

STRATEGIC PLAN

GREATER MINNEAPOLIS COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

September 8, 2010

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Executive Summary

The Strategic Planning Committee of the Board of Directors of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches (GMCC) engaged in multi-year study of internal operations and external environment. That study included the following elements which are summarized in this Strategic Plan:

- The identification of key strengths, evaluative questions or principles, program clusters, and program integration,
- An analysis of program trends over the past five years,
- An analysis of the financial models of each program,
- An environmental scan of unmet needs and future needs in the communities we serve, and
- A Nonprofit Business Analysis by the Nonprofit Finance Fund (in collaboration with the Finance and Administration Committee)

Based on this extensive study, the following six broad goals have been established. They seek to address **unmet needs** identified in the scan, and they assume a continuation of all existing GMCC programs and services as of September 2010 as funding is available to provide them. GMCC's programs are excellent and continue providing essential services to those in need.

Four of the goals identify **ends** we are seeking (preventing hunger, halting homelessness, erasing educational disparities, and maximizing the self-reliance of seniors—in short, **seeking the end of poverty**). Two of the goals identify **means** of getting there (increasing capital capacity/structure and reinforcing our entrepreneurial organizational culture). The goals are **visionary**, and we won't accomplish any of these on our own, but working together with like-minded organizations and congregations we expect to make significant progress toward accomplishing them.

The overarching vision is to empower people to achieve self-sufficiency and self-reliance.

1. **Prevent hunger**
2. **Halt homelessness**
3. **Erase educational disparities**
4. **Maximize the self-reliance of seniors**
5. **Increase capital capacity/structure**
6. **Reinforce our entrepreneurial organizational culture**

Key strengths

Need-Focused:

GMCC is willing to take on social issues that are important to the community but that are not otherwise being addressed or supported; or where GMCC believes it can be more effective.

Outcome-Oriented:

GMCC is focused on results and outcomes, not just process. While having a big heart and compassion, focusing on getting things done and being effective in the community is a key differentiator for GMCC.

Collaborative:

GMCC is effective at bringing different constituencies together around a problem and keeping them focused and working together. Program examples include the Center for Families, Minnesota Food Share, Metro Paint-A-Thon, Compassion Capital Fund, and HandyWorks. Our ability to unite people of faith rather than profess only one faith also helps us to collaborate more effectively.

Entrepreneurial and Well-Managed:

GMCC is always looking at the needs in the community and has several staff who are entrepreneurial by nature and bubbling with new initiatives and ideas. This is a great resource and necessary for future vitality but not sufficient for success on its own. GMCC is also strong at managing more mature programs in an efficient manner. This is a rare combination to find in one organization.

Efficient:

GMCC manages a low overhead averaging 11%. This is an attractive feature to potential donors, knowing that 89% of their contribution is going to be passed through to address the need directly.

Our programs are well-known:

While GMCC is not as well-known in the broader community as its programs, it is well-respected as an organization by those who interact with it regularly.

Pro-active and forward thinking:

GMCC is a leader in initiating programs responding quickly to emerging community needs.

Faith-based mission and capacity to mobilize volunteers, 25,000 from 700 member congregations

Financial management: GMCC's audits year after year are clean (no qualifications, no recommendations, no material weaknesses, no reportable conditions, no financial control deficiencies), and our financial management is frequently cited as a best practice.

Good working relationships with multiple levels of government

Legacy of impact in both years of service and depth of service

Flexibility and capacity to change with the times and needs

Skilled intermediary organization

Uniting justice and charity

Ability to develop leadership in faith-based and community-based grassroots organizations

Strong and growing organization at a time when the bulk of our core membership (mainline congregations) are in decline

Key evaluative questions or principles
used to determine which community needs or projects we would focus on

- Mission fit
- Experience
- Sources of resources (funding, staff, volunteers, space) identified to support our involvement
- Opportunities for success
- Collaboration/dialogue with partners
- Unique, distinctive, un-duplicative
- Risk of doing/not doing the project
- How to rank projects in priority order?
- Is this a new project, a major expansion of an existing project, or a minor expansion of an existing project

Key program clusters

Helping seniors live independently

- Paint-A-Thon
- HandyWorks

Reducing hunger in Minnesota

- Minnesota FoodShare

Nurturing healthy families, *including immigrant families*

- Family Group Conferencing
- Discover
- Center for Families
- Project Persevere

Closing the achievement gap

- Supplemental Educational Services *incubator*

Building a caring community

- Service/learning for youth and adult volunteers on urban poverty
 - Urban Immersion Service Retreats
- Serving as an intermediary to enhance the effectiveness of smaller faith-based and community-based nonprofit organizations
 - Compassion Capital Fund

Empowering urban American Indians - DIW

- Closing the achievement gap
 - Youth Leadership Development Program
- Nurturing families
 - Strengthening Family Circles
- Improving housing
 - Strengthening Family Circles
 - Healing Spirit House
- Reducing family violence
 - Strengthening Family Circles
- Reducing hunger
 - Food Shelf
- Treatment support and recovery maintenance services to chemically dependent American Indian people and their families
 - Recovery Maintenance Services

Reducing Crime

- Community Justice Project

Collaborative Programs

- Clinical Pastoral Education
- Friendship Village Chaplaincy Services

Cutting across these program clusters are these integrating screens

- Services spanning a continuum: Working with those in need of recovery (ex-offenders, victims of family violence, those recovering from chemical dependency) → Providing basic needs (food, shelter) → Helping people move toward economic self-sufficiency
- Particular racial/ethnic/cultural groups: American Indians, West Africans, African-Americans being the most prominent
- Services spanning the age continuum: Pre-natal → early childhood → school-age → adolescent → adulthood → elderly
- Circle of services addressing most areas of need (except medical care, mental health, employment)

Partnerships and Collaboration

The Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches is engaged in thousands of partnerships and collaborations with congregations, corporations, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and community groups. It would be difficult to imagine how we would function without these important relationships.

In each program area, our staff are charged to develop these collaborative relationships and to avoid duplication of effort. In the effort to alleviate hunger, for example, Minnesota FoodShare works with four other partners (food banks, food shelves, Hunger Solutions Minnesota, and the State of Minnesota). Here is how each partner fits into the larger collaboration:

Food Banks	Distribute supplies to food shelves, emergency meal programs, and other non-emergency social service programs at low cost.
Food Shelves	Provides food and personal care products at no cost to people in need. Receive food from donations and low-cost purchase from food banks.
Minnesota FoodShare	The March campaign recruits thousands of people to raise cash and food for local food shelves. The campaign raises over half of all food distribute at all Minnesota food shelves. Also advocates for awareness of hunger issues.
State of Minnesota	Administers federal and state-funded antipoverty and self-sufficiency programs. Also funds TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) allocation and distribution to food banks.
Hunger Solutions Minnesota	Hunger relief organization working to end hunger in Minnesota. Supports agencies providing food to the needy and guides grassroots advocacy.

Program Trends Over the Past Five Years

- Our programs serving elderly are seeing older elderly (84 is the average age) and elderly receiving multiple services.
- Our programs serving disabled adults are serving more clients probably because other programs providing chore services to disabled individuals are decreasing their services.
- Our programs serving children and youth are seeing the average age dropping to 8 years old and younger with the targeted services being from pre-natal to 5 years of age. This shift is following a broader community trend of focusing on early intervention.
- We are finding that long-term foster youth are not ready to transition into adulthood when they “age out” of the foster care system at age 18.
- There is a greater focus on getting teens job-ready and post-secondary-school-ready.
- More requests for services from American Indian families are coming from the inner-ring suburbs.
- Our services, particularly DIW’s, are more family-focused than individual-focused.
- There is an increasing interest in year-round enhanced day care which helps children be ready for school and parents better able to help their children be ready for school.
- There is an increased focus on pre-conception education, i.e., healthy bodies produce healthy babies, and in post-partum self-care, i.e., waiting to allow bodies to recover fully prior to a next pregnancy
- There is an increased focus on prostitution, sexual trafficking, and sexual exploitation of young women, particularly in the American Indian community.

- More seniors and middle class families in trouble are using food shelves.
- Funding priorities have shifted to:
 - Empowerment (of people and of smaller nonprofit organizations).
 - Disparities (both racial and economic).
 - Partnerships and collaborations (in spite of the increased challenges they present which are often not appreciated by funders).
 - Physical well-being and healthy lifestyles (to reduce health care costs to society), e.g., adult smoking cessation, particularly in the American Indian community.
 - Measurable results and success.
- Government granting opportunities are increasingly focused on:
 - Multi-state efforts
 - Having your own “skin in the game,” i.e., either providing a match in private funds or investing your own organization’s resources, either in cash or in-kind
- We are experiencing more internal program collaboration

General Principles and Key Learnings from the Study of the Financial Models of the Programs

- The Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches and the Division of Indian Work and our combined 31 programs are complex.
- All funding streams are volatile, not just government.
- Government funding volatility is more challenging to deal with because of:
 - The scale (the contracts are often significantly larger and of a longer duration than a comparable grant from any other source)
 - The loss of revenue for support services which goes away when a contract ends.
 - Government never adequately funds any program
- GMCC overall (and to a lesser extent DIW overall) shows fairly stable revenue from all sources. One of our strengths is our diverse funding from multiple sources—government, corporations, foundations, churches, individuals, etc. All are needed and complement each other.
- A large portion of the revenue we receive is re-granted to food shelves and other nonprofit organizations serving the disadvantaged. In 2009, the total re-granted was \$1,512,042 or 19% of our total expenditures. With the re-granting, GMCC provides technical assistance, training, and support so that these financial investments will make the most effective impact serving people in need.
- Support from government contracts and grants is about 40% of total revenue, fairly modest compared to the two largest faith-based organizations operating in our region. (Support from government contracts and grants is 80% of total revenue at Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota and 55% of total revenue at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.)
- One of the original questions driving this study was: Should we cap government funding at some percentage of total revenue? We have concluded the answer to that question is No. Instead, we believe we need to *manage* government funding more carefully:
 - Planning more effectively for the ending of large government contracts
 - Negotiating for increased “unit of service” rates or for decreased units of service for the same contracted amount.

- Some programs will never be fully self-sufficient but will be close enough to continue the program with careful planning.
- There are few opportunities for significant earned revenue since so much of GMCC's work is with the poor.
- While financial support from congregations and denominations has stayed at about the same amount for the last 20 years (excluding capital campaign support which has been very significant), volunteer support from the faith community has grown enormously during that time. Our 25,000 volunteers put in 311,000 hours of service each year. Using the valuation of volunteer hours by the Independent Sector (\$20.25 per hour), those volunteer hours are worth more than \$6.3 million annually!
- Foundations providing start-up funding for new initiatives for a set number of years contributes to the volatility of foundation funding.
- GMCC and DIW are very effective in using a "proof of concept" model which designs new program initiatives to meet unmet needs in the community, then pilots a small demonstration project before launching full-scale programs.
- An effective start-up strategy for new initiatives addressing important needs which may be unpopular to the general public and potential funders, is to invest GMCC's own "risk venture capital" to launch a program until it demonstrates solid outcomes which can attract support from outside funders. The Community Justice Project's work reducing crime and recidivism by ex-offenders through mentoring is an example of this approach.
- Measuring impact is distinctive of GMCC's work and a key to our success as an organization and in securing financial and volunteer resources.
- This study raised the question of balancing GMCC's recognized entrepreneurial talent for addressing emerging needs against GMCC's increasing trend of reaching/sustaining maximum organizational growth.

Programs

1. Minnesota FoodShare (provides more than half of the food distributed to almost all food shelves statewide since 1982)
2. Metro Paint-A-Thon (5,942 homes of low-income seniors and disabled individuals painted since 1984)
3. HandyWorks (chore services for seniors—lawn mowing, house cleaning, snow shoveling, yard raking, minor home repair)
4. Compassion Capital Fund (awards grants to grass-roots groups working to help low-income families in their neighborhoods. In addition to financial help, provides technical assistance and training in areas such as volunteer recruitment, accounting, grant writing/fund raising, and risk management)
5. Discover Parenting (teaches parenting and employment skills and reduces child protection cases)
6. Project Persevere (reconnects parents—cut off from monthly government assistance—with job counselors and benefits. When a parent loses the family's public assistance, the children lose housing, meals, and the stability of familiar daycare and schools.)
7. Urban Immersion Service Retreats (educates 110 congregations and 2,000 people a year—from 12 different states and 2 Canadian provinces since 2000—about urban poverty and places them in volunteer service providing 10,000 hours a year)
8. Center for Families (inter-jurisdictional, cross-sector, multi-cultural, and inter-disciplinary response to the large influx of West African immigrants as well as other families in need of support)
9. Families Forward (brings extended family members, teachers, pastors, neighbors, social workers, etc. together to develop a plan to support low-income families facing challenges: from early childhood issues to adults with frail elderly parents)
10. Discover Learning Centers/Supplemental Educational Services (provides tutoring assistance through local congregations for students in schools that have not met State targets for adequately increasing student achievement)
11. Community Justice Project (reduces crime and recidivism by mentoring ex-offenders)

Division of Indian Work

Strengthening Family Circles:

12. Strengthening Family Circles (strengthens American Indian parents, and children with home visits and prenatal and parenting classes)
13. Anpa-Wasté and Anpa-Wasté Numpa (offers reduced-rent apartment complexes for young American Indian families who can't find affordable housing. Parents living there either work or attend school and take part in weekly parenting classes)
14. Family Violence Services (provides counseling and legal advocacy to American Indian people impacted by domestic violence)
15. Phoenix Project (offers services to young Native girls who are at risk for or who have been trafficked into a life of prostitution)
16. Fathers Services (helps American Indian fathers become better parents and providers for their children)
17. Spiritual Counseling (uses traditional American Indian cultural practices to bring healing and wholeness to those needing extra support to deal with the challenges of everyday living)

Youth Leadership Development Program:

18. Youth Leadership Development Program (encourages well-rounded success by providing American Indian youth with after-school tutoring, mentors, and summer recreational and cultural activities)

19. American Indian Math Project (raises math scores of American Indian students using Native culture to teach math concepts)
20. Agindaasodaa! (Let's Read) (raises reading scores of American Indian students by grade 3 using a leveraged literacy curriculum)
21. First Language Project (provides experiential language instruction in conversational Ojibwe through cultural and recreational activities to American Indian youth ages 7-17)

Healing Spirit:

22. Healing Spirit House (provides education and support for American Indian youth in the long-term foster care system)
23. Healthy Youth Transitions (assures that system-involved (foster care, juvenile justice, truancy) American Indian youth are prepared for independent living)
24. Recovery Maintenance Services (serves American Indians who have completed chemical dependency treatment but need help maintaining their sobriety)

Health Services:

25. Horizons Unlimited (food shelf)
26. Women of Traditional Birthing (doula project)
27. Mashkiki Ogichidaag (Medicine Warriors) (teaches American Indian young people about the traditional Native uses for tobacco, including prayer, offerings, gift-giving, cleansing, and medicine. The aim is to keep them from smoking and prevent the negative health effects that come with it)
28. Live It! (a culturally-specific sexuality education curriculum)
29. Signs and Symptoms (heart attack and stroke prevention project)

Community Collaborations

30. Clinical Pastoral Education (trains seminarians, pastors, and faith leaders to provide spiritual care and counseling to men, women, and children in transitional housing facilities (in partnership with Catholic Charities) and in hospital settings (in partnership with Mayo Mankato Immanuel St. Joseph's Hospital)
31. Friendship Village of Minnesota (provides chaplaincy and spiritual counseling to residents of a large residential and assisted-living home who require direct service and crisis care)

Environmental Scan

The environmental scan sought to identify unmet needs in the communities we serve that might be a good fit with our mission and our experience and expertise as an organization. That process—to which all members of the Board of Directors and all staff were invited to participate—included these elements:

Twin Cities Compass - presentation by Paul Mattessich

The Strategic Planning Committee identified these key “take aways” for GMCC’s strategic planning process:

Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing access to data on independent living for seniors • Opportunities for more senior volunteers as numbers increase • Getting information to seniors who are not tech savvy • More emphasis is needed on the role of informal care-giving
Education Disparities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of children read at grade 3 level by grade 3 • 50-60% of children of color read at grade 3 level by grade 3 • 40% of transient children (“high mobility”) read at grade 3 level by grade 3 • 40% of 11th graders are proficient in math at grade level • 12-25% of 11th grade youth of color are proficient in math at grade level • Support development of leaders of color long-term to address these issues
Hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9% of people in the Twin Cities region are living in poverty • 25-33% of people of color in the Twin Cities region are living in poverty
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33% of households in Twin Cities region are “cost-burdened” (spend more than 30% on housing) • 53-58% of households of color in the Twin Cities region are “cost-burdened”
Urban American Indian People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per capita income: \$35,000 white, \$20,000 American Indian • Home ownership: 60% white, 42% American Indian • Homelessness: 20 per 10,000 white people, 179 per 10,000 American Indians • Graduation rates: 80% on-time white high school graduation, 38% on-time American Indian high school graduation (the lowest)

Heading Home Hennepin - presentation on homelessness and housing by Cathy ten Broeke

The Strategic Planning Committee identified these key “take aways” for GMCC’s strategic planning process:

- There are homelessness prevention opportunities particularly with seniors and ex-offenders in our existing programs.
- Discharge planning (as program participants leave our many programs) can be key to preventing homelessness in the transition.
- There are multiple opportunities to create units of supportive housing in partnership with the Division of Indian Work. The numbers may be small, but they add up:
 - Healing Spirit House for girls
 - Transitional housing for those aging out of the foster care system
 - Fathers
 - Women impacted by domestic violence
 - Girls impacted by domestic violence
 - Extended Juvenile Jurisdiction young people
- Can the Center for Families become what Heading Home Hennepin calls a one-stop Opportunity Center?
- Perhaps one way we can prevent homelessness is by addressing the achievement gap since lack of education often translates into un-employability which then can result in homelessness.
- We can use our multiple communications with congregations and other community members to build awareness about ending homelessness and encourage people to get involved, e.g., promoting the support of outreach workers and an outreach telephone number
- We should determine the extent to which our programs are directly or indirectly preventing homelessness or providing housing.
- A follow-up meeting between Cathy ten Broeke and our staff would be an effective way to inform Heading Home Hennepin about what specifically GMCC is currently doing on the homelessness issue and what strategic opportunities there may be for us to do more.

Regional Services Planning and Client Service Delivery Model - presentation by Rex Holzemer of Hennepin County

The Strategic Planning Committee identified these key “take aways” for GMCC’s strategic planning process:

- Insufficient information is available on how clients will be affected by the changes
- The County’s changes could be an opportunity or a threat—we need to stay engaged with the County to protect our interests
- It appears the integrated service delivery model should (in theory) serve clients better
- There is little clarity about how GMCC/DIW could be a partner with the County
- Given the public transportation system, is the regionalization model really better for clients?
- We want to secure the Center for Families as a pilot for the integrative services satellite plan
- We could help the County in knowing how to collaborate and measure success
- How can we make sure we stay at the table in conversations about various hub and satellite sites?

American Indian Issues and Needs - presentation by Noya Woodrich, Senior Vice President and Executive Director of the Division of Indian Work (DIW)

The Strategic Planning Committee identified these key “take aways” for GMCC’s strategic planning process:

- Discouragement that there has been very little improvement in the circumstances of American Indian people over the past 20 years.
- Consistent funding is key.
- The importance of communicating the knowledge that challenges are historically-rooted and multi-generational and hence it will take a long time to overcome.
- There are challenges finding American Indian mentors for youth because American Indians who would be good mentors are already overcommitted.
- An idea: partner with a school and grade and develop a test program to prove that a culturally-specific educational program works and do it publicly.
- Housing needs:
 - More foster care
 - For those aging out of foster care
 - Partnering with Nicollet Square (in part for those aging out of foster care)
 - For those women and girls who are being sexually exploited,
 - Transitional housing for young, male ex-offenders
 - Long term assisted living care for elders
- Instead of developing programs ourselves, the Division of Indian Work (DIW) could provide leadership to teach others about American Indian needs and methods to address them, e.g.:
 - Housing 150 (the Westminster and Plymouth joint effort)
 - Montessori Training Center
- See early education as a tool to end the cycle of poverty (see Bigelow Foundation’s *Words Work* initiative). Engaging parents is key.
- Teaching American Indian fathers a role (beyond bread winner) with their children since traditionally American Indian women are the ones responsible for the care of children.

Changing Face of Hunger in Minnesota - presentation by Barbara Thell, Director of Minnesota FoodShare

The Strategic Planning Committee identified these key “take aways” for GMCC’s strategic planning process:

- The recession has produced a major increase in demand for food at food shelves
- The food shelves have moved from being a short-term response to a “continuous supplement” for many people
- The short-term response focused on shelf-stable foods needs to now become more focused on nutritious food with fresh fruits and vegetables
- There is a lack of space, refrigerators, and money to buy food and pay staff that the shift to nutritious and fresh foods requires.
- There has been a shift from mostly serving those below the poverty line to serving the middle class.
- The old geographical food shelf boundaries need to change as under-served, primarily suburban, locations are experiencing a dramatic increase in need.
- Transporting food is going to require greater transportation efficiencies.
- We need to expand models for serving people, e.g., Fare for All, grocery vouchers, and mobile food shelves for seniors.
- Government feeding programs are even more important as a partner in the overall system of feeding hungry people.
- Impressed by the bipartisan advocacy work. Are donors aware of this?
- Impressed by the coordinating and consolidating of hunger partners
- Potential issue that will just increase: the move from shelf stable to fresh foods.
- Nutritional piece is even more important with health care reform.
- More background information is required to tell the whole story of what’s needed.
- Could the web not only identify how to find a food shelf but also what each food shelf needs in contributions each week?
- We need to bond with the middle class who are now using food shelves so they will support food shelves once they no longer need the food shelves themselves.

A Quiet Crisis in America - presentation on the issues and needs of seniors by Megan Nolan-Elliasen, Director of HandyWorks and Deidre Pope, Director of Paint-A-Thon

The Strategic Planning Committee identified these key “take aways” for GMCC’s strategic planning process:

- The goal of our two senior services programs (and the goal of seniors themselves) is to assist them in living independently in their own homes as long as they can.
- The four necessary services to help seniors retain that independence are: chore services, transportation, companionship, and coordination of resources. Seniors themselves identify chore services as the greatest unmet need, and Minnesota counties report chore services as the number one gap in services to seniors.
- There is projected to be a dramatic growth in the number of elderly (and of older elderly) in the next two decades. Accompanying this will be the need for increased programs and services to seniors.
- Funding to retain current levels of service is a challenge, let alone the increased funding necessary to meet the increased need for services that is coming. The funding challenge is because of a lack of focus by funders on seniors due to broad unawareness of the dramatic increase in seniors projected in the next two decades.
- Noting the role Art Rolnick, the top official of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, has played in helping the broader community become aware that it is in society’s best interest to increase the readiness of more children for kindergarten, we need an “Art Rolnick of senior services” to help build a broader community awareness that keeping elderly living independently is both best for seniors and economically less expensive for society as a whole.
- In 2009, our two senior services programs served 658 clients. To meet the growing need for services, we would need to serve 825 clients in 2015 (a 20% increase) and 1,000 clients in 2020 (a 52% increase). We are not prepared to meet this growing need.
- There is need for greater integration of services for seniors.
- There is a lack of case workers to refer clients to other services.
- There is a relatively low volunteer involvement by congregations in our senior services programs compared with the number of our member congregations.
- Defining elderly as 60+ may not serve us well since public perception is that 60 year olds are not elderly. It would be better, if we could, to focus on 80+ frail elderly. The requirement of our funders to define seniors as 60+ ties our hands, however.

Nonprofit Business Analysis by the Nonprofit Finance Fund

Key observations:

- Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches has had historically break even operating results, with fluctuations primarily due to capital contributions.
 - Revenue growth was primarily driven by government contributions as expenses grew 26% between 2003 and 2008.
- GMCC's main assets lie in its facilities, making it especially important for GMCC to prepare for and fund ongoing maintenance. Although some board designated funds have been accrued to support buildings and equipment, GMCC should carefully evaluate the reserves necessary for long-term maintenance.
- At fiscal year end 2008, GMCC had less than three months of available cash and investments. This cash, however, mostly comes from temporarily restricted funds, indicating that it is not truly liquid. Liquid net assets, perhaps a better measure of liquidity for GMCC, are at less than one month of expenses.
- Because GMCC's facilities are central to delivering its mission, it should take into consideration the costs of maintaining and improving these spaces into its annual budgeting process.
 - It will be important for the organization to generate operating surpluses to fund and build its reserves for future capital costs. In addition, surpluses will strengthen GMCC's overall capital structure and long-term financial stability and sustainability.
 - GMCC may want to consider conducting an engineering analysis of its facilities in order to develop a more accurate picture of the funds needed to maintain its facilities.
- GMCC has had increased demand for its services and has opportunity for growth at this time. The financial implications of growth should be considered carefully, along with programmatic results.

Key recommendations:

- Leadership indicated that GMCC's current budget process does not include incorporating capital needs for its facilities, although surpluses are generally put into board-designated reserves. NFF encourages GMCC to create targeted operating budget goals to generate operating surpluses large enough not only to cover programming and capital costs but also to contribute meaningfully to savings, strengthening its overall capital structure.
- A healthy capital structure, i.e., balance sheet, is central to GMCC's ability to deliver its mission successfully.
 - When capital structure is forced to carry operations by funding deficits, an organization will often be faced with short-term, cash flow-driven decisions, inability to innovate, mission creep, a deteriorating facility, and decreased ability to manage risks.
- As surpluses become cash, reasonable amounts can be put into board-designated reserves and invested safely in instruments that allow access to the cash when needed.
- Consistent surpluses will allow GMCC to generate reserves in order to build operating reserves, invest in facility improvements, build fundraising capacity, etc.

- NFF encourages GMCC to articulate a plan for building cash reserves to support existing and higher levels of fixed asset and cash flow needs.
- As such, GMCC may want to consider consistently setting aside a portion of operating surpluses or launching a capital campaign for a board-designated building reserve:
 - The appropriate size of this reserve could mirror accumulated depreciation (or a portion thereof), an imperfect estimate of the actual wear and tear of facilities.
 - A more accurate number can be derived by:
 - An engineering analysis of future maintenance and replacement needs.
 - A determination, based on funder preferences, of whether it is better to raise money to renovate current facilities gradually each year or in large chunks when specific work becomes necessary.
- GMCC may want to consider conducting a Systems Replacement Plan (SRP), or similar service, that uses an engineer to map the timing and anticipated costs of running and maintaining facilities over 20 years. The SRP can be used to create an annual capital expenditure budget.

The Strategic Plan

The overarching **vision** of this plan is to empower people to achieve self-sufficiency and self-reliance.

Our areas of **impact**:

- Helping seniors live independently
- Nurturing healthy families
- Empowering urban American Indians
- Reducing crime
- Fighting hunger
- Ensuring school success
- Building a caring community

Goals

In each goal area the plan identifies key facts guiding the selection of the goal and ways we seek to make **improvements** to existing programs, launch new **initiatives** addressing unmet needs, and begin **exploration** of additional initiatives.

The Strategic Plan is intended to address unmet needs. Therefore, not every program is named and has goals assigned. The goals assume a continuation of all existing programs and services as of September 2010 as funding is available to provide them. GMCC's programs are excellent and continue providing essential services to those in need.

Four of the goals identify **ends** we are seeking (preventing hunger, halting homelessness, erasing educational disparities, and maximizing the self-reliance of seniors—in short, **seeking the end of poverty**). Two of the goals identify **means** of getting there (increasing capital capacity/structure and reinforcing our entrepreneurial organizational culture). The goals are **visionary**, and we won't accomplish any of these on our own, but working together with like-minded organizations and congregations we expect to make significant progress toward accomplishing them

1. Prevent hunger

"I do not want to send them away hungry" (Matthew 15:32)

Facts:

- 9% poverty rate in the Twin Cities
- 25-33% poverty rate among people of color in the Twin Cities
- Major increase in demand for food at food shelves because of the recession—at the Division of Indian Work as well as across the state of Minnesota
- Food shelf volunteers/donors are aging
- Childhood obesity is linked with poverty and is at epidemic proportions
- Health disparities are directly related to poor nutrition

Improvements:

- Increase support of the Division of Indian Work food shelf

- Strengthen the grass roots food shelf network (and public awareness of that network) to assure that the March Campaign continues to provide at least half of the food distributed/ needed annually statewide
- Strengthen the congregational link to food shelf campaigns and hunger advocacy issues tied to health, nutrition, environment, poverty

Initiatives:

- Advocate/demonstrate the need for the emergency food network to provide healthy foods to low income families
- Increase the capacity of Minnesota FoodShare to address root causes of hunger and build partnerships with government feeding programs in the overall system of feeding hungry people
- Pilot a new Minnesota FoodShare campaign focusing on raising locally grown vegetables accompanied by a healthy eating campaign for clients and providers

Explorations:

- Consider new ways to get beyond “treating” the hunger problem in the American Indian community and start preventing it
- Consider new ways to provide more integrated, holistic services to the 18,000+ people who enter the Division of Indian Work through the food shelf
- Investigate ways to bring the food shelf network in to the next decade, building on our surveys, through listening sessions, testing new ways of communicating/connecting, and telling the food shelf network story to targeted groups
- Seek ways to strengthen the advocacy/education component and create greater awareness and more action by food shelves, their local congregations and food recipients
- Create a task force to consider better ways to tell the story of the need for healthy food in the emergency system and recommend actions/activities

2. Halt homelessness

**“Is this not the fast that I choose:
... to bring the homeless poor into your house?” (Isaiah 58:7)**

Facts:

- 33% of households in the Twin Cities region are “cost-burdened” (spend more than 30% on housing)
- 53-58% of households of color in the Twin Cities region are “cost-burdened”
- Urgent need to create units of supportive housing
- American Indians in the Twin Cities are nine times more likely to be homeless than European-Americans
- Through the Division of Indian Work the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches has developed a particular expertise in providing supportive housing to the American Indian community

Improvements:

- Make physical improvements to the Anpa-Wasté House at 3011 10th Avenue South and the Healthy Youth Transitions house at 2810 14th Avenue South

Initiatives:

- Successfully launch Healing Spirit House for girls at 4019 31st Avenue South
- Successfully launch Healthy Youth Transitions house at 2810 14th Avenue South

Explorations:

- Seek to create 15 units of new supportive housing through the Division of Indian Work (e.g., transitional housing for those aging out of the foster care system, women and girls impacted by sexual violence, “extended juvenile jurisdiction” young people, housing for larger American Indian families)
- Seek ways, in collaboration with others (including all those aligned with the Heading Home Hennepin plan to end homelessness), to address homelessness in other communities and, through advocacy, work to change public policies to reduce homelessness.

3. Erase educational disparities

"I truly understand that God shows no partiality" (Acts 10:34)

Facts:

- 80% of children read at grade 3 level by grade 3
- 50-60% of children of color read at grade 3 level by grade 3
- 40% of “high mobility” (transient) children read at grade 3 level by grade 3
- On time high school graduation rate in the Minneapolis Public Schools is 22% for American Indian students and 33% for African-American students
- Addressing the achievement gap—particularly in reading—and focusing on early education can help prevent homelessness and end the cycle of poverty
- More than half of Minnesota’s children are not developmentally proficient in language and literacy skills when they enter kindergarten
- White, middle-class children are more than twice as likely to be developmentally proficient in language and literacy skills as children of color and children of low-income families

Improvements:

- Successfully launch Agindaasodaa! (Let’s Read) of the Division of Indian Work
- Determine whether it is feasible—programmatically and financially—to continue offering Supplemental Educational Services as an intermediary organization

Initiatives:

- Expand literacy programming at the Division of Indian Work, K through 12
- Pilot innovative programs at 2-3 congregations to test different ways they can develop reading skills with students
- Implement programs in collaboration with congregations to help children become more ready for school, such as:
 - A program that trains members of congregations to administer the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3)
 - The utilization of a Learning Games curriculum in congregations
 - Additional parenting groups in congregations, focusing on helping parents nurture and support the development of their children

Explorations:

- Collaborate with other American Indian agencies to explore the possibility of an American Indian charter school
- Design initiatives to address school readiness, such as:
 - An After School Institute to build capacity in congregations and community-based organizations to provide effective after school programming
 - A program for congregations to integrate reading development into some of their congregational life activities
 - Creative approaches that help parents become more actively involved in their children's reading development
 - A home visiting model that could be used effectively by congregations

4. Maximize the self-reliance of seniors

**Like Abraham and Sarah who, advanced in years,
"set out, not knowing where they were going" (Hebrews 11:8)**

Facts:

- The number of those 65 and older in the seven county Twin Cities metro area will increase from 274,385 in 2007 to 412,230 in 2020, a 50% increase
- The number of those 85 and older in the seven county Twin Cities metro area will increase from 39,872 in 2007 to 54,510 in 2020, a 37% increase
- Seniors identify chore services as the greatest unmet need in services to enable them to remain living independently in their own homes
- One-third of seniors have retirement savings of less than \$10,000, half have less than \$50,000
- 10% of seniors in Minnesota in a long term care facility at an average cost of \$67,000 per person annually totals \$4.5 billion. By 2020, that cost will rise to \$6.4 billion (not adjusting for inflation).

Improvements:

- Increase chore services (lawn mowing, snow shoveling, yard raking, house cleaning, minor home repair) through the HandyWorks program to enable low-income elderly to continue living independently in their own homes as long as possible
- Increase house painting through the Paint-A-Thon program to enable low-income elderly to continue living independently in their own homes as long as possible

Initiatives:

- Successfully launch a pilot study with 10 clients of the Paint-A-Thon to assess our capacity to help seniors (and their families) identify and coordinate a broad range of services

Explorations:

- Investigate ways to expand our "entry point" with seniors using our HandyWorks and Paint-A-Thon programs to a more integrative and collaborative response to the needs of low-income seniors
- Consider new approaches necessary to address the increase in numbers of low-income seniors
- Consider adding services for American Indian elders at the Division of Indian Work

5. Increase capital capacity/structure

". . . like a wise man, who built his house on a rock" (Matthew 7:24)

Facts:

- GMCC's main physical assets are its facilities which are relatively new (three largest facilities built in the last 15 years) and debt free
- GMCC has inadequate reserves to prepare for and fund ongoing maintenance of its facilities
- GMCC is not able at this time to fund depreciation
- GMCC needs to conduct a Systems Replacement Plan that maps the timing and anticipated costs of running and maintaining our facilities over the next 20 years
- GMCC needs to create an annual capital expenditure budget
- At year end 2009, GMCC had less than four months of available cash and investments, and most of this cash comes from temporarily restricted funds indicating that it is not truly liquid
- At year end 2009, GMCC's liquid net assets, perhaps a better measure of liquidity for GMCC, are less than two weeks of expenses
- A healthy capital structure, i.e., balance sheet, is central to GMCC's ability to deliver its mission successfully
- Building operating reserves strengthens GMCC's ability to innovate, fuel growth, manage risks, build fund-raising capacity, and sustain long-term financial stability and sustainability

Improvements:

- Increase liquid net assets
- Build operating reserves to support innovation, fuel growth, manage risks, build fund-raising capacity, and sustain long-term financial stability and sustainability

Initiatives:

- Conduct a Systems Replacement Plan to map the timing and anticipated costs of running and maintaining our facilities, including furniture and equipment, over the next 20 years
- Create and fund a board-designated capital replacement reserve to implement the Systems Replacement Plan

Explorations:

- Consider ways to maximize our property assets, capturing and leveraging the value of those assets
- Consider ways to make our facilities more energy efficient and seek funding to implement them

6. Reinforce our entrepreneurial organizational culture

"The Holy Spirit will teach you everything" (John 14:26)

Facts:

- We are in the middle of the worst recession since the Great Depression
- Many more of our target populations are hurting due to the economic realities with high unemployment, under-employment, mortgage foreclosures, decline in assets
- Capital campaign consultants indicate that it will be 2-3 years before the environment would be receptive to a capital campaign
- GMCC is engaged in thousands of partnerships and collaborations with congregations, corporations, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and community groups

Improvements:

- Continue to support an entrepreneurial organizational culture where board and staff are always looking at the needs in the community and new initiatives and ideas to address those needs
- Continue to develop collaborative relationships to maximize impact and avoid duplication of effort

Initiatives:

- Successfully launch staff development activities focused on innovation, new initiatives, and responding to change

Explorations:

- Seek funding opportunities to expand programs and launch new initiatives which unite people of faith, and other community partners, to serve people in need
- Seek new, fresh voices to join the experienced, dedicated members of the board of directors