

St. Vincent de Paul – Louisville

2021 Strategic Plan

INTRODUCTION

Our strategic plan was developed in the spring of 2021 to provide guidance for the next four years for St. Vincent de Paul – Louisville operations.

In drafting the SVDP Strategic Plan a great deal of time and effort was spent in assessing the current landscape of the social service need and the resources to address the need in our community.

This strategic planning process included a track dedicated to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. As this is a new area of focus for our organization, an audit of organizational demographics (Board, Staff, Donors, and Clients) as well as policies, procedures, and general practices was conducted from an equity perspective. The outcome of this audit provides both a baseline and plan objectives to ensure that our organization is reflective of our stated values.

A comprehensive listing of stakeholders were asked to participate in surveys. The “Stakeholders” included 30 clients representing each of the agency’s programs, 6 scattered site program landlords, 113 individuals, corporate, and foundation donors as well as volunteers, 43 members of the staff, 75 community partners, and 31 current and past members of the Board of Directors. These surveys generated a wealth of information both objective and subjective which provided broad insight into the fact and perception of St Vincent de Paul from the stakeholder’s viewpoint.

Additionally, there was a great deal of introspective soul searching about the current range of programs we provide to families and individuals in need.

The process of evaluation was delegated to each of 7 committees which had purview over the issue being studied. These committees held no fewer than 2 meetings for discussions and drafting both the 4-year strategic objectives as well as year-one tactical plan, utilizing the “Stakeholder Surveys” and a traditional Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. Attached is **Appendix #1** which is the ranked SWOT analysis. The strategic initiatives identified in this document are an outcome of this process.

HISTORY

Founded as a lay Catholic organization, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul has been providing food, shelter, compassion and hope to those in need throughout Louisville since 1853. We started as Parish Conferences assisting people that would come to the parish seeking assistance. That work continues today with 29 Parish Conferences spread throughout Metro-Louisville and Central Kentucky. In the 1980’s a downtown campus was established to provide services that weren’t feasible for individual parishes. From 22 buildings spread out across an entire city block in the Shelby Park neighborhood, today SVDP is a broadly supported social services campus that provides quality programs and services to meet the needs of individuals and families in need – those homeless, hungry or overwhelmed by life. Whether via our Parish Conferences or one of the ministries on the downtown campus, SVDP addresses emergency situations, partnering with clients to help them move to more stable and sustainable lives.

Among a broad range of services, SVDP offers a men’s emergency homeless shelter, a community kitchen and food pantry, a variety of on campus and scattered site housing, thrift stores, and after school care and enrichment programs in a Family Success Center. All programs have professional case managers that encourage clients to take personal accountability to improve their lives. These case managers are some of the best in the city; they set a standard of excellence that sets SVDP apart.

We are blessed with dedicated volunteers who ensure that everyday tasks and special events operate smoothly. Normally there are over 2,000 volunteers that provide in excess of 50,000 service hours annually. COVID had significant impact on volunteer engagement. However, during the COVID FY 2020-21 our pantry and clothes-closet volunteers continued to fill the needs of our clients and neighborhood.

St. Vincent de Paul Louisville exists to serve anyone in need and in all cases, everyone is treated with compassion and care, assuring them they are not facing their perils alone.”

Current State:

During St Vincent de Paul’s 167 years of addressing the needs of people who are poor and homeless in our community the organization has grown to be one of the leading social service providers in Louisville. The Fiscal Year 2020-21 operating budget exceeded 7.25 million dollars allowing us to address the needs of hundreds of families and individuals. With a staff of over 100 we strive to provide services that move our clients towards their highest level of self-sufficiency.

This plan was developed recognizing significant need in our community. The COVID pandemic revealed the flaws in our community safety net which has validated the need for St Vincent de Paul Louisville programs. There are many people prohibited from full participation in society. Metro Louisville is with many neighborhoods challenged by distressed living conditions and disinvested citizens. The community is especially challenged by the lack of affordable housing units in our community (over 50K units short of the need). These issues will take additional resource and time to fully be addressed. The conditions are unlikely to dramatically change for the next several years. As a result, many people spend their lives living with unmet basic needs. The mission of SVDP is a critical asset for these people.

There are multiple challenges underlying living in a state of need. They include low socioeconomic status or socioeconomic inequities, access to mental and physical health care, food insecurity, access to affordable housing, underemployment and unemployment, addiction and neighborhood violence. SVDP meets people where they are and seeks to guide them to a more stable life situation. We work with clients on an individual basis, proposing a path to a better life, hoping to address root cause issues and break the cycle of poverty. Clients must engage and take personal accountability for their lives. Case managers accompany them and encourage them to make good choices. SVDP’s commitment to strong case management is a foundational strength.

We collaborate with other agencies to leverage accumulated community wisdom and receive the benefits of collaboration while avoiding unnecessary duplication of services. Some key partners are summarized below:

- Staff Resources (UL Kent School, JCPS, Vista, et al)
- Housing Partners (Louisville Metro Government, HUD, Coalition for the Homeless, et al)
- Social Services Providers (Catholic Charities, Dare to Care, Family Health Centers, House of Ruth, Volunteers of America, St. John Center, et al)

SVDP is a valued member of the Louisville social services community. In fact, more calls are referred to SVDP from the Metro Louisville 2-1-1 hotline than to any other agency in the city. SVDP has experience in many facets of social service. This strategic plan is designed to leverage our strengths and build our capabilities where we add most value to the community.

Life can be overwhelming at times resulting in our clients being able to meet their most basic needs. Our Christian faith compels us to respond, reaching out in a compassionate dignified manner. We work through a network of 29 SVDP Parish Conferences, three Thrift Stores, and a Downtown Campus featuring a variety of programs. All are designed to provide compassionate care while facilitating progress toward more stable and fulfilling lives.

During this process a special committee was vested with the responsibility to review and revise our Mission, Vision and Values Statements as well as establish an organizational Equity Statement. Using the work done during the 2017 strategic planning process as a baseline, the committee crafted statements that are representative of the current programs and initiatives of St Vincent de Paul Louisville. These statements are presented below:

MISSION:

We house, feed and support those in need with compassion and dignity.

VISION:

We strive to build a community where opportunity and hope are available to all.

VALUES:

- Respect - We respect the dignity and worth of all people
- Relationships + Engagement - We promote family, community, and participation
- Human Potential - We offer resources and opportunity for personal growth
- Accountability - We promote personal engagement and responsibility
- Collaboration - We partner with community to address unmet needs
- Spiritual Growth - We see Christ in those we serve, and lead by our Faith
- Equity – We strive to build an equitable environment for our clients, staff, donors and community partners.

EQUITY:

We are committed to making Louisville an equitable community where the inequities of discrimination in all its forms are acknowledged and addressed. We strive to lead by faith to understand and act upon these injustices.

We believe the social determinants of health can be positively impacted by the work we do, as guided by our mission and values.

We value the perspective of diverse leaders, staff, and board members; therefore, we are committed to inclusive hiring and board recruitment practices, as we continue to grow as an organization of faith.

Through a culture of openness and understanding, we will take joy in our successes and will learn from our mistakes!

ASSUMPTIONS:

There are some base assumptions which were brought to the process that greatly influenced the nature of these initiatives. Some of the major assumptions are as follows:

- SVDPs scope of programs is greater than other community partners. All of our programming was evaluated to address the concern that we are spread too broadly with respect to the overall scope. It was concluded that in general there is an appropriate use of assets in provision of the existing programs.
- SVDP core strength is in housing and case management
- Service delivery is provided through the principles of “Housing First” coupled with “Trauma Informed Care”.
- Case management is the primary component of real change in the lives of our clients. It is what differentiates us from other shelter providers and is the most critical component in successful “Housing First” program delivery.
- In general, there are adequate shelter services for men and to a lesser degree woman. However, there is critical lack of shelter for intact families. The Metro Homeless Coalition reports that on average 40 families are unsheltered on any given night.
- Food insecurity continues to be significant unmet need.
- The lack of education in all forms remains a significant barrier to clients rising to their highest level of self-sufficiency.

- Services need to be provided holistically to break the generational repetition of poverty and homelessness.
- Having been homeless is having survived a life-threatening *traumatic* event.
- Over 60% of SVDP clients have unmet substance abuse or mental health needs.
- The Veterans Administration has a significant unmet need for additional homeless services including; individuals struggling with addiction, those in need of permanent supportive housing coupled with supportive services including mental health services.
- SVDP Thrift Stores are often the community's first point of contact with the organization. The value of the stores operation is more significant than merely a generator of program revenue.
- Leadership and staff with the appropriate skill, knowledge and ability are essential to mission success.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION / OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEXT 4 YEARS

Strategic direction/objectives for the plan period 2022-2025 are delineated in **Attachment #2 and #3**. Specific objectives are segmented by strategic sectors resulting in a comprehensive plan.

This plan reflects the collaborative assessment of St Vincent de Paul by board, staff and stakeholders. The initiatives listed are the prioritization of the observed needs based on the highest and best use of the resources available to the organization.

Our work is not complete! Progress towards accomplishing these goals will require a commitment to continue the process at the committee level. Each of the objectives listed has been assigned to a specific committee based on purview. The committees will meet at minimum on a quarterly basis to assess progress and adjust efforts. The committees will submit their tactical plan annually for the subsequent year. These plans will be included in the agency's annual plan. The annual plan will be integrated into the budget process to assure the resources for completion of these initiatives.

Deuteronomy 15:11

"For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore, I command you, saying, 'You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.'"

ACCEPTANCE BY BOARD:

This plan was ratified by a quorum of the members of the Board of Director of The Society of St. Vincent de Paul Council of Louisville, INC. during a special meeting held on June 27th 2017.

Carleen C. Herde

Board Chair / Carleen Herde

7/7/21

Date

Richard D. Scherrer

Board Secretary / Richard Scherrer

Appendices follow:

Attachment #1 – Ranked SWOT Analysis

Attachment #2 – SVDP Louisville 2021 Consolidated Strategic Plan