



Board of Directors Recruitment Prospectus

"What you do makes this community so much more welcoming and kinder for families and people that tend to feel swept under the rug."

Paula, former client



Organizational Overview

Valley Outreach

1911 Curve Crest Blvd. W.

Stillwater, MN 55082

Phone: 651-430-2739

Website: www.valleyoutreachmn.org



/ValleyOutreach



@ValleyOutreach



/valleyoutreach

Chief Executive Officer: Tracy Maki

Board Chair: Laura Fredericks

Who We Are: Valley Outreach (VO) is a basic needs organization that provides food, clothing and personalized client support. The latter includes resource and application support, financial assistance and in-depth case management, all based on individual client needs. VO is the only St. Croix Valley nonprofit providing this range of services for low-income populations. Our historical service area has been Stillwater School District 834; now however, food and clothing programs are open to anyone, regardless of address. Our target population is those living at 200%, or less, of federal poverty guidelines, or those in crisis.

Annual Budget: Approximately \$2.6M, with about half of that in cash. The remainder is in-kind donations of food and clothing. Eighty-nine cents of every dollar go to direct programming; the remaining 11% supports administration and fundraising.

Staff: Eleven full-time and three part-time employees; and up to four social work interns annually.

Mission: We help people move their lives forward through basic needs services and personalized support.

Vision: We help create a vibrant and resilient community where everyone's needs are met.

Service Statistics: FY 2019-20 (October 1 – September 30):

Basic Needs: Our basic needs programs focus on food and clothing. We're able to help folks address food scarcity as the income issue it is, so they can redirect budget savings into expenses that may be harder to address (e.g., rent, medical bills, transportation, etc.) Here's a snapshot of some of our service statistics:

Food – Through our SuperShelf certified Food Shelf and related programs, designed to provide straightforward access to healthy and varied food options, we distributed more than 1 million pounds of food (equivalent to more than 1,146,000 meals). In the last year, we served a total of 2,619 households, a 25% increase over the previous year. A total of 10,271 individuals.

Within those numbers we:

- Distributed 7,163 Snack Packs to area elementary students
- Delivered food once a month to 35 homes through our Mobile Choice program
- 4,594 of our total food program visits were to our weekly Bonus Friday program

NEW IMPROVEMENTS: To meet the increased demands for our services, we've continued to invest in making our work and processes more efficient. For example, we've added a logistics coordinator to our team to lead the time-intensive work it takes to bring in, sort, stage and shelve food rescued from retailers. Currently half the food we distribute comes from food rescue, so this is a very important role. We're also trying new things to determine the best way to expand access to food for those in need, including adding an option to come in to shop by appointment for clients who cannot make our regular hours. The bottom-line is that we continue to welcome anyone who comes to us in need of food, offer a variety of high-quality grocery items and provide the same high-level of service - all while staying on budget despite a 22 percent increase in program use. In the summer of 2020, we hope to update our SuperShelf food shelf to expand square footage and make improvements based on what we've learned as leaders in the SuperShelf movement.

Clothing – Last year we served almost 700 households, an increase of 8% over the previous year. We distributed more than 68,000 items of clothing, including nearly 16,700 pairs of new socks and underwear.

NEW IMPROVEMENTS: In early March of 2020, we moved into a much larger space within our building – twice the size of our previous location. Clients will continue to receive free clothing. We'll also continue to rely on and welcome donations of new and gently used, clean clothing and new (in-the-package) socks and underwear.

It creates an improved shopping experience, provides a wider variety of clothing and allows access to more people in need of clothing. Previously, we could only serve clients from the Stillwater Area School District due to space constraints, with this expansion all clients may shop for free clothing. We anticipate that we'll serve more than twice the number of people we currently do when we re-open following closures due to COVID-19.

We remain committed, first and foremost, to serving our clients. Once we have new processes in a new space figured out for our core constituents, we plan to open for public sales. We spent time in 2019 meeting with similar organizations, to learn and understand how they blend client-facing programs with public sales. All revenue generated will go back into our programs at Valley Outreach.

With this expansion comes a new name – StyleXchange. This name represents the quality of brand names/basics available for all members of the family and the spirit of community engagement needed to sustain both the clothing program and real change in people's lives. Expanding this program will help us meet the basic needs of more people and celebrate more stories like this one:

Client Support Services:

We provide a variety of supports and services to help people move their lives forward on their terms. When people come to Valley Outreach, they often need help with more than food and clothing. Almost 1,800 families received assistance from one of our client support services team members, including licensed social workers.

Of these families –

- 92% also accessed a food program
- 67% received resource assistance through an intake meeting
- 24% received case management/application assistance
- 8% accessed financial assistance



History

Valley Outreach is the only organization in our community engaged in comprehensive, basic needs support. VO was founded in 1983 as the St. Croix Valley Food Shelf. We are a privately-funded,

community-based 501 (c) 3 that serves mainly residents of the St. Croix Valley and surrounding communities in need of food, emergency financial assistance, clothing, resources advising and case management.

Late 2005. The St. Croix Valley Food Shelf assumed operations of the St. Croix Valley Emergency Fund and changed their name to Valley Outreach (early 2006). This merger, and the addition of Dawn’s Closet clothing program (now StyleXchange), allowed VO to expand essential basic needs services.

2007. We moved to our current location (1911 Curve Crest Blvd. W., Stillwater), almost tripling our available space. Integral to our success and growth are our partners, including other local nonprofits, county and state human and social service organizations, faith communities, and a strong network of committed volunteers.

2011. Growth required significant expansion of VO’s leased space.

May 2015. We cemented further our place in the community by purchasing the building in which we now operate. Initially we leased about half of the building but due to continued program growth, we now use over 90% of the building.

August 2016. We expanded our programs to include social service case management. This program provides an array of long-term, intensive help to low-income families and individuals so they can gain greater stability.

December 2018. A local foundation made an extraordinary, one-time gift to pay off the \$1.2M mortgage we held on our building, freeing up significant resources for VO to use for client services.

Most families and individuals we serve have household incomes at or below 100% of federal poverty guidelines, or \$26,200 for a family of four. The government defines such families at “low and very low food security levels”. Our clients are working-poor adults; many of whom are employed at two or more low-wage jobs with few, if any, employer-provided benefits.

Looking to the Future

Valley Outreach is a leader in food shelf administration, having successfully piloted the first ever “better shelf for better health” choice model, now called SuperShelf. SuperShelf seeks to create a more equitable and reliable hunger relief system in Minnesota. This is achieved by emphasizing nutritious, whole foods; applying stocking standards; and using behavioral economics (layout, signs, displays, etc.). See www.supershelfmn.org for more information.

SuperShelf has grown into a large partnership with Health Partners (locally via Lakeview Health), the University of Minnesota Extension, and The Food Group. The model has been piloted in four other metro food shelves and in spring 2017, was awarded funding through the National Institutes of Health for a \$2.1M study over five years. Until spring of 2020, VO received approximately \$20,000 annually for our consulting role (real-world experience) in this project.

VO collaborates with other east metro food shelves to address hunger gaps we know exist outside of our traditional geographic homes.

Sources of Funding

Nearly half of Valley Outreach's \$2.6M annual budget comes from donated food and clothing. Cash side is raised mainly from foundations (43%), and individuals (37%); the remainder is donated by the faith community, civic organizations, businesses and through special events. We receive no fee-for-service revenue or government funding.

Board of Directors

Valley Outreach is overseen by a 15 to 20-member volunteer Board of Directors. The Board meets nine times per year (no meetings in March, July or December) with additional committee meetings at various times dependent on organizational activity. Board structure includes several standing committees and subcommittees and time-limited, project-based working groups and task forces.

New Board Members

Valley Outreach seeks new board members with skills and expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- Strategic thinking and problem-solving
- Entrepreneurial mindset, particularly related to growing an organization
- Experience with business and/or non-profit management, particularly with marketing/public relations, financial, legal, and human resource issues
- Passionate about Valley Outreach's mission
- Ability and willingness to advocate for the organization with external stakeholders
- Strong connections with key stakeholders and community leaders
- Familiarity with local organizations and resources serving our clients.
- Committed to organizational diversity and inclusion

We also seek to represent the community we serve and especially welcome new board members who are persons of color, LGBTQ persons and persons with lived experience in poverty.

Overview of Board Service

Board Member Term: Three-year terms with opportunity for two re-appointments (total possible service of nine years).

Annual and Monthly Time Commitment:

- **Board meetings:** 2-3 hours monthly (excluding March, July and December)
- **Standing Committee/Subcommittee/Task Force/Work Group meetings:** 2-4 hours monthly depending on workload. Board members are expected to serve on at least one standing committee and/or subcommittee or task force/work group. New members are invited to serve where their expertise and skills can best be applied.
- **Annual retreat:** 7-9 hours, usually split over two evenings, one of which is a regularly scheduled Board meeting

- **Fundraising and outreach events:** Board members are expected to be present at the annual fundraiser – Feed the Valley. Participation is welcome at other public and private events as schedules allow.

Board Member Duties

Board member duties are detailed in the [Valley Outreach Board Member Job Description \[Link\]](#).

Strategic Plan

Valley Outreach’s priorities are guided by a three-year strategic plan, which the board refreshes each year. Current strategic imperatives are:

1. We design and implement programs for a broader, basic needs organization. Programs and service levels continue to be developed, improved, expanded and adapted based on client needs and engagement. This includes our own direct programming as well as partnerships.
2. We are committed to cultural competency in all we say and all we do. We reflect the communities we serve. We are informed by thoughtful measures of success in both quantitative and qualitative forms. These measures invite greater investment in our organization, ranging from investments to individual talent to financial assets.
3. Valley Outreach is recognized as a collaborative leader in the St. Croix Valley and in Minnesota, creating stability for individuals and resiliency for communities. We use our experience and resources to proactively evaluate and address inequities in the food security sector through collaborations in programming, education, awareness and advocacy.

For more information about serving on VO’s Board, please contact Claudia Swendseid, Governance Committee Chair at claudiaswendseid@comcast.net or 612-618-5867 or Tracy Maki, Valley Outreach CEO, at 651-342-5560 or tracy.maki@valleyoutreachmn.org.