transportation, as we currently see it, involves a van with a driver cruising down a road. This is important, yes, but ultimately inadequate. Moreover, the reliance on volunteer drivers presents a substantial liability factor that we don't believe SWCAP can assume over the long haul.

This is particularly the case contextually, for three reasons, 1) transportation requires us to use a substantial number of capital assets (vans) that are fundamentally inadequate to the task at hand, 2) namely, providing independent rides (not scheduled service) to individuals or small groups, while 3) legislators from around the country are in thrall with building highways, but are

seemingly allergic to the idea that given the capital intensiveness of transit, a regional approach is fundamentally necessary, which requires public expenditures adequate to the task (which are substantially cheaper than a mile of interstate). Such expenditures are spelled T-A-X by people living in cities and rural communities alike. This brings upon legislators an instant case of “the vapors”. Consequently, things are unlikely to change appreciably. Even if it does, we face the same challenges we have now; expensive capital assets that aren’t appropriate to the volume of their use, along with the associated premature degradation of the operators and users balance sheet. LIFT is between a rock and a hard place – we aren’t large enough to build sufficient scale to provide commercial service, but we are too large to rely on our current fleet composition and staff complement. Something must give.

Hope isn’t a strategy. This challenge will not solve itself. Changes will be made. As a result, SWCAP needs to broaden its focus on the establishment of a comprehensive mobility management plan, which inherently involves other organizations. It isn’t easy, but what we’re doing is increasingly untenable. There are ways to rethink things. We just have to find enough community members to step outside of their comfort zone which, frankly, may be the hardest part.

Department: Household Stability

Currently, this department is a bit of a hodgepodge of distinct programs whose sole connection is that they have historically operated as programs disconnected from other programmatic peers or distinctive operational units. This was a common historical practice within SWCAP, but one that we are actively changing. The elimination of this nascent department will occur once these programs are integrated into more appropriately targeted departments in 2026.

Department: Housing

The development and support of housing has long played a role at SWCAP. Over time though, our service portfolio has become unduly fragmented, spanning a multitude of housing-related services (mortgage assistance, supportive housing, home energy and weatherization, rental housing and project development of multiple types), which individually make sense. However, many of these activities require long time frames to develop. Others are small and struggle to maintain the assets that they have and/or to find longer-term financial resources to support their current levels of service. This sets aside any realistic opportunity to scale themselves across southwestern Wisconsin. Conversely, bigger development projects (i.e. multi-family housing, or MFH) require more capital than most funding sources can/will provide, which necessitates packaging resources from multiple entities (both public and private). This takes enormous time attending an array of mind-numbing meetings and endless compliance-focused discussions. More importantly, MFH projects generally drain financial assets away from their residents rather than aiding them in the accumulation and appreciation of monetary equity (ownership). For most homeowners, equity built over time in their home provides accessible capital for their family in times of need. Renting is simply a monthly cost with no long-term financial advantage.

While we will continue to examine projects to which we have officially committed, the immediate paucity of housing that is affordable to the families of teachers, policemen/firemen, nurses, medical technicians, city/county/state employees, small business staff and retirees of average means poses a very real challenge to the fabric of rural communities across the nation and leads us to focus on the development of smaller projects across our service region in an attempt to 1) deliver workforce housing solutions in the near-term, and 2) do so at a

substantially faster rate than traditional. At present, SWCAP does many things well or acceptably, but we do so on such a small scale that marginal costs tend to diminish any potential positive returns, either fiscal or in community impact. These circumstances cannot be sustained over time and new models of development must be experimented with. We envision the inclusion of Neighborhood Housing Services (currently an affiliate, soon to be its own department) as an experiment doing so.

Summary

This document is not intended to represent a complex plan. It is intended to guide operational decision-making over the short term. Some believe that plans can be developed to guide decision-making far into the future. I am not one of those people. Ergo, this document is far more an operational reference than any type of map.

Many of us, particularly those with equivalent experience elsewhere, are of the opinion that transparency and honesty are vital parts of shared leadership. People who fail to share facts, intentions, perspectives or principles fail to be leaders. So here goes...

1. SWCAP has a reasonably good reputation amongst many constituencies in southwestern Wisconsin, **though it has burnt multiple bridges with others which will take many years to rectify**, if at all.
2. I would dare say that most staff members here mean well and try hard, though **too many are influenced by an existing organizational culture** that requires them to swim in a thick soup of individual personalities and socially regulated behaviors that prioritize stasis over change, repetition over performance and talking instead of trying.
3. A "this is how we do things" perspective dominates at SWCAP, **not as a considered strategy but as the least objectionable alternative**. Either way, the **organization has lost any comprehensive sense of why it currently exists as a whole** or why it should do so in the future. It lacks a clear perspective on how the parts of the organization fit together, how they should or why those parts are important in the first place. It is an amalgam of pieces rather than an integrated whole. That serves as quite a challenge, as no organization survives when some in the same boat are so obviously rowing in different directions.
4. SWCAP's future relies upon our ability to 1) **secure, build and retain talent** at all levels throughout the agency, 2) **diversify our revenue base** so that we aren't over reliant on any given source of funds (which we certainly are right now), and 3) substantially **enhance our return on assets** (ROA), some of which we have liquidated as they simply didn't help us accomplish our mission.
5. We **must** control our cost structure, which doesn't mean "don't spend money", rather, it means **spend it on things that create demonstrable value** to both mission and resources.
6. Elect to become an "**Employer of Choice**", not because it sounds good, but because it is good. Every organization in the community services realm will succeed or fail based upon the quality, understanding and capacity of its staff, volunteers and Board members. We're all quite aware that SWCAP has a long way to go before multiple people start tearing down our doors to hand us their resume. We are very, agonizingly slowly changing that. Having said that, there are a number of people already here that love what they do and the people they serve. They want this place to succeed, not in words, but in deeds. Bottom line, the future of SWCAP lies with those of us here, now & in the future.

7. Demonstrate **radical transparency** both by 1) not hiding behind historical practices or prejudices and 2) by simply telling the truth, when it's easy and when it's not.
8. Concentrate on **clarity, simplicity and intentionality** in both sourcing and deploying funds.
9. Risk the development and utilization of **genuine interorganizational partnerships** for the simple reason that most organizations can't accomplish what they say they do by themselves; anything else is just uninformed talk, myopia or ego.
10. **Function as an institution, not an aggregation of programs**, and
11. **Matter**, not just to the people we serve, but to the communities we serve them in and the organizations that we work alongside. **What we say is meaningless; how and what we actually do is what differentiates failure and success.**

The bottom line is this; a number of us, at all levels and roles in SWCAP really don't like some of the behaviors, beliefs, perspectives and attitudes associated with "that's how we do things here". Everyone has every right to their own beliefs, opinions and feelings, but no one gets to apply their own facts, truths or wisdom to distinguish right from wrong for any person other than themselves. Not their coworkers and absolutely not the children and families whom we're allowed to serve.

We're all trying. Some really hard, some less so.

Let me finish with this: If you love what you do and both recognize and accept that the mission of SWCAP is far, far more important than any of us individually, we love that you're here and hope to work together long into the future.

If, however, what is written here sounds like nonsense; if you're certain that you are one of the very few who clearly understands the obvious way forward; if you're convinced that the people around you are dolts, posers and ineffective do-gooders; if you're proud of your intolerance to change, then seriously, **please** find somewhere else to work. You'll be happier, and so will those of us who choose to stay here. That certainly wouldn't make you a bad person, but staying here will get harder for you; evidence will displace strongly held opinion, feelings will steadily be exchanged with facts and the value of the organization will be measured by its actual impacts, not our personal intentions.

SWCAP has barely begun to move from what it was to what it becomes next. I hope everybody understands that we have just started changing our perspectives, priorities and expectations (please note that whether you agree or disagree is a completely different issue).

Meaning well is easy, doing well isn't. We're committed to making SWCAP matter more. And if you sincerely believe that we can't or won't, then elsewhere is definitely a better place to be.