



2024-2027

# Strategic Plan



*Doing Whatever It Takes  
Since 1953*



# Overview



In 2023, Bay Area Community Services celebrated 70 years of service – 70 years of catalyzing community in service of community; 70 years of heeding the call for justice; 70 years deeply rooted in the soil of human dignity and branching out to support the growing need.

We celebrate this milestone by reflecting on where we have been and looking forward to what we hope for our community in the next 70 years. BACS has revisited the heart of our mission, resilient across our history, and embraces its evolution. We embarked on an effort fueled by reaching out to our stakeholders to refine our Mission, Vision, and Values, grounded in our past, committed to addressing today's community needs while shaping tomorrow's solutions.

BACS is proud to present this Strategic Plan for 2024-2027, rooted in a theme of pulling the critical impact of our past and propelling it in to the future. The work that BACS does – addressing homelessness on an individual and community level, supporting people with behavioral health challenges from crisis to recovery, and working with individuals so adversely impacted by historical trauma – is ongoing.

Our strategic plan reflects this as an extension of our prior plan and past efforts, responding to community calls for freedom by breaking barriers, empowering neighborhoods, and advancing community justice.

Every person contributing to and reading this plan sees that our community needs help. This plan reflects the community. Countless participants, neighbors, volunteers, staff, community partners, funders, and government partners weighed in to make this possible. BACS seeks to make concrete individual and systemic impacts, leveraging the unique scale and scope of the work that BACS staff live out every day, now serving our neighbors across five counties.





Our team is on the ground, in encampments, in the community every day. And that same team is observing, understanding, and responding to system changes, striving to influence and reshape them in ways that truly benefit the people we serve.

Our society's systems for responding to mental health, homelessness, criminal justice, deep poverty, substance use issues, and historical traumas of the past, and other complex issues are getting more complex. BACS seeks to bridge the gap between these systems of care, and break individual barriers. BACS holds a panoramic view of the pain and the promise for transformation within our communities. BACS is working holistically, doing "whatever it takes," and observes daily the ways in which our ever-complexifying systems of care address those pains and make good on those promises – and where they can also fall short.

The next three years will see societal-level transformation (including CalAIM and other emerging state and local initiatives), and this plan sets the path for BACS to navigate these changes, so that the people we serve get the care they need.

In this plan, we plant our feet firmly in the present, speaking from and with the communities in which we serve, committing to use our voice, expertise, and dynamic philosophy of care to uplift our communities. We will continue finding housing solutions and providing behavioral health services that truly change lives – this is the background, the daily work of BACS. Beyond those individual successes, we are prepared to advocate for and actively engage in the essential transformations needed within these support systems.

"Whatever it takes" requires nothing less, and our communities deserve that and so much more.





# Our Mission

Our mission is to uplift individuals, families, and communities by doing “whatever it takes.”



BACS envisions strong neighborhoods where everyone is healthy and has an abundance of resources, meaningful relationships, and a place they call home.

# Our Vision



# Our Values

We show up. We are accountable to the community. We innovate. We advocate for windows, not bars. We are anti-racist and fight all forms of oppression. We stand united against hate.



# Our Approach

BACS has 70 years of deep history in California – piloting programs, building best practices, and creating behavioral health and housing models that are used widely today.

We know what the community needs: housing, services that empower individuals, and economic stability. These basic needs, if met, will make our neighbors and neighborhoods safer.

# Our Strategies

- 1 Windows, Not Bars
- 2 Whatever It Takes, Not Whatever Is Available
- 3 Rooted & Regional





# Windows, Not Bars

BACS and the communities we serve know that affordable homes and windows to opportunity through economic empowerment are the real source of enduring public safety.

California spends more than twice as much on incarceration as it does on ending homelessness each year, and more than 70% of behavioral health spending happens in institutions – jails, prisons, and locked behavioral health wards – rather than in the community. High users of mental healthcare can cost more than \$120,000 per year, when even including costs for housing supports, serving these individuals in the community could dramatically reduce costs and improve neighborhoods.

### Goal 1.1

Reduce incarceration and institutionalization by expanding access to voluntary, neighborhood-based behavioral health and peer-led crisis response services.

### Goal 1.2

Reclaim neighborhoods by creating and preserving affordable housing where people want to stay. Reduce displacement and prevent families from losing their housing.

### Goal 1.3

Prioritize community self-determination by providing direct access to financial and economic resources, paired with enriched services directly to people and neighborhoods.





# Whatever It Takes, Not Whatever Is Available

BACS does “whatever it takes” for the people and neighborhoods we serve, but too often our system of support is limited by regulations and funding restrictions that do not reflect the realities or needs of our communities. BACS is challenging this scarcity mindset and building frameworks where communities and their needs, not funding streams, determine how services work in our neighborhoods.

## Goal 2.1

Partner with and educate funding, system, community partners on what it will take to fix structural challenges impacting our neighborhoods. Rethink and redesign the status quo of under-resourced program models with overburdened staff to create sustainable and enduring impacts.

## Goal 2.2

Evolve our spectrum of services to be a seamless integrated network of support from prevention to crisis, including behavioral health, housing, and other supports. Overcome existing silos in the system of care and act as a model for government partners to turn pilot programs into permanent, lasting, and high-impact community supports.

## Goal 2.3

Advocate for abundance in our community and in non-profits by investing in high staff pay, benefits, and training. Hire the best staff, not the available staff. Combat the pressing workforce crisis in our sector by actively developing the pipeline of staff who represent the people we serve.





# Rooted & Regional

70 years deep, our roots have now grown wide, crossing the jurisdictional lines that too often limit what communities can access and when. BACS is developing truly regional approaches to the problems pressing on (and often pressing out) our communities, because homelessness and community crises do not conform to city and county boundaries.

### Goal 3.1

Expand regionally to bring BACS' expertise to support diverse community needs, creating complete systems of care that serve as the roots strengthening our community. Dismantle artificial geographic funding boundaries in the system of care and in regional separations between support systems. Expand the safety net while preventing displacement in communities people call home.

### Goal 3.2

Nurture deeply-rooted communities through access to BACS' holistic supportive services. Build complete systems of care in the neighborhoods we serve.

### Goal 3.3

Strengthen local systems of care by fostering strategic partnerships and alliances. Leverage our expertise to create a community-focused network, inviting like-minded organizations to join us in enriching the communities we serve.





# Reflections

*on 2021-2023*



This plan builds on our 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, which had three unified goals responding to community calls for freedom. BACS, evaluators, and our community reviewed each goal and transparently report on our progress.

## Strategy #1 - Breaking Barriers is the Response

- ♥ Our goal was to bridge the gap between the mental health and housing systems of care. **We met this goal**, but is ongoing. BACS consolidated our mental health and housing operations under a new Chief Program Officer position and increased our program integrations (for instance, co-locating wellness and housing hubs). BACS grew our footprint in Sacramento and intentionally built in integrated behavioral health and housing supports.
- ♥ Our goal was to advocate for reform on government and funder approaches to ending institutionalization and partner with funders responsive to the needs of the community. **We met this goal**, but is ongoing. BACS took on multiple pilot programs (for instance, shallow subsidies to prevent homelessness, guaranteed income for foster youth, etc.) and is working with funders to create permanent programs with what we see worked.
- ♥ Our goal was to lead local and regional collaborations. **We met this goal**, as BACS built and were leaders in multiple major collaborative efforts. BACS led Keep Oakland Housed and transformed it into the regional Keep People Housed collaborative, and collaborated on countless efforts to advocate for housing funds, behavioral health reform, and more.

## Strategy #2 - Neighborhoods are the Response

- ♥ Our goal was to bring the BACS model to every community we serve. This goal was **partially met**. BACS significantly developed homelessness response in Monterey County and both mental health and homelessness in Sacramento County, but there are still gaps.
- ♥ Our goal was to create and expand housing choices for unhoused neighbors. **We met this goal**. BACS has created hundreds of units of affordable housing through our Project Reclamation initiative and the State of California's Homekey funding, as well as purchasing the St. Regis Center which will have truly integrated behavioral health and housing.



- ♥ Our goal was to build deep community partnerships beyond non-profits. **We met this goal**, with many collaborative partnerships throughout the agency and the many regions in which we work.
- ♥ Our goal was to reclaim neighborhoods by purchasing housing. **We met this goal**, purchasing **295** units of housing in local neighborhoods in the last three years. BACS buys single-family homes, duplexes and small apartment buildings, and former hotels.

### Strategy #3 - Community Justice is the Response

- ♥ Our goal was to expand community crisis response options. This goal was **partially met**. BACS did expand crisis response in Sacramento, serving more than 1,500 people, but did not yet start similar programs in other communities.
- ♥ Our goal was to push solutions to end institutional cycles. This goal was **partially met**. BACS did provide services to thousands of justice-involved community members and reduce their recidivism, but policy-level changes continue to be a challenge.
- ♥ Our goal was to end generational poverty with economic empowerment. **We met this goal**. BACS supports all people we serve to gain competitive employment, we launched multiple “shallow subsidy” programs connected to our housing/homelessness work, and implemented a guaranteed income pilot for youth exiting foster care.
- ♥ Our goal was to reverse regional displacement trends with homelessness prevention. **We met this goal**. BACS developed and launched an emergency financial assistance portal, expanded Keep People Housed to a regional model, distributed \$80 million in Oakland and over \$150 million regionally of pandemic funding. 92% of people we served kept their housing and were not displaced.

BACS has achieved significant milestones in breaking the barriers between mental health and housing support, advocated for important systemic changes, and strengthened communities. These effects serve as a solid foundation, motivating us to pursue even greater impact and innovation in addressing the evolving needs of our communities.







As BACS unveils our Strategic Plan for 2024-2027, we stand at a pivotal juncture, leveraging 70 years of BACS' unwavering commitment to community, justice, and human dignity. Reflecting on our past achievements, we build on the meaningful milestones of our 2021-2023 Strategic Plan and, in response to community needs, present a forward-looking roadmap for the next three years.

For 70 years, BACS has bridged gaps in mental health and housing systems, advocated for reform, expanded homelessness response, and reclaimed neighborhoods through housing initiatives. Our commitment to community justice is evident in our crisis response expansions, economic empowerment efforts, and successful regional displacement prevention programs.

As we navigate societal transformations in the coming years, including initiatives like CalAIM, our Strategic Plan positions BACS to adapt and grow to ensure that the people we serve receive the care they need. We stand firmly in the present, committed to uplifting communities by addressing their immediate needs and advocating for essential systemic transformations. We look to the future, ready to navigate societal transformations, positioning BACS to adapt and ensure our communities receive the care they need.

Our focus is not just to meet goals but to exceed them, ensuring that our communities receive nothing less than the comprehensive, compassionate support they deserve. In the spirit of "whatever it takes," BACS remains dedicated to uplifting communities, believing in the promise of a brighter, more equitable future.



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