2021-2024
STRATEGIC PLAN
INTRODUCTION
The time is now. Calvary Women’s Services and the community we serve are both at a critical juncture. The Washington DC region is facing a crisis. Our community lacks affordable housing and homelessness continues to increase. The COVID pandemic and the racial unrest experienced locally and nationally over the last year have drawn overdue attention to the racial, economic, and gender inequity and injustice in our systems and experienced in people’s lives. Our governments – local and Federal – are increasingly focused on tackling these issues and implementing solutions. At the same time, women struggling with homelessness and domestic violence face unique hurdles in securing and sustaining affordable, safe housing. The situation is both complex and urgent.

Calvary Women's Services is financially strong, clear on our priorities and mission, and built on a successful, proven model. We have established ourselves in the Anacostia neighborhood, a community fostering equity in the midst of economic development. As one of the only providers of services exclusively for women in our region, Calvary has a unique understanding of the needs of women. As an organization serving primarily Black women and women of color, we are committed to doing everything in our power to build an equitable society. Affordable housing and quality, comprehensive services can have a profound impact not only on individual women, but also on their families, neighborhoods and broader community. Calvary is also uniquely positioned to lift women's voices and promote women's issues across our community.

Calvary must take action. The challenges and opportunities of this moment call for Calvary to grow our capabilities and housing options, and become a more vocal advocate for the women we serve. We are the right organization at the right time to lead the charge in ending homelessness for women in our community.

CALVARY’S MISSION AND VALUES
Calvary Women’s Services provides housing, health, education and employment services for homeless women and domestic violence survivors. Our comprehensive, personalized services are available to women in our four transitional and permanent housing programs – Calvary at Good Hope Road, Reach Up Transitional, Reach Up Rental Assistance Program, and Sister Circle. Calvary operates at the intersection of homelessness and domestic violence and recognizes that the program models we offer are the most effective for those often overlapping populations.

Our mission is to empower women to transform their lives and end their homelessness by offering comprehensive support services and housing in a respectful and compassionate manner. The majority of women who come to Calvary are Black or women of color and face the staggering consequences of racism, sexism, and intergenerational poverty. We remain committed to identifying and addressing those issues and building a more just and equitable community.
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

We will achieve our vision of ending homelessness for women and creating equity in our community by moving aggressively in three strategic directions:

- **Creating More Housing.** Expanding the housing opportunities available for women and continuing to pair housing with comprehensive, trauma-informed and personalized support services.

- **Strengthening Our Leadership.** Advancing our organizational leadership to ensure a strong foundation for current and future organizational growth and amplifying women’s voices particularly those of Black women and women of color.

- **Telling Our Story.** Building Calvary’s brand by promoting its successful model, advocating for policy and funding in support of women’s housing and issues, and positioning Calvary for even greater impact in the community.

ACTIONS

To realize our strategic directions, Calvary will take the following actions:

- **Creating More Housing:** Through our expansion in recent years, Calvary has developed best practices for both the permanent supportive housing and the joint transitional/rapid rehousing models and for providing high-quality support services that complement these housing models. We are experienced in operating single-site and scattered-site programs and effectively managing both types of real estate arrangements. We remain committed to the wards 7 & 8 communities and being a part of equitable and sustainable development in the east end of our city. Building on this experience, we will:

  - Add at least 25 new housing units for women through either a new Calvary-owned site and/or apartment-based placements.
  - Improve our capacity for data management and outcome evaluation that better informs the enhancement of our programs and services for women.
  - Create more pathways to employment and expand opportunities for education and skills building through our workforce development and education programs.
  - Continue to strengthen our intensive and personalized case management and create an environment of peer support that is critical to women’s success.
  - Expand opportunities for women’s input on program development and community life that recognizes the identities and diversity of the women we serve.

- **Strengthening Our Leadership:** To keep pace with the programmatic growth of the organization and to reach our strategic goals over the coming period, Calvary recognizes the need to increase the capacity of our staff team and Board of Directors. In building up our organizational leadership, we remain committed to amplifying women’s voices, particularly those of Black women and women of color, and living our core values that...
include respect, empowerment, and safety. We also remain committed to retaining leadership that represents the clients we serve, especially women and people of color. Building on the solid leadership foundation we have developed, we will:

- Use the organization’s strategic directions, and commitment to racial and gender equity, to drive strategic recruitment for its Board of Directors and leadership staff.
- Implement a governance structure within the Board of Directors that makes sure they know the issues and make decisions from a place of strong knowledge, and provides clear opportunities and expectations for contributing their skills, expertise and resources to benefit the organization’s mission.
- Design and implement staff structure that offers leadership from middle management positions and creates new opportunities for career advancement within the organization.
- Promote and provide additional opportunity for professional development and the implementation of best practices across our program, operations, administrative, and development work.
- Develop a leadership succession plan that is available to guide an effective transition of senior leadership and provides a framework for other leadership succession within the organization.

- **Telling Our Story:** Calvary has a strong reputation. We are recognized for our effective supportive housing model, our leadership in highlighting the intersection of domestic violence and homelessness, our expertise in meeting the needs of unaccompanied women, and our consistently strong program outcomes. To meet our strategic goals, we must capitalize on this reputation by taking aggressive steps to tell our story and build our brand. In so doing, we will advance the organization’s programs and services, successfully advocate for women’s issues and policies, and broaden and deepen our reach with current and potential donors, policy makers, strategic partners, and the public. In order to meet this goal, we will be firmly committed to:
  
  - Fully fund and staff our strategic communications plan.
  - Engage in intentional and targeted networking that lifts up women’s voices and concerns, and advocates for policy and funding in support of women’s housing and issues.
  - Improve the skills and abilities of staff leadership and the Board of Directors to speak about and on behalf of the organization.
  - Develop a strong point-of-view based on our unique experience and expertise, through which Calvary can, via our participation in coalitions and organizations that work in this space, positively influence the landscape of support for women experiencing homelessness and policies related to race, gender, class and physical and behavioral health.
In conjunction with this storytelling, outreach and advocacy work, Calvary will invest in the continued growth of our fundraising program. We begin this plan in a strong financial position. Funding reserves and financial planning efforts underway with the Board of Directors and leadership staff will allow flexibility and strategic adjustments throughout the execution of the plan.

**GUIDEPOSTS**

Calvary must be flexible and poised to leverage opportunities, especially in light of the current real estate market. We will use the following guideposts in our deliberations and decision-making processes. We will:

- **Stay true to who we are**, an organization serving women; providing high-quality services on a low staff to client ratio; creating and sustaining an environment of respect and compassion for clients, staff, volunteers and board; and supporting women’s efforts to change their lives.
- **Act boldly** but thoughtfully, always prioritizing impact, effectiveness and efficiency.
- **Focus on program growth that is incremental, sustainable and based on best practices.**
- Concentrate on the development of affordable housing, likely a **permanent supportive housing or joint transitional/rapid rehousing model.**
- Actively pursue opportunities for **collaboration** with organizations (non-profit, for-profit, government) that share our mission or can help us further our mission.
- Seek **new sources of funding**, staying focused and strategic in funding our work through a diversity of sources.

**SHARING OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

We are confident in the continued success of our program model in empowering women to achieve the goals they set for themselves. Calvary will gauge the success of this model with two primary measures - the number of women who secure and maintain permanent housing and the number of women who achieve and maintain financial security. Setting specific targets for each year, we will strive to continually increase the number of women who experience positive change in these two areas.

To monitor and improve our health and educational programming, we will also measure women’s mental health stability, substance addiction recovery stability and educational accomplishments.

Once our strategic communications function is implemented, Calvary will develop specific metrics to measure our efforts to raise our profile, give voice to the women we serve and shape the community-wide conversation about the roots of and solutions to homelessness.
Calvary Women's Services

Calvary remains committed to using annual goals and metrics to track and monitor progress. By improving our data management and outcomes evaluation, we will focus on improving the ways that we share our accomplishments. We will also compare our outcomes by benchmarking to similar programs in our community. We will continue to listen and act upon the recommendations of the women we serve gathered through regular surveys and community meetings.

GUIDED BY OUR VALUES

The manner in which we work is as important as the work that we do. We act with courage, confidence and competence. We believe that our work is powerful, effective and valuable in responding to the critical needs of our community. Calvary holds the following values as central to our organizational culture:

- **Respect** - We treat all people with respect by honoring their skills, knowledge, talents and inherent dignity. We believe each person is valuable and treat them with compassion and kindness.
- **Empowerment** - We offer everyone support to reach their own highest potential. We value self-sufficiency, independence and the accomplishment of personal goals.
- **Collaboration** - We are a community of people who support one another, willing to both offer and ask for help. We live and work with integrity and openness.
- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusivity** - We are an inclusive community that welcomes all people. We value every opinion and each unique background, history and perspective. We create a safe environment in which to live and work, and where each person feels safe and free to be themself. We intentionally elevate voices that have been historically marginalized.
- **Excellence** – We provide the best housing, health, education and workforce programs to every woman, every day.

CONCLUSION

This plan charts the way forward. It builds on Calvary's achievements and sets a bold direction for Calvary's future. This plan aligns directly to our community's strategic plan, Homeward DC 2.0, and articulates the critical role that Calvary will play in achieving the city-wide goal of ending homelessness.

Calvary's success depends on our ability to engage our partners – volunteers, donors, local business, government, service providers – in this important and challenging work. We are confident that together we can have a lasting impact on the lives of women, their families and our whole community. We know that women are eager and able to transform their lives and await the opportunities we will offer.