

2018 Results & Actions

"If it weren't for the Firehouse, I could have never recovered from the use of drugs, from homelessness—I had given up on life. The Firehouse gave me my life back. It gave me the support I needed to get my life back."

Jimmy
Current Firehouse Guest



5,505
PEOPLE SERVED

Number of people served by screening clinic: **180**

Percentage of persons who are disabled: **68%**

Percentage of guests who are Veterans: **11%**

Number of youth served: **280**

Number of yearly services at the emergency shelter: **194,695**



OF EVERY DONATED
DOLLAR

93%

GOES DIRECTLY
TO PROGRAMS
THAT EMPOWER
GUESTS
TO END THEIR
HOMELESSNESS



OVER

97,000

MEALS
SERVED



17,028

ITEMS OF CLOTHING
HANDLED OUT



215

FIREHOUSE SPONSORED
BEDS EVERY NIGHT



70%

MEN DISCHARGING FROM
FIREHOUSE SPONSORED
HOUSING MOVE TO
PERMANENT HOUSING

\$3,469

AVG COST FOR FIREHOUSE TO HOUSE A
GUEST IN A SHARED APARTMENT PER YEAR

(This is the **LOWEST** of ANY HUD funded
agency in Birmingham by thousands of dollars.)

Highest Contributing Donors

Lillian Jean Salmon
St. Luke's Episcopal
Canterbury UMC
Trinity UMC
Ken & Violet Adams

Church of the Highlands
Bradley, LLC
Danny & Sally Rodgers
Burton Family Foundation
Virginia Hoff

Without you, we would not be able to touch the lives of Birmingham's most vulnerable population. Without you, we would not be able to lift men off the streets. Without you, we would not be able to create positive change in so many people's lives.

But with you, we can. We restore dignity, respect and hope. With you, we are a shining light in the darkness. The last hope for many.



With your help,
we can alleviate
homelessness
for many.

*You have an opportunity to
revitalize someone's life. To
invest in your community,
please contact:*

Anne Rygiel: 205.252.9576
awright@firehouseshelter.com



FIREHOUSE MINISTRIES



Continued Support is Needed for the Long Term Success of The Agency

The Firehouse is so much more than a building—it is the services within that make us special! A bigger building means increased operating costs, and we are reliant on the continuing generosity of our supporters to make sure the homeless have what they need in order to get back on the path to independent living. **Will you help us help the homeless?**

Who do we serve?

We serve Birmingham's chronically homeless men. These men are often faced with multiple challenges including mental health problems, chronic substance abuse, and issues arising from systemic poverty. These are the people who are the hardest to serve. The Firehouse is the "last house on the block" because we help the men that others cannot or will not serve.

What makes us different?

We serve the people who are forgotten and who don't make easy success stories. While other agencies are moving away from emergency shelters, Firehouse Ministries remains committed to offering a path and a helping hand from chronic street homelessness to a productive life.

- We are now the **ONLY** emergency men's shelter in the city center.
- We provide one of the largest, on-site, student-led medical screening clinics in the country through our partnership with UAB.
- We take people who need help the most- we have no length of stay cap at the emergency shelter. The new shelter is simply a "springboard" to success.
- We often move men from the emergency shelter right into one of our 165 housing beds.

Where will the new shelter be?

The site of the new shelter is 626 2nd Avenue North—this building will allow us to house 120 people every single night, effectively doubling our current capacity! The new shelter will include an expanded emergency dorm, late intake shelter for the working poor, youth shelter for 18-to-24-year-olds, respite shelter for the ill, and family shelter for emergency situations. It will have ample meeting space for community classes and workshops, a computer lab and GED classrooms, medical exam rooms, and a chapel. The new shelter will be energy efficient and ADA compliant for our guests with disabilities.

Why should I give?

For 35 years, The Firehouse Shelter has cared for the homeless in downtown Birmingham. People who are homeless cannot be shipped out to somewhere else, they cannot simply be arrested or ignored. A new Firehouse will offer chronically homeless men a safe place to begin a new life whilst working towards the long-term solution of providing housing for all of those without homes. The ongoing revitalization of Birmingham and the growth of the budding Innovation district needs a new Firehouse Shelter and we need you to join with many others and build it with your gifts.

Increasing your yearly gift (or making your initial pledge) is easy!

Please visit our website at www.firehouseshelter.com

to donate online or mail in your donation to:

P.O. Box 11722 | Birmingham, AL 35203

If you wish to make a multi-year pledge, or if you would like to discuss legacy giving, giving the gift of stock, or in kind gifts, please email us at

awright@firehouseshelter.com today for more information!



FIREHOUSE
MINISTRIES

Strategic Plan 2020-2022

Summary Report and Recommendations

November 2019



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I. Executive Summary

A. Background

Since its founding in 1983, Firehouse Ministries (Firehouse) has remained committed to its mission of “providing people who are homeless in the Birmingham Area a nurturing and caring environment and supportive services that break the cycle of homelessness and empower individuals to achieve their highest potential.” Today, Firehouse has expanded from its original focus on meeting immediate needs of the homeless including food, shelter, and clothing, to also assist clients in achieving housing stability by helping them successfully network through the continuum of social services. To support this work, Firehouse currently operates multiple facilities in various neighborhoods throughout Birmingham in addition to its emergency shelter downtown.

This year marks an important milestone for Firehouse and the Birmingham community, as Firehouse is nearing completion of a new facility in downtown Birmingham. Made possible through generous gifts toward an ambitious capital campaign, the new facility is designed to meet the complex and changing needs of the community and individuals Firehouse serves.

Leadership of Firehouse recognized a need and opportunity to develop a new strategic plan to support and align with this growth in service and facilities. Understanding that the new facility will serve as important *physical* infrastructure for Firehouse, leadership sought a strategic plan to serve as important *organizational* infrastructure for Firehouse. Additional goals for the strategic plan included articulating a clear vision and roadmap for the next three years, considering how to grow responsibly, and ensuring organizational sustainability and strength for the future.

B. Strategic Priorities and Goals

The strategic planning process resulted in the identification of four strategic priorities and goals that will help Firehouse achieve its mission, grow responsibly, and focus on sustainability.



A. Organizational Health: Ensure board, staff and volunteers of Firehouse are well-supported in their efforts to provide high-quality service that is responsive, engaged and client-focused



B. Services: Collaborate with the community to provide case management and supportive services that meet the unique needs of the people served by Firehouse and help individuals achieve their highest potential



C. Resources: Continue to be an excellent steward of resources and ensure Firehouse thrives with the financial, human and operational resources needed to achieve the mission



D: Communication and Outreach: Promote understanding among partners, volunteers and the community about the breadth and depth of services offered by Firehouse and the many ways they can partner with the organization to fulfill the mission

C. Planning Process

Firehouse engaged Clarus Consulting Group to facilitate its strategic planning process, which took place between June and November of 2019. Throughout the process, Clarus worked closely with a steering committee of ten members of the board, junior board, and staff who helped guide and inform the strategic planning process.

Stakeholder Engagement

The planning process was centered around a stakeholder engagement initiative that collected insights from thirty-five key stakeholders. The process engaged these stakeholders through eleven in-depth interviews and three focus groups. Stakeholder groups represented in the process included staff, board, volunteers, community supporters, and partners along the continuum of care. Following the stakeholder engagement initiative, Clarus analyzed the stakeholder feedback and presented a summary of findings to the steering committee at a feedback session held on September 12, 2019. This session also included identification of preliminary strategic priority areas.

Plan Development

Following the initial review of stakeholder feedback, the board and key staff participated in a full-day strategic planning session held on September 26, 2019. The strategic planning session included activities designed to build consensus around the future direction of Firehouse and resulted in the identification of the strategic priorities, goals, and objectives for the strategic plan. The steering committee met to review a draft strategic plan on November 8, 2019. Feedback from committee members was incorporated into the draft, and the final strategic plan is presented in this summary report and recommendations.

D. Key Observations

Across the strategic planning process, a set of key observations emerged that create important context for understanding Firehouse's strategic plan:

- **Core Strengths.** Firehouse has a number of core strengths to build on as it plans for the future. These include dedicated, hardworking, and compassionate staff and leadership; a remarkable level of care and service for its clients; a strong reputation in the community; and a collaborative and engaged network of partners, volunteers, and supporters.
- **Growth and Sustainability.** Firehouse is experiencing a significant period of growth and change. Stakeholders recognized that while this growth is an exciting opportunity for Firehouse, it also underscores the need to focus on internal and organizational priorities and sustainability. This is especially true for an organization with limited organizational capacity and a small staff.
- **Continuum of Care.** Stakeholders recognized that Firehouse provides critical services along the continuum of care for people who are homeless. At the same time, stakeholders recognized Firehouse cannot "be all things to all people." Stakeholders agreed that discerning how Firehouse can best care for people who are homeless will require an ongoing commitment to building and maintaining strong partnerships along the continuum of care while also maintaining and focusing on the core strengths and services of Firehouse.

E. About the Strategic Plan Report

The strategic plan for Firehouse is summarized on the grid on the following page. The grid is a high-level summary of the plan and can be used as both a communication and management tool for the organization. Following the grid, the report includes:

- An overview of the structure of the plan on page 6
- A narrative description of the strategic plan beginning on page 7
- Consultant recommendations for activities to help align the organization and its stakeholders around the plan, make a seamless transition from planning to implementation, and promote use of the plan as a management tool on page 15

The strategic plan and recommendations will help Firehouse continue to leverage current opportunities associated with growth in service and facilities while continuing to achieve its mission and focus on sustainability and strength for the future.

II. Structure of the Plan

The strategic plan for Firehouse includes five key components: mission, core values, strategic priorities, goals, and objectives. These components make up the structure of the plan and are described below.

A. Mission Statement

A mission statement clarifies an organization's purpose and why it exists. An organization's mission statement also serves as the *north star* for its strategic plan. In other words, each priority, goal, and objective in the plan should drive the organization toward being more effective and successful in accomplishing its mission. The mission of Firehouse is: *"to provide people who are homeless in the Birmingham Area a nurturing and caring environment and supportive services that break the cycle of homelessness and empower individuals to achieve their highest potential."*

B. Core Values

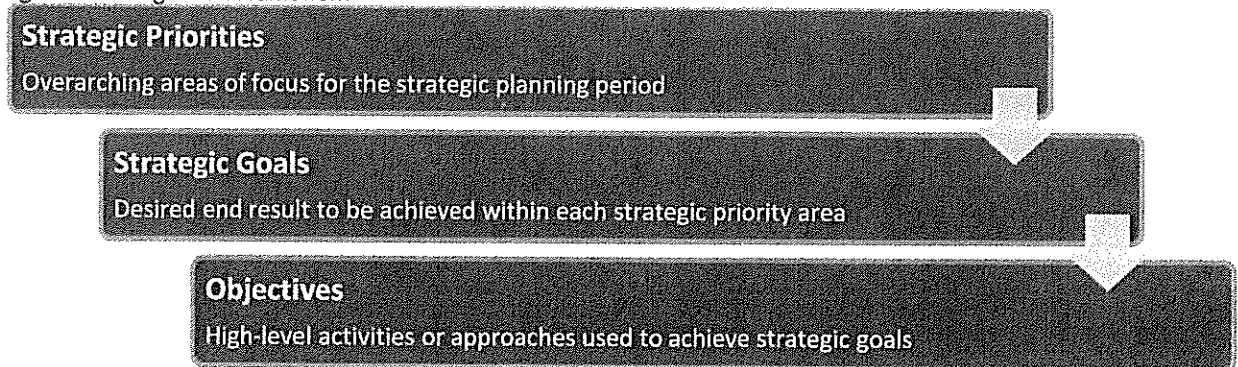
An organization's core values are the guiding principles that shape and inform all its work. Core values serve as a guide for behaviors, procedures, and actions. The core values of Firehouse include:

- Treating all guests with respect and dignity
- Providing accessible, safe, and clean facilities
- Nurturing and caring for all of our guests
- Empowering all guests to achieve their life goals
- A recognition that our ministries are part of a larger community
- Being a faith-based community that provides opportunities for spiritual growth

C. Strategic Priorities, Goals, and Objectives

The strategic plan includes four strategic priorities that will help Firehouse achieve its mission. Each priority includes a goal statement and set of key objectives to guide focus within that priority area. While each priority is distinct, there is overlap and commonality among the priorities, and each priority supports the others. Together, the four strategic priorities will help position Firehouse for continued growth and success. For the purposes of this plan, the following terms and definitions describe the framework of the strategic plan:

Figure 1 Strategic Plan Framework



III. Strategic Plan

The narrative in the pages that follow provide detail about each of the strategic priorities, goals, and objectives summarized in the strategic plan grid. The narrative description brings together feedback from the stakeholder engagement process with input from the board and staff at the strategic planning retreat, to provide important context for the strategic plan that will help support a seamless transition to plan implementation.

A. Organizational Health

Goal: Ensure board, staff and volunteers of Firehouse are well-supported in their efforts to provide high-quality service that is responsive, engaged and client-focused



Throughout the planning process, stakeholders identified Firehouse staff, board, junior board and volunteers as the core strengths of the organization. At the same time, stakeholders identified an opportunity to focus on and invest in the staff, board, junior board, and volunteers of Firehouse in order to ensure sustainability for the future. The Organizational Health priority focuses on ensuring the Firehouse continues to have the internal capacity through its staff, board, junior board, and volunteers to be successful in achieving its mission.

Firehouse Staff

Stakeholders described the staff and leadership of Firehouse as dedicated, passionate, and hardworking. They praised the staff's commitment to meeting clients where they are and engaging with clients in genuinely caring and respectful ways. Stakeholders also recognized that the staff is critical to ensuring Firehouse runs smoothly and safely, which they recognized as a particular strength given the nature of the mission of Firehouse. One stakeholder even noted how the staff "creates miracles" at Firehouse every day.

With these strengths as a foundation, stakeholders also recognized that one of the greatest challenges for Firehouse is the size and capacity of its staff. They reported the small staff size can result in high workloads, turnover, a stressful environment, and can also result in individuals having to multi-task simply to cover core functions of the organization. As a result, stakeholders recognized one of the greatest opportunities for Firehouse is not only to increase staff size (see Resources priority) but also focus on attracting, retaining, developing, and supporting staff. Some ideas for addressing this included a focus on developing a healthy organizational culture and strategies such as evaluation of compensation and providing professional and team development opportunities.

Firehouse Board and Junior Board

Stakeholders highlighted that an effective, efficient, and engaged board of directors is critical to an organization's overall success and sustainability. In addition, stakeholders recognized that Firehouse has a unique board structure consisting of general members as well as members representing Partner Congregations. With this in mind, a number of stakeholders recognized an opportunity to evaluate the current board and governance structure to ensure both the size and composition allow the board to leverage individuals' strengths and be responsive to organizational needs and priorities. Internal stakeholders also identified a need for the board of directors to focus on best practices including self-assessment processes, regular review of bylaws, and ensuring a clear articulation and understanding

of financial commitments of individual board members. In addition to governance, stakeholders focused on a need to ensure both the board and junior board have strong engagement from members and the resources they need to be effective.

Firehouse Volunteers

Throughout the stakeholder engagement process, stakeholders recognized the vital role Firehouse volunteers play in the organization. On a daily basis, volunteers serve meals, help maintain and organize the shelter, engage with clients and guests, and serve in many other ways critical to the Firehouse mission. During the planning process, stakeholders, including volunteers themselves, identified opportunities to make the volunteer experience and service even more meaningful to Firehouse and to volunteers. A key focus of this feedback was an opportunity to enhance the volunteer experience through strong volunteer management, coordination, training, communication, and appreciation.

Organizational Health Objectives

Aligning the organization’s strengths with opportunities for Organizational Health resulted in the identification of four objectives.

Organizational Health	
A1. Firehouse Staff	Create and sustain a culture that attracts, retains, develops and supports staff
A2. Governance Structure	Evaluate the current governance structure to ensure optimum effectiveness and alignment of expertise and organizational needs
A3. Board Engagement	Ensure the governing and junior boards are engaged, effective, well-supported and utilizing best practices
A4. Volunteer Experience	In collaboration with Partner Congregations, develop strategies to enhance the volunteer experience

B. Services

Goal: Collaborate with the community to provide case management and supportive services that meet the unique needs of the people served by Firehouse and help individuals achieve their highest potential



The strategic planning process included a strong focus on engagement of partner organizations and agencies along the continuum of care for people who are homeless in the Birmingham area. This resulted in dynamic and informative conversations that highlighted the importance of strong case management and supportive services offered by both Firehouse and partner organizations in the community. The Services priority focuses on ensuring individuals who are homeless in the Birmingham area are well-served by both Firehouse and its partners in the community.

Services Provided by Firehouse

Throughout the strategic planning process, a wide range of ideas emerged for services needed in the community that Firehouse could consider providing. Examples included education, job and skills training, and transportation. While opportunities for service expansion are great, stakeholders also recognized that Firehouse cannot “be all things to all people” and must maintain focus and alignment with its capacity and expertise for the direct services it provides.

In order to explore this dynamic further, the strategic planning retreat included an important conversation about what makes Firehouse unique and how that might inform how Firehouse ensures its services are aligned to its mission and strengths. Board and staff agreed a distinguishing factor is that Firehouse includes among those it serves individuals with the highest need and fewest resources. Board and staff also agreed that that one of the greatest strengths of the organization historically is that it does not turn anyone away and works to meet the unique needs of each and every person who walks through the door. The board and staff agreed about the importance of holding these core characteristics as foundational to the work of Firehouse, serving as a sort of “screen” when considering any expansion of services and helping to ensure alignment of services with the Firehouse mission.

In addition to focusing on alignment and approach to services, board and staff recognized an opportunity to increase focus on assessment and measurement for its services. The board and staff recognized an opportunity to set measurable goals and engage in regular assessment of services to ensure the organization is effective and efficient, reporting outcomes in a clear and concise way, and able to share and communicate the full impact of its service in a variety of ways.

Services Provided in Collaboration with the Community

Stakeholders identified an opportunity for Firehouse to continue to build and strengthen partnerships across the community that complement the services provided by Firehouse. Stakeholders agreed this would support strong stewardship of Firehouse resources by focusing on delivering a set of core services aligned with Firehouse strengths and expertise and preventing duplication of services among providers in the community. They also agreed this would require strong communication and coordination with providers along the continuum. Some established and emerging opportunities for

partnership along the continuum identified during the planning process included education, job readiness and training, transportation, and housing.

Services Objectives

Aligning the organization’s strengths with opportunities in Services resulted in the identification of four objectives.

Services	
B1. Service Alignment	Ensure services are aligned to the Firehouse mission and serve those with the highest need and fewest resources
B2. Inclusive Approach	Foster a flexible and inclusive approach within the core services of Firehouse, recognizing that success is different for each client
B3. Assessment	Demonstrate the value and impact of services through regular assessment of measurable goals
B4. Partnerships	Build and strengthen partnerships that complement the services provided by Firehouse to prevent duplication of services and leverage expertise across the continuum of service providers in the community

C. Resources

Goal: Continue to be an excellent steward of resources and ensure Firehouse thrives with the financial, human and operational resources needed to achieve the mission



One of the greatest strengths of Firehouse named by stakeholders is the organization's history of strong and responsible financial stewardship. The Resources priority extends the focus of stewardship beyond financial to also include human and operational resources.

Fund Development

Throughout the planning process, stakeholders acknowledged that Firehouse has a history of strong financial stewardship with an incredibly high percentage of its budget and resources going directly to its mission and service. Stakeholders praised Firehouse for consistently achieving remarkable outcomes with limited resources and funding. At the same time, stakeholders articulated a vision for Firehouse that included long-term financial health and stability, and a number of stakeholders identified funding and finance as one of the organization's greatest challenges. Stakeholders identified factors contributing to this challenge including a general need for more financial resources, need for more financial resources to maintain a new and larger facility, and lack of a healthy mix of funding resources with potential overreliance on grants.

In order to build on the organization's strengths and address challenges, stakeholders identified an opportunity for development of a fund development plan and to increase capacity for development both in terms of a staff capacity and expertise and stronger engagement from the board in support of fundraising. In addition to these priorities, several stakeholders identified an opportunity for Firehouse to explore developing innovative revenue streams beneficial to both the organization and the people it serves. Stakeholders identified a number of models in the region and across the country for social entrepreneurship and income-generating programs that have been successful in advancing client service and fund development opportunities through innovation and mission-centered work.

Facilities

Throughout the stakeholder engagement process, stakeholders identified the new facility as one of the organization's greatest strengths. At the same time, stakeholders recognized that maintenance and upkeep of this facility will require increased resources and attention. In addition to the new main facility, however, stakeholders also noted that Firehouse owns and/or uses a number of other facilities across the community. In light of this, stakeholders identified an opportunity for a comprehensive evaluation to ensure all facilities are aligned and supporting the Firehouse mission and meet standards of quality, safety, and efficiency.

Staff Support and Capacity

Throughout the strategic planning process, staff was highlighted as a core strength of Firehouse. At the same time, stakeholders named staff size and capacity as one of the organization's greatest challenges. While the Organizational Health priority focuses on an organizational culture that attracts, retains, supports, and develops staff, the Resources priority focuses on ensuring the organization has an optimal staff size as well as adequate levels of compensation to attract and retain staff. Some

ideas about areas of the organization that could benefit from increased staff included case management, volunteer management and coordination, development, and communication and outreach.

Resources Objectives

Aligning the organization’s strengths with opportunities in Resources resulted in the identification of four objectives.

Resources	
C1. Fund Development	Develop a fund development plan to ensure the long-term financial health of Firehouse, including exploration of developing innovative revenue streams beneficial to both the organization and its clients
C2. Staff Support & Capacity	Ensure the level of staffing and compensation support delivery of quality services and provide sufficient organizational capacity
C3. Facilities	Ensure all facilities and physical spaces support the Firehouse mission and meet its standards of quality, safety and efficiency
C4. Accountability & Integrity	Maintain a culture of accountability and financial integrity

D. Communication and Outreach

Goal: Promote understanding among partners, volunteers and the community about the breadth and depth of services offered by Firehouse and the many ways they can partner with the organization to fulfill the mission



The stakeholder engagement process revealed that partners, volunteers, and the community have an extremely positive perception of the mission and work of Firehouse. At the same time, the process revealed a gap in understanding of the depth and breadth of services and impact that Firehouse provides in the community. The Communication and Outreach priority responds to an opportunity to close this gap by strengthening internal and external communication and outreach for Firehouse.

Firehouse Story

The strategic planning process explored the topic of communication and messaging for Firehouse. While stakeholders agreed Firehouse has a strong reputation and clear identity in the community, they largely reported this identity to be as an emergency shelter for people who are homeless. While this is a core component of the Firehouse mission, Firehouse provides services well beyond the emergency shelter. Stakeholders identified opportunities to clarify and expand understanding of Firehouse including the full depth and breadth of its services and its mission to end homelessness.

In addition to helping the community understand the range of services that Firehouse provides, stakeholders also identified an opportunity to help the community understand the complexity of homelessness as it relates to systemic issues such as poverty, education, housing, criminal justice, and transportation, as well as its connection to mental health and substance use disorders.

Overall, stakeholders focused on continuing to strengthen the ways in which Firehouse shares “the Firehouse story.” Some questions asked by stakeholders that could guide this work included:

- How does Firehouse address community needs?
- How does Firehouse communicate outcomes?
- How can the work of Firehouse be related to people at a personal level?
- How is Firehouse using best practices and being innovative?
- What is the vision and strategy of Firehouse?
- How does the work of Firehouse fit into the vision for a thriving Birmingham?

Stakeholders agreed that sharing the Firehouse story in compelling ways must include a range of strategies including but not limited to social media, website, and newsletters. They also agreed it must include a range of approaches to sharing outcomes and success such as quantitative and qualitative or story-based strategies.

Partners and Volunteers

In addition to sharing the Firehouse story broadly, stakeholders identified an opportunity to strengthen communication with partners, volunteers, donors, and supporters. Ideas shared for improved communication included increasing awareness about the scope and services provided by Firehouse,

resources available through Firehouse, and ways to engage and support Firehouse that are both financial and volunteer or service oriented.

Internal Communication

Internal stakeholders also identified an opportunity to strengthen internal communication. Most often, this feedback focused generally on stronger communication and awareness of activities between and among staff, board, and junior board. However, an example of a specific area of opportunity for improved communication and understanding was the idea that while each individual staff member understands his or her role well, the roles of all team members are not well understood by everyone. Strengthened communication and understanding of roles can support an overall culture of teamwork and support across the organization.

Communication and Outreach Objectives

Aligning the organization’s strengths with opportunities in Communication and Outreach resulted in the identification of three objectives.

Communication and Outreach	
D1. Firehouse Story	Share the story of Firehouse to increase awareness of the organization’s unique mission
D2. Partners & Volunteers	Strengthen communication and connection with partners so volunteers understand the power of their individual and collective impact
D3. Internal Communication	Enhance internal communication between and among the Board, Junior Board and staff

IV. Consultant Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on Clarus' observations throughout the strategic planning process. They are presented for consideration by leadership of Firehouse during rollout and implementation of the strategic plan.

A. Strategic Plan Communication and Rollout

Rollout of the strategic plan should continue to demonstrate the model for collaboration and communication established during the strategic planning process. Following communication of the plan to internal stakeholders including Firehouse board and staff, Firehouse leadership should next turn to additional stakeholders who participated in interviews and focus groups to share the plan intentionally. Beyond these efforts, Firehouse could consider how to best communicate the plan through formats including print, online, and/or opportunities associated with the new building.

B. Strategic Plan Implementation Process

Because of the thoughtful approach to strategic planning by Firehouse, many internal and external stakeholders are ready and excited to learn the results of the planning process. While this readiness is a best-case scenario, it must be calibrated with the recognition that sustainable change requires time, resources, and a continued focus on alignment of many parties. The task for Firehouse going forward will be to develop action steps and timelines for priority areas and objectives identified in the plan. The strategic planning process captured a number of preliminary action steps which are captured in an attachment to this report.

A formal implementation structure should be developed that includes infrastructure, processes, and tools to ensure manageable and successful achievement of priorities. A recommended implementation methodology is to establish a dedicated working group for each strategic priority, comprised of both board and staff, and with a designated group champion. Once working groups are established, their first charge should be to review and prioritize the objectives identified during the planning retreat and captured in the strategic plan grid and report. After reviewing the key objectives, the working group should define the action steps required to accomplish each objective, building on preliminary action steps already developed. Each action step should also include individuals and groups responsible for implementation, resources required for implementation, timelines for completion, and measures for benchmarking progress.

C. Strategic Plan as a Management Tool

In addition to serving as a communication tool, the strategic plan can serve as a management tool for board and staff of Firehouse. For example, priorities in the strategic plan can become agenda items for board and staff meetings and progress toward implementation can be shared through new or existing internal communication channels. In addition, leadership should make a commitment to provide key stakeholders with an annual update on progress toward plan implementation. To facilitate this, leadership can review the plan annually to make note of progress and ensure the plan remains responsive to priorities and resources available. This will ensure the plan remains top of mind and relevant to all of the organization's stakeholders.

D. Importance of Organizational Health and Capacity

Firehouse's strategic plan includes four priorities and fifteen objectives. While some objectives will require time and focus, others will require financial investment. Because all of this work will not be accomplished in Year One, Firehouse will need to set realistic expectations and timelines for plan implementation. This can occur through prioritization and transparency around resource availability and management.

A challenge for many organizations engaged in strategic planning is to be responsive to organizational needs yet realistic about resource constraints. Firehouse in particular must address the need to increase staff capacity in order to implement its strategic plan. The staff at it exists today is already stretched thin with current responsibilities, and taking on additional strategic goals and objectives will require additional staff capacity and/or resources.

In addition, successful implementation of the strategic plan will require strong leadership and capacity from the board of directors. Firehouse should give strong consideration early in the implementation process to ensuring the organization's governance structure, roles, and responsibilities are clear and effective. Leadership of the board and staff should contemplate what, if any, additional supports and resources are needed to ensure adequate capacity and engagement are in place to lead the organization into the next exciting chapter of its growth and success.

E. Mission Statement

The steering committee recommended a few relatively minor but powerful wording updates to the mission statement to make it more responsive to the evolving work of Firehouse and to community and funding guidelines and resources. The proposed revised mission statement is reflected on the Firehouse Strategic Plan grid and throughout this summary report; however, careful attention should be given to reviewing and formally approving the new mission statement at an upcoming Firehouse board meeting in order for the change to be officially adopted. It may also be necessary to amend the bylaws and Articles of Incorporation to reflect the updated mission statement.

V. Attachments

A. Steering Committee Members

The following individuals served on the steering committee for the strategic planning process. These individuals gave generously of their time and expertise to guide and inform the development of the strategic plan.

Board of Directors

1. Nick D'Alessandro, Barfield, Murphy, Shank & Smith
2. Rick Kilgore, UAB
3. Don Lupo, City of Birmingham
4. Ricky Miskelley, Blue Dawg
5. Luke Newell, Dunn Building Company
6. Patti Reid, Renasant Bank
7. Danny Rodgers, Dunn Construction

Junior Board


8. Bo Welden, Dunn Construction

Firehouse Staff

9. Anne Wright Rygiel - Executive Director
10. Val Green - Assistant Director

B. Preliminary Action Steps

Throughout the plan development process, the board and staff identified a number of items that could serve as action steps for strategic plan implementation. While all of the action steps presented below will need to be reviewed, revised, strengthened, and added to, they provide a strong foundation for the implementation process.

Strategic Priority: Organizational Health

GOAL
<i>Ensure board, staff and volunteers of Firehouse are well-supported in their efforts to provide high-quality service that is responsive, engaged and client-focused</i>
OBJECTIVES & PRELIMINARY ACTION STEPS
<p>A1: Create and sustain a culture that attracts, retains, develops and supports staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> A1a: Create opportunities for professional development, training and team development<input type="checkbox"/> A1b: Develop a leadership pipeline for current and future staff to support sustainability of the organization<input type="checkbox"/> A1c: Ensure staff roles and responsibilities are clear<input type="checkbox"/> A1d: Ensure organizational policies and procedures are clear<input type="checkbox"/> A1e: Assess employee benefits <p>A2: Evaluate the current governance structure to ensure optimum effectiveness and alignment of expertise and organizational needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> A2a: Assess current organizational needs and governance structure; consider feasibility of reducing the size of the governing board and developing an Advisory Board for Partner Congregations<input type="checkbox"/> A2b: Clearly define and articulate the role and responsibilities of the governing Board, Junior Board, Partner Congregations, volunteers and staff <p>A3: Ensure the governing and junior boards are engaged, effective, well-supported and utilizing best practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> A3a: Annually conduct a board self-assessment to gauge Board engagement and effectiveness and identify interests and strengths of individual board members<input type="checkbox"/> A3b: Develop strategies to ensure the board reflects the diversity of the community<input type="checkbox"/> A3c: Evaluate the current junior board structure and ensure it is aligned with its intended purpose <p>A4: In collaboration with Partner Congregations, develop strategies to enhance the volunteer experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> A4a: Develop formalized feedback loops with volunteers and Partner Congregations<input type="checkbox"/> A4b: In partnership with Partner Congregations, strengthen volunteer training and orientation<input type="checkbox"/> A4c: Consider developing a Volunteer Coordinator position; seek funding from Partner Congregations to endow the position

Strategic Priority: Services



GOAL

Collaborate with the community to provide case management and supportive services that meet the unique needs of the people served by Firehouse and help individuals achieve their highest potential.

OBJECTIVES & PRELIMINARY ACTION STEPS

B1: Ensure services are aligned to the Firehouse mission and serve those with the highest need and fewest resources

- B1a: Regularly conduct client assessments and track and adjust services accordingly

B2: Foster a flexible and inclusive approach within the core services of Firehouse, recognizing that success is different for each client

- B2a: TBD

B3: Demonstrate the value and impact of services through regular assessment of measurable goals

- B3a: Develop measurable goals; track and adjust services as needed to ensure effectiveness

B4: Build and strengthen partnerships that complement the services provided by Firehouse to prevent duplication of services and leverage expertise across the continuum of service providers in the community

- B4a: Conduct a Partnership Inventory to identify gaps and ensure alignment to quality services

Strategic Priority: Resources



GOAL

Continue to be an excellent steward of resources and ensure Firehouse thrives with the financial, human and operational resources needed to achieve the mission

OBJECTIVES & PRELIMINARY ACTION STEPS

C1: Develop a fund development plan to ensure the long-term financial health of Firehouse including exploration of developing innovative revenue streams beneficial to both the organization and clients

- C1a: Gauge readiness for development of an Endowment Fund
- C1b: Ensure funding sources are diversified; strengthen support from faith-based community and planned giving
- C1c: Consider hiring a Development Director
- C1d: Develop a long-term fund development plan
- C1e: Partner with local colleges and universities to conduct best practice research on enterprise ideas

C2: Ensure the level of staffing and compensation support delivery of quality services and provide sufficient organizational capacity

- C2a: Conduct gap analysis to identify and prioritize staffing needs, giving consideration to adding staff in the areas of development, communication and outreach, volunteer coordination and case management

C3: Ensure all facilities and physical spaces support the Firehouse mission and meet its standards of quality, safety and efficiency

- C3a: Develop and implement a comprehensive Facilities Maintenance plan

C4: Maintain a culture of accountability and financial integrity

- C4a: Improve board understanding of organizational funding streams and associated requirements especially for services funded through federal grants

