

# 2021 - 2023 Strategic Plan



# Executive Summary

Bay Area Community Services (BACS) is community-based in the deepest sense of the word.

In 1953, BACS became one of the very first nonprofits in the Bay Area when a council of 12 churches in Oakland joined together.

Our founders heard the call of the community, and stepped up to respond to poverty and institutionalization - what held back people with mental illness and frail elders. For nearly seven decades, BACS has created community centers and employment programs, crisis mental health programs, and programs determined to end homelessness, pulling together advocates, experts, and innovators to break down these barriers.

Today, BACS provides recovery-oriented behavioral health services across the spectrum of need, re-entry services to break the cycle of incarceration, and housing solutions to end the homelessness crisis.

We are **grassroots**, from deep East Oakland to Vallejo to Richmond to San Francisco. We are embedded, engaged, and listening. We have a responsibility to hear the call of our vulnerable community members.

Over the last 6 months, BACS' participants, board members, funders, staff, and community supports partnered together to understand systemic gaps, individual needs, and agency strengths and opportunities. As we set our strategic priorities, we heard from thousands of community members of their struggles – **generational poverty, policing, racism, disability, injustice, trauma**. 99% of BACS clients are extremely low income; more than 80% are people of color; more than 80% are experiencing behavioral health challenges.

Systemic oppression prevents the people BACS serves from being healthy, safe, and housed. **Our community is calling out for freedom – this strategic plan is our response.**

## **STRATEGY #1 - Breaking Barriers is the response.**

BACS will bridge the gap between mental health and housing systems of care and meet the needs of the "whole person" no matter what those needs are. We will pursue a "wraparound" comprehensive model of care for everyone we serve, to help all people achieve lasting stability.

# Executive Summary

## STRATEGY #2 - Neighborhoods are the response.

We will bring the BACS model of care – including the housing co-op approach to ending homelessness, and integrated Wellness & Housing hubs with housing, mental health, and employment supports – to all communities we serve. We will continue to create and expand housing choices for unhoused neighbors. We will strengthen local communities through deep partnership with neighbors, churches and community centers, families, and natural supports of our partners. We will purchase housing dedicated to ending homelessness.

## STRATEGY #3 - Community Justice is the response.

BACS will continue to work to end generational poverty through economic empowerment. We hire people who struggle to get employment due to individual histories and barriers (incarceration, housing insecurity, mental health challenges) and supporting all participants who want to work in achieving competitive employment through the BACS Wellness & Housing Hubs. BACS will continue expanding community response for crisis mental health to decrease reliance on policing, and reverse regional displacement trends and restore community power through housing preservation and homelessness prevention.

We are proud to be a part of the fabric of the Bay Area – to be an agency that has grown and adapted alongside social changes, that has worked constantly to reach more people, and has opened services in the areas that need them most.

Our legacy is as rich as the cultural heritage of activism of the Bay Area. Our Towne House program opened in 1969 to help community members with mental illness live fulfilling lives – the same year that the Oakland Black Panther Party started the free breakfast program, that Native American activists occupied Alcatraz, and that People's Park was established in Berkeley. Programs that BACS started in the 1960s and 1970s providing affordable housing and legal assistance for seniors grew and spun off into non-profits that still exist today.

BACS' team, nearly 400 diverse people from strong as of 2020, will always show up for the community and do "whatever it takes" to creatively solve the problems that hold people back.

# Who We Are

## Our Mission

*Our mission is to uplift under-served individuals and their families by doing whatever it takes.*

## Our Vision

*We envision a world where all people are healthy, safe, and engaged in community wellness, with access to quality housing.*

## Our Values

Accountability      ♥      Community      ♥      Prevention  
Engagement      ♥      Integrity      ♥      Innovation      ♥      Wellness

## Our Leadership

*BACS is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. We are a 501(c)3 agency. Our volunteer Directors guide BACS activities in accordance with our mission, our vision, and our values. BACS' Board of Directors re-affirmed BACS' mission, vision, and values in September 2020.*



\*Service areas added since 2017

# *Freedom is the call*



May 2020, BACS organized the "Whatever It Takes to Bring Change" demonstration against systemic injustice & racism.

**Goal** *Bridge the gap between mental health and housing systems of care, and meet the needs of the "whole person" no matter what those needs are.*

**Goal** *Advocate for reform on government and funder approaches to ending institutionalization and homelessness, and seek funding partners responsive to the needs of the community.*

**Goal** *Lead local and regional collaborations to reach shared community goals without duplicating resources.*

# *Freedom is the call*



## *Neighborhoods are the response*

- Goal** *Bring the BACS model of deep-rooted community services to every community we serve.*
- Goal** *Create and expand housing choices for un-housed neighbors.*
- Goal** *Strengthen local communities through deep partnership with neighbors, religious centers and community centers, families, and natural supports of our partners.*
- Goal** *Reclaim neighborhoods for community benefit by purchasing housing dedicated to ending homelessness.*

# *Freedom is the call*



March 2020, BACS staff meet outside Santa Rita Jail to coordinate services for 350+ people given early release due to COVID-19.

- Goal** *Expand community response services for crisis mental health, and decrease reliance on policing.*
- Goal** *Push community solutions to end the cycles of incarceration and institutionalization.*
- Goal** *End generational poverty with economic empowerment.*
- Goal** *Reverse regional displacement trends and restore community power through housing preservation and homelessness prevention.*

# Building the Future

This plan builds on our 2018-2020 Strategic Plan, which had three unified goals to guide BACS in supporting community members. The organization and evaluators reviewed each goal and determined progress as follows:

## HOUSING IS THE SOLUTION

- ♥ Our goal was to purchase 'a house a year' for people in need. **We met this goal:** BACS purchased 9 houses - creating permanent, stable housing for 45 people, and received a Project Homekey award from the State of California to purchase 10 additional homes.
- ♥ Our goal was to respond to gentrification by widening our service footprint, and bring our housing & homelessness services to more communities. **We met this goal:** BACS expanded across the Bay Area into three more counties (Contra Costa County, San Francisco County, and San Mateo County), bringing housing solutions to each new area.
- ♥ Our goal was to address poverty issues for everyone we serve. **This goal was partially met:** BACS increased access to our Supported Employment and helped hundreds of participants increase their income - but there is more sustained work to be done. 99% of people we serve still live in poverty.

## COMMUNITY IS THE SOLUTION

- ♥ Our goal was to increase community alternatives to homelessness, incarceration, and institutionalization. **We met this goal:** BACS focused on re-entry programs to break the cycle of incarceration and reduce recidivism. BACS expanded crisis mental health support, to reduce the need for emergency psychiatric hospitalization. BACS opened new housing navigation and long-term housing sites.
- ♥ Our goal was to prevent more people in need from slipping through the cracks by expanding services across the System of Care. **We met this goal:** BACS supported thousands more people per year, and opened programs targeted at especially vulnerable community members who usually struggle to access services - people with severe mental illness or experiencing a mental health crisis, older adults who have been unhoused for many years, people with mental health challenges exiting prison/jail, and more.

# Building the Future

- ♥ Our goal was to transform access to mental health and substance use support for youth to prevent lifelong challenges. **This goal was partially met:** BACS incorporated mental health support and substance use services in to all services involving youth. BACS also graduated the last participants of Thunder Road Adolescent Treatment Center and stopped serving new participants due to lack of demand in Alameda County for inpatient teen substance use treatment.
- ♥ Our goal was to pioneer the use of family-inclusive services for all ages, not just youth. **We met this goal:** BACS committed to partnering with families, chosen families, and natural supports of all people we serve. BACS provided Family Partners on treatment teams, assisted with family finding and reunification, and helping clients build supports in the community. These connections further recovery and help clients succeed long-term.

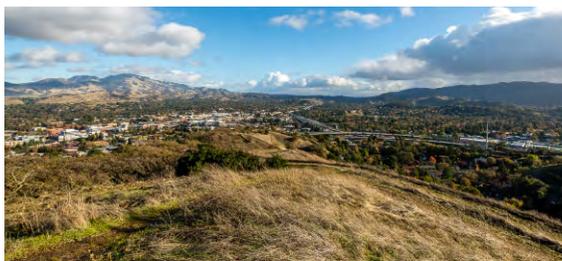
## SUSTAINABILITY IS THE SOLUTION

- ♥ Our goal was to invest in cutting-edge technology to decrease costs, strengthen services, and increase client connectivity. **We met this goal:** Several BACS programs moved to paperless charting. BACS invested in touch-screen laptops to increase efficiency and allow for document signatures wherever clients or staff are. BACS created Client Connection stations with computers for client use at all BACS sites.
- ♥ Our goal was to remain below the national benchmark for administrative overhead costs. **We met this goal:** BACS maintained our overhead between 10% and 15%, well below the national benchmark.
- ♥ Our goal was to be an early adopter of Pay for Performance in the government contract landscape. **We met this goal:** BACS implemented multiple contracts with Pay for Performance structures.
- ♥ Our goal was to expand private funding sources to increase BACS' impact. **We met this goal:** BACS partnered with private funders including Crankstart, The San Francisco Foundation, and others to prevent homelessness before it starts in Oakland through Keep Oakland House, with Kaiser Permanente for a major push to end senior homelessness, with the Thomas J. Long Foundation to ensure Towne House's sustainability, and more. .

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# Conclusion

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The Bay Area Community Services (BACS) plan for the future, rooted in our mission and vision, is to break the systemic barriers that our clients see every day.

In 1953, BACS became one of the very first community-based nonprofits in the Bay Area. Our founders were ahead of their time, with a mission to keep people out of institutions and connected to their communities.

For nearly 70 years, BACS' mental health, housing, aging, and youth services create a comprehensive safety net for our community. Time and again, BACS' staff, leadership, and volunteers have heard the call of the community and responded to fill those gaps.

BACS has seen tremendous change in the community since 1953, and supported vulnerable community members at every step of the way. **This Strategic Plan is our community call-and-response.**

Systemic oppression – generational poverty, policing, racism, disability, injustice, and trauma – prevents the people we serve from being healthy, safe, and housed. Over the next three years, BACS will respond to the community calling for freedom by breaking barriers, building and strengthening neighborhoods, and empowering community justice.

Our Board of Directors, leadership team, and staff are dedicated to doing “whatever it takes” to uplift our community. This plan was reviewed and adopted by the BACS Board of Directors on December 1, 2020.



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