STRATEGIC PLAN

Our Mission
Plymouth Housing Group works to eliminate homelessness and address its causes by preserving, developing and operating safe, quality, supportive housing and by providing homeless adults with opportunities to stabilize and improve their lives.

Our Vision
Housing is just the beginning... the first step to building hope and transforming lives. We envision a day when every person has a home and a better quality of life.

Our Core Values
Plymouth believes...

- Every person has the right to a home
- Every person is valuable, with a unique story and journey
- Affordable housing requires responsible stewardship
- Cultural diversity and embracing difference are sources of strength
- Respect, trust and compassion are integral to all interactions
STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE A – Supporting Residents

Plymouth Housing Group provides permanent housing and supportive services to very low-income people experiencing homelessness. Our residents have diverse backgrounds and experiences and constantly changing service needs due to age, disability, chronic illness and trauma. Plymouth staff members strive to provide the most appropriate level of support to our residents so they can maintain a secure and dignified quality of life and avoid returning to homelessness.

Goal A 1 Provide high quality services, utilizing evidence-based practices and promising approaches.

Strategy A 1.1 Continue developing staff expertise and cultivating partnerships to provide permanent supportive housing that utilizes principles of housing first, harm reduction, trauma informed care, cultural humility, motivational interviewing, and relationship-based care.

Strategy A 1.2 Maintain and expand integrated housing supports and medical services to meet the mental health, substance use, and medical needs of residents.

Strategy A 1.3 Explore new housing, service, and funding models to address significant challenges and unmet needs of our current and future residents.

Goal A 2 Promote resident health and stability.

Strategy A 2.1 Offer multiple venues for residents to express interests and concerns, including the use of an annual resident survey regarding agency practices, staff interactions, and living space satisfaction. Use feedback from residents to make improvements to community spaces and programming.

Strategy A 2.2 Adhere to quality design standards that build supportive living spaces, and continue offering meaningful activities and volunteerism to build community and improve resident health.

Strategy A 2.3 Serve as a model landlord in our community by providing high quality housing with strong resident protections, that promote resident health and that serve to prevent residents from returning to homelessness.

Goal A 3 Promote resident autonomy and recovery.

Strategy A 3.1 Provide high quality housing and individualized case management services that support residents in various stages of recovery from illness and trauma.

Strategy A 3.2 Provide opportunities for interested and eligible supportive housing residents to progress to housing with less intensive services.
DEFINITIONS

Housing First

Housing First is an approach that centers on providing people experiencing homelessness with housing quickly and then providing services as needed. What differentiates a Housing First approach from other strategies is that there is an immediate and primary focus on helping individuals and families quickly access and sustain permanent housing. Housing First programs share critical elements:

- There is a focus on helping individuals and families access and sustain rental housing as quickly as possible and the housing is not time-limited;
- A variety of services are delivered primarily following housing placement to promote housing stability and individual well-being;
- Such services are time-limited or long-term depending upon individual need; and
- Housing is not contingent on compliance with services – instead, participants must comply with standard lease agreement obligations and are provided with services and support that are necessary to help them successfully remain in housing.

Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is an approach for substance use treatment that involves a set of practical techniques that are openly negotiated with clients around what is most likely to be achieved. The focus is on reducing the negative consequences and risky behaviors of substance use; it neither condones nor condemns any behavior. By incorporating strategies on a continuum from safer drug use, to managed substance use, to abstinence, harm reduction practice helps clients affect positive changes in their lives. The harm reduction philosophy embraces respect, trust and a nonjudgmental stance as the essential components of an effective therapeutic relationship. A basic assumption in this approach is that clients want to make positive changes and the skilled clinician uses motivational strategies to help clients move along the change continuum as far as possible.

Trauma Informed Care

Trauma informed care is a way of structuring our organization and approaching our work that involves understanding, recognizing and responding to the effects of all types of trauma. It emphasizes physical, psychological and emotional safety for ourselves as employees, and for the tenants we serve. It helps us work toward a sense of control, safety and empowerment for ourselves and for our tenants.

Cultural Humility

Cultural humility is a lifelong commitment to self-reflection and self-critique whereby the individual not only learns about another’s culture, but starts with an examination of her/his own beliefs, cultural identities, assumptions, biases and values. Cultural humility helps us recognize that we can’t know everything about every culture, and that we all have complex stories as we intersect in a variety of cultures, such as race, gender, class, age, work status, and disability status. Those who practice cultural humility increase their self-awareness of their own biases and perceptions and engage in a life-long reflective practice that involves the continual challenging of oneself and an openness to learning from others. This practice promotes meaningful and ethical engagement with the people we serve and between staff throughout the organization.
Motivational Interviewing
Motivational interviewing is a form of guiding that elicits and strengthens motivation for change. It focuses on exploring and resolving ambivalence and centers on motivational processes within the individual that facilitate change. The method differs from more coercive or externally driven methods for motivating change as it does not impose change (that may be inconsistent with the person’s own values, beliefs or wishes); but rather supports change in a manner congruent with the person’s own values and concerns.

Relationship Based Care
Relationship Based Care is a working framework that seeks to improve safety, quality, resident satisfaction, and staff satisfaction by improving every relationship within the organization. Staff connect with the purpose and meaning of their work, teamwork is based on deep commitment rather than surface-level compliance, and residents feel safe and cared for as everyone in the organization is committed to making authentic human connections with the people in their care.

Permanent Supportive Housing
Decent, safe, and affordable community-based housing that provides residents with the rights of tenancy under state/local landlord tenant laws and is linked to voluntary, flexible support and services designed to meet residents’ needs and preferences.

Housing Options Program (HOP)
A Plymouth program that offers subsidized conventional apartment units to long term stable tenants living in permanent supportive housing (PSH) so that the units they vacate can house currently homeless, extremely low-income disabled singled adults with high service needs. The HOP program is designed for current Plymouth tenants who have demonstrated skills and the ability to manage their tenancy PSH. At the same time, these individuals have disabilities and challenges that require services and support, albeit at a less intensive level than is available in PSH.

Recovery Housing
Recovery Housing at Plymouth is a model of permanent supportive housing designed for individuals with a substance use disorder who are experiencing homelessness and who have expressed a preference for living in a housing setting targeted to people in recovery with an abstinence focus. Residents are committed to working toward recovery and services align with participants’ choice and personal goals regarding sustained recovery. Relapse is understood as an expected part of recovery, and tenants experiencing relapse are provided with support to refocus on goals toward recovery.

Corporation for Supportive Housing Dimensions of Quality

National Healthy Housing Standard
**STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE B – Supporting Employees**

Our employees provide the eyes, ears, hands and hearts necessary to care for our residents and our organization.

We are committed to properly supporting our staff members in order to achieve our mission. As Plymouth grows, we work to ensure that our staff are valued as employees, individuals and members of the Plymouth community; that they are equipped to serve with respect and compassion; and that they are motivated to grow as employees and citizens of our community.

**Goal B 1** Recruit and retain staff by creating a culture that values employees and diversity at all levels of the organization.

**Strategy B 1.1** Develop a comprehensive recruiting program to attract a talented, diverse and compassionate pool of candidates to all positions.

**Strategy B 1.2** Maintain a fair and competitive compensation program.

**Strategy B 1.3** Continue to develop tools and initiatives to maintain and increase staff safety, security and well-being.

**Goal B 2** Invest in staff by providing opportunities for professional growth for all staff members throughout their tenure at the organization.

**Strategy B 2.1** Develop a comprehensive orientation program to welcome and prepare staff to acclimate to the organization.

**Strategy B 2.2** Invest in development of paths for growth within the organization and educate staff on the paths and requirements for growth.

**Strategy B 2.3** Provide opportunities for staff education and training to increase workplace effectiveness in partnering with our unique resident populations, funders, partners and each other.

**Goal B 3** Create a flexible, collaborative and inclusive work environment that embraces diversity and empowers staff to contribute.

**Strategy B 3.1** Continue to invest in tools, training and development regarding Plymouth Housing Group’s cultural values to enhance cultural proficiency.

**Strategy B 3.2** Equip our leaders with diversity and inclusion knowledge and skills to effectively create an ever increasing diverse and inclusive workplace.

**Strategy B 3.3** Implement work/life flexibilities (wellness, telework, flexible work schedules) as appropriate.
STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE C – Governance

Plymouth addresses complex issues affecting the organization’s well-being and ability to carry out its mission. These include decisions about policy, housing development and other key areas.

As Plymouth grows and changes to meet the needs of residents who live in its buildings, Plymouth’s organizational structure will reflect sound business practices, encourage strong leadership and maintain financial well-being.

Goal C 1 Plymouth Housing Group’s Board will maintain a solid framework for governance of the organization.

Strategy C 1.1 Regularly consider Board responsibilities as a governing body (i.e., fiduciary oversight and oversight of Plymouth Housing Group as a whole). In order to ensure that Board structure and function meet the governance objectives, the Board will regularly assess Board and committee structure and performance.

Strategy C 1.2 Regularly establish and monitor policies necessary to ensure sound business and governance practices for the organization.

Strategy C 1.3 Review at least annually Plymouth’s progress on the goals and measures of success as stated in Plymouth’s current Strategic Plan.

Goal C 2 Plymouth Housing Group’s Board will establish processes to ensure strong leadership of the organization now and in the future.

Strategy C 2.1 Assess and adjust Board composition (e.g., size; background; diversity; areas of expertise) to best meet the needs of the organization.

Strategy C 2.2 Recruit, educate and mentor new members about Plymouth Housing Group’s mission and about Board responsibilities, including the expectation of financial support. The Board will ensure ongoing education of all Board members about topics that relate closely to Plymouth’s mission. The aim is to enable Board members to participate fully in policy discussions, fiduciary oversight, housing development decisions, advocacy and fundraising.

Strategy C 2.3 Ensure that an appropriate succession plan for the Executive Director is in place.

Goal C 3 Plymouth Housing Group’s Board will establish and monitor policies to ensure the transparent and responsible management of Plymouth’s financial affairs.

Leveraging the Finance Committee, the Board will continue to implement the following strategies:

Strategy C 3.1 Monitor internal controls and risk management, including selection of the organization’s independent auditor and oversight of the annual audit process.
Strategy C 3.2  Oversee financial policy and procedures, including monitoring financial performance compared with budget projections, planning for adequate cash flow & reserves to meet organizational needs, and considering appropriate reserve investment strategies.

Strategy C 3.3  Address the long-term financial health of the organization. This will include planning for potential reductions in rent subsidies or other program funding; and ensuring that funds are available for new housing development and maintenance of existing buildings.
STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE D – Managing Growth

As development opportunities grow scarce in downtown Seattle, and in recognition that homelessness is not limited to downtown, Plymouth has expanded its focus to other neighborhoods. To facilitate effective ongoing management, new projects should be sited strategically to create clusters of units in given neighborhoods, close to public transportation and services, and with a buffer from single family housing.

Plymouth developed 368 new homes between 2005 and 2010, and another 149 between 2010 and 2015. Plymouth currently has a portfolio of 950 homes.

**Goal D 1** Develop 350 homes in 4 developments in the next five years to bring the total of homes to 1,300.

**Strategy D 1.1** Pursue new projects and resources to fully fund both the development and ongoing sustainability of new housing.

**Strategy D 1.2** Develop a method for early acquisition of potential development sites for the Plymouth pipeline.

**Strategy D 1.3** Continue to advocate at the local, state, and national level for long-term public funding to support affordable housing.

**Strategy D 1.4** Over the next five years, continue to evaluate existing programs to explore future development strategies (e.g., graduation housing at Sylvia Odom’s Place; recovery support program at Pat Williams Apartments).

**Goal D 2** In addition to Plymouth’s Permanent Supportive Housing model, commit time, energy, and resources to responding in new ways to the homelessness crisis in Seattle.

**Strategy D 2.1** Explore different types of housing: e.g., 24-hour housing/shelter akin to navigation centers.

**Strategy D 2.2** Explore partnerships with other organizations: e.g., real estate joint ventures.

**Strategy D 2.3** Investigate mergers with related organizations to expand Plymouth’s geographic footprint as well as achieve greater operational efficiencies.

**Goal D 3** Intentionally manage growth and monitor its effects on financial capacity, infrastructure, organizational structure, staffing, and role and requirements of the board.

**Strategy D3.1** Ensure that Plymouth’s financial capacity is maintained by following Board-designated reserve requirements and prudent use of debt.

**Strategy D3.2** With each new development, evaluate all agency departments that support onsite efforts (Property Managers, Maintenance, Social Service Program Managers, Finance, and
Administrative staff) to achieve appropriate operational ratios.

**STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE E – Fundraising and Communications/Marketing**

Plymouth Housing Group offers a comprehensive, professional fundraising and communications program, including fundraising and cultivation events; long-term development of major donors; workplace giving; community engagement; traditional and social media; and mail and email fund appeals.

Plymouth’s fundraising and communications will need to expand as the organization continues to grow and must evolve to meet the needs of our community at large and, most importantly, our community of formerly homeless residents.

**Goal E 1** By the year 2021, Plymouth will address the organizational growth and service needs of its residents by increasing the private, corporate and foundation fundraising goal for operating expenses by 60% to $4+ million annually.

**Strategy E 1.1** Develop new and increased levels of annual giving by engaging new audiences.

**Strategy E 1.2** Strengthen relationships with existing supporters through targeted programs such as planned giving, workplace giving and recurring gifts.

**Strategy E 1.3** Evolve the Resource Development department to achieve elevated fundraising goals.

**Goal E 2** Raise public awareness of Plymouth as a compassionate and cost-effective leader in permanent supportive housing, as well as a model for policy development and public education.

**Strategy E 2.1** Use strong, focused stories about lives changed and statistical information to communicate the efficacy of Plymouth’s approach to ending homelessness.

**Strategy E 2.2** Develop speaking opportunities and forums for Plymouth’s leadership to create further awareness of the organization’s mission.

**Strategy E 2.3** Enhance the Plymouth brand to showcase its evolving growth, value and services provided.

**Goal E 3** Engage the people and businesses of Downtown Seattle and surrounding neighborhoods in supporting Plymouth’s mission.

**Strategy E 3.1** Promote Plymouth’s innovative programs, organizational efficiency, thoughtfully designed properties and appealing street-front presence.

**Strategy E 3.2** Attract community and local leaders to Plymouth’s mission by hosting learning events and participating in neighborhood-centric activities.

**Strategy E 3.3** Create a Plymouth Housing Group Advisory Council to provide long-term wisdom and guidance.