



MODEL CITIES

# Strategic Plan

2024 - 2026



ModelCities



#### **OUR MISSION**

Our mission is to promote social and economic prosperity by providing access to opportunities that stabilize and develop families and communities.

#### **OUR VISION**

We envision an equitable community where all people have access to housing, economic opportunities, and culturally responsive services that help them thrive.

#### **OUR VALUES**

**Creating  
opportunity**

**Respecting  
others**

**Building  
community**

**Providing  
stability**

**Driving  
equity**

# Great strides, with more to come.

Three years ago, twin pandemics—Covid-19 and the murder of George Floyd—prompted a social and racial justice reckoning that continues today. Our previous strategic plan called for transformational change.

## Together, we met the need

We're proud of all we've accomplished, thanks to the support of our funders.

- **Doubled our revenue sources**
- **Added a trauma-informed process to our work**
- **Began updating our technology and software systems**
- **Improved our employee retention rates**
- **Increased individual and corporate giving**

## But there's still more to do

We're just getting started on building partnerships and accomplishing more through strategic advocacy and new funding channels and sources.

We've seen the effects caused by a lack of affordable housing. Many of our efforts in the months ahead will focus on solving this urgent problem.

And we've become acutely aware of the needs of our staff. As we navigate an uncertain future, we will establish systems and safeguards to ensure Model Cities remains strong.

## Our new plan is clear

We will make investments in infrastructure and act strategically over the next three years in order to accomplish these key goals:

### GOAL 1

**Develop community-focused housing solutions that address root causes of racial and socioeconomic inequities.**

### GOAL 2

**Increase capacity of our core offerings through funding, organizational development, and improvements in workplace culture.**

### GOAL 3

**Cultivate partnerships and opportunities for strategic growth and long-term organizational sustainability.**

# We believe communities thrive when people thrive.

Since 1967, our work has supported marginalized and underserved communities with an emphasis to meet the needs and invest in the economic stability and vibrancy of Black Minnesotans in Saint Paul.

## We lift up those who need it most.

We actively develop healthy communities by offering interconnected programs of support delivered with care and respect, including:

### Homeless Services

- **Safe Space:** A low-barrier, year-round 64-bed emergency shelter in downtown Saint Paul.
- **Supportive Housing:** Housing with services for parenting young adults and single-parent families with a history of homelessness.



### Economic Services

- **Homeownership Services:** HUD-approved housing-counseling agency that provides homebuyers with tools they need to navigate the home-buying process.
- **Financial Literacy Programs:** Community classes, workshops, and one-on-one coaching to help with creating a budget, managing money, or saving for a home.
- **Business Development and Entrepreneurial Support:** One-on-one financial coaching, risk-management counseling, and commercial space leasing to help entrepreneurs get a strong start.

## Community Development

- ➔ **Commercial Leasing:** Developer, owner, and manager of affordable commercial rental spaces in Frogtown, primarily serving minority-owned small businesses.
- ➔ **Real Estate Development:** Developer, owner, and manager of affordable housing units in Frogtown.
- ➔ **Property and Facility Management:** Providing leasing services as well as property maintenance and repair for affordable housing units and commercial spaces within our portfolio.



## Youth Services

- ➔ **Youth Coaching:** Mentorship, skill building, and opportunity access for youth (ages 10-18) on probation in Ramsey County.

# Our work remains more relevant and urgent than ever.

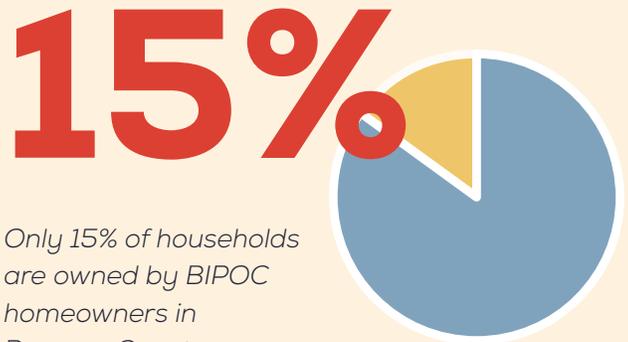
The data confirms we must continue to build equity and create opportunities for community members facing barriers, especially people of color who experience acute disparity.

## Aging, diversity, and housing challenges in Minnesota require new solutions.

Over the next decade, retirees will outnumber children under 14 for the first time in our state; meanwhile, communities of color drive population growth. In Ramsey County, this aging, diverse population may struggle to find affordable housing. Already, about 50% of renters commit more than 30% of their income to housing costs, meaning a person would need to work 75 hours a week at minimum wage to afford a 1-bedroom apartment. The problem is growing, and we're responding to it.

**75**  
hrs/wk

*A person would need to work 75 hours a week at minimum wage to afford a 1-bedroom apartment in Ramsey County.*



*Only 15% of households are owned by BIPOC homeowners in Ramsey County.*

## Homeownership disparity is daunting.

Minnesota has the nation's fourth-largest disparity in homeownership rates between white/non-Latinx and households of color. With a population in Ramsey County that's 61% white, white people comprise 85% of its homeowners, leaving only 15% of households owned by BIPOC homeowners. Our ability to drive equity is needed now.

## **Demand for housing is greater than supply.**

Ramsey County has 28,070 extremely low-income households but only 9,775 affordable housing units available. This sizable deficit—18,295—results in extended families or friends crowded into living spaces or seeking short-term housing solutions. With 231,081 Minnesotans currently living in overcrowded households, this problem is systemic across the entire state. Our ability to develop real estate and provide supportive housing services offers a way forward.



## **Those with less have been hit hardest.**

As we build back after Covid-19, demand for services provided for many nonprofits, including Model Cities, has only grown. Many of those we serve—lower-income households, households of color, and Indigenous households—had the greatest chances of unemployment and falling behind in their housing payments due to the pandemic. The financial literacy programs we run can help get people on track.

## **Our staff has felt the challenges as well.**

Like many Minnesota nonprofits, Model Cities has seen an increase in rates of staff burnout, heightened expenses, and decreases in funding, all of which have affected morale and hindered our ability to provide a workplace that is flexible, safe, and supportive. To attract, retain, and train our best and brightest, we need to provide a human-centered approach, competitive salaries and benefits, and possible shifts in funding models. We recognize that stability starts from the inside out.



## HOW WE RESPOND

# Model Cities is here to lift up those who need it most.

Our mission to promote social and economic prosperity through access and opportunities that stabilize and develop families and communities is needed now more than ever.

Housing challenges in Minnesota for BIPOC and low-income families are at a critical point where action is needed. Families are eager to find a new sense of stability. Communities want to come together to heal and grow. Model Cities is here, and has been since 1967, to lift up those who need it most.



## 3-year goals

Over the next three years, we will explore opportunities to help us accomplish these key goals:

### GOAL 1

Develop community-focused housing solutions that address root causes of racial and socioeconomic inequities.

### GOAL 2

Increase capacity of our core offerings through funding, organizational development, and improvements in workplace culture.

### GOAL 3

Cultivate partnerships and opportunities for strategic growth and long-term organizational sustainability.

### STRATEGY 1

#### Strengthen our operations

We will invest in people, processes, and technology to enhance safety, improve infrastructure, and remain resilient.

### STRATEGY 2

#### Create better outcomes for the housing continuum

We will use our talents as connectors, advocates, developers, and service providers to open doors and create housing stability for our clients.

### STRATEGY 3

#### Increase visibility to expand revenue

We will amplify the voices of our community, share our story, and position ourselves as a leader to strengthen our base and grow our revenue streams.

# Simply put, this is how we will accomplish our goals.

To keep ourselves accountable and on course, we will track our progress and make adjustments as we go.

## 1. Strengthen our operations

### Improving outcomes from the inside

- Technology and security updates
- Staff trainings and workplace culture improvements
- Enhancements to process and services

### Key performance indicator:

- We will improve our employee experience and our employee retention year over year.

## 2. Create better outcomes for the housing continuum

### Opening doors and creating stability

- More classes and programming
- Mental health resources and support for staff and residents
- New community spaces and events to improve safety

### Key performance indicators:

- We will support or implement new community focused housing solutions each year that increase capacity to the housing continuum.

## 3. Increase visibility to expand revenue

### Amplifying voices and growing impact

- Increased marketing and promotions
- A focused approach to fundraising and events
- Greater advocacy and leadership

### Key performance indicators:

- We will increase our funding by diversifying our sources and growing our total number of funders.
- We will increase our reach and engagement with the community.

# We are stronger with you by our side.

The work is important, and it will take many hands and hearts to get it done. We seek advocates, neighbors, volunteers, community partners, and committed allies to join us in creating an equitable community where all people can thrive.

**To find out more about how you can help, contact us at:**

Model Cities of St. Paul, Inc.  
839 University Avenue W  
Saint Paul, MN 55104

651-632-8350  
[www.modelcities.org](http://www.modelcities.org)

**Donate**

Invest in impact that transforms individual lives, builds economic opportunity, and strengthens communities that need it most. Donors of any scale help us further our mission and fuel our accomplishment.

**Volunteer**

We're always looking for enthusiastic people with a variety of skills. Check out our website to put your talents and passions to use.

**Advocate**

We celebrate advocates willing to articulate our value to community groups, civic organizations, private, foundational, and corporate funders, and the Legislature. Reach out to us if you want to use your voice to make a difference in one of these arenas.

**Join & Share**

Inspired to do more? Join our social networks, attend one of our events, make a referral, or show up in whatever way works for you.

Facebook: @modelcities1967

Twitter: @ModelCitiesInc

Instagram: @modelcitiesinc

LinkedIn: @model-cities

YouTube: @modelcitiesinc



ModelCities

[www.modelcities.org](http://www.modelcities.org)

