



Family Promise[®] of Greater Indianapolis

Strategic Plan | FY2017-2019

Mission Statement

We are a partnership of congregations and community organizations responding to the crisis of children and their families who are homeless. We work to eliminate homelessness in Greater Indianapolis.

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MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Mission (to be revisited in 2017)

We are a partnership of congregations and community organizations responding to the crisis of children and their families who are homeless. We work to eliminate homelessness in Greater Indianapolis.

Vision (to be revisited in 2017)

- We will collaborate and partner with other organizations to help create a community where homelessness is rare, short lived and recoverable.
- We will listen to our guests and seek ways to address their immediate and long term needs.
- We will work toward the day that all Hoosier families who are homeless are sheltered on the day they become homeless because homelessness is not an option for any family or individual.
- We will educate the broader community on the reality, causes and prevention of homelessness.
- We will work to eliminate all obstacles to housing including those beyond the control of individuals.

Values (newly established in 2016)

Interfaith cooperation: While our beliefs vary, our motivation for what we do is rooted in spiritual faith and a profound call to service. This allows us bridge our differences for the sake of helping others without proselytization.

Keeping families together: We believe families should stay together—not be separated—during the most difficult times in their lives...*no matter the makeup of a family.*

Changing lives: While we will provide assistance to meet emergency needs, it is more important that we provide access to skill development, resources, and networks to create lasting stability.

Hospitality: We try to generously give of ourselves in addition to our resources. We believe a warm welcome and compassionate service are keys to replacing despair with dignity.

Good stewardship: We serve almost twice as many families per dollar invested as traditional shelters because we have 1,000+ unpaid volunteers utilizing a network of in-kind facilities. Because children and their families are in crisis, every dollar needs to count.

Raising awareness: We believe the reason for homelessness is poverty, and part of the cause is systemic. Said more simply, opportunities are not equal. It is not enough to help a family without asking ourselves and neighbors why there is a need in the first place.

INTRODUCTION

Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis—formerly known as Indianapolis Interfaith Hospitality Network—is a partnership of congregations and community organizations responding to the crisis of children and their families who are homeless. Since 1994, the organization has worked to eliminate homelessness in Greater Indianapolis. The organization began with a single program—the Interfaith Hospitality Network—but now has expanded to include AfterCare and a homelessness awareness initiative.

Facing opportunities and challenges, the Board of Directors in July 2016 sought to develop an updated strategic plan to set achievable and measurable goals through which the organization and its programs can grow. Board members and staff conducted a survey and follow up interviews with numerous stakeholder groups including guests of the Interfaith Hospitality Network shelter, former guests, staff, volunteers, congregational coordinators, Family Promise (FP) national staff, other FP affiliate staff, and other service provider staff in Central Indiana. Over 100 surveys were collected and over 40 interviews held.

What follows is the result of the surveys, the dialogues, and a board retreat to review data and establish organizational priorities. The goals follow the categories of the challenges and opportunities identified, and a board level committee is established to oversee and execute each section: resource development, congregational and stakeholder relationships, program and services, and communications and technology. This plan seeks to establish the criteria for successful growth while coordinating the timing of their implementation. Different stakeholders consisting of existing staff, new staff, and board-level committees are responsible for each objective. This plan can be considered a living document as it is revisited every quarter at board meetings and in staff performance evaluations, with goal or timeline changes being proposed annually. It includes an organizational analysis, a summary of the goals, and a description of objectives for each goal with dates for completion. The plan covers the fiscal years 2017 to 2019, which all start on January 1. A more detailed plan with specific tasks to achieve each objective is available upon request (see end note).

This plan represents the best efforts of the Board of Directors of Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis, and was made without paid consultants but through the effort of volunteers and the executive director.

SUMMARY ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS

Resource Development

Recently the operating budget of Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis (FPGI) has been approximately \$300,000/year. A healthy nonprofit organization has six months to a year in cash reserves, which would be at least \$150,000 for FPGI. At the end of FY2016, it is projected that FPGI will have approximately \$100,000 in unrestricted cash reserves. As the operating budget potentially increases, so would the reserves.

Of the \$300,000 in revenue received each year, the principal sources are congregation support (approximately \$100,000), special events (\$80,000), individual donations (\$60,000), public contracts (\$30,000), and private grants (\$30,000). Congregation support is at long-term risk given the trend of decreasing membership in religious congregations (short-term is stable), but an opportunity exists to recruit new congregations—even non-traditional congregations like schools and hospitals—to fill gaps in service delivery. Special events have great tradition and stability, but only recently began to benefit from significant outreach to corporate sponsors—a large key source of revenue in special events best practices. Individual donations indicate a strong base of support, especially amongst the board and key volunteers in the organization. However, there is great potential for stability from an incentivized recurring donation club, a major gifts recognition plan, and a planned giving mechanism for legacy gifts like naming rights. Most important, though, is an effort to increase the annual appeal donor base given of the 2,000 volunteers who serve the organization each year, less than half receive the annual direct mail appeal. Public support is doubtful to expand without a program delivery change to family homelessness prevention or rapid rehousing. Last, grants are currently relied on for operating support, when many foundations express a desire to fund new or expansion initiatives.

From this analysis, large program expansions are best avoided until after a more stable and consistent revenue stream is established to cover the entire operating budget. It will be very important for the long-term sustainability of the organization to develop the individual donor base and congregational support to shift reliance off of private grants. Private grants then can be utilized to fund manageable expansions as necessary. Every effort needs to be made to gradually increase the cash reserves of the organization as well so that within three years there is at least six months of the operating budget available. Expenses cannot be cut much at all to speed this up given the organization already operates on a shoestring budget, leveraging volunteers and in-kind gifts at all times possible.

Congregational & Stakeholder Relationships

Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis (FPGI) has existed thanks to the generosity of numerous sponsoring and hosting religious congregations. Currently, fifty congregations are in relationship with the organization as sponsors, while 35 of those congregations host families experiencing homelessness. These congregations are principally located on the north side of Indianapolis and in Hamilton County, with only a handful of exceptions. They represent numerous Christian denominations and independent

churches, along with two Jewish temples and one Unitarian house of worship. The distance between the Day Center and a congregation ranges between a 10-minute drive and sometimes a 60-minute drive.

Though congregation retention has not been a challenge, there has been little formal recognition of congregations or their volunteers for how important their contributions are to the success of the families in our programs. Furthermore, staff have observed varying knowledge and implementation of policies by congregations, instances of which could affect everything from child safety to volunteer out-of-pocket expense. Both of these areas—recognition and training—are priorities before intense recruitment begins. The annual meeting provides a great vehicle for recognition, and thanks to free and accessible digital media like YouTube, online training tutorials can easily and affordably be developed.

The current congregation hosting schedule consists of two rotations in operation, each hosting four families at a time. A rotation is a combination of congregations that cover every night for up to four families, 52 weeks a year. The second rotation has to shut down for 17 weeks of the year because there are not enough congregations recruited to host. Given the Day Center still receives over ten calls per day from families that it cannot accommodate, recruiting new congregations to fill the second rotation is a key priority. Though many congregations are challenged to host because of a lack of adequate facilities or volunteers, the pool of congregations in and around Indianapolis is vast. Especially around the Day Center in the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood alone, there are over fifty congregations within two miles. Prioritizing recruitment there not only decreases the travel time that guest families have to/from the congregation, it also allows guests to arrive at the congregation on a bus if necessary for work. Last, given many of the nearby congregations are predominantly African American/Black churches and that over 80% of the guest families identify as African American or Black, there is potentially great additional value for kids to interact with volunteers of the same race (assumption based on shared-race mentor studies) and receive hospitality that is perhaps more likely to be culturally sensitive (e.g., food chosen for meals, activities planned, etc.). This effort would align with internal goals the FPGI Board has to seek greater diversity in its own membership to be representative of the population it serves.

Of the volunteers that filled out the survey, the average age was sixty years old. Perhaps this is because it is presumed easier for a retiree to volunteer with the FPGI programs, but it also could be an indicator of the national trend of the aging of congregational membership. There is opportunity—based on the success of other Family Promise affiliates—to recruit other community groups such as hospitals and universities to host guest families, thereby filling the service gap in Rotation Two while also potentially decreasing the median age of volunteers for the future of the program.

Program Model & Service Delivery

Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis is best known to its stakeholders for its hallmark program, the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN). This program model utilizes a network of congregations to provide shelter for families experiencing homelessness. While the program has received praise for the hospitality of its volunteers, its model has created challenges to acquiring employment due to lack of accessible public transportation near many congregations. Furthermore, the average stay of a successfully transitioning family is over 60 days due to waits for income assistance like childcare vouchers. FPGI to date has not provided significant financial assistance for rent, utilities, childcare, or other guest assistance.

FPGI is one of few shelters with home-based case management (i.e., AfterCare) for families after they leave successfully. FPGI has a strong reputation for the quality of its AfterCare program with other service providers in Indianapolis. The principal challenge for the AfterCare program from staff analysis is guest perception that it is focused on furniture and gifts (e.g., bus passes, diapers), rather than continuous skill and network-building, like budgeting, parenting, and job advancement training. Both AfterCare and IHN programs could benefit strongly from a review of their purposes, policies, and procedures for updating and training.

The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has shown a funding priority focus on homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing, as opposed to emergency shelter and/or transitional housing (i.e., longer-term stays to improve self-sufficiency). As a member of the Continuum of Care (CoC)—an association of homelessness agencies required to receive certain federal funding—FPGI has access to a rapid re-housing fund that it can apply to for rent assistance on behalf of guest families, and a prevention fund for AfterCare families at risk of a relapse into homelessness. The CoC also coordinates entry into permanent supportive housing units for families have obstacles, such as intellectual or developmental disabilities, that prevent ever being able to be self-sufficient. Separate from the CoC, the State of Indiana, through the Family Social Services Administration, can do assessments and coordinate supportive housing placements in market-rate units through Medicaid waivers and case management contractors. The Board of FPGI has encouraged building relationships with both of these entities to evaluate the potential success for the families FPGI serves. FPGI also has potential to create its own guest assistance fund to decrease its average stay and assist families to reach independence (as much as possible) more quickly. Whether internally or through external partnerships, these are the strategies to better serve families in the coming years. The Board of FPGI has decided not to pursue static shelter or owning and operating transitional housing, though it does believe those options need to be assessed continually to be sure FPGI is meeting the needs of families the best way possible—especially as other Family Promise affiliates nationally experiment with different models.

In October of 2015, FPGI first implemented a program called Awareness with many congregations. It consisted of congregations participating in an outreach weekend to their membership with talks and materials shared on homelessness. While the service of fifty families per year in FPGI matters greatly, it is not a model that can be scaled to meet the entire need of the ten calls per day from families needing shelter. For the necessary public and private investment to occur in resources and policy changes, awareness leading to advocacy is the key. Family Promise—the national organization—has materials to do just that through its Just Neighbors educational program, and other awareness curricula also exist.

While FPGI has been approached to consider an expansion in Hamilton County, the Board has decided to simply participate when invited as a speaker while independent volunteers work to recruit the necessary number of congregations, find a centrally located Day Center, and fundraise the first year of startup and operating costs. FPGI does not currently have the staff capacity to participate fully in a new outreach effort. When those three goals above are achieved by the grassroots volunteer organizers, FPGI would be open to a conversation about what economies of scale are possible through centralization of functions as the organizational structure and governance is determined.

Communications & Technology

The Board of Directors of FPGI documented its core values in the Fall of 2016 while drafting this plan. With its 22-year foundation articulated, it provides opportunity to revisit the mission statement and vision statement, as is a best practice to do periodically. There are benefits from assessing how it aligns with the current community needs and Family Promise national's mission and vision.

The largest stakeholder group by far are the hosting and sponsoring congregations who provide over 1,500 volunteers to this mission. Their largest critique in the survey was that communication with the Day Center was not adequate—including important logistical updates, but especially updates about what happened with the families they hosted!

After creating consistent branding and a style guide, and investing in professional equipment (e.g., DSLR camera), there is great potential to develop communications plans to astound people with the impact of their time, talent, and treasure. FPGI has already recently created a new Email Service Provider (ESP) account that can be integrated with its Salesforce account (a cloud database). However, organizational audiences need to be determined and communication plans for each audience need to be created. With strong media personnel working for some sponsoring congregations, the numbers of moving success stories that could be communicated through social media, e-newsletters, and online video are seemingly endless. The central dissemination point for information has to be, though, from a mobile-friendly and easily updatable website.

The organization has a strong value proposition for its programs: the hospitality the volunteers provide and their lack of empathy fatigue, the savings from in-kind facilities that allows more families to be served, the existence of AfterCare, and the potential awareness building in those with the resources to take eventual action. To date there has been little invitation to formal training of board members—or even former guests—in how to be ambassadors for the organization, including the onboarding process. This presents a great opportunity for “friend-raisers” (i.e., awareness events) to build new connections for a sustainable organization.

Organizational Capacity

There are other organizational factors to consider in the setting of goals, even if not explicitly represented in those goals. First, the Board of Directors is largely made up of representatives of hosting congregations who each have volunteered with the IHN program. This deep personal experience with the programs of FPGI has allowed for board members to be engaged with the organization at the highest level possible, something sometimes craved by other nonprofit organizations. While the current membership is committed and generous, there is room to expand the board and benefit from diverse membership, ensuring discussions around direction and policy consider as many perspectives as possible. This latter intentional recruitment should be considered simultaneously with investments in diversity and inclusion training to help with board retention as its membership becomes more diverse.

Second, staff time is currently very strained. While the case management responsibilities are fewer than comparable shelters or follow-up programs, the operation of the Day Center and coordination of hundreds of volunteers add responsibilities that have pushed staff to capacity. Planning for staff expansion would be necessary when considering any additional initiatives requiring staff.

Last, volunteers are numerous and generous, but they are already asked to do many initiatives including hosting families, clothing drives, holiday gifts, urgent need response, starter kits for AfterCare, not to mention fundraisers like Walking for Dreams and Home Sweet Home. To prevent fatigue, it is important to further emphasize the need for new partners, while also focusing on the initiatives that help families achieve the most lasting change and reduced risk of future homelessness.

SUMMARY OF GOALS

Resource Development

- 1) Eliminate dependence on private grants for recurring operating support by end of FY2019.
- 2) Grow cash reserve balance to six months of operating support by end of FY2019.

Congregational & Stakeholder Relationships

- 3) Retain and recruit hosting sites to operate two full rotations for the Interfaith Hospitality Network program by beginning of FY2018, while decreasing average travel time between congregations and Day Center by at least 10%.

Program Model & Service Delivery

- 4) Increase from 50 families served per year to 55 (FY2017), 60 (FY2018), and 65 (FY2019), while maintaining successful exit rate above 70%.
- 5) Decrease relapses into homelessness by 40% for all active families in the AfterCare program.
- 6) Create structured program to raise awareness and understanding of systemic causes of poverty (*measured through goal's objectives*).
- 7) Assess the need and feasibility of other program models, including prevention, static sites, or permanent housing alternatives for potential inclusion in the next strategic plan cycle.

Communications & Technology

- 8) Revisit mission and vision statements by end of FY2017 to align with new values statement.
- 9) Increase knowledge of organization's mission and impact among its stakeholders, primarily its volunteers (*measured through goal's objectives*).
- 10) Receive recognition as a high-performing emergency family homeless shelter from public and mass media outlets.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Resource Development

Goal 1: Eliminate dependence on private grants for recurring operating support by FY2019.

Objective 1: Increase funding from individual gifts (non-special events) according to the following schedule:

- \$65,000 in FY2017, with \$20,000 as recurring commitments;
- \$75,000 in FY2018, with \$40,000 as recurring commitments;
- \$90,000 in FY2019, with \$60,000 as recurring commitments.

Objective 2: Increase sponsoring congregation support to \$100,000 each year.

Objective 3: Maintain public grants at \$30,000 each year.

Objective 4: Increase funding by corporate/organizational sponsors from \$22,000 in FY2016 to \$41,500 in FY2017; \$50,000 in FY2018; and \$60,000 in FY2019.

Objective 5: Create an endowment with \$50,000 in assets by end of FY2018 and \$200,000 more in pledged assets by the end of FY2019.

Goal 2: Grow cash reserve balance to six months of operating support by end of FY2019, with a plan for sustainability.

Objective 1: Procure major gift pledge of \$100,000 in exchange for naming rights to the Day Center by end of FY2018.

Congregational & Stakeholder Relationships

Goal 3: Retain and recruit hosting sites to operate two full rotations for the Interfaith Hospitality Network program by beginning of FY2018.

Objective 1: Establish congregation, coordinator, and volunteer recognition program by February 28, 2017.

Objective 2: Restructure volunteer training program utilizing YouTube tutorials, online tests of policy knowledge, driver and coordinator background checks, and semi-annual in-service training by June 30, 2017.

Objective 3: Recruit three new non-hosting volunteer groups to supporting hosting congregations by June 30, 2017.

Objective 4: Recruit five new hosting congregations each hosting at least three weeks to fill gap in rotation by December 1, 2017, at least one of which is not a traditional house of worship.

Objective 5: Recruit at least two new congregations by June 30, 2018 and again by June 30, 2019 to reduce burden on existing congregations—allowing option for congregation distant from Day Center to join Hamilton County rotation, if created and if desired.

Program Model & Service Delivery

Goal 4: Increase from 50 families served per year to 55 (FY2017), 60 (FY2018), and 65 (FY2019), while maintaining successful exit rate above 70%.

Objective 1: Reduce average stay of successfully exiting family by 10% in FY2017, FY2018, and FY2019 by utilizing Rapid Re-Housing funds of the Continuum of Care and an FPGI organizational guest assistance fund.

Objective 2: See Goal 3 above as filling rotation gaps will allow increase in number of families served.

Goal 5: Decrease relapses into homelessness by 40% for all active families in the AfterCare program.

Objective 1: Apply for and receive homelessness prevention funds to assist all active AfterCare families facing eviction or foreclosure to stay in their homes.

Objective 2: Utilize coordinated entry assessment tool to place high-need families into permanent supportive housing with internal case management support.

Goal 6: Create structured program to raise awareness and understanding of systemic causes of poverty.

Objective 1: Begin Just Neighbors or similar curriculum with five hosting congregations in FY2019.

Objective 2: Create ambassador training and speaking program among former guests and volunteers to reach 20,000 people by end of FY2019.

Goal 7: Assess the need and feasibility of other program models, including prevention, static sites, or permanent housing alternatives for potential inclusion in the next strategic plan cycle.

[Objectives N/A, but detailed actions are at the “Task Level” of the plan that is not public.]

Communications & Technology

Goal 8: Revisit mission and vision statements by end of FY2017 to align with new values statement.

[Objectives N/A, but detailed actions are at the “Task Level” of the plan that is not public.]

Goal 9: Increase knowledge of organization’s mission and impact among its stakeholders, primarily its volunteers (measured through goal’s objectives).

Objective 1: Create e-mail campaigns segmented by stakeholder audiences with consistent 30% open rate and master distribution list of 1,000 by end of FY2017; 2,000 by end of FY2018, and 3,000 by end of FY2019.

Objective 2: Expand social media presence to include Instagram and a following of 2,000 individuals by end of FY2017; 2,500 by end of FY2018; and 3,000 by end of FY2019.

Goal 10: Receive recognition as a high-performing emergency family homeless shelter from public and mass media outlets.

[Objectives N/A, but detailed actions are at the “Task Level” of the plan that is not public.]

Note: This plan presented above is an abridged version editing out the tasks created with dates to achieve each objective. Copies of the master plan can be requested by emailing mike@familypromiseindyhn.org.