



STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2024

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



For nearly 50 years, the Housing Authority of Billings has been a leader and forward thinker in providing housing assistance, leadership and creative housing solutions to our community. Through monumental changes, we have maintained a steadfast focus on the community we serve. This is core to our success. It is who we are.

In housing programs, change is the only constant, and the pace of change continues to accelerate. We embrace it. There has never been a more critical time to plan for the future; to lay down an aspirational path that ensures continued growth and success for years to come.

I am pleased to introduce you to HomeFront's 2021-2024 strategic plan - a bold and clear plan that outlines our re-branding of where we are going, how we will get there and what it means to be critical partners within our community. The four strategic priorities, vision, mission and core value statements will keep us focused on our future direction, as

well as our day-to-day work and we are proud of the leadership and work that created this plan.

Many community voices helped to shape this plan. Throughout a robust engagement and planning process, we heard from staff, commissioners, community leaders, partners and families that we serve. In building this blueprint for the future, we remained true to what we heard, what we learned about ourselves in our community and hope you see your voices reflected within the document and in the work we continue to do. We are committed to receiving your ongoing input and feedback as we journey through this plan and its priorities together.

On behalf of the HomeFront TEAM, we would like to thank all those who shared their wisdom, thoughts and vision in the development of this strategic plan. We asked challenging questions, you answered and we were inspired. Together, we are creating a community HomeFront - Partners for a Better Billings.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Patti Webster', with a large, stylized initial 'P'.

Patti Webster
CEO/Executive Director

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IS SOMETHING WORTH FIGHTING FOR. WHEN ALL IN BILLINGS
HAVE A DECENT PLACE TO LIVE, WE ELEVATE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR EVERYONE.

HomeFront (formerly Housing Authority of Billings) is a leading partner in housing affordability, helping our neighbors find safe, decent places to live, and helping make Billings a better place for all. We strive for a unified community made up of a diverse patchwork of people, cultures, and beliefs.

Our mission is broad in scope and clear in focus: going beyond housing as partners for a better Billings. HomeFront is where we all have the opportunity to be productive citizens and live our best lives.

The struggle for affordable housing is about much more than housing – and so are we. HomeFront also creates a path to self-sufficiency and homeownership for families and individuals with moderate and lower incomes. HomeFront forges public/private partnerships to fund and build new affordable communities – keeping the housing market more attainable throughout the region. HomeFront works strategically with local partners to address the most critical needs in our community: combating homelessness, ending

domestic violence, supporting physical and mental health, and creating thriving neighborhoods.

While our core work remains unchanged – the efficient management and distribution of federal affordable housing dollars – our mission is much more expansive: a safer, stronger, better Billings for us all. Imagine what we can accomplish together!



PROGRAMS

PUBLIC HOUSING

- Seven apartment complexes
- Four single family sites made up of townhouses, duplexes, tri-plexes, four-plexes, ten-plexes, and single-family structures
- Clients pay either a flat rent or income based rent based on 30% of adjusted gross income

RESIDENT PROGRAMS

- Family Investment Center
- Family Self-Sufficiency Program
- Resident Advisory Board
- Youth Activity Fund

SECTION 8

- 679 units from the federal government
- 475 units from the State of Montana
- 33 Mod Rehab Units

SECTION 8 NEW CONSTRUCTION

- Pleasantview apartments -102 units for elderly and disabled
- A community garden available for tenant use

SECTION 8 HOMEOWNERSHIP/FSS

- Assists current HomeFront Section 8 and Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC) Section 8 voucher holders to become homeowners

GARDEN PROJECT

- Community gardens in low income and affordable housing complexes- Whitetail Run, Pleasantview, and St. John's

VASH VOUCHERS

- 80 housing vouchers serving homeless veterans

MOD REHAB

- Agent for MDOC to administer a program that assists landlords in rehabing their properties and then offering these units to low income people
- 33 units

HOMEFRONT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

- Non-profit development corporation to provide affordable housing for low income families.
- Develops, owns, and manages HomeFront properties
- Spring Garden Apartments, Old Town Square, Westchester Square East

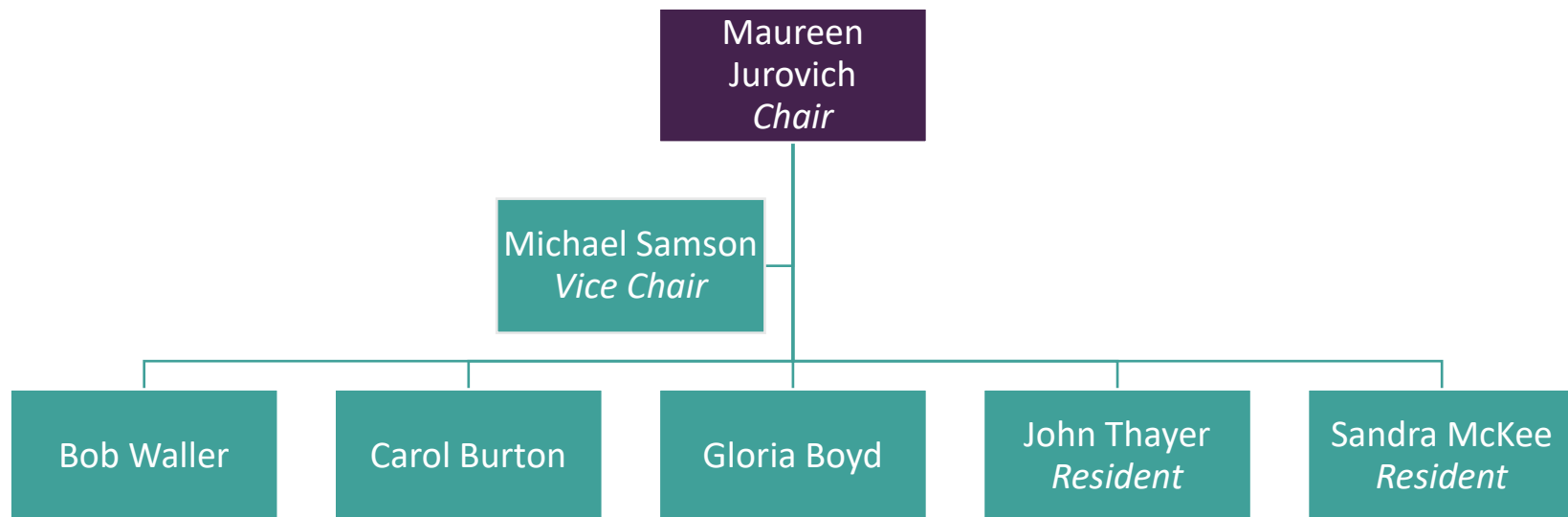
WHITETAIL SQUARE SUBDIVISION

- Whitetail Run Apartments - 302, 2, 3, and 4 bedroom units
- Pheasant Home Apartments - 16, 2 and 3 bedroom units
- Red Fox - 30,1-2 bedroom units
- Falcon Run - 2, 4-bedroom accessible units

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

A seven-member Board of Commissioners governs HomeFront and is responsible for establishing policy and approving the annual budget. The Board of Commissioners also hires the Executive Director. The Executive Director oversees the day-to-day operations of HomeFront and implements policies and programs established by the Board.

Each Board member is appointed by the Mayor of Billings. Two of the seven board members are resident commissioners who are HomeFront residents, as well as members of the board.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

HomeFront would like to extend deepest thanks to all Board, staff, residents, and community members who participated in the 2021-2024 strategic planning process. The collaborative effort shown in the plan's development provides inspiration to the staff as they pursue the newly outlined goals over the next three years.

This document synthesizes the input of HomeFront staff, Board members, and stakeholders who participated in strategic planning sessions and review processes. Their input and expertise are greatly appreciated.

Strategic Plan Steering Committee

Patti Webster, CEO/Executive Director

Amber Field, Housing Choice Voucher Director

Helen Verhasselt, Finance Director

Teddi Shorten, Senior Asset Manager

Kristen Watts, Senior Asset Manager

Kyle Tafton, Operations Director

Pamela Aning, Housing Resource Specialist

Maureen Jurovich, Board of Commissioners Chair

Annie Zimmerman, HRDC District 7

Melanie Schwarz, BSED

Jennifer Owen, Attorney at Law and Community Consultant

Community Planning Session Participants

Jenn Weber

Gib Glasson

Vicky Stephens

Fred Sparks

Jack Nickels

Matt Lundgren

Helen Verhasselt

Tara Williamson

Carol McCracken

Tam Rodier

Travis Diamond

Teddi Shorten

Patti Webster

Becky Nelson

Margie MacDonald

Sandra McKee

Kate Ferguson

Melanie Schwarz

Tanya Wilson

Joel Simpson

Lenette Kosovich

April Keippel

Amy Hall

Laura Narum

Penny Ronning

Karen Miller

Brian Farren

Danny Choriki

Barbara Mettler

Tammy O'Shea

Kristen Watts

Marty Hylland

Seana Rau

Kyle Trafton

Carol Burton

Cathy Longtine

Jennifer Owen

Pamela Aning

Amber Field

Gloria Boyd

Susy Paddock

Pat Bellinghausen

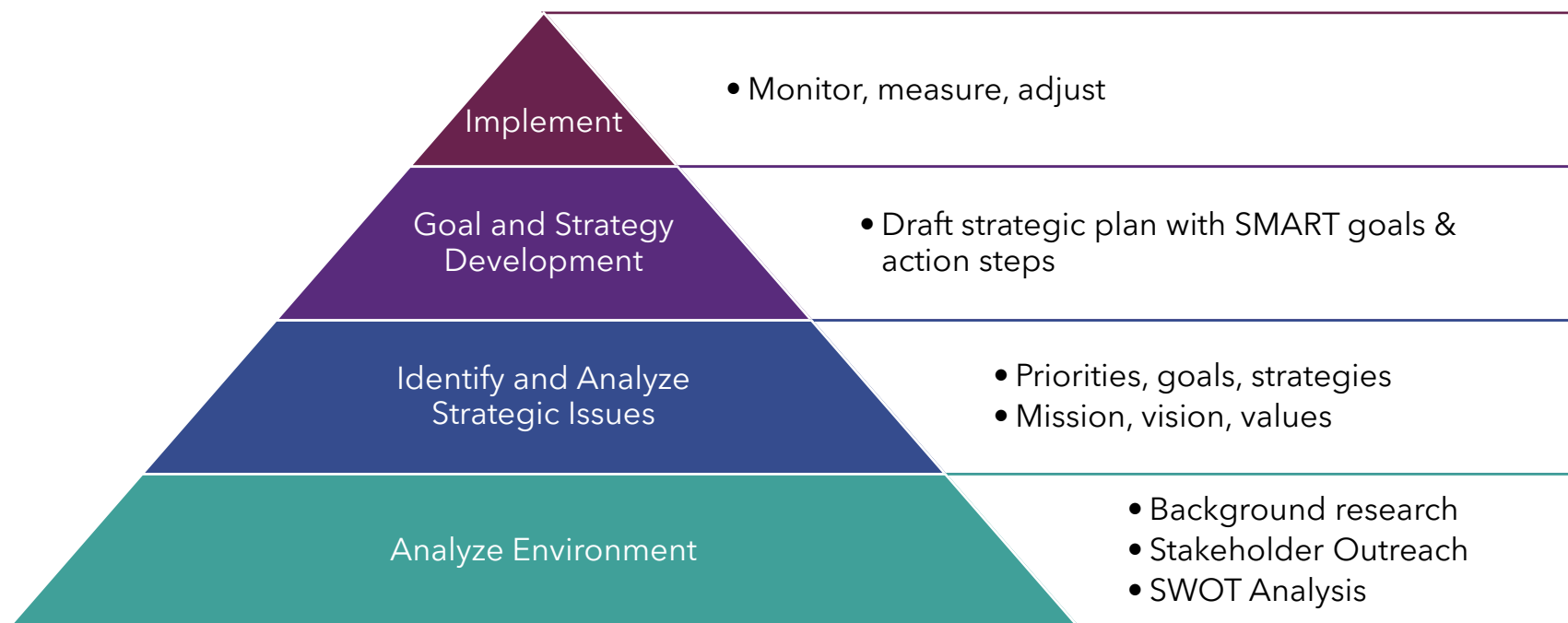
Brett Solberg

METHODOLOGY

HomeFront carried out an extensive strategic planning process in 2019-2020. Throughout the process, there was a strong emphasis on client and partner engagement. The overarching intent of this process was to develop a clear blueprint for HomeFront as an organization as it seeks to strengthen partnerships throughout the region and provide an enhanced level of support for residents.

Strategic planning is necessary to engage and energize leadership, provide continuity, manage goals in a realistic time frame and leverage the organization's limited resources. This is a consensus-driven plan with input collected from a wide array of HomeFront partners and area stakeholders.

HomeFront initiated the planning process alongside a separate, yet related rebranding process. Running these processes simultaneously allowed for several process efficiencies. The planning process is summarized in the graphic below.



TIMELINE



TERMINOLOGY

This plan identifies overarching priorities, key goals, and supporting strategies to provide HomeFront with a clear foundation for decision making. For purposes of this document, the following terminology is utilized.

PRIORITY

- Priorities are long-term, overarching areas of focus for the organization.

GOAL

- Goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based (SMART) elements that will meet or enhance the outlined priority.

STRATEGY

- Strategies are stepping stones and activities that need to be accomplished to attain each goal.



STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The roadmap set forth through this strategic plan is built around HomeFront's vision, mission, and values. By linking each action of the organization back to these guiding forces, HomeFront can ensure that their strategic actions are in line with the broader intent of the organization.

Vision

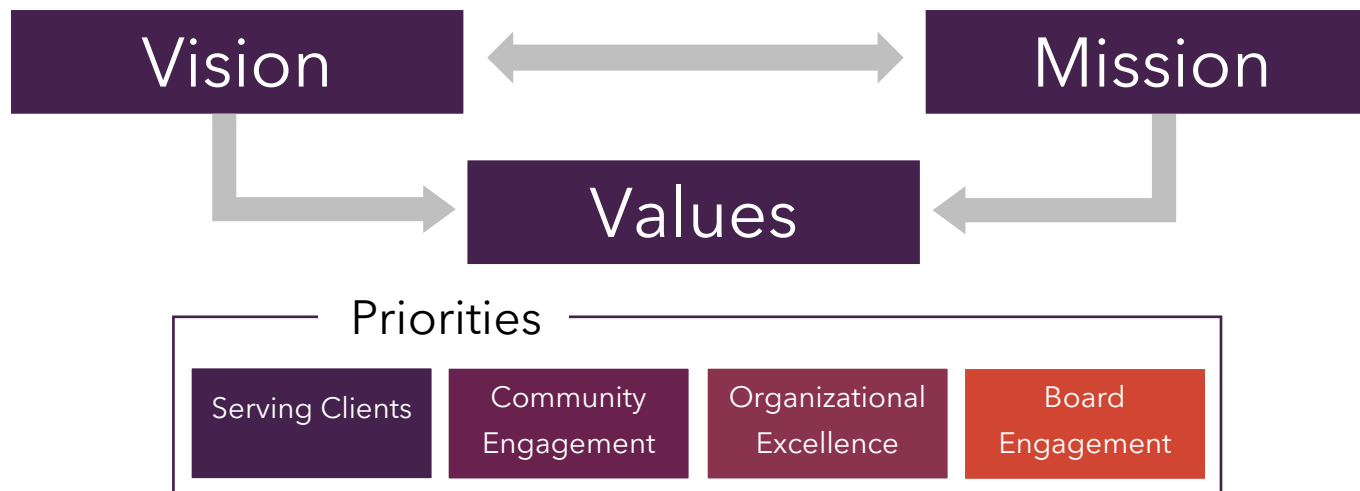
HomeFront: Inspiring Individuals and families, Promoting Partnerships and Cultivating Change

Mission

HomeFront's mission is to elevate the quality of life in our community by creating innovative, affordable, and sustainable neighborhoods.

Values

Integrity, Diversity, Public Trust, Respect, Empathy, and Professionalism



KEY CONCEPTS AND VALUES

- **Show Respect**
- **Listen and Validate**
- **Ask yourself, what don't I know?**
- **Meet people where they are, not where you want them to be**
- **Don't feed the bears**
- **Back out of power struggles**

INTEGRITY	Be honest and ethical using guiding principles to do the right thing when no one is looking
DIVERSITY	Recognize and honor differences
TRUST	Act with transparency and accountability to instill hope and confidence in our team and in our community
RESPECT	Honor yourself and others with dignity. Meet people where they are and not where you want them to be
EMPATHY	Create and encourage a genuine and caring environment where we lean in with compassion and grace Listen and validate
PROFESSIONALISM	Commit to effective performance, authentic presence, and contagious attitude Be a Champion

OVERVIEW OF GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Serving Clients

- Develop and maintain a wide variety of quality affordable housing options with a continued focus on health and safety.
- Educate and empower clients.
- Involve clients in HomeFront's process of continuous improvement

Community Engagement

- Strengthen and diversify community partnerships.
- Develop and implement a more formal communications plan to better inform the public of HomeFront's purpose, resources and activities.
- Increase community engagement and understanding by actively participating in existing community networks

Organizational Excellence

- Maintain excellence in management and ensure long-term sustainability by establishing an organization-wide staff development and succession plan.
- Identify opportunities to streamline business processes to improve customer experience.
- Conduct annual employee satisfaction surveys to routinely identify opportunities for engagement, improvement and growth.



Board Engagement

- Develop an official onboarding program for board members to ensure appropriate knowledge of the expectations of their role.
- Develop a quarterly board training schedule to include rotating education sessions from each division within HomeFront.
- Assign each board member to a division and rotate each quarter to allow board members to better understand the inner workings of HomeFront's diverse workload.
- Empower board members through advocacy training to effectively advocate for HomeFront as an organization and for clients as valuable members of the community

PRIORITY 1 SERVING CLIENTS

All that HomeFront does centers on providing high-quality, consistent, reliable, and impactful service to clients. Through maintaining and growing a diverse housing portfolio, we will be able to meet changing community and resident needs. Increasing cost of rents in Billings combined with low vacancy rates, intensifies the affordable housing need. By maintaining a quality housing portfolio and leveraging broader resources in our area, HomeFront and its partners will be in a better position to meet the housing needs of the region. It is important to recognize that HomeFront's service to clients extends beyond providing quality, affordable housing. HomeFront must also incorporate education, advocacy, and community integration to help our clients develop vibrant, healthy, and productive roots within their community.

Develop and maintain a wide variety of quality affordable housing options with a continued focus on health and safety.

- Identify and invest in opportunities throughout HomeFront's service area for infill, renovation, and redevelopment housing projects. Consider opportunities for mixed use properties.
- Establish a preventative maintenance plan with a focus on opportunities to improve energy efficiency and resource conservation.
- Complete at least one new development project by 2023.
- Conduct a housing trust feasibility study as an innovative funding and partnership model to better meet housing demands.
- Secure financial and staffing resources necessary to increase the quality of services and facilities offered to residents.
- Dispose of all single-family homes, utilizing cost savings to develop additional housing opportunities.
- Increase availability of Section 8 housing.
- Enhance partnerships between Homeward and the medical facilities, with housing fulfilling a multi-use housing need for workforce and patients.



PRIORITY 1

SERVING CLIENTS

CONTINUED



Educate and empower clients.

- Evaluate existing educational programs to determine effectiveness and modify as appropriate. Ensure that programs adequately address ongoing and emerging needs of client populations.
- Create and implement a schedule of quarterly training opportunities to strengthen clients' ability to serve as self-advocates through positive communication and relationship skill building.
- Determine the need and viability of a comprehensive education campus through a feasibility study. The education campus would provide personal and professional development programs to enhance client's quality of life, while also incorporating a safe and healthy space for HomeFront's youth population to interact, learn, and grow.
- Educate clients about the value of higher density, quality design with easy access to essential services such as transit, schools, medical services, and parks.
- Implement a resident success plan that encourages residents to define and work toward goals related to increased self-sufficiency.
- Provide a literacy development program to clients including Wi-Fi access and tablets as appropriate.
- Establish a Head-Start satellite site and Explorers' Academy

Involve clients in HomeFront's process of continuous improvement.

- Conduct annual client satisfaction surveys to routinely identify opportunities for improvement and growth.
- Involve clients in pro-active conversations regarding property improvements, new investments, programming options, and applicable community issues.
- Establish a policy on how client input will be collected and meaningfully incorporated.

PRIORITY 2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Strengthening support for affordable housing is a vital element for a vibrant, growing, and sustainable community. This priority is intended to foster the development of strong partnerships with organizations and individuals who serve and support HomeFront's mission and our clients. Through partnerships, HomeFront will be able to maximize the capacity for their mission and vision, connecting clients to more diverse housing, employment, and service opportunities. Through public education, HomeFront can bring further awareness and a commitment to affordable housing in the greater Billings community.

Strengthen and diversify community and regional partnerships.

- Establish a quarterly partnership meeting to encourage collaborators from across the community to connect and establish meaningful, mutually beneficial relationships aimed at supporting underrepresented populations.
- Identify existing and potential key partners with an intent to establish meaningful collaborations with a minimum of five additional agencies by the end of 2022.
- As appropriate, work with partners to secure financial resources to broaden available affordable housing options.
- Leverage partnerships to help clients establish meaningful relationships within the broader community.
- Host an annual bus tour to showcase projects throughout the community.



PRIORITY 2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONTINUED



Develop and implement a communications plan to better inform the public of the HomeFront's activities.

- Identify target groups and engage and highlight 3-5 communications objectives that HomeFront can use to measure impact.
- Raise visibility with government bodies through a minimum of six presentations to city council, county commission, and Big Sky Economic Development each year.
- Develop a standard presentation to allow staff to deliver a consistent message and map of services throughout the community.
- Coach maintenance staff on key communications messages as they are most frequently visible to residents and the public.
- Create a media package to use as a "roadshow "including regular radio/tv interviews and quarterly resident success videos.
- Update the HomeFront website to include 360-degree tours of properties, videos and human-interest pieces.
- Evaluate and update the communications plan bi-annually.

Increase community engagement by actively participating in community networks

- Seek out existing community networks to present at and diversify where HomeFront is delivering the presentation to showcase the depth of leadership within the organization.
- Support HomeFront leaders in becoming actively engaged with community service and partner organizations. Use this activity as a way to further educate and engage a broader audience.
- By the end of 2022, have a minimum of 10 staff members serving on various boards for partner organizations.

PRIORITY 3 ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

HomeFront's staff are the heartbeat of the organization. These talented professionals are the reason the organization is able to provide high-quality services to clients. This strategic priority focuses on growing and developing existing talent while continuing to attract additional professionals to join the HomeFront team. Through this priority, HomeFront embraces a growth mindset at all levels of the organization and highlights the critical role that efficient business processes play in the service provided to clients.

Maintain excellence in management and ensure long-term sustainability by establishing an organization-wide staff development and succession plan.

- Conduct a skills inventory for all staff. Assess training needs and prepare an annual training schedule and budget to ensure needs are met.
- Update job descriptions for each staff member to clearly outline expectations and responsibilities and incorporate the agency's mission and values.
- Create a consistent framework for performance reviews and establish a schedule for completion.
- Develop a comprehensive onboarding program for all new employees.
- Foster an open and empathetic culture by implementing quarterly all-staff training sessions to focus on leadership development, team building, cultural responsiveness and sensitivity, and safety practices.
- Strengthen staffs' business acumen through regular cross-training opportunities.
- Strive to employ a diverse staff, reflecting the diversity of HomeFront clients.
- Establish a training facility for maintenance staff, considering the opportunity to partner with the school district to design the facility as a multi-use space.



PRIORITY 3 ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE CONTINUED

HomeFront's staff are the heartbeat of the organization. These talented professionals are the reason the organization is able to provide high-quality services to clients. This strategic priority focuses on growing and developing existing talent while continuing to attract additional professionals to join the HomeFront team. Through this priority, HomeFront embraces a growth mindset at all levels of the organization and highlights the critical role that efficient business processes play in the service provided to clients.

Identify opportunities to streamline business processes to improve customer experience.

- Update policies and develop standard operating procedure manuals for each division. Update business forms to accurately reflect current processes.
- Create a business process map for each department within the organization. Identify dependencies, pain points, and opportunities for improved workflow.
- Develop a process for reviewing and updating policies and procedures annually.
- Communicate changes and updates clearly to staff through an in-person re-onboarding session and make updated documents accessible to all staff.

Improve and monitor employee satisfaction.

- Embody core values and cultural aspirations by conducting departmental listening sessions.
- Incorporate cultural touchpoints and leadership lessons learned into monthly team building and training sessions.
- Create and deploy an internal mentoring program framework that incorporates core developmental skills to all employees. Leverage this program to help encourage cross-training.
- Conduct annual surveys to routinely identify opportunities for improvement and growth.

PRIORITY 4 BOARD ENGAGEMENT

HomeFront's Board of Directors are critical links to community partners and, in many ways, are positioned to serve as the voice of the organization. In this role, it is essential that all board members are adequately trained and clearly aware of the services provided by HomeFront as well as potential opportunities on the horizon. Through ongoing training, improved onboarding practices, and improved communication, HomeFront will build board capacity and regularly solicit feedback for continual improvement within the organization.

Drive engagement through training and education.

- Develop an official onboarding program for board members to ensure appropriate knowledge of the expectations of their role are established.
- Develop a quarterly board training schedule to include rotating education sessions from each division within HomeFront.
- Assign each board member to a division and rotate each quarter to allow board members to better understand the inner workings of HomeFront's diverse workload.

Encourage board members to be active advocates.

- Empower board members through advocacy training and educational tools to effectively advocate for HomeFront as an organization and for clients as valuable members of the community.



IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN

This section of the strategic plan is designed to make each priority, goal, and strategy actionable to ensure progress is made. The action plan is most effective when a champion/team lead is assigned to guide each strategy, making sure that no key element is lost in the flurry of day to day activities. As a champion/team lead is assigned to each strategy, also assign a targeted time frame to accomplish each strategy. This will allow HomeFront leadership to make sure that required actions are appropriately spread across staff and across the time horizon for this plan. **Review the progress on the action plan quarterly, with a process in place to make adjustments.**

Priority	Goal	Strategies	Time frame	Assigned to
Priority 1 Serving Clients	Goal 1.1 Develop and maintain a wide variety of quality affordable housing options with a continued focus on health and safety.	Identify and invest in opportunities throughout HomeFront's service area for infill, renovation, and redevelopment housing projects. Consider opportunities for mixed use properties.		
		Establish preventative maintenance plan with a focus on opportunities to improve energy efficiency and resource conservation.		
		Complete at least one new development project by 2023.		
		Conduct a housing trust feasibility study as an innovative funding and partnership model to better meet housing demands.		
		Secure financial and staffing resources necessary to increase the quality of services and facilities offered to residents.		
		Dispose of all single-family homes, utilizing cost savings to develop additional housing opportunities.		
		Increase availability of Section 8 housing.		
		Enhance partnerships with Homeward and medical facilities, fulfilling a multi-use housing need for workforce and patients.		

Priority	Goal	Strategies	Time frame	Assigned to
Priority 1 Serving Clients	Goal 1.2 Educate and empower clients	Evaluate existing educational programs to determine effectiveness and modify as appropriate. Ensure that programs adequately address ongoing and emerging needs of client populations.		
		Create and implement a schedule of quarterly training opportunities to strengthen clients' ability to serve as self-advocates through positive communication and relationship skill building.		
		Determine the need and viability of a comprehensive education campus through a feasibility study. The education campus would provide personal and professional development programs to enhance client's quality of life, while also incorporating a safe and healthy space for HomeFront's youth population to interact, learn, and grow.		
		Educate clients about the value of higher density, quality design with easy access to essential services such as transit, schools, medical, and parks.		
		Implement a resident success plan that encourages residents to define and work toward goals related to increased self-sufficiency.		
		Provide a literacy development program to clients including Wi-Fi access and tablets.		
		Establish a Head-Start satellite site and Explorers' Academy		

Priority	Goal	Strategies	Time frame	Assigned to
Priority 1 Serving Clients	Goal 1.3 Involve clients in HomeFront's process of continuous improvement.	Conduct annual client satisfaction surveys to routinely identify opportunities for improvement and growth.		
		Involve clients in pro-active conversations regarding property improvements, new investments, programming options, and applicable community issues.		
		Establish a policy on how client input will be collected and meaningfully incorporated.		
Priority 2 Community Engagement	Goal 2.1 Strengthen and diversify community and regional partnerships.	Establish a quarterly partnership meeting to encourage collaborators from across the community to connect and establish meaningful, mutually beneficial relationships aimed at supporting underrepresented populations.		
		Identify existing and potential key partners with an intent to establish meaningful collaborations with a minimum of five additional agencies by the end of 2022.		
		As appropriate, work with partners to secure financial resources to broaden available affordable housing options.		
		Leverage partnerships to help clients establish meaningful relationships within the broader community.		
		Host an annual bus tour to showcase projects throughout the community.		

Priority	Goal	Strategies	Time frame	Assigned to
Priority 2 Community Engagement	Goal 2.2 Develop and implement a communications plan to better inform the public of the HomeFront's activities.	Identify target groups and engage and highlight 3-5 communications objectives that HomeFront can use to measure impact.		
		Raise visibility with government bodies through a minimum of six presentations to city council, county commission, and Big Sky Economic Development each year.		
		Develop a standard presentation to allow staff to deliver a consistent message and map of services throughout the community.		
		Coach maintenance staff on key communications messages as they are most frequently visible to residents and the public.		
		Create a media package to use as a roadshow including regular radio/tv interviews and quarterly resident success videos.		
		Update the HomeFront website to include 360-degree tours of properties, and videos.		
		Evaluate and update the communications plan quarterly.		
	Goal 2.3 Increase community engagement by actively participating in community networks.	Seek out community networks to present at and diversify where HomeFront is delivering the presentation to showcase the depth of leadership within the organization.		
		Support HomeFront leaders in becoming actively engaged with community service and partner organizations. Use this activity as a way to further educate and engage a broader audience.		
		By the end of 2022, have a minimum of 10 staff members serving on various boards for partner organizations.		

Priority	Goal	Strategies	Time frame	Assigned to
Priority 3 Organizational Excellence	Goal 3.1 Maintain excellence in management and ensure long-term sustainability by establishing an organization-wide staff development and succession plan.	Conduct a skills inventory for all staff. Assess training needs and prepare an annual training schedule and budget to ensure needs are met.		
		Update job descriptions for each staff member to clearly outline expectations and responsibilities and incorporate the agency's mission and values.		
		Create a consistent framework for performance reviews and establish a schedule for completion.		
		Develop a comprehensive onboarding program for all new employees.		
		Foster an open and empathetic culture by implementing quarterly all-staff training sessions to focus on leadership development, cultural responsiveness and sensitivity, and safety practices.		
		Strengthen staffs' business acumen through regular cross-training opportunities.		
		Strive to employ a diverse staff, reflecting the diversity of HomeFront clients.		
		Establish a training facility for maintenance staff, considering the opportunity to partner with the school district to design the facility as a multi-use space.		

Priority	Goal	Strategies	Time frame	Assigned to
Priority 3 Organizational Excellence	Goal 3.2 Identify opportunities to streamline business processes to improve customer experience.	Update policies and develop standard operating procedure manuals for each division. Update business forms to accurately reflect current processes.		
		Create a business process map for each department within the organization. Identify dependencies, pain points, and opportunities for improved workflow.		
		Develop a process for reviewing and updating policies and procedures annually.		
		Communicate changes and updates clearly to staff through an in-person re-onboarding session and make updated documents accessible to all staff.		
	Goal 3.3 Improve and monitor employee satisfaction.	Embody core values and cultural aspirations by conducting departmental listening sessions.		
		Incorporate cultural touchpoints and leadership lessons learned into monthly team building and training sessions.		
		Create and deploy an internal mentoring program framework that incorporates core developmental skills to all employees. Leverage this program to help encourage cross-training.		
		Conduct annual surveys to routinely identify opportunities for improvement and growth.		

Priority	Goal	Strategies	Time frame	Assigned to
Priority 4 Board Engagement	Goal 4.1 Drive engagement through training and education.	Develop an official onboarding program for board members to ensure appropriate knowledge of the expectations of their role are established.		
		Develop a quarterly board training schedule to include rotating education sessions from each division within HomeFront.		
		Assign each board member to a division and rotate each quarter to allow board members to better understand the inner workings of HomeFront's diverse workload.		
	Goal 4.2 Encourage board members to be active advocates.	Empower board members through advocacy training to effectively advocate for HomeFront as an organization and for clients as valuable members of the community.		

The HomeFront strategic planning session was facilitated and analyzed by:



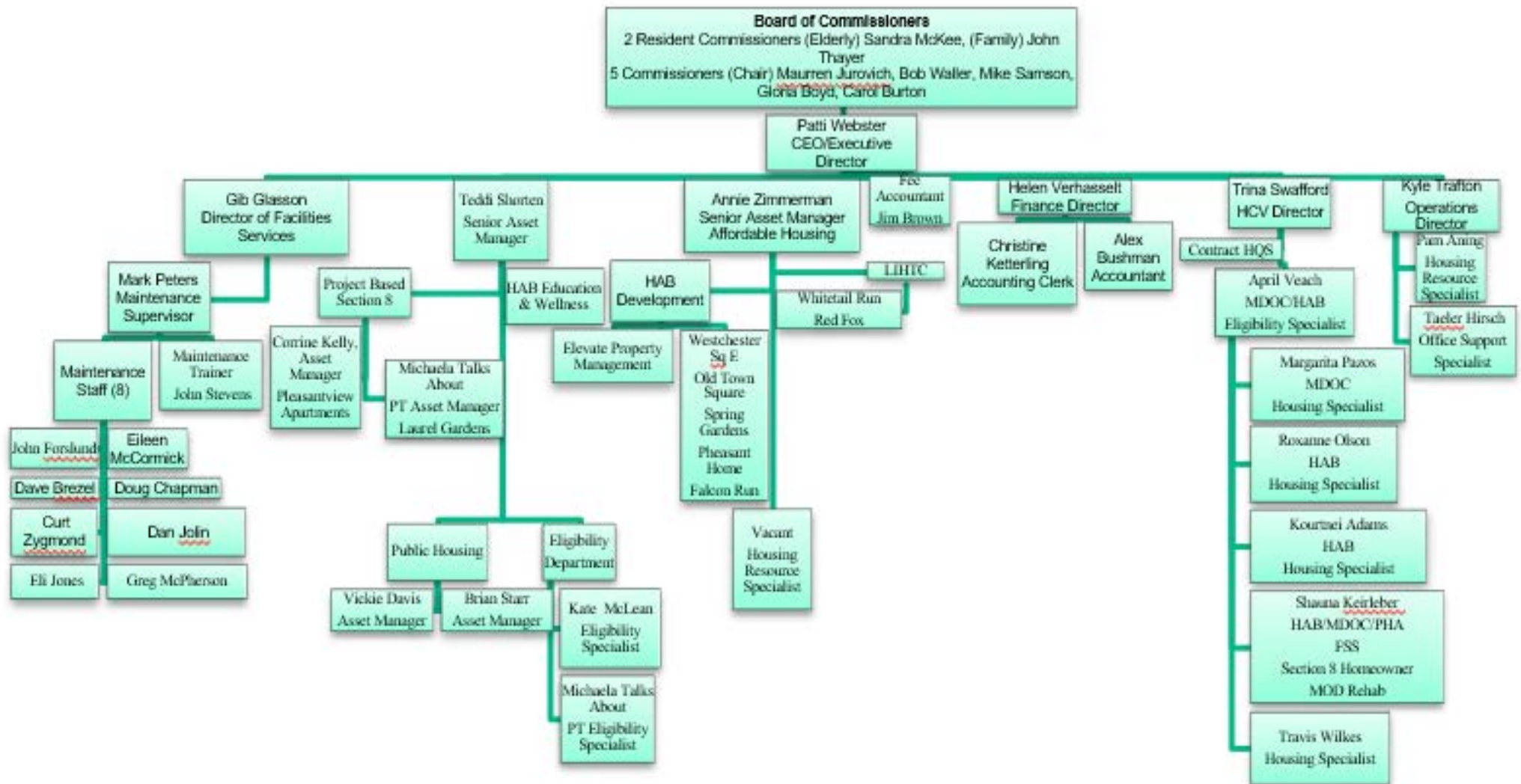
2611 Gabel Road
Billings, MT 59102
406.245.5499

becky.bey@kljeng.com

kljeng.com



APPENDIX A - ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



APPENDIX B – SURVEY RESULTS

In the summer of 2019, HomeFront provided a survey to board members, community stakeholders, consumers and residents of the various properties under the HomeFront umbrella, and staff. Surveys could be accessed on-line and in hard-copy and HomeFront staff also distributed them to clients as they came into the office for various appointments (incentive cards were provided to clients and results were kept anonymous). Survey responses were gathered from 48 community and board members and partners, 54 consumers and residents and 10 staff members. In addition to the surveys, in August of 2019, Homefront hosted a community strategic planning session which brought together several community partners, interested community members, and board members for a tour of HomeFront properties and additional in-person discussion about the future of the agency. 45 community members attended that session. Both the survey tools and the community strategy session were utilized to gather input and opinions from the broader community and from internal staff to allow Homefront leadership the opportunity to gain additional insights as to community perception of the agency, clients being served, areas for improvement and determination of goals moving forward.

What we learned from our Residents

54 consumers and residents completed and submitted surveys during the 30-day period in which they were available. Respondents were evenly distributed between those currently living in single family homes, duplexes or triplexes and apartment complexes. Residents were asked to rate a series of quality questions on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very unsatisfied/unhappy and 5 being very satisfied/happy. Averages for those inquiries are as follows:

- Overall service provided by staff – 4.5
- Quality/conditions of your house/apartment – 3.9
- Quality/conditions of the outside areas around your house/apartment (parking lots, grass/greenspace, playgrounds)-3.8
- Safety and Security in your neighborhood – 3.7
- Maintenance Services/Response – 3.7
- Management Staff- 3.9

- Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8, VASH or Preference Voucher) -4.2
- Quality and Availability of Social Services in Billings - 4.1
- Sense of safety alone at night in your house/apartment - 4.1
- Sense of safety alone at night in the hallway/lobby/laundry room of your building - 4.0
- Sense of safety alone at night walking on the outside grounds of your home/apartment-3.6
- Sense of safety allowing your school-age children to walk through the neighborhood alone in the day - 3.4
- How you are treated by staff -4.3
- Staff's speed/timeliness at returning your calls/answering your questions - 4.1
- Staff's responsiveness to questions/concerns about your rent (even if you didn't like the answer, did staff answer your questions?) - 4.3
- Staff's responsiveness to your questions and concerns about your tenant responsibilities, policies and procedures (even if you didn't like the answer, did staff answer your questions?) - 4.3
- Staff's responsiveness to your questions and concerns about maintenance - 4.2
- I am satisfied with the value of my unit for the rent I pay - 4.0
- I would recommend my property to a friend or family member - 4.7
- Information provided by HomeFront is easy to find, on time and answers my questions - 4.3
- My neighborhood/housing complex is open and accepting toward all different kinds of people - 4.2
- I am completely happy/satisfied when I've called HomeFront with the telephone system - 4.3

Clients were also asked open-ended questions regarding what kind of improvements they would like to see to their residences, buildings and surrounding neighborhoods, and how HomeFront might improve their on-line/website services. Overall, respondents indicated they found their housing units satisfactory. Suggestions for residences and buildings generally had to do with more "updated" amenities including a desire for air conditioning, updated heating units, private fencing, and dishwashers. There were also some requests for additional maintenance attention that included more frequent deep cleaning of the units (in complexes) and faster maintenance response.

In terms of the website, most respondents either had not utilized the website at all or, if they had, found it to be user friendly and meeting their needs. The limited number of suggestions provided indicated a desire to be able to complete additional forms online and to be able to pay rent utilizing the website.

What we learned from our staff

10 staff responded to the staff survey. Half of those staff indicated they had been with HomeFront more than 8 years, reflective of the lengthy tenure of most of the agency staff. As with clients, staff were asked to rate a series of quality questions on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very unsatisfied/unhappy and 5 being very satisfied/happy. Averages for those inquiries are as follows:

- I clearly understand and work toward the agency goals and targets - 3.9
- I believe I am valued as a member of the team and empowered to do my job to the best of my ability - 4.4
- Staff members here (including me) communicate effectively with each other - 3.7
- Staff morale is high - 3.4
- My role and responsibilities in my department and in the agency are clearly defined and understood - 4.2
- I enjoy working here 4.4

When asked why they worked for HomeFront, respondents overwhelmingly indicated a desire to contribute positively to the community and to help and serve others. When asked what the top motivators were for continuing to work at the agency, staff listed job security, good wages and benefits, good work environment and supervision and the continued opportunity to make a difference in the community.

Staff was also asked a series of questions related to the operational excellence and mission of the agency. These questions centered around topics such as what does HomeFront do well, what does the agency NOT do well, what should the agency continue doing in the future, what are the agency's greatest strengths and what are the challenges. Again, staff was universal in their responses indicating that what the agency does well and should always continue doing is providing safe, decent and affordable housing within the community by hiring and maintaining mission-driven staff. Staff agreed that the agency's greatest strength was the caliber of staff in the agency and that this was also a potential challenge moving forward. Adequate funding and the ability to grow while maintaining reasonable workloads was also reported as challenging.

Lastly, comments were made as to the need to “update” several policies, procedures and agency technologies, including but not limited to the filing system, website, and communication protocols amongst staff, particularly during times of increased change and transition.

What we learned from our board and Stakeholders

48 board and community stakeholders completed and submitted surveys. A vast majority of participants were new partners, with approximately 67 percent of survey respondents indicating they had been engaged either on the Board or as a community partner 5 years or less. When asked to rank and prioritize HomeFront services/programs in terms of importance for the Billings community, the development, rehabilitation, and/or management of affordable housing was clearly ranked first (10.21 average rank based on a 1-11 ranking criteria). This was followed by populating existing affordable housing in the community (finding vacancies and filling them through referrals), a 9.13 ranking utilizing the same ranking criteria. When asked if there any services that HomeFront should consider providing that were not currently offered, 75 percent of respondents indicated they didn’t know enough about the agency or their programs to comment. When rating HomeFront’s public image, 59 percent indicated “neutral,” and when asked if they were satisfied with HomeFront and their website and call-in navigation system, 72 percent of those participating said they’d never utilized either.

In short, the surveys and the community planning session revealed significant misunderstandings and/or lack of knowledge as to what HomeFront provides to the community, what programs they administer, and what properties are under the HomeFront umbrella, resulting in the creation of the vast majority of strategies as outlined in Priority 2: Community Engagement.