



STRATEGIC PLAN

OUR VISION: To end chronic homelessness in Washington, DC by 2017

CONNECTION

Ensuring quality, guest-centered outreach, engagement, assessment and housing placement exists for individuals who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically homeless.

HOUSING

Ensuring enough quality housing is provided through Coordinated Entry and with the Housing First philosophy to individuals who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically homeless.

LEADERSHIP

Ensuring quality, consistent and diverse leadership works to ensure ending chronic homelessness is prioritized and evaluated system-wide.



REFINING OUR MODEL FOR ENGAGING GUESTS

We will invest in continuous improvement as we provide healthy meals and high-quality social services to people who are experiencing chronic homelessness.



BEING A COORDINATED ENTRY LEADER

We will continue to play a leadership role in managing Coordinated Entry city-wide and explore starting our own outreach team to fill the critical gaps that currently exist.



EXPANDING OUR HIGH-QUALITY PSH FOOTPRINT

We will look to expand our current scattered-site PSH contract and also add site-based PSH through partnerships with real estate developers.



STARTING MK RAPID RE-HOUSING

We will pursue becoming a Rapid Re-Housing provider; housing individuals through housing location assistance, time-limited financial assistance and time-limited case management services.



INCREASING OUR ADVOCACY IMPACT

We will continue to play a leadership role in achieving systems change by ensuring the work necessary to end chronic homelessness is fully funded and implemented by the DC government.



2016 – 2018 Strategic Plan

Introduction

Miriam's Kitchen is on the cusp of an historic moment – the end of chronic homelessness in our Nation's Capital.

While we have not yet arrived at this moment, there is now broad agreement among nonprofit providers, DC government leaders, and the general public that ending chronic homelessness by 2017 is possible.

However, its end is not inevitable. The continuous need for year-over-year funding, high-quality service provision and implementation, and continued education on best practices means there is much work for Miriam's Kitchen to do as both a direct service provider and an advocacy leader.

We believe that this strategic plan will see us through the end of chronic homelessness in Washington, DC. The chance to alleviate and end the suffering experienced by our guests is within our reach. Through vigilance and continued focus on the programmatic opportunities that have impact, we will be able to achieve our vision of ending chronic homelessness in Washington, DC.

Because we are at this unique moment, this strategic plan is different than previous Miriam's Kitchen strategic plans. We now need a strategic plan that gives both clear focus and direction to Miriam's Kitchen's work over the next three years AND supports us as we remain flexible and adaptable in a complex and changing external environment.

Our work will be anchored by the strategic priorities and corresponding activities that we know must happen to end chronic homelessness in Washington, DC. These will drive Miriam's Kitchen's direct service and advocacy work over the next several years.

Strategic Priorities

The following priorities will guide our work. Sustained focus and attention in these areas is critical to ending chronic homelessness in DC:

1. **Connection:** Quality, guest-centered outreach, engagement, assessment, and housing placement exists for individuals who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically homeless.
2. **Housing:** Enough quality housing is provided through Coordinated Entry and with the Housing First philosophy to individuals who are, or are at risk of becoming, chronically homeless.
3. **Leadership:** Quality, consistent, and diverse leadership works to prioritize and evaluate progress toward ending chronic homelessness in DC system wide.

Activities

To enact these priorities, we will focus on the following activities while staying open to emerging opportunities:

- ***Refining our model for engaging guests:*** We will invest in continuous improvement as we provide healthy meals and high-quality social services to people who are experiencing chronic homelessness. This is at the core of what we do. It's at the heart of our work and is foundational in enabling everything else. Investing in continuous improvement here is strengthening our ability to achieve our mission.

- **Being a Coordinated Entry leader:** *We will continue to play a leadership role in managing Coordinated Entry city-wide and explore starting our own outreach team to fill the critical gaps that currently exist. Without successful Coordinated Entry, we can't end chronic homelessness in DC.*
- **Expanding our footprint for providing high-quality PSH:** *We will look to expand our current scattered-site PSH contract and also add site-based PSH through partnerships with real estate developers. Housing ends homelessness. Miriam's Kitchen should play a significant role in it because of our values, commitment to quality, and guest-centered approach. Providing high-quality PSH also ensures that people have the support they need stay housed.*
- **Starting Rapid Re-housing:** *We will pursue becoming a Rapid-Rehousing provider: housing individuals through housing location assistance, time-limited financial assistance, and time-limited case management services. Rapid Re-housing is necessary to ending chronic homelessness as well as a critical component to ending all homelessness, and Miriam's Kitchen can bring its track record of quality and best practices to helping RRH expand and innovate in DC.*
- **Increasing our advocacy impact:** *We will continue to play a leadership role in achieving systems change by ensuring the work necessary to end chronic homelessness is fully funded and implemented by the DC government. We have distinguished ourselves here and others look to us for continued leadership.*

There are two further activities we are aware of that may align with our strategic priorities and strategic criteria:

- **Developing and staffing the Downtown Services Center:** *Until 2009, the Downtown Business Improvement District and DC government funded a homeless services facility at 10th and G Streets, NW. There are plans to restart the Downtown Services Center. Depending on whether there is strategic alignment between the Downtown Services Center and Miriam's Kitchen, Miriam's Kitchen may have an opportunity to engage in its redevelopment.*
- **Developing our own PSH building:** *An enormous amount of quality PSH housing will need to be developed in the eight wards of Washington, DC over the next several years. Miriam's Kitchen may be able to contribute to that housing pool by developing its own building, or doing so in partnership with others. Part of our work over the next several years will be evaluating the feasibility of this approach for Miriam's.*

Strategic Flexibility

Ending chronic homelessness in Washington, DC is a complex challenge that requires community-wide commitment and action. Given the complexity of our external environment, Miriam's Kitchen needs to remain flexible and adaptable throughout the execution of this plan.

We have developed a set of strategic criteria that will provide grounding, focus and direction during these times of change. Staff and board alike will use the strategic criteria to guide our discussions and decisions. The strategic criteria are not intended as a checklist, but rather, they will serve as a guiding framework and tool to support us in making the right decisions.

When making decisions, we will ask ourselves if the activity being discussed:

- **Leverages Miriam's Kitchen's current strengths:** *Miriam's Kitchen's core strengths are our consistent, high-quality programs, our values-driven, guest-centered culture, and our ability to build relationships in the community. Will this decision enable Miriam's Kitchen to do more of these things? We will pursue opportunities that allow us to build upon our existing strengths.*

- *Fills a need for individuals who are chronically homeless:* We will pursue opportunities that are responsive to guests' needs while also ensuring that guests are included in decision making and implementation.
- *Fills a service or quality gap in the work to end chronic homelessness in DC:* If we don't pursue this opportunity, will another qualified, quality provider step in? We will pursue opportunities that meet a need in the community, that are most critical for ending chronic homelessness, and for which Miriam's Kitchen is uniquely positioned to do better than others.
- *Provides more benefit to ending chronic homelessness than risk to Miriam's Kitchen:* Will this decision result in gains that outweigh the strain and pain for Miriam's Kitchen? Can the risks be managed? We will pursue opportunities that have greater benefits than risk.
- *Has a reliable funding source:* Can we accomplish this with current resources (financial and staff)? Is there evidence that we could obtain additional resources to fund this? Miriam's Kitchen will only pursue opportunities that are achievable with current or easily obtainable resources.

Measuring our Success

The single most important measure of our success is the number of chronically homeless individuals in DC. The annual Point-in-Time count (PIT) occurs each January and is an enumeration of a single day's homeless population. The PIT report is published in May of each year by the Washington Regional Council of Governments (COG). Since 2011, single adult chronic homelessness decreased by nearly one quarter from 2,093 individuals to 1,593 individuals in 2015. Our goal is to achieve functional zero by the end of 2017. Incremental progress toward ending chronic homelessness is also tracked city-wide through monthly housing placements of people experiencing chronic homelessness. How close DC is to reaching its monthly housing placement targets will give us regular feedback on how to be directing our direct services and advocacy work.

We will also set annual work plan goals and metrics to measure our success. Miriam's Kitchen is committed to monitoring its progress through systemic measurement of its programs. Each department creates annual goals and report monthly against these goals. Quarterly, each department reviews its progress against goal and makes adjustments as needed.

The Miriam's Kitchen Way

We believe that our success is measured not only by what is achieved, but also by how it is accomplished. We are committed to nurturing and living out the following core values as we execute this plan:

1. Our guests are at the center of everything we do
2. We are good stewards of relationships and resources, while working hard and having fun
3. We are passionate about our work for justice and meaningful change

Miriam's Kitchen will only be successful in executing this plan if we continue to foster our staff culture and develop our internal infrastructure. We will do this by:

- *Focusing on diversity and inclusion:* We define diversity as a commitment to acknowledging, understanding, respecting, valuing, and encouraging the unique characteristics and differences that each individual brings to our organization. A diverse workplace promotes open dialogue, personal

strengths, and professional growth. We are committed to continual learning that fosters inclusion, tolerance and respect, and value diversity in all its forms.

- *Engaging guests in decision-making:* Our guests are at the center of everything we do, and we are committed to engaging individuals with lived experience in the critical decisions we make as an organization. Examples of this are including guests in the staff leadership committees (Leadership Circles), continuing our Advocacy Fellows program and using it as a pipeline for future Miriam's Kitchen staffing, and recurring executive-level communication about the "state of Miriam's Kitchen" with all guests.
- *Ensuring government contract growth is purposeful, values-driven, and supported by our organizational infrastructure:* Many of the strategic activities that Miriam's Kitchen will pursue in this strategic plan are publicly funded. This provides a complementary set of opportunities and challenges. For example, public funding is often a steady and large source of revenue. However, this revenue is often restricted and may have complex reporting or compliance requirements that are costly to Miriam's Kitchen. Also, we know ending chronic homelessness in Washington, DC, requires us to continue to be an advocacy leader. There could be an inherent tension between being critical of government policies and our need for government funding.
- *Developing our physical infrastructure to meet our staff and organizational needs:* Pursuing any additional programmatic activities will require an assessment of infrastructure needs and the financial resources to adapt and grow the space.

After the End of Chronic Homelessness

The possibility that chronic homelessness will have ended within the timeframe of this strategic plan leads us to think about what Miriam's Kitchen's future may look like. While achieving our vision is not guaranteed, part of our work will be to start envisioning what comes next.

While we won't start writing a new strategic plan until 2017, from our current vantage point there arise two important potential goals for our work after we end chronic homelessness in DC:

1. Maintain an end to chronic homelessness in DC by ensuring there are enough housing resources and the right systems and services in place to prevent people from becoming chronically homeless.
2. Ending single adult homelessness in Washington, DC, by 2020.

In the same way that the lessons we are learning and the capacities we are building to end veteran homelessness are setting up Miriam's Kitchen and DC to end chronic homelessness, so too will Miriam's Kitchen emerge from the successful effort to end chronic homelessness with unique skills and capacities that can be translated to ending all single adult homelessness. During the execution of our current strategic plan, it will be important for us to keep an eye toward the development of our capacities to contribute toward ending homelessness for a broader population like all single adults.