

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022



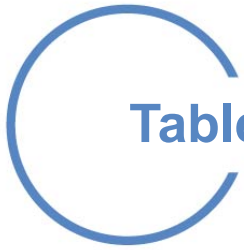


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About Way Station

Mission	The Way Station provides safe, welcoming, non-judgmental space and supportive services for the homeless & housing insecure of Mt Washington Valley.
Vision	<p>Way Station's vision is to support the homeless and housing-insecure population by sustaining an adaptive organization to advocate for each client's future situation while providing mitigation of present struggles leading to greater quality of life.</p> <p>Advocate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form relationships with homeless and housing-insecure populations and in particular, the clients we serve • Identify and document homelessness and housing insecurity in the MWV area • Connect clients to additional agencies and nonprofits that also provide care for overlapping populations • Assist client to develop a route to stability and empowerment <p>Barrier mitigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify process barriers • Mitigate barriers to processes and connections that support sustainable quality of life <p>Quality of life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet essential needs of client • Provide services that reduce risk of harm to clients • Identify client goals and support steps to achieve sustainable client objectives • Identify and fill the resource gap for clients we serve • Assist clients to strive for independent, safe, and sustainable living situations <p>Responsive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain flexible structure to meet individual needs
Values	<p>Our organization seeks to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compassionate and non-judgmental: recognition of dignity and value of each human's life • Responsive and adaptive: innovative and flexible approach to meeting client needs • Empowering people to find their own path: supporting people's choices and independence • Transparency and accountability: communication with clients, personnel, supporters and service providers • Trust-building: developing connections of integrity with clients and service providers • Teamwork: Use a collaborative and communicative approach

History

The Way Station supports homeless and housing-insecure populations of the Mount Washington Valley region. Created in June of 2019, the Way Station targets basic day-to-day services in an effort to improve immediate quality of life and diminish suffering. Way Station's initial narrow focus on day services grew from a thoughtful landscape assessment of regional N.H. homeless services, consideration of a newly forming organization's capacity, the immediate community needs, and local barriers to a transitional housing initiative. Way Station has successfully pivoted and adapted funding streams in order to provide basic services even amidst Covid-19, building durable connections with local and regional stakeholders as well as within the homeless and housing insecure population of the Valley.

One of Way Station's initial goals was to accurately capture the scope of the problem in the Mount Washington Valley region. In January of 2019, the annual Point-In-Time (PIT) Count¹ for Carroll County identified only one homeless individual. With Way Station's involvement, the following January 2020, over 100 homeless or housing insecure individuals were identified.

After the onset of COVID-19 in 2021, Way Station's weekly client numbers tripled, and fortunately community funding support increased 600 percent over the same timeframe. In January 2021, the PIT count, despite significant collection challenges posed by COVID restrictions, confirmed 97 homeless or housing insecure individuals, and the Way Station provided about 70% of those numbers.

In January 2022, Tri-County Community Action Program (CAP), White Horse Addiction Center, Ossipee Police Department, and the Way Station team conducted the annual count for Carroll County. Households totaling more than 100 people were contacted, and 90 people (35 women, 35 men, and 20 children²) were documented to be living in what is considered a homeless/housing insecure situation, and the Way Station provided 85% of the information tabulated.

Way Station currently services approximately 30 clients each week. In the last quarter of 2021 Way Station had over 600 client contacts and provided over 450 client service deliveries logging over 360 volunteer hours.

Way Station partners with local and regional service providers across a wide spectrum, working to develop relationships for effective and efficient referrals and collaboration. Service provider collaborators include those working on food insecurity, mental health, recovery, domestic violence, housing, child and family resources, medical, emergency responders, law

¹ The Point-In-Time Count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness, conducted nationwide on a single night in January, reported through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Households counted through the school system are reported separately through the Department of Education and people living in recovery or being served by domestic violence agencies are also documented elsewhere.

² No unaccompanied minors were documented, but Way Station does not generally have contact with that population.

enforcement, legal, education and schools, elder services, veterans administration, social workers, spiritual.

🏠 The Four Pillars

In 2021, Way Station crafted an expanded basic vision for its services. After looking at the long term impact the organization seeks to have, agreeing on a desire to complement (and not overlap) services provided by other local agencies, and assessing client and community needs, Way Station developed Four Pillars to forward the mission.

The Four Pillars, expressed using the acronym HOPE, stem from two fundamental desires: to care for individuals, recognizing their differences and strengths and promoting their autonomy; and to ensure that individual care is multifaceted, with deep, community-level involvement and commitment.

Way Station's goal from its founding has been to provide 'Housing', since the lack of emergency and transitional housing in the county is such a clear and critical gap. As of early 2022 the 'Housing' pillar is in the planning phase. Way Station decided to initially focus on providing basic daytime services ('Operations' in the 4 HOPE Pillars below) for those who are homeless and housing insecure because it allowed for the development of mutual trust and a supportive network between clients and staff and volunteers and supporters. 'Poverty Mitigation' evolved from the assumption that housing and day services alone would not get to the root of the problem Way Station clients face: poverty, often multi-generational, and the many challenges and barriers that come with it. Finally, the 'Economic Stabilization' pillar focuses direct financial support through a stabilization fund, to cover costs that can either lead to instability or help move clients out of unstable situations.

“We’re not just aspirational. We have a practical approach to challenging the status quo.”

Way Station New Hampshire Four Programmatic Pillars

Provide safe, welcoming, non-judgmental space and supportive services for the homeless & housing insecure of Mount Washington Valley



H

Housing

Actively working to open the county's first emergency housing, offering overnight/24 hrs short term housing and open-ended stays tied to client goals with case management/progress.

O

Operations

Operating a day resource center offering mail service, toiletries, laundry cards, phone cards, emergency food, clothing and supplies, a shower facility, a phone number 'hot line', and weekly phone check ins.

P

Poverty mitigation

Providing clients the structure to become their own leader and inspiration to move out of poverty, including authentic involvement of community members in the individuals' support system.

E

Economic stabilization

Funding to cover clients' short term emergency costs that cannot be effectively met by other support systems and that create or contribute to instability in individual and family living conditions (e.g. car repair to maintain employment).



Planning Process

With the generous support of a grant from New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the Way Station board contracted the services of a consultant to conduct strategic planning. The board of directors comprised the 'Core Team' for planning, and chose to focus on this question to guide the planning work:

“How do we add new layers of champions, leaders, and services to achieve Way Station’s mission?”

The discovery phase included 22 interviews and one group dialog session, conducted in summer and fall of 2021. Input was collected from 5 clients, 1 staff member, 6+ volunteers, several donors, and at least 20 representatives of related service providers. The interviews were scripted with 10 questions, and were mostly conducted by consultant Janet Wilkinson. The goals with these interviews were: 1) to search for, learn about, and highlight the best of what is currently being practiced at Way Station and 2) to identify aspirations, dreams, opportunities and trends that will help improve Way Station’s services or achieve its mission. All interview transcriptions were coded with themes that arose, and the resulting report provided guidance for the Core Team’s planning and design work that followed.

Interview themes that emerged regarding how Way Station currently operates:

1. **Way Station’s leadership, volunteers and staff are viewed as being passionate, effective, and committed to the mission.** A volunteer remarked that the dedication is contagious: *“I just want to share in the commitment and passion they have for this project.”* A client noted that *“My interactions with the people there outweigh the resources that are being given.”*
2. **Way Station distinguishes itself from most other service providers with its commitment to making person-to-person connections, treating everyone as a person and not objectifying them, and truly and actively listening and responding.** A staff member said *“We connect with people on a different level, a more sincere level, makes people happy to come in when they don’t feel like a burden and unwelcomed. We are kind to everybody.”* A client remembered: *“The first time I came here I was desolate, COVID was at its peak, I was homeless for the first time, didn’t have anywhere to go. They geared me with a tent, sleeping bag, and everything I needed. They were kind and courteous, and didn’t make it awkward.”*
3. **Way Station’s services and programs are easy to access and not bureaucratic.** A staff member stated: *“Not to say we can help everyone in every situation but we do our best to be able to.”* A volunteer said: *“When people are in dire need, to throw them a 15 page application is not exactly helpful.”*

4. **Way Station's services have been designed to, and currently are, meeting needs of clients and the community.** A staff member said *"For me it's the relief on someone's face when we are able to help them. A lot are in crisis but some are just looking for breathing room in their life - a phone card, help with the week's rent. That look on their face is everything."* A client stated simply: *"I feel like [Way Station's services] are tailored to me, the individual, and my needs."* Many interviewees simply value Way Station's existence: *"I value the fact that it exists. This was something we didn't have. Our area barely acknowledged homelessness 'til 3 years ago. Prior to that, our resort town didn't believe this was a thing. So they have been a great resource for all the folks who have needed this for so long. That is invaluable."*

Interview themes regarding hopes and opportunities for the future included:

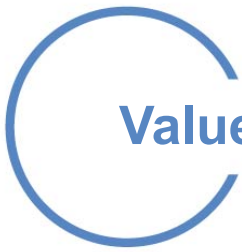
1. **Increase capacity to meet ongoing needs of clients and the community.** Interviewees imagined many ways to do so, from adding case management services to offering supportive housing to expanding day resource center hours to adding another day resource center location.
2. **Work toward breaking the overall cycles of poverty.** A service partner said *"Just giving someone food is not helping them out of their situation. We're putting our fingers in the holes in the dam and that water keeps getting higher and higher and spilling over. We need to break that cycle and help people become self sufficient."* Another partner said *"We're putting band-aids on problems that are intergenerational at this point."*
3. **Continue to inspire and educate the community about their mission and clients.** A volunteer shared that *"[Way Station is a] community resource, serving a population that is not readily recognized by our residents. It's hidden. [Their work] brings to the forefront a really important area that is not being addressed or is being addressed insufficiently - they are both highlighting the issues and responding to the issues."* Another shared: *"What matters is the outreach, the recognition, the increased acknowledgment that we have homelessness and these people matter, they have needs that can be met, it's not a hopeless situation. There are things that can be done."*
4. **Offer case management and/or wrap around services:** A volunteer shared: *"I mentioned I was homeless as a young adult. I was a single dad at 22 in transitional housing. I was fortunate for that. Those [wrap around services] I credit a lot for who I am today...counseling, childcare, transportation were all available to me. Great to have transitional housing but without those services to be set up to leave and be successful, folks will be back in."*
5. **Commit to helping solve the broader housing crisis that exists locally and across the country.** A partner observed: *"The only thing that stinks is I don't know what folks would transition TO. Affordable housing we need desperately. You can put people in transitional [housing] all day long but then where do we put them from there?"* Several brought up the issue of short term rentals: *"I see the housing situation as way larger than Way Station, I look at my neighborhood and half the houses are Air BnB's, there aren't young families any more."*
6. **Guide the community beyond stigmas and preconceptions surrounding homelessness and housing insecurity.** A client said: *"If we had more sense of community, more friends and more allies there would be less drug addiction, less crisis with mental health instabilities or any number of things. Our sense of community is vital because we need to feel wanted, we need to feel important, we need to feel human. When you are poor and suddenly in a position where you have never been before it is the most scary thing ever."*

*To just know there is someone out there who can offer you a cup of coffee and say 'it's alright, this is what we have to do', that's...*everything*."*

7. **Act as a convener of service providers that effectively refers and connects clients.**

One client said: "Way Station is one of the pillars of this community towards reducing homelessness, bridging the gap between the poor and the not so poor. The gap is immense. It's not anyone's fault per say, we talk in different circles, walk in different circles, there's no path to get from one point to another, I think that is Way Station's role...it's a path." Another interviewee: "Way Station will be the clearing house to [lead the decrease in homelessness here]. Folks will be getting services they didn't know were out there. Our input has given them the hand up that they need."

8. **Demand structural and political change at municipal, state and even federal level for Way Station clients.** A partner observed: *"In order to see that happen, this is an issue everywhere, if I were to wake up down the road it wouldn't be something we or Way Station did that will solve [homelessness and housing insecurity]. So something Way Station can do is to get involved up the chain - working with reps, networking - a lot of it is systemic that needs to change top down."* Another partner stated: *"This is the only county [in NH] with no housing authority and with no shelter"*



Values Based Outcomes

The Core Team gathered for four half day retreat planning sessions in late '21/early '22 to evaluate discovery data and begin to develop the strategic plan. As part of the transition from the 'Discovery' to the 'Dream' phase of planning, the Core Team identified the root causes of Way Station's current success and then developed their vision of the root causes of future success. Four themes were identified and integrated with applicable organizational design elements, resulting in the following future-focused and values-centered outcomes statements:

🏠 Theme: Community Building

Way Station is nurturing interconnectivity of the greater community by building awareness of the Four Pillars:

- Creates opportunities to foster awareness that enables the community to embrace goals and values of the Way Station.
- Nurtures a culture that supports circles of belonging and connection while promoting individual self autonomy and sustainability.

🏠 Theme: Governance

The Way Station Board remains committed to the shared vision and values of the mission as expressed by the Four Pillars:

- The board meets its ethical, fiduciary, and legal obligations as outlined in the organization's bylaws. The board oversees areas of operations and services to ensure fidelity with mission, vision, and values.
- The board, while maintaining oversight, empowers program staff/management to run day to day operations in areas of focus.
- The board takes responsibility for providing structure that will continue to enable expansion to incorporate future growth areas.
- The board maintains a flexible response to emerging situations.

🏠 Theme: Fiscal Sustainability

Way Station is growing to fund the Four Pillars:

- Identifies, cultivates and sustains layers of financial support.

- Fosters alliances and partnerships (individual, organizational) that align with our vision, values, purposes.

🏠 Theme: Management Structure

Way Station is committed to a management structure that supports and serves the Four Pillars:

- Upholds human connection/creativity and builds confidence while meeting human needs.
- Maintains management structure that is clearly defined and non-hierarchical.



Strategic Goals and Objectives

🏠 Goal 1: Keystones

Add new layers of champions, leaders, and services to achieve Way Station's mission. Way Station's model for growth will prioritize shared, distributed leadership and deeply iterative processes. Several paid positions and non-board volunteer roles will be developed to take on management, programmatic and administrative needs that were previously managed by the board of directors.

- 1.1 Develop a model for growing and maintaining a viable organization
- 1.2 Secure funding for all organizational needs and plans
- 1.3 Public relations and communications planning
- 1.4 Build capacity including staff, consultants, volunteers

🏠 Goal 2: Housing

Open emergency housing with case management services, offering overnight/24 hrs short term housing and open-ended stays tied to client goals with case management/progress. Such a facility does not exist in all of Carroll County, an area of 993 square miles with a population of over 48,000 people. Temperatures fall below freezing 180 nights per year here, on average. The annual 'point in time' count has documented at least 90 homeless or housing insecure individuals locally in January for the last several years. After more than three years of day services, Way Station has established trusting relationships with both clients and local service providers to be able to deliver on this long unmet community need.

- 2.1 Determine business model
- 2.2 Secure funding
- 2.3 Identify property
- 2.4 Solidify operating structure
- 2.5 Include people with lived experience of homelessness/having lived in emergency or transitional housing in decision making

🏠 **Goal 3: Operations / Day Resource Center**

Continue to meet day to day needs of clients. Since 2019, Way Station has been operating a Day Center in a central location in North Conway village, providing support and basic services for those who are homeless and housing insecure, and coordinated support with other local and state service providers. The Day Center currently serves more than thirty individuals and families each week, and in the last quarter of 2021 had over 600 client contacts. The Day Center space is in a church's old rectory, which is in need of several renovations to ensure ADA compliance and general safety. The sole paid position at the Day Center, a part time client care coordinator, is funded by a one-time grant. All other staff are volunteers.

- 3.1 Stabilize/secure the client care coordinator position
- 3.2 Ensure the operations space is ADA compliant and meets needs of the program
- 3.3 Secure funding for ongoing day service operations
- 3.4 Develop client-informed, post-COVID vision of operations

🏠 **Goal 4: Poverty Mitigation / Circles**

Empower people to break the cycle of poverty. Way Station has enrolled as a chapter of Circles USA, with a goal of providing our clients the structure to become their own leader and inspiration to move out of poverty, including authentic involvement of community members in the individuals' support system. This new program area is guided by the knowledge that allyship and peer-to-peer support can provide innumerable positive outcomes for both clients and communities. Documented impacts of the Circles program for participants after 18 months in the program: 72% increase in earned income; 52% decrease in 'unemployed' status; 50% increase in 'full time employment' status; and those participants who struggled to name one emergency contact at the beginning of the program reliably report having three people they could call on for support after 18 months.

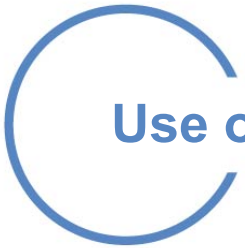
- 4.1 Develop a startup team to launch the Circles program
- 4.2 Secure a program manager
- 4.3 Foster the interplay between this pillar with case management, housing operations, day center operations

- 4.4 Remain flexible in considering adapted/alternative models as means toward breaking poverty cycles

🏠 **Goal 5: Economics / Stabilization Fund**

Transition Stabilization Fund from pilot to permanent phase. Way Station maintains a discretionary emergency fund for clients. Some public and private emergency funds are available to Way Station clients, so this fund is focused on filling the gaps that those funds will not cover. The fund is administered at the discretion of Way Station leadership, based on their knowledge of client needs and situations.

- 5.1 Secure a funding stream for the Fund
- 5.2 Measure and report on impact of the Fund



Use of the plan

This plan was developed for both internal and external use. It will be proactively distributed throughout the network and will be posted to Way Station's website and Candid profile.

An internal implementation plan was developed to go alongside this document, and serves as the primary tool for tracking the plan's outcomes and providing internal accountability.

Way Station thanks the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation for awarding a grant that underwrote the cost of this strategic planning process. Way Station is also grateful to the generous contributors and partners who brought the organization to this point, and whose support and collaboration will make the implementation of this plan possible.

Visit <https://www.waystationnh.org/> to learn more and get involved.