



Red River Valley  
**Habitat**  
for Humanity®

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# **2020-2025**

# **Strategic Plan**

Presented to the Board of Director  
June 16, 2020

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# WHO WE ARE

## Vision

A world where everyone has a decent place to live.

## Mission

Bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope.

## A Message from the Director

The Red River Valley Habitat for Humanity has been a silent partner in the Greater Grand Forks Community for over 30 years. In that time, we've built 32 houses and served 33 families. Habitat for Humanity is an organization dedicated to helping low-income community members build and purchase their own home. With stable, affordable housing comes greater economic and social confidence, better financial planning and wealth accrument, better educational opportunities for kids and parents, and a greater connection to the community. All people deserve a decent, stable, affordable home. In Grand Forks, ND and East Grand Forks, MN, the Red River Valley Habitat for Humanity is working to make that possible.

The Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 isn't just a guide to operations, its development allows the staff, board and stakeholders to take time to reflect on what affordable housing for Greater Grand Forks means for the community and residents. What values do we hold? What responsibilities do we have to the public? How can we ensure that our values and responsibilities are reflected in the work we do?

We must continue to develop our organization to meet the ever changing needs of the community. We must grow our organization to address the national affordability crisis. The Strategic Plan is how we will do that.

Thank you to all the volunteers and stakeholders who contributed valuable input in the planning process which helped with the development of the Strategic Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marisa Sorensen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marisa Sorensen  
Executive Director

## **Diversity and Inclusiveness**

Habitat for Humanity welcomes people from all walks of life to partner with us as volunteers, donors, employees and homebuyers. We celebrate and value our diversity, welcome differences and leverage the collective strengths of all people.

## **A Hand Up, Not A Hand Out**

Habitat for Humanity does not build homes for people, but with them as equal partners. Habitat homeowners build alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage.

## **The Power of Homeownership**

We believe in the power of homeownership to build strength, stability, independence and opportunity for families and communities.

## **Focus on Community**

Habitat for Humanity is committed not just to building homes, but to building community. We prioritize our construction efforts within focus neighborhoods to maximize our impact.

## **Volunteerism as a Social Change Strategy**

Habitat for Humanity volunteers don't just reduce cost—they are our ambassadors and partners in helping to change the world. We are committed to offering opportunities for people in our community to put their values into action.

## **Collaboration**

We strive to create strong, productive and mutually-beneficial partnerships with like-minded organizations in service of our common vision—a community where everyone has a decent place to live.

## **Transparency and Accountability**

We are committed to the efficient use of our financial, environmental, and human resources and to full and accurate reporting to our donors, volunteers and partners.

# GOALS & HOW WE ACHIEVE THEM

## Build A Sustainable Organization

A sustainable organization can continue to operate and fund its operations long term to achieve its mission and goals. Listed below are strategies for the Red River Valley affiliate to build a sustainable organization.

### Fund the Mission

- Increase donor retention
  - Improve donor tracking and thank you's. Develop business benefit plan for corporate donors.
- Increase average gift size
  - Continually demonstrate community progress to encourage increased support. Implement donor recognition program.
- Implement annual fundraiser
  - Partner with Hugo's or another community business to provide materials for a hardhat breakfast fundraiser. Find a donated or discounted space to rent, charge for the meal, provide testimony from 1-2 homeowners, 1-2 volunteers, a board member and donor. Encourage volunteer sign up, recurring donation sign up, host a raffle, include advocacy information
- Improve grant tracking
- Transform Volunteers to Donors
- Open ReStore
  - Partner with construction companies and hardware suppliers for donated items and materials, rent a space and host a grand opening event to draw attention. Locate downtown or a central construction area.

### Grow Skills and Leadership Capabilities

- Training
  - Attend all Habitat, professional, and nonprofit trainings available.
- Networking
  - Attend conferences and events, participate in membership organizations (NDANO, Chamber, Greater Grand Forks Young Professionals, Forx Builders).
- Board Members
  - Share Resources with one another, engage in learning opportunities presented by staff and other board members, contribute to decision making.
- Interns
  - Provide Guidance to and take time to learn from student interns (undergraduate or graduate).

### Operate with Excellence

- Homeowners and Applicants
  - Improved communication and training, keep in contact, continually offer resources, develop “Welcome Home Binder”. Provide information and resources to applicants.
- Volunteers
  - Improved training, recognition programs, and incentives. Increase retention and participation rate. Host Women’s Build and Veteran’s Build events. Appoint lead volunteers.
- Donors
- Stakeholders
- Staff
  - Hire essential staff to improve productivity and community reach, apply for operating funds to cover first year’s salary from CDBG, United Way, Engelstad Foundation, Otto Bremer Trust Foundation.

### **Community Impact**

A successful nonprofit organization will have a lasting and meaningful impact on the community it serves. The effects of its work don’t just benefit the direct service population, but the community as a whole.

### Sustainable Construction

- Serve at least one family per year
- Implement repair program and Aging in Place
  - Partner with USDA Rural Development Program for owner occupied repair funding assistance. This allows us to serve other communities in the Red River Valley.

### Leverage Shelter as a Catalyst for Community Transformation

- Advocacy
  - Take advantage of community feedback meetings and forums, write press releases, submit letters to the editor about affordable housing issues, increase newsletter frequency and include advocacy news.
- Connect families to community resources

### Grow Capacity to Serve Disaster Victims

- Flood Assistance Program
  - Research and identify a grant that will assist with program start up costs.

## Sector Impact

A nonprofit that is connected to its community is also connected to sector businesses, encouraging them to use a portion of their resources to support the mission.

### [Support Market Forces that Better Help to Accomplish Our Mission](#)

- Partner with Like-Minded Organizations
- Stay Up To Date on Relevant News

### [Support Policies that Allow Greater Access to Affordable Housing](#)

- Advocate for Affordable Housing Locally
- Stay Up To Date on Relevant News
- Contact Legislators When Needed
  - During important policy debates and developments, and social reforms.

## Societal Impact

Successful nonprofit organizations make a lasting impact on their community and the people they work with. They help all stakeholders grow as community members and persons.

### [Mobilize Volunteers as Advocates of the Mission](#)

- Recruit and Train Volunteers
- Educate Volunteers About the Need for Affordable Housing and How They Can Help
- Increase Community Support

### [Be the Leading Advocate for Affordable Housing](#)

- Participate in Housing Related Events and Activities
- Attend Community Meetings to be a Voice for Affordable Housing

# PROSPECTIVE TIMELINE

Area of Development	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	Beyond
<b>Staff</b>	Hire Social Media Intern	Hire Construction Manager	Hire family services specialist	Transition to Communications Intern		Hire Fundraising Specialist
<b>Fundraising</b>	Update and Improve Grant Tracking, Attract and Retain New Donors, Increase Average Gift Size	Implement Tax Incentive and Planned Giving Program, Donor Recognition Program	Implement Annual Fundraiser	ReStore Planning	Open ReStore	Host Habitat MN Habitat 500 Fundraiser
<b>Construction</b>	One New Build Per Year		Start Repair Program	Launch Aging in Place Program	2-3 New Builds Per Year, Flood Assistance Program	
<b>Advocacy</b>	Host New Mayor at 2021 Build Site, Submit Press Releases for Each Event	Transition to Monthly Newsletters, Include Important Policy Info in Each Newsletter, Write Letters to the Editor at the Grand Forks Herald	Implement Annual Advocacy Event			



# CONCLUSION

The Red River Valley Habitat for Humanity has the opportunity to make great contributions to the Greater Grand Forks and Red River Valley communities. This plan is a roadmap to how best take advantage of those opportunities. As we look to our next five years of bringing people together to build homes, communities, and hope, we rely on our volunteers, homeowners, and the community to get us there.

