Strategic Plan
2017 - 2019
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Introduction

For more than 45 years, Berkeley Food & Housing Project (BFHP) has provided a comprehensive range of housing, food, and support services to help those in need move from homelessness into a safe and affordable home of their own. We accomplish our work in partnership with the City of Berkeley, other government agencies, and a robust network of local service providers. Our many volunteers offer their time, energy and talents. Vital financial support is derived from a mix of public funding, individual giving, private foundations and corporate charitable contributions. While the agency was founded in Berkeley and has focused through much of its history in the East Bay and the northern area of Alameda County, it has grown substantially in recent years. Through our collaboration with the VA, we now provide services for homeless veterans across five counties in Northern California (Alameda, Amador, Contra Costa, Sacramento, and Solano). BFHP is now not only a local force in the struggle against homelessness and hunger but a regional leader helping shape the field.

Agency Mission, Philosophy & Ideals

Mission Statement

To ease and end the crisis of homelessness in our communities.

Vision

External

BFHP sees a future where the community of residents, businesses and government offers the support needed to ease and end homelessness in our communities. Referrals into our programs will come from true emergency situations, not a chronic state of hunger, poverty and homelessness.

Internal

BFHP is working to become a model of service delivery for homeless residents and formerly homeless BFHP clients in our community. We see ourselves as setting a standard for the continuum of programs offered by BFHP and our partners that are designed to achieve stable supportive housing for our clients.
Guiding Principles & Values

BFHP provides emergency food and shelter, transitional housing, permanent housing, and housing placement with support services to homeless individuals and families.

Our strategy combines housing, food, and short and long-term case management with compassion to nurture individuals and families who have struggled with poverty and homelessness, in order to move from a life on the streets to permanent housing and stability.

History

- **1970:** University Lutheran Chapel of Berkeley volunteers launch The Meal Project, a free meal program of those in need. In 1972, the name changes to Berkeley Emergency Life Line.
- **1984:** The agency is incorporated as The Berkeley Emergency Food Project (BEFP) and receives non-profit status from the IRS.
- **1988:** The City of Berkeley allows BEFP to house homeless adult men in the basement of the Veterans’ Memorial Building on Center Street. This is the beginning of our Men’s Emergency Shelter.
- **1991:** BEFP obtains the use of the historic 2140 Dwight Way building for the first permanent home of its women’s and children’s emergency shelter.
- **2000:** An extensive renovation project is completed at Dwight Way, allowing for expanded women and children's services including 14 beds in Transitional House, development of the North County Women’s Center and an additional six-month transitional housing program for women working to move from homelessness into permanent housing. In 2001, the backyard at Dwight Way becomes a beautiful children's playground and courtyard.
- **2002:** The Russell Street Residence officially opens its doors as a 17-person permanent housing facility for chronically homeless, mentally ill men and women. The RSR Annex, an additional independent living house for four mentally ill adult men and women begins accepting referrals in April 2002.
- **2002:** The Board of Directors officially changes the organization’s name to Berkeley Food and Housing Project (BFHP), reflecting the agency’s growth and maturation into an organization whose mission is to alleviate and resolve homelessness for men, women and children in Berkeley and which provides a full range of services to meet the diverse needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
- **2008:** BFHP develops a **Housing Case Management Team** to provide housing services. We assist more than 195 men, women, and families into permanent housing in the first year.
- **2009:** BFHP launches a centralized **Shelter Reservation System**, in collaboration with City of Berkeley.
- **2010:** BFHP celebrates its 40th Anniversary. The BFHP Board of Directors sets its strategic priority to acquire land to build an integrated center for homeless services, including permanent supportive housing.
- **2010:** BFHP receives $1 million dollar award from the **VA’s Support Services for Veterans Families (SSVF)** program. BFHP, provides homeless prevention and rapid re-housing services to 200 homeless and underhoused veteran households in Alameda, Contra Costa, and Solano Counties.
- **2011:** BFHP creates a new transitional housing program for homeless Veterans at the Men’s Shelter which provides case management, life skills counseling, family reunification support, access to the Veterans Affairs health care system, and assistance in moving to permanent housing.
- **2014:** The City of Berkeley issues a public Request for Qualifications (RFQ) inviting teams to respond with a plan to develop a site on **Berkeley Way** that is currently a city-owned parking lot. BFHP forms a team with BRIDGE Housing and architects Leddy Maytum Stacy to submit our winning proposal. The team enters into a formal Memo of Understanding with the City, during which we develop plans, architectural renderings, fiscal and fundraising strategy, as well as other items involved in the development of the entire site which will include a new building for BFHP and approximately 85 units of low-income housing (developed, built, and managed by BRIDGE Housing)
- **2015:** The City of Berkeley issues an RFP to develop and run a **Coordinated Entry System (CES)** for homeless services. BFHP submits a proposal and is awarded the contract.
- **2015:** BFHP moves to new offices at 1901 Fairview in south Berkeley. Our free **Community Meal** is relocated to the Lutheran Church of the Cross on University Ave.
- **2016:** The City of Berkeley’s **CES**, operated by BFHP, opens in January.
- **2017:** BFHP expands its support services for homeless veterans into Sacramento and Amador counties and rebrands the program as **Roads Home (A Pathway to Housing for Homeless Veterans)**

**Programmatic Expertise**

BFHP provides an extensive range of food, housing, and social support services. Our portfolio includes programming specifically designed for the chronically homeless, those with serious mental illness, women and their children, and veterans.
BFHP has developed a robust network of local and county partnerships that have supported us in serving more than 2,000 clients annually – making the agency one of the leading homeless service providers in the East Bay. Our current programs include the following:

The Coordinated Entry System

BFHP was awarded the City of Berkeley’s contract to develop and operate a Coordinated Entry System (CES) for homeless services. Accordingly, as of January 5, 2016, BFHP’s CES (also referred to as the Hub) became the sole point of entry for anyone seeking homeless services in the City of Berkeley. BFHP operates the CES in partnership with the City of Berkeley. Our goal is to prioritize those most in need and match them to the most appropriate services.

SERVICES OFFERED:
- Intake, diversion, prioritization, & eligibility
- Intensive outreach services
- Direct booking into local shelters
- Linkages to veteran programs, drug treatment providers, domestic violence services, & other essential services
- Housing searches that encompass networking with landlords & securing apartments
- Housing placement into permanent housing, transitional housing & family reunification

CES Outreach

A core service, and initial step for many potential Hub clients, is targeted street outreach. BFHP staff conducts outreach for up to 40 hours per week, on a varying schedule to include early mornings and evenings in order to best reach people on the streets.

Outreach is typically conducted in small teams that include at least one outreach worker with an Intake Specialist, or an outreach/intake worker. The outreach staff also include a dedicated Transition Age Youth Outreach Specialist who visits places most frequented by young people, and also may go out with the team. Housing Navigators may also join the team, especially on visits to larger encampment sites, or to reconnect with clients who have been through the assessment process but are still living on the streets.

Our Outreach teams offer items for improving the potential client’s immediate condition (water, snacks, socks and hygiene materials), as well as providing information about services at the Hub. If someone is interested in doing an intake and potentially receiving
additional services, an Intake Specialist with the team can conduct the screening and intake immediately.

The Outreach teams cover Berkeley, Emeryville and Albany.

**Transitional Housing**

BFHP has two programs that offer temporary housing (lasting 6-24 months) and intensive life skills training to people with significant barriers to obtaining and maintaining permanent housing.

Transitional House is located at the North County Women’s Center and accommodates 23 disabled women and their children.

In addition, our Veterans’ Transitional Housing Program, funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs since 2011, has 12 beds for homeless male veterans and is located within the Men’s Shelter on Center Street in Berkeley.

**Safety Net Services**

Our safety net services focus on meeting a person’s basic need for food and shelter, while acting as a gateway to other services.

**Shelters**

BFHP runs two emergency shelters in downtown Berkeley. Our women’s shelter, in operation since 1992, accommodates up to 32 women and children nightly. Our men’s shelter has been run from the Veterans’ Memorial Building on Center Street since 1986 and has 36 beds. The shelters offer those who are homeless a safe place to stay and support to find permanent housing and build income in order to sustain themselves when housed. The shelters operate 365 days/year, and are open between 5:00pm–7:30am.

**Free Community Meals**

BFHP has the longest running free, weekday community meal program in the City of Berkeley. Our guests include those who are homeless and/or unemployed as well as those who must make difficult decisions between rent or food. BFHP’s Community Meal is served Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at Lutheran Church of the Cross on University Avenue. Menus are created with nutritional value, dietary restrictions, and – above all - taste in mind.
Permanent Supportive Housing

For the most vulnerable of our clients, BFHP offers permanent housing and supportive services through two programs.

Russell Street Residence

Our Russell Street Residence was established in 2002 and provides permanent supportive housing for 17 formerly chronically homeless men and women, aged 18 and older, diagnosed with serious and persistent mental illness (SMI). Residents at Russell Street receive 24/7 care. Staff works with residents to develop independent living skills and assess those who might be ready to move into a more independent setting, such as the Annex. The Russell Street Annex is a 4-bedroom house on the same property that provides housing for an additional 4 adults living with SMI. Annex residents live semi-independently and are responsible for the maintenance of their home, cooking and cleaning. They still participate in program activities and outings, and work with staff on developing and maintaining independent living skills.

SERVICES OFFERED:
- 24-hour staffing
- Meals
- Therapeutic groups, activities and outings
- Transportation to medical appointments
- Assistance with daily activities including laundry and personal hygiene

Shelter Plus Care

Shelter Plus Care is a housing subsidy program for individuals who are chronically homeless in Berkeley. It is a HUD-funded program that provides permanent housing and operates in collaboration with the Berkeley Health, Housing and Community Services Department. Participants pay approximately 30% of their income towards rent, and receive ongoing supportive services.

SERVICES OFFERED:
- Rental assistance
- Home visits
- Life skills counselling
- Benefits advocacy
- Case management
Rapid Re-Housing

BFHP works with people who are homeless to move them into affordable permanent housing as quickly as possible – and to help them remain housed. Rapid re-housing places a priority on moving people from homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible. One of its core principles is “housing first”: offering housing without employment, sobriety, and income preconditions. Our rapid re-housing programs work with veterans, families, and individuals to successfully secure and retain housing.

SERVICES OFFERED:

- Housing search and placement
- Intensive case management
- Financial assistance
- Referrals to healthcare & legal services
- Links to VA services, where appropriate
- Post-placement support

Veterans’ Program

Our Roads Home program, in operation since January 2014, works to promote housing stability for veterans across five counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano, Sacramento and Amador. Road Homes is funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs through their Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program.

BFHP has more than 20 years’ experience engaging with and housing chronically homeless and mentally ill people who are living outdoors. Our experience and expertise led us to develop a specialized peer outreach model for reaching chronically homeless veterans. BFHP’s SSVF program has a dedicated outreach team which is led by our interfaith chaplain who is trained in moral injury. Her team consists of peer outreach workers who are currently homeless veterans who want to give back and who also want to gain employment skills for their resumes.

Designed as a professional internship with stipend, all who have graduated from the program have been able to move into permanent housing of their own and all have found employment. One of the graduates is now a full-time employee of BFHP.

Providing outreach to encampments through our Peer Outreach Intern Program is one example of how BFHP has developed creative and effective collaborative efforts that are working to end homelessness among veterans. The success of this program has been recognized by the VA at the national level.
Our peer outreach team has been very effective in reaching and engaging with street homeless veterans, especially the disaffected, chronically homeless veterans of the Vietnam era. Our engagement strategy is centered on building personal relationships and trust. We are clear to identify ourselves as civilians who are there to help. We start out by offering items that might ease their situation: socks, granola bars, hygiene kits and water – and always offer the option to meet with our chaplain for spiritual care. The latter is especially helpful for those suffering moral injury from combat duty. Our chaplain can help them feel worthy again which allows them to be more inclined to accept help.

Major Projects Underway

Berkeley Way Project

BFHP is embarking on a major capital project to develop – with our partner BRIDGE Housing – a site in downtown Berkeley on Berkeley Way between Shattuck and Milvia that is currently a city-owned surface parking lot. The development will result in two facilities – though designed as an architecturally unified entity – that will consist of a new building for BFHP with 53 units of permanent supportive housing for disabled adult men and women; 32 shelter beds for adult homeless men; transitional housing for 12 adult male homeless veterans (in partnership with the VA); a kitchen and dining facility in which to serve our community meal, and offices for staff and necessary support services.

BRIDGE Housing will build approximately 85 units of low-income rental housing which will be owned, operated, and maintained by BRIDGE. The project includes replacement parking.

Our immediate efforts are focused on approval of the submission of our project proposal and design documents to the City of Berkeley, creating an LLC with BRIDGE Housing; concluding a successful capital campaign with a $3.3M goal, and working in close collaboration with our strategic partners BRIDGE Housing and Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects to meet a proposed date for ground breaking in 2019.
Strategic Initiatives

Communications

As BFHP has grown over the last 46 years, a greater need has arisen for more coordinated and focused communication around the mission, vision, values and programs of BFHP. Strong marketing communication and branding come from consistent communication of who you are and the value you deliver - to the right people - at the right time.

1. Organization Name Change
   
   BFHP will rename the organization to better reflect the expanded geographic presence of the organization in the Bay Area. As the organization has grown beyond serving only homeless people in Berkeley and beyond providing only food and housing, the name Berkeley Food and Housing Project no longer accurately and completely reflects the organization’s mission and activities.

   Timing
   
   By June 2018, a proposed new name and timeline for implementation will be presented to the Board for approval.

   Result
   
   A new name will help BFHP be better understood within the various communities it serves, and provide the opportunity to increase and expand BFHP’s donor base and supporters.

   Roles
   
   The Board’s Marketing and Communications Committee will, in collaboration with Executive Staff, develop a proposal to the full Board.

   Resources
   
   BHFP has previously worked with marketing experts from the Taproot Foundation on an organizational name change. All prior work will be reviewed and considered as a part of the name change effort.
2. Key Messages Development

As the organization grows, there is a need to solidify and build infrastructure around key messages.

Timing

Ongoing - yearly assessment of key messaging documents by board and bi-annual board training on key messages to be led by Marketing and Communications Committee.

Result

BFHP will project compassionate leadership within the community by delivering consistent marketing communication. This means all leadership (including the Board) will deliver the same key talking points in reference to BFHP. Key stakeholders/audiences will clearly understand the mission, vision and values of BFHP and feel compelled to support the organization (via time, talent, influence, donations, referrals, etc.).

Roles

To be led by Development with support from Marketing and Communications committees.

Growth

BFHP frequently considers opportunities for programmatic growth. We will establish standards and criteria for BFHP leadership to consider when evaluating such opportunities, in order to systematize and ensure consistency across staff decision-making. Such criteria will be applied by BFHP leadership to all future opportunities and current projects, including the Berkeley Way Project.

Establish Criteria for Considering Growth Opportunities

Timing

Spring 2018

Result

A written policy will be established that describes the criteria and standards the agency considers when evaluating growth opportunities. The policy will include the principles
and key questions that BFHP leadership shall consider when evaluating opportunities for growth, including contract and merger opportunities.

Roles
Executive Committee & senior management team will develop the policy.

Resources
Financial data from staff.

Financial Sustainability

The Finance Committee will serve as a financial sustainability strategic team, working with the executive director and the director of finance and administration, to determine the amount of funds needed to finance six months of unfunded/non-contracted operational expenses.

The financial sustainability strategic team will then take steps to ensure the identified amount is made part of the Strategic Plan for Advancement and Development (SPAD) at BFHP.

Establish and Implement Financial Sustainability Plan

Timing
The amount of a target operating cash reserve and plan for achievement shall be identified within six months.

Result
BFHP has determined an amount of cash reserves necessary to meet six months of non-funded/non-contracted operational expenses and a plan in place to achieve it. The target amount will be included in the 2018 budget.

Roles
Finance Committee, Executive Director, and Director of Finance and Administration will meet during regular bi-monthly meetings to assess progress.
Succession Planning

The agency’s current executive director has informed the Board that in approximately two or
more years she will retire. In anticipation of that event the Board will need a Succession Plan in
place to ensure a smooth and orderly transition.

Establish an Executive Director Succession Plan

Timing

Within no less than one year of the anticipated retirement of the Executive Director, the
Board will have contracted with an executive search firm/consultant to assist the Board
throughout the succession process.

Result

In the Succession Plan the Board prepares, there shall be included key criteria by which
the success of the plan will be measured. The following work plan is outlined:

- To commence work on this initiative, the Board will form, no more than eighteen
  months prior to the Executive Director's retirement, a Search Committee,
  consisting of at least four Board Members.

- The Search Committee’s initial charge will be to secure the services of an
  executive search firm/consultant. That selection and engagement should be
  completed no more than one year prior to the anticipated departure of the current
  executive director from her role. As part of that task, the Search Committee will
determine, and inform the Director of Finance and Finance Committee, the
  estimated cost of the executive director search, so that necessary funding for the
  succession can be provided in the next budgeting cycle.

- With the guidance and support of the chosen firm/consultant, the Search
  Committee will prepare our Succession Plan, including but not limited to the
  following features:
    - Preparing the organization and its stakeholders for the transition
    - Incorporating the current executive director and agency staff in the
      process
    - Determining criteria for recruiting and selecting the best candidate
    - Marketing the position to generate a quality pool of candidates
    - Structuring the interview process
    - Selecting qualified candidate and reaching terms of hire
    - Transitioning the new executive director into role
Roles

The Board will form a Search Committee with responsibility for finding a qualified candidate. That Committee will seek input and assistance from the Director of Finance and Administration, the Finance Committee, and the Executive Director.