



## 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](http://www.valleyoutreachmn.org)



/ValleyOutreach



@ValleyOutreach



/valleyoutreach

**Chief Executive Officer:** Tracy Maki    **Board Chair:** Becky Billingsley

**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 \$3.06M, with 45% of that cash and 55% in-kind donations of food and clothing. Eighty-six cents of every dollar goes to direct programming with the remaining 14 cents being core mission support of 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.

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: We are better together.**

As an organization, we are building and nourishing an environment in which inclusiveness is a reflex, not an initiative.

We strive for consistent progress towards social and economic equality. We are an ally in creating positive change, never hesitating to advocate for justice, and listening to those most affected by broken systems.

In all we say and all we do, we commit to diversity, equity and inclusion across race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, status as a veteran, basis of disability and other aspects of personal identity.

These values are nonnegotiable.

## **Current programs: Service statistics, COVID-19 pandemic response**

*Program snapshot from fiscal year 2019/2020 including adaptations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

**We start with yes.** Over the last five years, the number of individuals we serve every month has more than doubled and the need for our services continues to grow. Last year, we served 3,925 unique households, a 49% increase over the previous year. (For reference, in 2018/2019 we served 2,619 unique households.) A conservative average household size of families we serve is 3 people. Using that average we served at least 11,775 people last year.

**Basic Needs:** Our basic needs programs focus on food and clothing. We help people address food scarcity as the income issue that it is, so they can redirect budget savings into things that may be harder to address (e.g., rent, medical bills, transportation, etc.)

- **Food** – Through our SuperShelf certified food shelf and related programs, we distributed more than 1,215,000 meals (or nearly 1.5 million pounds of food). More than 1,380 households visited us every month last year. We had a total of more than 17,000 visits (duplicated count, indicating level of use) to our food programs last year (programs include – food shelf/drive-up services, Mobile Choice/Delivery, CFAP Bonus Friday, and To Go Market).
- **Clothing** – 660 unique households received clothing and we distributed more than 37,000 items. While we served nearly the same number of households as the previous year, we did see a drop in total items distributed due to our building closure and adaptation to drive-up service.

**Client Support Services:** Our Client Support Services team, which includes licensed social workers, served 1,776 unique households last year. This number is similar to the prior year. We believe this number would be higher if we were operating business as usual vs. our current drive-up model.

In 2019/2020, households that receive Client Support Services:

- 95% also accessed our food program
- 77% received resource assistance through our intake process
- 30% received deeper case management/application assistance support
- 11% accessed financial assistance

Our Client Support Services program is so important because Valley Outreach is where people show up when they need help. It often starts with help with food and from there our team can learn more about a client's situation and connect them to available resources.

**COVID-19 Response:** Beginning March 16, we adjusted our operations to limit person-to-person contact while prioritizing food distribution and phone-based client support. To do this, we closed our building to the public, set up clear social distancing and safety plans and offered drive-up food distributions five days a week. We work closely (over the phone and Zoom) with our community partners to ensure we're meeting the needs of people. We've made many adaptations in the past several months to adjust to increased demands for our services and changes to the food supply chain.

We serve 350 to 400 households each week through our drive-up food distribution model and about 60 households each month receive delivery services. This is an increase of nearly 30% over the previous year. Our team proves, time and time again, that they can rise to a challenge and pivot quickly to meet the needs of our community. We monitor needs by staying close to the people we serve and our agency partners.

**WE PROVIDE PEOPLE WITH  
A WIDE RANGE OF SUPPORT**

**13,000+** → **60%**  
PEOPLE USED OUR SERVICES      OF FAMILIES SERVED WERE NEW TO V.O.

**IN 2020**



We distributed enough food for **more than 1,215,000 meals**.



We distributed more than **37,400 items of clothing**.



Almost **1,800 families** received personalized client support services.



**450 volunteers** donated **17,500 hours** of their time valued at nearly **\$477,496**.

## 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.

**March 2020.** The clothing closet program, previously limited to local residents only, moved to a new space in the building, doubling the square footage available. Rebranded StyleXchange, the program is open to any family or individual with a need. Plans for this program include a social enterprise component with sales of clothing to the general public, too.

Most families and individuals we serve have household incomes at or below 200% of federal poverty guidelines, or \$26,500 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.). For more information see [www.supershelfmn.org](http://www.supershelfmn.org).

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

Just over half of Valley Outreach’s \$3.06M annual budget comes from donated food and clothing. Cash is raised mainly from individuals (46%), foundations (31%), and the remainder is donated by the faith community, civic organizations, businesses and through special events. We receive no fee-for-service revenue. We typically do not receive government funding either, however with the CARES Act, food shelves were eligible for dollars specifically related to food distribution and we did receive dollars in the last fiscal year as a result of pandemic aid.

## Board of Directors

Valley Outreach is overseen by a 17 to 21-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

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

In building a board with a variety of skills and life experiences, we are considering applicants who will be:

- Passionate about Valley Outreach's mission, vision and values
- Committed to increasing organizational cultural competency through a diversity, equity and inclusion lens
- Thoughtful strategic thinkers and problem-solvers
- Willing to advocate for the organization with external stakeholders
- Experienced in business and/or non-profit management, marketing/public relations, financial, legal, human resources, DEI
- Connected with community leaders and familiar with organizations and resources serving our clients
- Motivated to succeed yet open to risk, failure and learning opportunities

## 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 Jan Hallstrom, Governance Committee Chair at [hallstrom.leider@gmail.com](mailto:hallstrom.leider@gmail.com) or Tracy Maki, Valley Outreach CEO, at 651-342-5560 or [tracy.maki@valleyoutreachmn.org](mailto:tracy.maki@valleyoutreachmn.org).