



2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan

*Preventing and ending homelessness
for families with children through
housing, resources and opportunity.*

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2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan Executive Summary

In the spring of 2014, the Board of Directors and leadership staff embarked on a planning process to determine the agency's direction for the next five years in meeting its mission to prevent and end homelessness for families with children through housing, resources and opportunity. A comprehensive Environmental Scan was prepared that included opportunities and challenges faced by Solid Ground and the families we serve; information gathered for the Scan was compiled from various sources including client focus groups and surveys; interviews with volunteers and donors; staff surveys; financial trends; the MN State Plan to Prevent & End Homelessness; and data from the 2012 Wilder Research Homeless Study and other relevant sources.

The Board of Directors and staff held two retreats, facilitated by Aurora Consulting, in fall 2014 to review the Environmental Scan and to brainstorm key issues and solutions. Primary opportunities and challenges include:

- Homelessness among families in MN increased 32% from 2006 to 2012.
- Most homeless adults have multiple, chronic health issues like mental illness and chemical dependency, and most homeless women have also experienced domestic violence, sexual assault and other trauma.
- Homeless and unstably housed children are more prone to medical illnesses, emotional and behavioral problems, developmental delays and poor school performance; the average age is 6 years old.
- “Coordinated Entry” is a new approach to target shelter and supportive housing to those most in need; all Solid Ground referrals now come through these new systems in Ramsey and Washington Counties.
- Rapid Rehousing, a newer model that provides time limited and shallow housing assistance/services, is being promoted as an effective solution to homelessness for most families. Supportive housing is seen as most appropriate for the disabled and long term homeless.
- Key performance measures for supportive housing agencies like Solid Ground include: permanent housing placement; increased income, particularly from employment; and, regular school attendance and improved school performance
- Solid Ground performs as well, or better, than comparable agencies in the above measures.
- Two-thirds of Solid Ground families have incomes below the federal poverty level, which for a family of four would be less than \$24,250. This includes income from all sources, including public assistance and child support.
- Lack of transportation and childcare are top barriers to our clients' self-sufficiency goals.
- Solid Ground stakeholders rank housing, education and employment as our most important services.
- Solid Ground currently has a diverse funding base and sufficient operating reserves. Funding from service contracts (government) has been fairly stagnant, while individual contributions are rising. Foundation grants, typically our largest source of funds, are often unpredictable from year to year.
- All Solid Ground housing programs operate at a deficit and are supported by charitable contributions and general operating funds.
- Solid Ground partners with Duffy Development in the EMP Limited Partnership (EMP LP) to own and operate the East Metro Place supportive housing development in White Bear Lake. Solid Ground intends to acquire and be sole owner of East Metro Place by 2021.
- Solid Ground has a strong reputation among its stakeholders but is not widely recognized outside the immediate community. Building our brand is a top priority.

Using this information, Solid Ground has developed four Strategic Goal areas to guide our work for the next 5 years:

1. Expand services to children and youth to break the cycle of homelessness
2. Provide wellness programs to enhance clients' well being
3. Enhance opportunities for permanent employment
4. Continue organizational growth and impact

Our strategic goals, initiatives and intended outcomes are found on the next pages. We are pleased and excited to share our 2015-2020 Strategic Plan with you, and we ask you to be involved in whatever way you are able to contribute to this important work. Together, we will help at risk families in our community find solid ground.

2015-2020 Strategic Plan

Goals & Strategies

Expand services to children and youth to break the cycle of homelessness

- Improve childcare solutions
- Promote educational attainment
- Support social-emotional development of children/youth
- Build support and resources for children/youth

Provide wellness programs to improve client well-being

- Advance capabilities to serve clients' mental and chemical health needs
- Cultivate wellness initiatives
- Increase connections between clients and their communities

2020 Vision



- Families have access to affordable childcare
- All 4-5 year olds are enrolled in early learning programs
- All school-age children achieve higher than expected progress in reading and math
- Children/youth are engaged in some type of enrichment activity outside of school
- Solid Ground actively participates in initiatives and legislative agendas that support homeless/at risk



- Solid Ground clients effectively manage their mental and chemical health
- Adults and children are active and have access to healthy, nutritious food
- Clients report having at least one supportive friend or neighbor

2015-2020 Strategic Plan

Goals & Strategies

2020 Vision

Enhance opportunities for permanent employment

- Strengthen employment outcomes for families
- Increase transportation access



- Clients have increased income at time of exit
- Clients will develop a stronger work ethic and have greater skills to be successfully employed
- Solid Ground will have additional agency-owned/leased vehicles and an expanded fleet of drivers

Continue organizational growth and impact

- Secure resources to fund programmatic expansion
- Grow housing services to promote stability for clients
- Maintain and improve East Metro Place facilities
- Strengthen community engagement for Solid Ground and its clients



- New service contracts and/or Medicaid funding
- New partnerships with developers of mixed-income supportive housing
- All Solid Ground families reside in permanent housing at program exit
- More robust, outcome focused client database
- Transition plan for East Metro Place ownership
- Speakers Bureau actively promotes Solid Ground to wider audience
- Solid Ground-hosted public forum