



**VEAP** **HOPE**  
*for the*  
**FUTURE**

VEAP's Strategic Framework 2018-2022

We asked. We listened. We learned. *Now, we are responding.*

*Our community is changing. VEAP must be adaptable and flexible to meet the needs of our community.*



# Goal 1: Create Pathways to Stability

## Providing everyone in our community access to healthy food

Our clients consistently report that affordability is the biggest barrier to eating healthy and said they are unable to buy nutritious foods when shopping for themselves. Access to healthy food, living wage jobs and affordable housing are crucial to individual and family stability and our community's ability to remain vibrant. VEAP's strength is procuring and distributing healthy foods.

**VEAP can feed one person for under \$1.50 per week.**

- ✓ **Increase Access to Healthy Food:** More frequent visits to the food pantry allows client households to designate their food budget dollars to housing and other basic needs.
  - During the Summer of 2017, VEAP provided an extra visit to the food pantry to families with children. This resulted in an additional 1,200 pantry visits.
  - By collaborating with area Rotarians and other partners, VEAP will continue and improve the Student Hunger Collaborative providing weekend food for students at risk of having little or nothing to eat.
- ✓ **Mobile Food Pantry:** In partnership with ThermoKing and Western National Insurance Group, we will launch a mobile food pantry to bring fresh and healthy food to neighborhoods that need it most.
- ✓ **Increase Healthy Food Access for Seniors:** VEAP will expand ride service from the Food Pantry and partnerships with senior living facilities to increase senior access to the pantry.



## Increasing client resourcefulness and support systems

Clients are coming to us in crisis. We believe short-term skill building will help our clients achieve stability, with a focus on resources and knowledge needed to access more income. This will help clients move to the next level and commit to long-term supports. Our social workers, in partnership with Hennepin County, are working with clients to:

- ✓ Improve their skills at navigating community resources
  - Creating a budget
  - Advocating with utilities and other service providers to manage payments and reduce expenses
  - Navigating the disability process
  - Navigating the complex housing environment
  - Accessing county, state, and federal supports
- ✓ Improve their skills at getting and keeping a living wage job
  - Resume and application building
  - Job search mentoring
  - Basic computer literacy and access skills



### Business Incubation Program

Since January 2016, HOYO has used the VEAP commercial kitchen to produce traditional Somali sandwiches – sambusas – for sale with the mission to employ and support single Somali mothers. They continue to scale up their business with the intent to eventually “graduate” to a facility closer to local Somali populations.

Based on this successful model, we plan to provide access to our kitchen to five start-up businesses or entrepreneurs who might not otherwise be able to afford the space needed to get their business off the ground.

## Increasing access to affordable, safe, and dignified housing

Lack of affordable housing is a mounting crisis. Approximately 80% of VEAP client households have monthly incomes of \$1,600 or less. With average rent for a 1-2 bedroom apartment in our service area at approximately \$1,100, that leaves little for food, transportation, clothing, medication or other basic needs.

- ✓ Help clients find and keep affordable housing near public transportation
- ✓ Provide financial resources where appropriate to stabilize housing for families whose income is limited and basic needs are unmet
- ✓ Help clients navigate community resources and provide advocacy through an asset-based social service model
- ✓ Connect people with others to build social connections and support systems



## Integrated Service Model

VEAP's unique integrated and coordinated service model with Hennepin County Human Services allows clients to access the benefits of VEAP and Hennepin County in one location. We plan to expand this service model with other providers and partners.



## Goal 2: Grow Awareness of Suburban Poverty

### Broadening and increasing understanding of the needs and issues of suburban poverty and its impact on the community

Fifty-six percent of the Twin Cities metro area's poor now live in the suburbs, compared to forty-six percent a decade ago. A household earning minimum wage (\$9.00/hour) would need to work 89.7 hours per week to afford rent in our service area according to a document prepared by the Metropolitan Council.

Part of our mission is to increase awareness of suburban poverty and to shine a spotlight on why suburban poverty continues to grow.



- ✓ Since 2008, suburban poverty has increased by 53%
- ✓ Many of the jobs are paid minimum wage and do not offer health insurance or other benefits
- ✓ The number of affordable housing units has declined and the rents have gone up
- ✓ Households spending more than 30% of their income on rent are considered cost burdened— many VEAP client households are spending 50-80% of their income on housing
- ✓ Affordable housing availability is at an all time low—vacancy rates hover around 2%
- ✓ In the Twin Cities, there are only 78 affordable and available rental units for every 100 low-income renter households (National Low-Income Housing Coalition)
- ✓ Less expensive apartments are often too far from public transportation; without access to public transportation, many cannot get to work



## Goal 3: Engage Community and Advocate Change

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### Building a stronger community by engaging and convening partnerships to change systems and policies that create pathways to stability for low-income, diverse neighbors

As real estate values have improved, owners of affordable housing units are selling properties to developers who want to build housing that will be marketed to higher income families.

VEAP is an active member in the local housing coalitions looking to expand availability of affordable housing. Community partners recognize that VEAP is an organization that responds directly to the housing needs of the community and we recognize the voices of those most impacted. VEAP is already actively working with city staff, elected officials, housing advocates and nonprofit preservation developers. We will also convene opportunities for community dialogue and host housing forums for the community to learn about this issue and how it affects everyone.

## Goal 4: Expand Revenue Generating Opportunities

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### Achieving long-term financial and operational sustainability

To accomplish the program expansion goals, we will need to deploy strategies to diversify and increase revenue. We will continue to work to expand our donor and funder base and navigate the changing fundraising landscape.

## Goal 5: Build Organizational Capacity

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### Expanding organizational resources and infrastructure to meet the needs of our community

We must leverage our core competencies to manage our operational costs and assets through diversity, inclusion and equity. We must also extend partnerships and develop and manage human capital including staff. VEAP is lean on infrastructure and 96% of support goes directly to programs. In order to accomplish the goals set forth by this strategic framework, we need to invest more into the staffing infrastructure of the organization.

### Volunteers

VEAP depends on its energetic and talented corps of volunteers to deliver programs. Thousands of community members volunteer with VEAP in the food pantry, warehouse, performing data entry, driving clients home from the pantry and organizing special events. **Donate & Do** volunteer groups focus on processing fresh foods to get it ready for the pantry shelves. Local businesses, congregations, schools and other groups give back through **Donate & Do**.





# Our New Vision

A thriving community where all are free to pursue their dreams.

## Our New Mission

Together, we create pathways to stronger, more hopeful, communities through access to healthy food, housing stability and supportive services.



## Through Our Year-Long Strategic Planning

### We Learned:

- Our community needs more access to healthy foods
- Our community needs more affordable housing
- Our population is aging and becoming more diverse
- Since 2008, suburban poverty has increased by 53%
- Gaps between income and expense are increasing
- There is a need for more social connection and support systems

### Our Focus Areas:

- Access to Healthy Food
- Safe, Dignified Affordable Housing
- Social Connections and Support

### Our Core Competencies:

- Healthy Food Access and Distribution
- Integrated Service Model with Housing Support
- Volunteer Management
- Expertise in Suburban Poverty

VEAP is committed to innovative, sustainable and impactful programming by focusing on our strengths, creating efficiencies, building capacity and prioritizing our resources (staff, volunteers, dollars) where we have the most impact.

# How You Can Help

**We can't do this without you. To accomplish our goals, we need:**

## More Food

### Organize a food drive

VEAP helps approximately 10,000 individuals access healthy food every month.



## More Volunteers

### Volunteer with VEAP

VEAP relies on the hearts and hands of over 3,000 volunteers each year to serve our mission.



## More Funds

### Donate to VEAP

For every \$1 donated, VEAP is able to purchase \$10 worth of food.



## More Engagement

### Get Involved

Find out how at [veap.org](http://veap.org)



[veap.org](http://veap.org)

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***Our Values:*** Compassionate • Collaborative • Inclusive • Innovative • Responsive • Integrity