



Building foundations, shaping futures.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026



VALLEY YOUTH HOUSE STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026

In the fall of 2021, after weathering the storm of the COVID-19 pandemic, the leadership of Valley Youth House set out to chart its next five years of serving youth and families. A Strategic Planning Committee, comprised of Board members, community leaders and VYH staff members, met over a nine-month period to focus on eleven different aspects of the agency's operation.

The result is this exciting new five-year Strategic Plan, which lays out a strategy and specific action steps that will allow Valley Youth House to continue to provide high-quality, life-changing programs to serve youth and families most in need in our community.

After nine-months of meetings, we have found that:

- **Our Mission and Vision remain the same;**
- **Our Core Values continue to serve as our foundation;**
- **Only our strategy changes to address the changing needs of youth and families.**

Our strategy is pretty straight forward. We seek to employ the right people to deliver the best, evidence-based programs that can be measured and proven to change the lives of youth and families. Our hope is that as we share these superior results with our various funding sources, continued resources will be made available to allow us to continue to provide these life-changing programs to more youth and families in our area.

Our success has been based on the outstanding people who work with youth and families at Valley Youth House every day. This plan calls for supporting these mission-driven people to help them do their jobs more effectively.

We wish to thank the many Board members, community leaders and VYH staff members who helped develop this plan, and we look forward to working with each of you as we serve young people and families at a time when they most need our help.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Raymond
Chair, Board of Directors
Valley Youth House



Philip C. Jackson
Chair, Strategic Planning
Valley Youth House



Thomas R. Harrington
President & Executive Director
Valley Youth House



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

The DEI Committee has established the following goals and objectives:

- Ensure all leadership team members are properly trained on DEI topics
- Build a pipeline for emerging leaders through agency mentor program
- Develop resources and build capacity for leaders at all levels within the agency to prioritize DEI
- Ensure that leadership at all levels is reflective of the communities served by Valley Youth House

Recruit, hire, retain and develop a high-performing workforce that reflects the communities we serve by optimizing experiences throughout an employee's career

- Create career development tracks for employees to develop and excel in their careers
- Expand methods to recruit underrepresented demographics, incorporating multiple avenues to ensure staff is representative of communities served
- Promote opportunities and experiences that increase cultural competencies and foster a work environment where employees feel welcomed, valued, respected and engaged
- Establish review policies across VYH programs to ensure they are consistent, fair and equitable

Develop messages, including opportunities for dialogue, that encourage all employees to see their personal success and the success of Valley Youth House

- Increase staff awareness of diverse & inclusive celebrations of culture and identity
- Improve community awareness of Valley Youth House, its programs, services and opportunities
- Create a platform/space where members of historically excluded communities are able to share their voice
- Develop a shared lexicon for internal communication that aligns with DEI values
- Develop guidance for a multi-tiered internal communication regarding external events that involve DEI-related issues

Provide fair, equitable and living wages that attract individuals to work for Valley Youth House while retaining current staff and providing opportunities for upward mobility and professional development

- Analyze staff retention and salary equity in relationship to the agency's commitment to DEI
- Evaluate current salary schedules and make adjustments/plan to liveable wages
- Increase agency benefits to include recognition of racial justice focused holidays, cost of living increases and additional support benefits in order to align them with mission and values of DEI
- Develop practices that align compensation with the DEI values and work



PROGRAM AND PORTFOLIO GROWTH COMMITTEE

The PPG Committee was empaneled to develop a plan to deliver a sustainable portfolio of programs that provide high-quality, impactful, and replicable services to enhance the scale and scope of youth and families that benefit from the mission of Valley Youth House. In order to approach this goal, it was quickly determined that the primary focus of the organization's efforts over the short-term needed to target enhancing the technological infrastructure and processes used in the day-to-day management, oversight and service delivery of the 80+ programs offered by VYH. Once these processes are harmonized, a foundation will exist that enhances employee satisfaction by reducing redundant tasks, efficiencies will be improved in both client-facing and back-office service venues, work flow management and productivity will be improved and qualitative reporting and outcome measures will be more readily aggregated. These improved efficiencies will provide the bedrock upon which program expansion and diversification can be achieved to deepen and widen the impact of the services we administer. Additionally, the efficient business support and methods are imagined to be a desirable and replicable feature attracting potential complimentary business partnerships that could enhance our continuum of care. Our goals and objectives include:

- Optimize IT support systems to enhance efficiencies of current programs with a concurrent eye towards future program growth
- Assess the quality, staffing and sustainability of each program by area utilizing a newly developed program analysis tool
- Develop new programs and/or expand current programs in our existing market areas
- Expand into new geographies and/or partner with agencies in our existing market areas that support our mission



CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

Valley Youth House is committed to providing high quality life changing services. The purpose of Continuous Quality Improvement is to foster an organizational culture that identifies practical changes, streamlines practices, procedures and operations, supports staff development and improves client outcomes. Over the last 5 years, VYH team members, Board members and community members have strived to meet this goal identifying areas of improvement, investment and change. In order to continue the progress, the following key initiatives have been identified in the CQI Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2026:

1. Invest in a Quality Improvement Manager. Similar to Risk Management, ownership and investment in this area is necessary to meet the goals and support high quality life changing services. The Manger will develop and implement a CQI plan with structure, ownership, roles, responsibilities and receive and incorporate team member feedback
2. Optimize the use of our Electronic Health Record (EHR). The EHR must be efficient for program staff, consistently utilized, and contain accurate data to improve understanding and impact of the outcomes
3. Provide quality staff development and training for agency team members. The services are only as impactful as the team members providing them. Ensuring appropriate training for specific roles and responsibilities, with an eye towards excellence and efficiency will support our team members in providing the best services. Additionally, development of staff and areas of growth will support a positive and meaningful agency experience and culture
4. Seek national accreditation to keep with national standards, best practices and cutting edge services. VYH will become accredited to ensure high standards across all agency processes including Fiscal Department, Human Resources, Information Technology, Programming, Risk Management, etc.

Overall, the agency must continue to promote and support a culture of quality where every team member is invested in and responsible for continuous quality improvement. Every team member is empowered to identify areas of improvement, areas of excellence and share observations with others to improve programming, process and ultimately outcomes for youth and families. These outcomes will then be communicated at the individual, program, agency and community levels to share successes and progress for our community

Culture of Quality is not something that the quality team does, but is something that we all are committed to every day. Having a CQI plan and process will allow us to measure our outcomes and communicate our outcomes to stakeholders.



HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

In 2021 and 2022, Valley Youth House hired an outside organization (501 Commons) to conduct a climate survey. While we received favorable comments in the areas of teamwork, supervisor relationships and client service, we received unfavorable feedback in the areas of compensation, culture and communication. Therefore, the Human Resources Committee chose to focus on the following areas for the five year plan:

Compensation

Pay has always been a challenge for Valley Youth House. It has been increasingly harder to attract and retain talent at our current pay rates. The HR committee recommended that a compensation firm be engaged to benchmark key positions and review current pay of all staff. The results of the study confirmed that many of our staff were not being paid a competitive wage. As a result, VYH has already committed over 1.5 million dollars in salary increases (impacting much of our direct service staff) to bring pay at a competitive rate to the market.

Recruitment and Retention

VYH is committed to enhancing our current recruiting strategies to increase hires, reduce vacancy rate, improve time to hire and increase our overall candidate pipeline. The strategy will consist of hiring another recruiter and creating a marketing plan to attract and hire the right people for all VYH opportunities. The marketing plan consists of partnering with key universities, using social media and additional tools to promote current opportunities and building our current internship program to convert more interns to hires. With these initiatives we hope to reduce our current vacancy rate by to 10%, increase candidate pipelines for open positions and reduce the time to fill.

Benefits

The HR Committee feels that while our benefits are great, we need to do a better job of showcasing what we have to offer as part of our hiring process. In addition, benchmarking our current benefit offerings against similarly situated organizations will determine if we are truly competitive. The initiatives suggested are:

- Benchmarking current benefits against other non-profits to determine if VYH is competitive
- Implement a skills/leadership development program
- Improve the current Tuition Reimbursement Program
- Update the current Telework policy as an attractive hiring and retention tool

These main initiatives, along with additional strategies, will offer staff competitive wages, better benefits and enhanced retention resources to hire and retain the right employees to service our clients, and fulfill the mission and vision of Valley Youth House.

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

The Advocacy Committee was charged with charting a course to increase the recognition and regard for Valley Youth House and the issues it addresses in order to elevate its stature and ability to shape local, state and federal policy and financial engagement. The Committee contemplated that this purpose could be achieved in two complementary approaches—Near and Long-Term Strategies. The Near-Term Strategy imagines that by 2024, VYH will have significantly increased brand recognition at the local and state level with measurable growth against its chosen topics for thought leadership through improved stakeholder engagement—especially its employees. The Long-Term Strategy focuses on VYH becoming a leading voice on academic, national and federal levels regarding issues that impact youth and families by being called to shape policy and responses to said issues within the next ten years. Enhancing academic and legislative influence can assist in the enhanced delivery of services to the youth and families that VYH strives to support. Becoming the institution of thought leadership would naturally position the organization for sustained success and qualitative impact for years to come. Our goals and objectives include:

- Create a cohesive understanding of advocacy and recognize the value of employee engagement through Institutionalize Ambassadorship
- Deliver the VYH message and vision to internal and external stakeholders repeatedly and habitually
- Identify our “interest” and “authority” issue(s) on which to advocate support (interest) and/or an academic / thought leadership (authority)
- Build the platform into a tower to earn academic and governmental support for VYH thought leadership

BOARD GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

For the first 30 years of Valley Youth House’s history, its programs were primarily focused on two counties in Pennsylvania – Lehigh & Northampton counties (referred to as the Lehigh Valley). As such, its Board of Directors was primarily comprised of community leaders from the Lehigh Valley.

In recent years, VYH has expanded its programs to serve youth and families in 15 counties in Eastern and Central Pennsylvania. In light of this growth, VYH has adopted a new governance structure that authorizes the creation of a new Board of Governors in each region in which the agency operates.

This new governance structure calls for a smaller Board of Directors that includes the Chairs of each of these regional Board of Governors. This will not only streamline decision-making, but will also enhance local ownership and provide a scalable governance structure to support future growth.

CAMP FOWLER COMMITTEE

The Camp Fowler Committee developed the following mission statement: “To use experiential learning, adventure-based activities, and nature as the primary vehicles to instill Positive Youth Development within young people and those who work with young people.” Furthermore, the committee identified three main objectives for the next five years: 1) Program Development, 2) Financial Sustainability and 3) Capital Improvements.

The overall goal for program development is to expand Camp Fowler offerings to include year-round programs that support local youth and serve the community in the following areas: K-12 school programs, team-building and leadership development, professional development for educators, retreats (i.e. bereavement, siblings, family bonding, etc.), rentals and VYH programs.

In terms of financial sustainability, the committee’s goal was to ensure Camp Fowler is a financially sustainable, critical asset that supports youth and enhances VYH programs. Specifically, the committee agreed that there needs to be a focus on camp-specific fundraising efforts, an increase in revenue growth through program delivery and rentals, and an expansion of marketing and communication of camp facilities and available programs.

Lastly, the committee focused on capital improvements for the camp and recognized the need to create a prioritized list of capital improvement and maintenance needs with target costs and completion dates. In addition, the committee established a goal to build a budget and secure additional funding (above the initial lead gift) to break ground on the Carter Family Center by Spring 2023 with completion by Fall 2024, and to focus on increased EITC revenue to support camp.

RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The safety and wellbeing of all clients served at Valley Youth House is the number one priority of the Risk Management Committee. Our committee has identified 4 main areas of risk that the majority of our agency risks fall into:

- **Youth Protection-** By implementing the Praesidium Model, Valley Youth House will build on current policies and procedures to keep youth protection at the forefront of the risk management framework. The high-risk populations that Valley Youth House services need daily assessment of emerging risks, identifying trends, and gaps or areas of improvement necessary to protect the psychological, emotional and physical well being of youth is critical to our mission. In collaboration with the Development & Marketing and Staff Development teams, the Risk Management Committee will create the Youth Protection Guide for all youth and staff
- **Site and Physical Safety-** Safety in the workplace and residential programs is an ongoing risk at Valley Youth House. The goals within site and facility planning are:
 - Ensure we are meeting all the standards for all governing bodies. Establishing more documented inspections at our facilities and residential programs will enhance these efforts
 - Integrate use of fleet telematics to track potential accidents, employee injuries, liability concerns and vehicle maintenance. The goal of implementing vehicle telematics is to help lower risk, improve efficiencies and promote safe driving behaviors
- **Business Continuity and Compliance Oversight-** Valley Youth House will begin to build an Enterprise Risk Management framework focusing on preventing interruptions to mission-critical services and reestablishing full function of the organization as quickly and smoothly as possible. A vital part of this framework is having a robust incident reporting process and grievance procedures, meeting corporate and regulatory requirements, allowing for transparency, protection of reputation and focusing on youth voice being heard at all levels of the organization
- **Information Security-** Expand locus of control to ensure healthy communication with clients and agency reputation risks on various platforms is a critical need. Designing and implementing a data mesh integrating EHR, Financial Ledger and HCM to enhance the core infosec triad, confidentiality, integrity and accessibility is critical to extracting value from these data repositories for decision makers at all levels of responsibility

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Development Strategic Plan is to successfully engage funders and the community, inspiring philanthropic support for the Valley Youth House (VYH) mission. The 2022-2026 Development Strategic Plan calls for increased efforts in private fundraising:

- Launch an Endowment Campaign over the next several years to build our permanent endowment in celebration of VYH’s 50th Anniversary on March 19, 2023. VYH will hire a Leadership Gift Officer by December 2022 to facilitate the campaign that will raise unrestricted funds and ensure adequate funding streams to ensure that our programs and services will be able to help young people for many years to come
- Increase major and planned giving to mirror the VYH footprint and double the donor base by 2026. The staff will deploy prospect management and pipeline development and leverage Board members and key stakeholders in +1 engagement
- Expand *Champions for Youth* annual giving recognition and *The Catalyst Society*, created in 2020 to recognize planned giving donors of \$25,000 or more
- Implement a corporate matching gift program by December 2023 to capitalize on the revenue received from employees of companies with participating programs
- Increase EITC (Educational Improvement Tax Credit) program offerings to include STEAM Camps and expand eligibility limited currently to summer programming. EITC fundraising efforts will increase and Camp Fowler will operate at a surplus by 2024
- Continue to apply for Special Purpose Entity (SPE) tax credits annually and expand the program if accepted through the state of Pennsylvania

These fundraising efforts will be the fuel we need to energize our programs and drive our future growth.

FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

A growing, efficient and effective organization requires commensurately strong support functions. In light of the work done by other committees, particularly the Program Portfolio & Growth Committee, we reviewed the current state of the support functions – IT, HR, Finance, Facilities, Risk Management and Quality – to determine the adequacy of that support both now and going forward. Our review included an assessment of the people, systems, processes and measurement needed for Valley Youth House to succeed. The strategic focus of the plan for all four areas is twofold. First, to ensure the compliance needs of the organization are met while minimizing the administrative and other non-program delivery processes that prevent those staff from serving our clients. Secondly, to measure ourselves in a way that allows for continuous improvement to all areas of the organization. To that end our key objectives are:

- **People:** Ensure the right resources are in the right roles to maximize the effectiveness of the support functions
- **Systems:** Identify and implement the right support systems to provide for efficient operations and effective measurement
- **Processes:** Design and implement processes to ensure compliance with all oversight organizations while creating an environment of repeatability, efficiency and scalability across disparate programs and geographies
- **Measurement:** Develop tools to measure the performance of the organization including financial and program delivery

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The goals of the Marketing and Communication strategic plan are to increase engagement and awareness of the Valley Youth House Brand Story with selected external audiences, such as donors, funders, referral sources and media and to improve internal communications and establish a culture of ambassadorship that ensures a singularity of voice among staff.

- In order to steward referral sources, the marketing and communications team will collaborate with program leadership to determine marketing needs for strengthening revenue-generating relationships
- Marketing & Communications will work with the **Continuous Quality Improvement Subcommittee** to catalog and incorporate any agency accreditations and licenses into internal and external communications
- Marketing & Communications will look to build new relationships and strengthen existing relationships with regional priority media outlets in order to expand awareness and a positive reputation
- Marketing & Communications will aim to position Valley Youth House as thought leaders in the field, while developing a plan with the **Advocacy Subcommittee**
- Staff will support the **Fundraising/Development Subcommittee** by developing a Donor/Funder Communication Strategy and work with the **Program Portfolio & Growth Subcommittee** to establish a marketing plan to promote the benefits of partnering with our organization. It is also important to ensure our internal marketing and communication policies and procedures are up to date and followed by VYH staff agency the Agency

In order to accomplish the goals established, we request additional resources that include an increased marketing budget, additional communications staff and updates to the VYH website.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

- Committee Chair(s): **Dr. Donald Outing**
- Staff Advisor(s): **Shawn Mack**

Program Portfolio & Growth Committee

- Committee Chair(s): **Mike Gausling**
- Staff Advisor(s): **Jay Deppeler, Shani Meacham**

Continuous Quality Improvement Committee

- Committee Chair(s): **David Yale**
- Staff Advisor(s): **Lisa Weingartner**

Human Resources Committee

- Committee Chair(s): **Jackie Renner**
- Staff Advisor(s): **Cherise Stewart**

Advocacy Committee

- Committee Chair(s): **Julian Ritchey**
- Staff Advisor(s): **Jay Deppeler**

Board Governance Committee

- Committee Chair(s): **Bill Spence**
- Staff Advisor(s): **Tom Harrington**

Camp Fowler Committee

- Committee Chair(s): **Don Sachs**
- Staff Advisor(s): **Mike Brady**

Risk Management Committee

- Committee Chair(s): **Adrienne Bonser**
- Staff Advisor(s): **Lauren Johnson, Shaun Michel**

Development Committee

- Committee Chair(s): **Mike Gigler**
- Staff Advisor(s): **Christina Schoemaker**

Finance & Infrastructure Committee

- Committee Chair(s): **Maura Topper**
- Staff Advisor(s): **Thomas Brown, Shaun Michel**

Marketing & Communications Committee

- Committee Chair(s): **Mike Rice, Molly Russin**
- Staff Advisor(s): **Emily Connors, Mary Harvilla**