



## Hope Partnership Strategic Plan 2021-2023

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### **Introduction:**

It is the best practice of our organization, Hope Partnership, Inc. (formerly Community Hope Center, Inc.), to present a five-year strategic plan. However, given the nature of the pandemic and economic fallout we are currently weathering, forming a five-year plan is simply not feasible. Instead, the leadership of this organization have crafted a strategy for the next two years. We hope that by 2023, the pandemic will be behind us and the economic recovery well underway and we can project into a brighter future.

This plan was formed by the managers and directors of each department of Hope Partnership, Inc. along with the chief executive team. This strategy was approved by the Board of Directors in January 2021.

### **The Problem:**

As the economy continues to suffer throughout our country, the HWY 192 corridor and the surrounding Central Florida area continues to be the hardest hit. With an economy focused primarily on hospitality and tourism, and with those industries severely impacted, we are left with the largest unemployment rate in the state as well as a continued lack of access to quality food sources and affordable housing. The problem of poverty and homelessness is not new to our region, but the added impact of a world pandemic has made the problem more severe and the demand for a response even more urgent.

### **The Approach:**

Empowering our neighbors, strengthening our communities, and building hope is the key approach to ending homelessness and addressing systemic poverty in the Central Florida region. Hope Partnership, Inc., along with its entities, is the leading provider

of homelessness services in Osceola County and is known regionally and nationally as a best practice organization. We focus on the whole continuum of care, from homelessness to home and everything in-between. We believe that we must address the barriers perpetuating homelessness and poverty for the people we serve individually and as a community. Our goal is to connect service providers, businesses, investors and clients with evidence-based solutions and trauma-informed care practices to end homelessness and restore hope. Our approach is holistic, individualized, and client-centric. Hope Partnership, and its entities, are committed to helping all those in need in our community while also bringing awareness to how our community can be part of the solution.

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### **Hope Partnership, Inc.:**

Hope Partnership, Inc., is the overarching nonprofit organization that oversees all of our underlying programs and strategies (Hope Center, Cares, Works, Builds, Properties, and Strategies, LLCs.). Consisting of our executive team as well as our development team and IDignity, Osceola, it is where our systemic work around addressing poverty and homelessness is most recognized. In the next two years, the Partnership will continue to oversee the entire operation, fundraise, and work to build our public profile. We will also expand the reach of the organization as we work to build out new entities that have not yet come into existence (Hope Builds, Hope Properties, Hope Strategies). Work especially regarding property and land acquisition falls currently on the Partnership executive team in alignment with the board of directors. This team will work closely to develop strategy over the next two years in implementation of a capital campaign to purchase and renovate a hotel, explore the purchase of mobile homes and a master lease program, and consider opportunities for new housing construction as well as expand our impact regionally.

In 2021 Hope Partnership, Inc., will also move our organization into actively working to dismantle white supremacy. For years, housing laws and practices have emphasized white ownership/renters and have disenfranchised African-Americans and Latinx individuals. We, as an organization, are committed to becoming anti-racist, and we must acknowledge the intersectionality between poverty, homelessness, and racism. In the next year we will hire a Director of Justice Initiatives (working title) who will research and develop strategies for addressing racial inequities and injustices in our community. This work may be centered under our Hope Strategies umbrella in the coming years.

### **Hope Partnership, Development:**

The following metrics are put forth as a fundraising and development strategy for the next two years. Our first priority is overseeing our ongoing capital campaign to completion. In addition, we will continue to diversify funding streams to include new foundations and corporate sponsorships. With the following 2021 goal of 60 proposals submitted and 2022 goal of 66 proposals submitted. We will also establish consistent, reliable, funding through monthly giving, increase monthly giving by 10% each year, retain current donors, and work to re-engage lost donors through effective communication and value demonstration. We will also increase peer-to-peer fundraising among our current donors and move this giving away from social media. We will continue growing our events and volunteers department and fully implement a Volunteer Management System to improve recruitment of skills-based volunteers for programs such as IDignity, Osceola and Good Neighbors.

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Lack of identification is a leading cause of homeless individuals inability to apply for services, find adequate housing, or secure long-term employment. By providing an avenue to remove this barrier through Identification procurement we believe that both situational and chronic homelessness in Osceola will directly benefit.

IDignity was created to assist the disadvantaged in Central Florida to navigate the complexities of obtaining their personal identification, such as birth certificates, Florida ID cards and Social Security cards. These documents are essential to fully participate in our current day society. The need for such a program was recognized by members of five downtown churches in Orlando who were unable to find a resource that provided such a service. This group developed a viable solution after meeting for a six-month period of exhaustive research and interviews. A significant part of this solution was to expand the process that was developed at Project Homeless Connect (PHC), an annual service fair which utilizes various agencies working together symbiotically.

Due to Covid-19, IDignity services are available by appointment only. Clients in need of assistance are encouraged to contact us so intake interviews can be scheduled via phone. Clients who require a face to face appointment will be scheduled for the next available client care day. Clients who need an appointment at the Osceola Tax

Collector's office are also scheduled for an Florida ID appointment and bus passes are provided to assist with transportation to the appointment.

IDignity's top priority during this time is the clients' safety and the safety of those working with clients. We have taken extra precautions to ensure an environment that follows guidelines recommended by the Center for Disease Control. All clients, staff, and volunteers are required to wear a mask, and answer Covid-19 screening questions before entering client service areas. Our work area provides a safe and physically distant environment. The work area is also thoroughly sanitized before and after each client is served. Clients are individually welcomed to client care days and treated with respect and compassion throughout the process.

Over the next two years IDignity, Osceola will:

- Run bi-weekly IDignity, Osceola client service days serving 15-20 individuals with identification services per day while observing all safety guidelines outlined by the CDC.
- Establish a schedule of training and complete 75% of scheduled training of new case management software and update detailed written procedures for client care day preparation and coordination, as well as remote work procedures for client follow-up/on-going care.



Like many cities, especially those powered by tourism, Kissimmee is facing a crisis, and not because of reasons you think. A lack of affordable housing — not mental illness or addiction — is the primary reason that our hotels on the 192 corridor are full each night. Many of the families who move here end up in hotels and motels, working full-time jobs and unable to find affordable housing; meanwhile, they pay an average of \$1,063/month for a 300ft<sup>2</sup> hotel room. Our hospitality economy relies on minimum wage jobs, yet someone earning a minimum wage cannot afford to live here. An average full-time minimum wage worker in Central Florida must work 96 hours/week to afford a modest one-bedroom apartment's rent. An average rent in the Kissimmee area will pass \$1,400 per month in 2020, up from \$950 five years ago.\* A minimum wage salary equals \$1369 per month before taxes.

More than half the people working with our programs have a job or are actively looking for one. Their lives are getting back on track. The only thing missing is a safe

and permanent home. For them, traditional affordable housing is not an option. Too few qualify; for those who do, there is a 2-3 year waiting list. And no one is building housing for people moving out of homelessness.

In this community, only 20 affordable units exist for every 100 extremely low-income families. To think of it another way, there are 56,000 extremely low-income renters in Central Florida and only 11,200 available and attainable units. What about the remaining 44,000 renters? These families end up paying more than 50% of their income on rent, or they resort to living in situations that aren't stable such as hotels, motels, or doubled up with other families. These are the workers at tourist attractions, restaurants, and hotels, the backbone of Central Florida's world-renowned tourist industry. We owe our standard of living to them, yet we are failing to meet their basic need of housing.

Hope Builds has been created to deal with the affordable housing crisis in Central Florida from a trauma-informed perspective. We believe that every person deserves a place that they can call home, and we are working to provide that home for our neighbors.

In the next two years, Hope Builds will:

- Secure the purchase of hotel/motel space
- Renovate hotel/motel into affordable apartments
- Maintain and develop workforce property in downtown Kissimmee (FUMC)
- Finalize planning for site development at Shingle Creek property
- Secure the purchases of manufactured homes for senior citizen clients
- Expand our services to a downtown Kissimmee location
- Establish a footprint in Orange County



These two entities will be further developed in the next two years, with the hope of both of them launching in quarter four of 2022.

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The Hope Center impacts the low-income, poverty-level families and individuals living in and around Osceola County, Florida. The primary emphasis is to assist families experiencing homelessness in motels and hotels along Osceola County's HWY 192 Corridor, as well as provide outreach and navigation services to those facing street homelessness.

This program works to restore dignity and self-determined success to those in need in our community through a holistic approach to case management, funds assistance, and life skills. The Hope Center's primary program is the Self-determined stability/success (SDS) program which is a long-term case management strategy. The SDS program uses a client-centered approach in which the client takes the lead on their journey and makes decisions for their household while developing goals to address housing stability, employment, and other important needs. The Hope Center is committed to walking alongside these families and individuals as they work toward their self-identified goals. Along the way, Hope Center advocates are there to provide support, community resources, and referrals.

During this time of a global pandemic, the Hope Center has continued the work of the SDS advocacy program, shifting client meetings to virtual appointments via zoom and phone calls. In 2020, 65 household/165 heartbeats were transitioned into permanent housing. 60 of those households/146 heartbeats were housed after the onset of COVID-19. During the pandemic, the Hope Center also acted in response to community housing emergencies such as abandoned hotels without electricity or water that had been deemed unsafe for human habitation. We will continue these strategies into the next two years.

Our Rapid Rehousing (RRH) program is a short-term housing program that helps families who are experiencing homelessness transition to housing of their own following a housing first and harm reduction philosophy. Clients in the RRH program receive case management services, assistance with the housing search process, and temporary rental assistance after housing has been identified and secured. RRH is time-limited and serves unaccompanied youth and families with minor children. Housing is scattered-site (client choice) and clients manage their own tenant leases. Clients are matched to this program pending a recordkeeping review, verified supporting documentation, and program availability. In 2020, the Hope Center housed 18 families through the Rapid Rehousing program and continues to work with

these families as they taper off of rental assistance and prepare to take over the full rental amount.

The Hope Center plans in the next two years to achieve the following goals:

- Assist 65 Household per year in moving to and maintaining stable/permanent housing.
  - Have 20 households per year demonstrate an increase in household stability by increasing their income score on the SSM by at least 1 point
  - Reduce wait time for client appointments to 3 weeks or under, preferably 2 weeks, by adding additional staff.
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The emphasis of Hope Cares' Outreach Program is to assess the needs of chronically homeless individuals and to provide them with the resources and services that will ultimately move them towards permanent housing. Outreach is an essential step towards meeting people experiencing long-term or multiple episodes of short-term homelessness and developing the critical relationships necessary for supporting transition to stable housing.

Outreach, in theory, is designed to proactively canvas communities to respond to the crisis using a people-centered approach by meeting them where they are, and supporting them to restore their lives. This enables outreach workers to identify persons with health conditions and needs unmet. The primary way of achieving this is face-to-face interaction with people experiencing homelessness. The process of ending homelessness is time-consuming and can require 15-20 contacts or more to overcome service resistance for an individual. Once outreach workers have made initial contact with potential clients, they must build engagement so these individuals are comfortable and well-equipped to access services and resources. Homeless outreach takes place on the streets, in camps, under bridges, at meal sites, libraries, public facilities, and wherever else persons might be located.

Over the next two years, Hope Cares will expand services to those most vulnerable and unsheltered in our community. Our goals include:

- linking medical and mental health care services to those unsheltered
- increasing street outreach services for literally and chronically homeless
- assignments to Supportive Housing Case Management.

The need is high and increasing for, specifically, those suffering from psychosis. Another area of need is matching the inflow and outflow of permanent supportive housing (PSH) referrals with a supportive housing case manager. Further increase in street outreach will be implemented within the Good Neighbors Program to provide employment opportunities and stability for literally homeless individuals . The overall results of expanding outreach will produce the following outcomes:

- Outcome #1: Diversion of individuals from the criminal justice system to the community mental health system.
- Outcome #2: Increased navigation, case management assignments, and housing stability through CES.
- Outcome #3: More effective engagement and connection to Good Neighbors program with diversion and ensured follow up.
- Outcome #4: Timely response in verifying disabilities for supportive housing referral and approval.
- Outcome #5: Implementing street psychiatry and mental health care.

We also hope to expand our program to add certified nurses or healthcare professionals to provide the following:

- models of care such as street psychiatry, diagnosing and assessments of severe and persistent mental illness
- connection to various systems of medical care through our Federally Qualified Health Clinics.

Hope Cares also seeks to add in the next two years a Supportive Housing Case Manager to provide the following:

- community-based support services to a primary caseload who were formerly chronically homeless
- engage permanent supportive housing residents to collaboratively develop service plans for housing, mental health, substance abuse, health, education, income and other goals.

We will also increase outreach advocacy to provide opportunities for literally homeless to access and be referred to Good Neighbors program and other educational opportunities and diversion and extended engagement with “hard to reach clients.”

During the time of a global pandemic, the coordinated entry system has not stopped. The street outreach manager supplies various forms of PPE to those living in places unfit for habitation. Day services and food ministries had closed or were operating in a changed, reduced capacity. Access to restrooms, showers and/or laundry was and remains restricted or reduced. There is a potential decrease in accessing harm reduction supplies or substance use recovery services. Access to Social Security Administration benefits, the main money source for many individuals, decreased or stopped. Street outreach continues weekly interactions and engagements at camps

and on the street to provide basic needs. A COVID-19 Risk Assessment was created by the Homeless Services Network (HSN) as a requirement to prioritize those that are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 during their referral into permanent supportive housing. This assessment tool was completed on 14 chronically homeless individuals in 2020 and assisted them in being document ready and approved for supportive housing or referred to Bridge Housing. The assessment tool will continue to be used at least throughout the next year.

Finally, we will continue our work in our St. Cloud outreach by meeting the basic needs of the St. Cloud homeless population through our partnership with First United Methodist Church, St. Cloud. The goal is to continue the Bags of Love lunch bags with non-perishable goods items to those in need in the community. We plan to add a fruit/vegetable item as well as bottled waters and hand sanitizers to each bag. We also plan to expand services to include a clothing closet, job assistance, (church sponsored) Bible study, mobile showers and haircuts. We are actively working to purchase a Mobile Shower unit that we can use across the entire county.

Two other needs are met specifically through this partnership with FUMC St. Cloud.

- Elmer's Kitchen Ministries provides hot meals for those in need in our community, and it is our hope to increase the number of churches and organizations participating in this ministry. As safety permits, we will open our Family Life Center for meals.
- So far in the winter of 2020/2021, we have had four cold nights with 32 guests and 12 volunteers. Cold Night Shelters will provide a safe, warm place to stay when the temperatures drop to 40 degrees and below. During the stay a hot meal is provided for dinner and guests receive a breakfast bag to-go for breakfast with a fruit cup, granola bars out as they leave. We provide jackets, hats and gloves when needed. This is a team effort with the Emergency Management Dept and other area shelters, and we will continue them into the future.

Finally, we are looking to make more community presentations about the Hope Cares St. Cloud services and share success stories of clients and guests once the pandemic allows.

### **Hope Cares, Food Distribution:**

Since the start of the pandemic we have fed 38,000 heartbeats seeking food support in our community. Although this is not a primary goal or strategy of the organization we understand that none of our other programs or assistance will matter if our community is hungry. Therefore, we are committed to continuing our weekly food distribution program until the economy/food insecurity is addressed more holistically in our country.

At the start of the stay-at-home orders, we closed our service center to in-person appointments and our family advocates continued holding regular appointments with their clients virtually. However, it was apparent there was additional need for food support services when unemployment claims weren't being processed and businesses furloughed more workers. Osceola County saw a peak of 20.2% unemployment since the start of the COVID-19 response measures, and unemployment remains the highest in the state. We started offering weekly food assistance first at our service center, then moved to our administrative site to provide a safer, less-contact, distribution environment. Prior to COVID-19, we provided once-a-month food support for our current clients only, we didn't operate a public food pantry.

Focusing efforts largely on food distribution has allowed us to further deepen relationships with organizations in Osceola County who have also had to shift their operations because of COVID-19. We've worked closely with the Osceola Council on Aging and St. Cloud Food Pantry to host large food drops. We've partnered with organizations gleaning crops from Central Florida farms. We've worked closely with Second Harvest to keep a steady supply of food coming into our community, and we've seen both individual and corporate donors respond to support our efforts. COVID-19 has also provided an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with the Osceola Department of Health by hosting a testing site at our service center as well as providing drive-thru testing at one of our food distributions.

We hope that there will be no need for this operation by the end of 2021, but we are committed to it until our community is able to tell us that they are not facing food insecurity or hunger.

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Hope Works is our newest entity and is in its infancy stages. However, with generous funding from Advent Health, we look forward in the next two years to have an established and recognized program with Good Neighbors, a program that will provide day labor opportunities for 250 individuals, assist a minimum of 10 clients in securing stable employment in 2021 and assist 20 clients in graduating from Valencia Advanced Manufacturing programs. Our goals include:

- establishing partnerships with employers willing to work with the community, developing a system for day labor
  - implementing employee tracking within CM database to identify those eligible for Good neighbors program
  - building our employer partner network to at least 6 regular employers
  - develop and implement employer partnership agreements
  - explore and implement ways for continued education and job training through partner employers and educational institutions.
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