



Families First Community Center Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020



Unanimously by Board, 8-7-2017, 6:37pm

Mission

We seek to break the cycle of homelessness by equipping families with minor children with the skills they need to gain self-sufficiency.

Vision

We believe that, together, we can build a community free from poverty, discrimination, and neglect.

We envision a community where all members stand on solid ground with the skills and confidence they need to achieve their dreams.

“The true reflection of society can be seen in the way that it cares for the elderly, the poor and needy, and the homeless.” ~ Hubert Humphrey

History

The idea for Families First Community Center began in 2015 when the two co-founders were working at the local emergency homeless shelter in Hancock County, Maine. Each day they saw residents leaving the facility, doomed to repeat their homeless situation due to not being prepared for sustainability and success in the outside world. Traditional options of short-term shelter, welfare checks, rent vouchers, food banks and spotty case management have not adequately addressed the challenges homeless families face. Dispersed throughout a rural county, lacking transportation and unaware of the many service and support options available, many homeless families fail to get the help they need.

Building on recommendations made by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, Families First Community Center (FFCC) focuses on families in a two-generation approach, providing one location for family housing with supportive services to allow for the development of skills that will be needed once permanently housed. FFCC will provide private living quarters, communal areas, office space, childcare facility, learning environment, supportive staff, and case management required for providing family housing, support services and life skills training to these homeless families. FFCC will provide a staffed facility to accomplish this goal, while leveraging and building community resources by collaboration with existing organizations. The long-term goal of our program is to make sure that our families are never homeless again.

Goals

- 1. Increase community awareness of poverty to spur active engagement and support.**
- 2. Purchase, renovate the house, and build programming to support our families.**
- 3. Build the capacity of the Families First Community Center Board, Community Advisory Panel, and volunteer network to accomplish the vision.**
- 4. Grow and diversify the financial resources to reach sustainability.**



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Goal I: *Increase community awareness of poverty to spur active engagement and support.*

Outcomes by 2020:

1. Track number of people reached through outreach efforts to increase engagement of an additional 15% of the total Hancock County population.
2. Collaborate with 15 additional organizations.
3. Actively work with 3-5 key Washington County partners, including Poverty Busters, Washington County Transitional Shelter for the Homeless, and Maine Sea Coast Mission to raise community awareness and share resources.

Actions in 2017

1. Explore partnerships to bring Donna Beegle to Maine to kick off a community awareness campaign with a community workshop.
2. Collect stories and develop strategies for sharing them with the community in ways that protect individual and family privacy. *(Ongoing)*
3. Create and pilot community mentor network using Mentor Training program Lynne Campbell Witham developed. *(Funded by Maine Community Foundation)*
4. Network with organizations doing similar work such as Community Compass, Maine Sea Coast Mission, Washington Hancock Community Agency, and Washington County homeless efforts including Poverty Busters. **(Completed)**
5. Work with Maine State Housing Authority to conduct and improve accuracy of Point in Time count of homeless and semi-homeless in Hancock County. *(Ongoing)*
6. Do presentations with community groups throughout the county. *(42 conducted by July 2017)*

Actions in 2018

1. Compile and publicize Year One accomplishments.
2. Highlight existence of tent villages and other makeshift housing that area homeless families are creating.
3. Work with people living in makeshift housing to identify what will help them make it through the winter.
4. As an alternative to makeshift housing, explore communal village/affordable housing options, such as Covenant Way in Sedgwick, to support people transitioning from the home.
5. Continue to work with Maine State Housing Authority to conduct and improve accuracy of Point in Time count of homeless and semi-homeless in Hancock County.
6. Work with Wayfinder Schools to bring Passages Program, a home-based diploma program, and funding to Hancock County.

Actions in 2019

1. Assess readiness for expansion to Washington County.
2. Work with Maine State Housing Authority to conduct and improve accuracy of Point in Time count of homeless and semi-homeless in Hancock County.
3. Explore expansion of Family Futures Downeast, a nationally recognized two-generation college access model, to FFCC with the University College of Ellsworth.

Goal II: Purchase, renovate the house, and build programming to support our families.

Outcomes by 2020:

1. House will be purchased, renovated, and fully occupied by six families including children.
2. Programming has been expanded beyond house residents to include up to 480 individual enrollments of under-resourced community members in workshops/classes annually to expand and maximize economic impact.
3. Program and case management services exist and expand from three to six case managers to also serve enlarged network of partner organizations.
4. A phased staffing plan will grow to ten positions, including an executive director, nurse educator, certified vocational educator, facilities maintenance specialist, program specialist, digital literacy and engagement specialist, volunteer coordinator, office manager, house parent, as well as a development specialist.

Actions in 2017

House purchase, repair and alteration into family housing (start November 1)

1. Obtain financing and purchase home. *(Financing obtained)*
2. Create detailed budget and plan for renovation. **(Completed)**
3. Convene Project Management Team to meet regularly to oversee work.
4. Create Facility and Transportation Committee.
5. Explore innovative strategies to engage donated labor as well as community support and involvement.
6. Utilize Window Dressers program to improve energy efficiency and lower heating costs. *(Started)*
7. Renovate barn to house two apartments.

Program development (begun in February)

1. Develop Program Committee to create

Actions in 2018

House repair and alteration to family housing

1. Renovate barn to house Child Learning Center and classrooms.
2. Explore use of heat pumps and solar energy to improve energy efficiency in house and barn.

Program development

1. Assess program efficacy and family progress.
2. Develop programming for Child Learning Center to offer work experience and professional development opportunities.
3. Continue to create MOUs from other agencies for referrals for our case management services.

Actions in 2019

House repair and alteration to family housing

1. Explore possibility of adding room to accommodate onsite nursing staff.

Program development

1. Recruit successful program graduates to join volunteer network.

<p>goals and structure, including policies for programs and approving training from external resources.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Develop assessment plan for program goals. 3. Identify local supportive service agencies and develop MOUs to leverage local services and maximize impact for our residents, other clients, and the community. <i>(Ongoing with 53 current MOUs in hand)</i> 4. Flesh out strategy for developing social network support (i.e., mentors to provide ongoing support). <i>(Received funding for development and implementation of mentoring program)</i> 5. Create staffing plan and identify priority positions. (Completed) 6. Develop job positions and employment policies. <i>(Started)</i> 7. Create plan for phased development of programs and services. 8. Hire key staff. 		
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Goal III: *Build the capacity of the Families First Community Center Board, Community Advisory Panel (CAP), and volunteer network to accomplish the vision.*

Outcomes by 2020:

1. The board consists of at least 12 members and operates as a fully functioning and vital entity.
2. The board is supported by the capacity of at least four active committees that include both CAP members and external members.
3. Each of the 30 CAP members is actively engaged in a specific role to support the board.
4. At least 50 volunteers are hard working and appreciated for their essential work.

Actions in 2017

1. Draft by-laws (**Completed**)
2. Write board member job description. (**Completed**)
3. Develop recruitment strategy to identify and vet potential board members with the goal of having five more people become FFCC board members.
4. Board meetings are running effectively. (*Ongoing – progress made*)
5. Time commitment and board member expectations are clearly stated and modeled. (*Ongoing*)
6. Priority committees are formed and operating: Facility and Transportation, Program, Development, and Executive Committee.
7. Build leadership structure for long-term sustainability that is not dependent only on founder. (*Exploring co-chairmanship*)
8. Match skill sets of 8 members of CAP (Community Advisory Panel) Team I and volunteers (engaged in pre-house start-up) with priority work.

Actions in 2018

1. Recruit two additional board members to achieve a total of 12 members.
2. Develop training materials to onboard new members.
3. Obtain funding for board development to enhance capacity, including poverty awareness training.
4. Develop succession plan to carry on beyond founding chair’s tenure.

Actions in 2019

1. Revitalize board.

<p>9. Keep 18 members of CAP Team II and 15 volunteers (committed to post house renovation support) updated to maintain engagement.</p> <p>10. As program development and house renovation progresses, identify gaps in skill sets of CAPS and strategically recruit new members.</p> <p>11. Draft pilot evaluation program to track progress towards goals and to ensure sustainability.</p>		
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Goal IV: Grow and diversify the financial resources to reach sustainability.

Outcomes by 2020:

1. A Development Plan provides 30% of operating budget through multi-faceted strategies.
2. Strategic staffing and programming including case management and day care facilities provide 40% of operating budget.
3. Secured governmental and organizational funding supplies 30% of operations.
4. Continue to build financial sustainability by leveraging available community resources.

Actions in 2017

1. Create a Development Committee to oversee fundraising and craft a multi-faceted Development Plan. (*Committee functioning*)
2. A business plan and operational budget showing revenue streams and expenses and outline plan to achieve financial sustainability. (**Completed**)
3. Build updated case for support using data from Emmaus and HOME. (*In process of collecting data*)
4. Continue participation and outreach through community events to increase community awareness of poverty in our region and our vision. (*Ongoing*)
5. Write first annual appeal letter by end of October highlighting accomplishments and future plans.
6. Explore avenues to secure CDBG funds.
7. Reapply for Federal Home Loan Bank funds (FHLB) building on near-success of first application. (*In process*)
8. Continue to monitor grant opportunities and create a calendar of deadlines to maximize funding potential. (*Ongoing*)

Actions in 2018

1. Development Committee creates annual plan including:
 - a. Auction excess resources from barn and house;
 - b. Whitney House owner to inform pricing;
 - c. Offer naming opportunities connected with house;
 - d. Pledges per square foot to maintain the house.
2. Create sub committee to organize and run annual events.
3. Develop business plan for Child Learning Center to generate additional revenue.
4. Start networking with efforts in Washington County. Explore collaboration opportunities to maximize resources.
5. Reach out to all 36 Hancock County municipalities outside Ellsworth to appear on town warrants for support.

Actions in 2019

1. Evaluate progress on the annual plan.
2. Assess funding mix to build maximum sustainability.
3. Continue to engage community support.

<p>9. Continue networking to find local funding not publically accessible. (<i>Ongoing</i>)</p> <p>10. Create and receive donations through Go Fund Me site. (Completed)</p> <p>11. Secure funding from Children and Adult Care Food Program for childcare facility. (<i>Started</i>)</p> <p>12. Explore options including FEMA ESFP Program and USDA for communal food. (<i>Started</i>)</p> <p>13. Secure DHHS childcare vouchers for Child Learning Center. (Completed)</p> <p>14. Reach out to all 36 Hancock County municipalities to solicit General Assistance funding. (Completed: all have been approached; two have promised funding)</p> <p>15. Publicize and encourage autonomous community fundraising efforts on our behalf. (<i>Ongoing</i>)</p> <p>16. Continue to create our signature craft items to raise funds. (<i>Ongoing</i>)</p> <p>17. Continue to accept community donations of furniture and house goods. (<i>Ongoing</i>)</p> <p>18. Continue Facebook auctions and e-Bay sales of donated items. (<i>Ongoing</i>)</p>		
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