

THE GOALS CENTER ANNUAL REPORT

2020-21



GOALS
CENTER

Greater Omaha Attendance and Learning Services

A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GOALS is dedicated to elevating, supporting, and accessing the existing expertise and passion in the community to jointly tackle the contributing factors to chronic absenteeism.

As I reflect over the past year at The GOALS Center, I am in awe of how much this team of professionals accomplished. Despite all the challenges presented to us, we found growth and opportunities in the barriers we encountered, and because of that, GOALS experienced many notable successes. We learned valuable lessons that changed the way we approached our work. The team remained dedicated, open-minded, and innovative for the benefit of our families and community. Now, more than ever, we know the importance of prioritizing collective impact, outreach, data, engagement, and diversity. The work of GOALS reaches far beyond monitoring school attendance. In fact, solely focusing on school attendance fails to tell the story of our mission, impact, and the continued needs for families. Looking further into our priorities garnered GOALS indispensable insights.

The team dedicated efforts in creating new and thriving relationships with stakeholders, partner agencies, and school districts. School attendance is a community issue and directly relates to social determinants of health for the entire city. GOALS is not a one size fits all solution for families struggling with absenteeism. In fact, GOALS is dedicated to elevating, supporting, and accessing the existing expertise and passion in the community to jointly tackle the contributing factors to chronic absenteeism. We volunteered, collaborated, listened, advocated, and partnered with anyone willing to do so. Through this, GOALS learned and evolved in unexpected ways.

COVID-19 showed us that adding an outreach component to GOALS programming is essential to fill the gap between school and home. Families struggling with chronic absenteeism cannot wait for service. Remote learning and the overwhelming needs for students and families exposed that in order to increase student attendance, we must first focus on school engagement. Thousands of students across the Learning Community were unaccounted for and lacked any level of engagement in school. The GOALS team responded by developing outreach-focused programming dedicated to supporting families to increase school engagement. This was so successful that it changed the way we view programming, and outreach services will be expanded moving into the new school year.

Using data to direct the work, collectively and as an agency, is essential to overcoming critical issues for kids and families. For the second year in a row, GOALS generated and disseminated reports that outlined the intersectionality between poverty, race/ethnicity, and the impact on school attendance. These reports continue to highlight the devastating disparities for families of color experiencing poverty across the Learning Community. These same families funnel into every other system and validates that they are under or overserved in a negative way. The GOALS Center remains committed to addressing poverty and racial and ethnic disparities through our work. With our youth, families, and partners, we are developing strategies to keep progressing to make our community stronger.

“ Westside Community Schools is very appreciative of our partnership with GOALS. The pandemic has taught us many things, to include the importance of regular/consistent attendance for learners of all ages and abilities. Our collaboration with GOALS helps meet the needs of our students and their families across the board. ”

-Dr. Mike Lucas, Westside Superintendent, Board Director

Nicole Seymour
Executive Director



MISSION AND VISION

The mission of the GOALS Center is to address absenteeism and at-risk behavior through encouragement of coordinated efforts to improve student attendance and learning.



OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Family - It's about people

Integrity - Honest always

Purpose - We are activators

“ I think the next few years are going to be critical, in respect, to the early identification of barriers to learning that affect the success of children and families. COVID-19 will create an environment that will demand that we serve children and families earlier and more comprehensive than ever. ”

-Commissioner Chris Rodgers,
Board Secretary

OUR FRAMEWORK

Due to the uncertainty of 2020 (with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, protests against systematic racism, and citywide lockdowns), GOALS staff began having open discussions regarding the culture and framework of the organization. Collectively the GOALS team developed our vision:

We advocate and empower diverse families to engage in education and accomplish their goals.

PARTNERSHIPS

The GOALS Center works in partnership with the 11 public school districts in Douglas and Sarpy Counties of Nebraska. GOALS also recognizes the importance of community and collaborates with numerous agencies and coalitions in the area, including:

Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium, Metro-Omaha Raise-Me-To-Read, Douglas County Community Response, Douglas County Juvenile Justice Stewardship Group, Elevate Program, Lift UP Sarpy, School Based Mental Health Collaborative, Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative and Racial & Ethnic Disparities Committee, UNO Juvenile Justice Institute, Nebraska Department of Education, School Based Attendance Coalition, Non-profit Association of the Midlands, and Project Harmony Multi-Disciplinary Teams

THE GOALS CENTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Terry Haack, Board President

Superintendent, Bennington Public Schools

Dr. Cheryl Logan, Board Vice President

Superintendent, Omaha Public Schools

Dr. Melissa Poloncic, Board Treasurer

Superintendent, Douglas County West Community Schools

Chris Rodgers, Board Secretary

Douglas County Commissioner

Nicole Brundo, Board Director

Deputy County Attorney, Douglas County Attorney's Office

Dr. Mike Lucas, Board Director

Superintendent, Westside Community Schools

Dr. Jeff Rippe, Board Director

Superintendent, Bellevue Public Schools

Mary Balluff, Board Director

Community Consultant

Reverend Portia Cavitt, Board Director

Reverend, Clair Memorial United Methodist Church

Lee Denker, Board Director

Executive Director, Papillion-LaVista Schools Foundation

The Honorable Amy Schuchman, Board Director

Judge, Douglas County Juvenile Court

Sean Connolly, Board Director

Attorney, Connolly IP, PC, LLO

“ We have been reminded in the past year of the importance of supporting students and parents to be present and attentive to school and thus assure that children learn. The actions taken early, before the family and student are in crisis, help to build resilient students and later productive citizens. The GOALS Center, a valuable resource by coordinating with school districts and community agencies, promises that families have what they need to guarantee their children are learning.

-Mary Balluff, Community Consultant, Board Director

”

Thank you to our
volunteer Board of
Directors for your guidance,
wisdom and support during
this year!
-The GOALS Team

10 YEARS IN REVIEW

2009

GOALS was created through LB 800 at the NE State Legislature

2011

2 employees through in-kind support from DHHS

2013

501C3 Status
Executive Director Hired

2019

Program development defined roles, successes, and key performance indicators

2021

10 employees
Many partnerships
Still growing

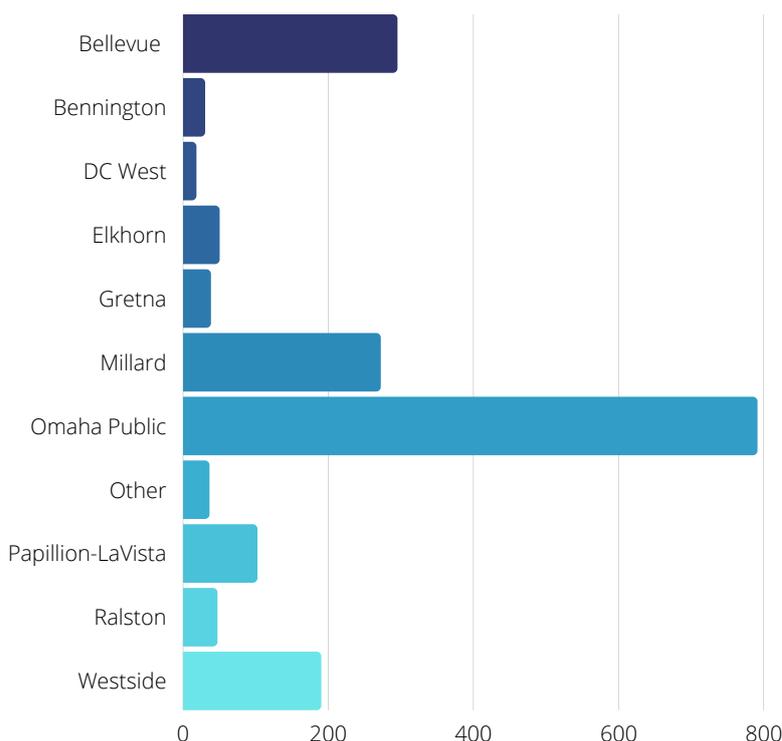
“ GOALS is very important to me. From the work we do with families, to the relationships we build within the community, to the GOALS team. There hasn't been anything else like it. I feel so lucky to be a part of it.

-Rebecka, 1st GOALS Employee / Program Supervisor

APPROXIMATELY
6,000

INDIVIDUALS
HAVE
WORKED
WITH GOALS
SINCE 2011

STUDENTS BY DISTRICT 2011-2021



“ I was initially drawn to GOALS due the opportunity to work with the Youth, but have received so much more! GOALS stands to meet families where they are and equip them with the tools to be successful in whatever goals they have set. Our approach is individualized to the needs of the family, not a one size fits all. I love that about GOALS. I also love the atmosphere we have set amongst ourselves. We are a family. We make sure each other are good, and I think that really helps to ensure we are at our best to support the families we serve.

- Jasmine, Family Advocate

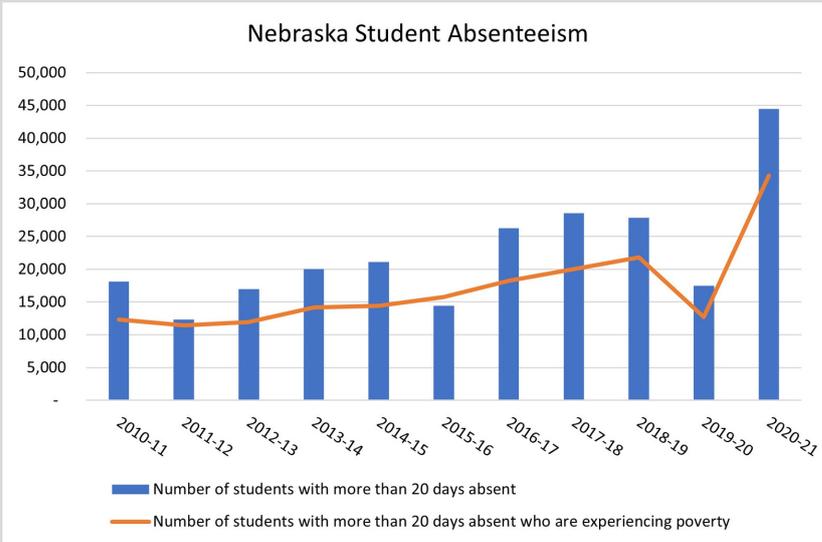
COMMUNITY NEEDS

The pandemic impacted all Nebraska students this year, especially those with barriers resulting from poverty.

The rates of absenteeism and absenteeism while experiencing poverty in Nebraska are correlated as seen the last ten years in our state (Figure 1). The data also shows that Covid-19 made a detrimental impact on attendance during the last school year in Douglas and Sarpy County specifically (Figure 2).

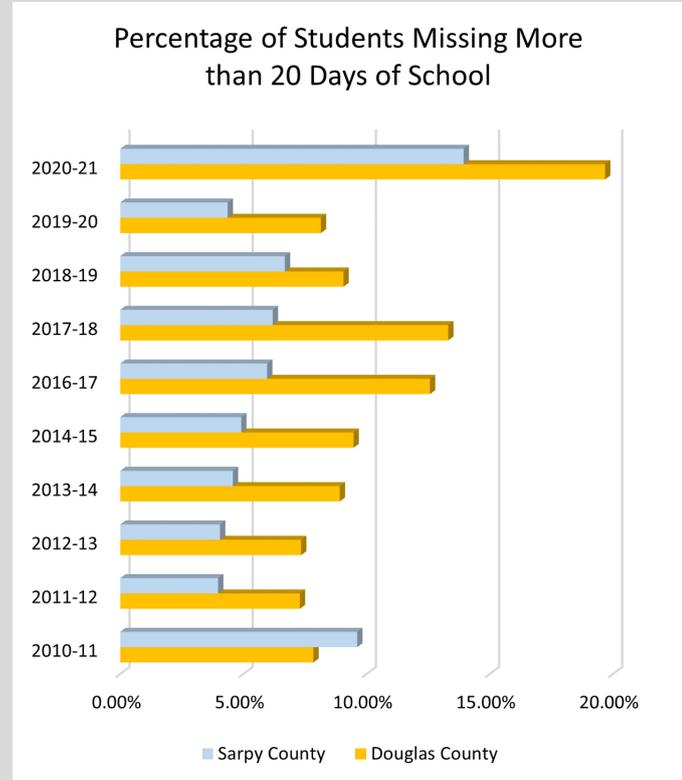
ABSENTEEISM AND POVERTY

FIGURE 1



DOUGLAS AND SARPY COUNTY ABSENTEEISM

FIGURE 2



IMPACT OF RACE AND POVERTY IN DOUGLAS AND SARPY COUNTIES 2020-21*

DOUGLAS COUNTY

94% of Black students who missed more than 15 days, were experiencing poverty

90% of Hispanic/Latino students who missed more than 15 days, were experiencing poverty

60% of White students who missed more than 15 days, were experiencing poverty

SARPY COUNTY

71% of Black students who missed more than 15 days, were experiencing poverty

64% of Hispanic/Latino students who missed more than 15 days, were experiencing poverty

36% of White students who missed more than 15 days, were experiencing poverty

*Only highest represented racial groups referenced

PROGRAM SATISFACTION

STUDENT AND CAREGIVER SURVEY

100% of participants would encourage other students struggling with school attendance to participate with the GOALS program

97% of participants would rate the quality of the GOALS Program as good or excellent

"Our GOALS advocate made us feel like she was there to help and guide my student along the path to having good attendance. She was there for us when we felt like everyone else in the school system was not wanting my student to succeed. She was very understanding and very relatable to my daughter. She made my daughter feel comfortable and like she was on her side and wanted to help."

-Caregiver

"It helped me feel more at ease with attendance issues that my son was having. His issues were caused by severe anxiety and our Family Advocate was absolutely wonderful and extremely helpful!"

-Caregiver

STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

4.23 Rating regarding likeliness to utilize the GOALS Center again (1: Extremely Unlikely, 5: Extremely Likely)

3.8 out of 5 stars: Overall, how satisfied are you with the GOALS Center? **

"Your staff are incredibly kind and compassionate. They WANT students to do well, and they are incredible advocates for students. Students can tell this and appreciate them, even when they feel they are being 'checked up on'."

-School Stakeholder

"The level of collaboration is high. It's very important to work as a team to help our students be successful."

-School Stakeholder



** many stakeholders reflected their dissatisfaction was related to lack of capacity and the waitlist

2020-21 GOALS YEAR IN REVIEW

204

Students in grades K-12 were referred to the Family Advocate Program



50% referral increase from last year!

+ 22

Students were referred to the COVID-19 Outreach Program



11 different school districts served

226 total students and families*

*approximately 904 individuals 226 students x average family size of 4



69 unique school buildings

Chronic Absenteeism is defined as missing 10% of school days or about two or more days per month



On average, students began having problems with attendance one year before being referred to GOALS and missed an average of 34.4% of school at referral.

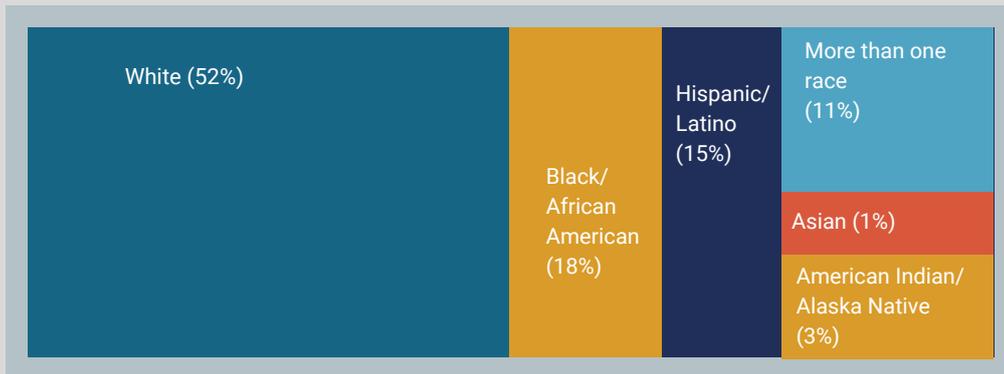
GOALS Family Advocate worked with a family for 14 months. The student overcame many obstacles, including the loss of her adoptive mother, behavioral issues, medication changes, remote learning during a pandemic, and a change in her living environment. Her support system continues to rise to the occasion, and her current caregiver has consistently provided for this child's needs. When the Family Advocate first started meeting with the student, they were failing nearly every class. With persistence, dedication, good work ethic, a positive support system, and will to change, the student passed her classes by the end of the school year. This story speaks to her resiliency and dedication to her future. Her efforts have proven that situations can change with hard work, a changed mindset, and consistently working to be a better version of one's self.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

- 90% of families were diverted from formal system involvement for reasons contributing to chronic absenteeism
- 49% of students closed successfully
- Less than 1% of students were re-referred from last year
- 52% of students improved attendance

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

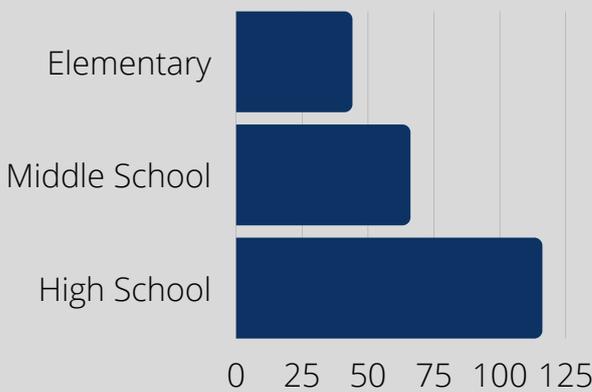
RACE AND ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS



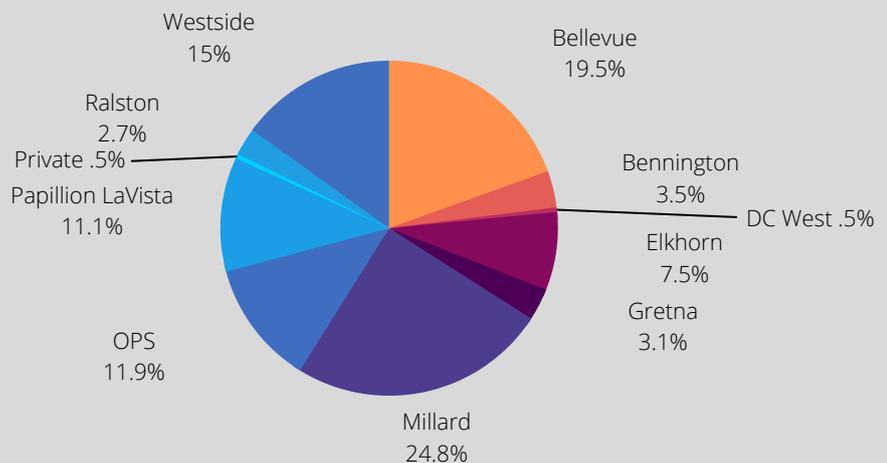
Top Zip Codes

ZIP	#
68005	19
68111	18
68022	12
68123	12
68124	12
68137	12
68046	10

Grade Levels Served



School Districts Served



RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The transition from in-person learning to e-learning, and back again, in response to COVID-19 left many students unaccounted for in school. Students and their families seemingly went missing, with no contact between those families and the school districts.

In an attempt to find some of these missing students, GOALS created a short-term COVID-19 program:

30-60 day program

4 project districts:

- Bellevue
- Millard
- Ralston
- Westside

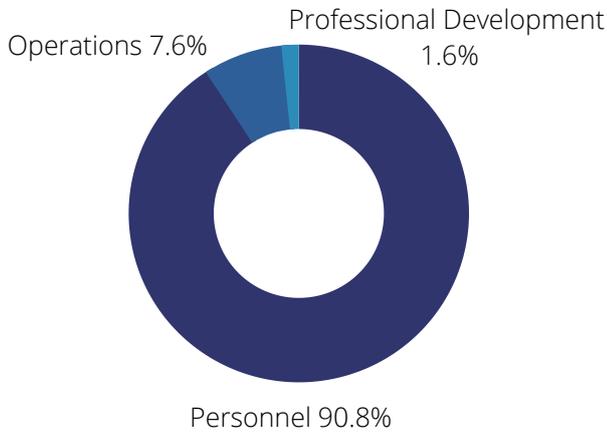
Priority Areas:

- Supervision needs for children
- Resource identification to meet the basic needs of the family
- Accessibility and assistance with e-Learning systems
- Financial stability for caregivers

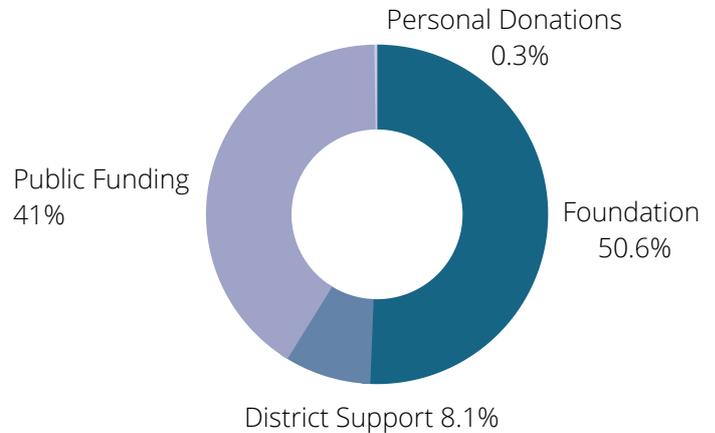
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2020-21 TOTAL BUDGET: \$541,663

Expenses



Funding



GOALS manages to keep operational expenses low due to in-kind support from the public school districts in Douglas and Sarpy County, specifically Omaha Public Schools, Millard Public Schools, Papillion-LaVista Community Schools, and Bellevue Public Schools who provide us with office space and internet access.

2020-21 SUPPORTERS

Thank you to all of the organizations and private donors who supported the GOALS Center this year. We could not do this work with the Omaha Metropolitan community without it! All of us at GOALS are grateful for all that you have done to help students and their families.

Sherwood Foundation

The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties

Douglas County- Community Based Aide

Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

United Way of the Midlands

William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation

Omaha Community Foundation

The Creche Foundation

Midlands Community Foundation

Nebraska DHHS Cares Act

SHARE Omaha



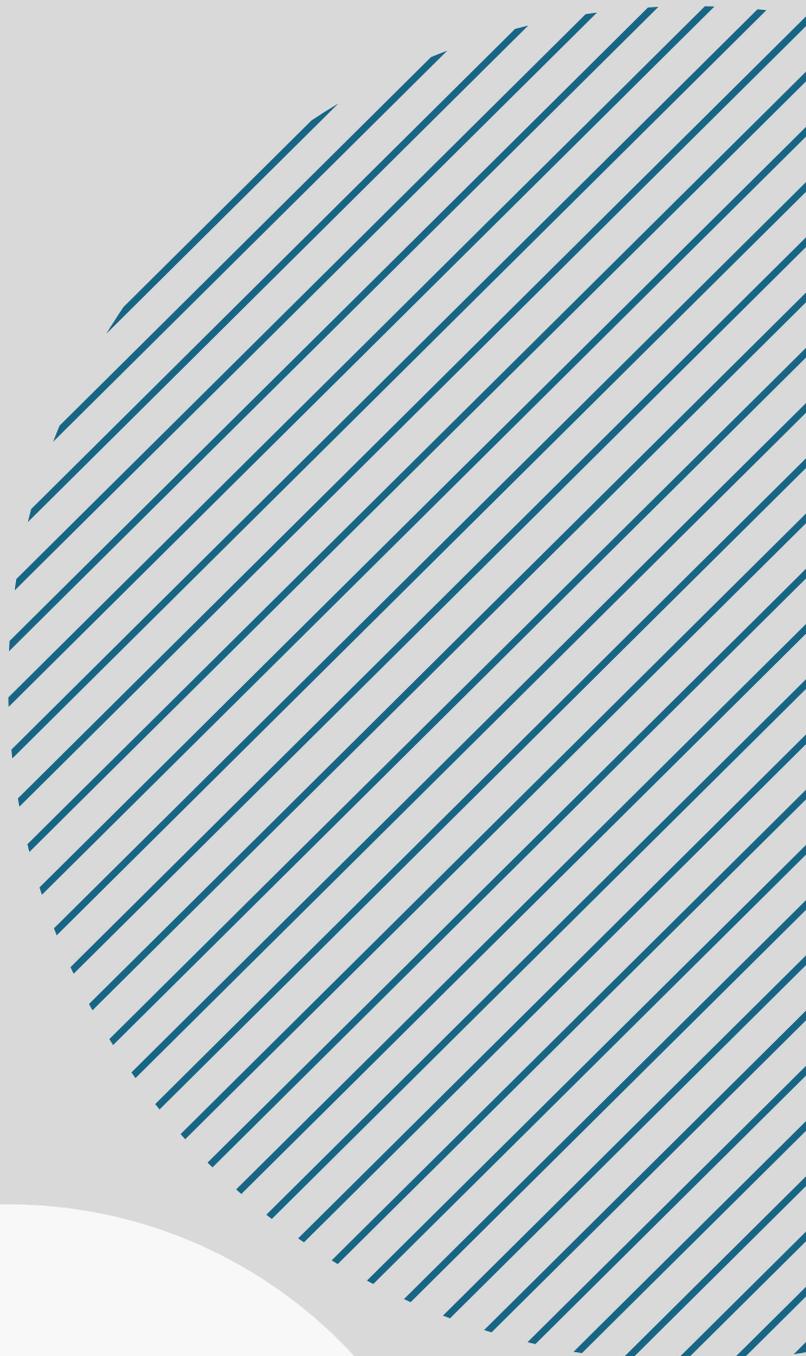
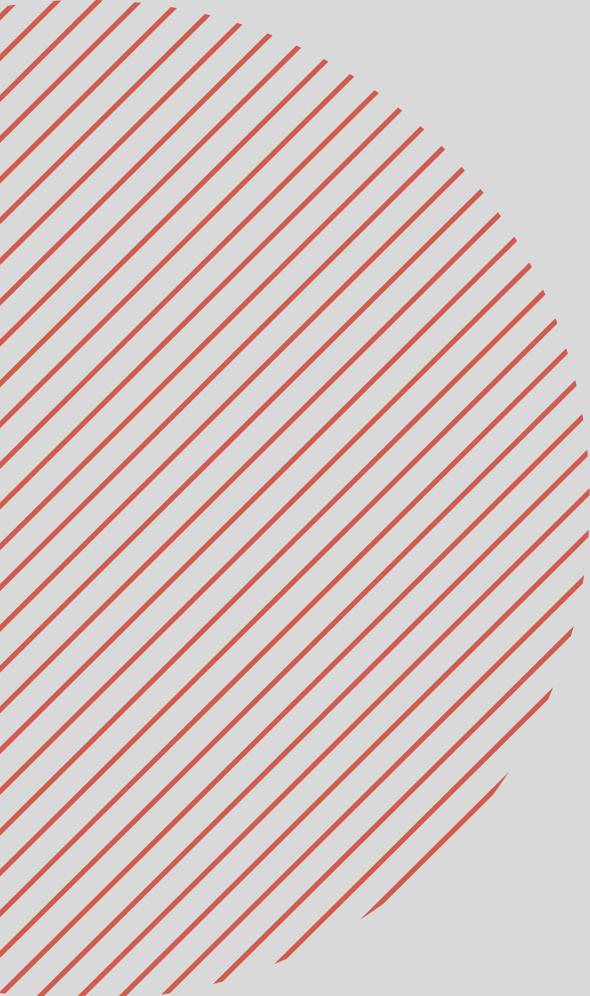
CONTACT US!

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