

HousingLink Strategic Plan FY 2012 – 2016

Board Approved: May 18, 2011
Refresh Approved: January 21, 2015

Introduction

HousingLink was established as a result of the 1995 Hollman v Cisneros Consent Decree, which sought improved housing conditions and greater location choice for families participating in the Section 8 voucher and public housing programs. Since that time, HousingLink has become the region's primary source for affordable housing-related data, information and resources. In the next three years HousingLink will provide more information for renters through our website, broaden key services statewide, and increase information to better serve the disability community.

Mission

Our mission is to improve people's lives through information expanding their affordable rental choices.

Values

HOUSING CHOICE. We empower renters to choose housing locations with access to good schools, employment, transportation, and community resources.

STABILITY. We help renters find affordable housing that leads to stability in all aspects of their lives.

EQUITY. We believe communities are stronger when all renters have access to quality affordable and safe housing.

RELIABILITY. We are a trusted, objective source of accurate and reliable information that is easy to find.

INNOVATION. We continually find new and better ways to provide affordable rental housing information.

HousingLink Goals for 2012 – 2016

- Enhance services for renters and expand their housing choices, finding stable housing and increasing equity in the community.
- Expand services within the region and in Greater Minnesota, increasing housing choices for all Minnesotans.
- Develop and implement an accessible housing initiative, increasing housing choice and access to units with accessible features.
- Market proprietary HousingLink data and services to the broader industry.
- Continue to build a strong, financially sustainable organization.

HousingLink Goals and Strategies

1) Enhance services for renters and expand their housing choices, finding stable housing and increasing equity in the community.

Strategies:

- a) Provide information on schools and transportation through our rental search engine.
- b) Creatively use technology to deliver education on renter rights and responsibilities.
- c) Explore the feasibility of translating HousingLink’s information to additional languages to serve more renters.
- d) Develop outreach strategies to meet the needs of underserved populations, e.g. ex-offenders, immigrants, etc.
- e) Continue to enhance the usability of HousingLink’s website and technology.

Measures of success:

- School/transportation information added to property listings
- Expanded information on renter rights and responsibilities, including questions to guide them to broader choices
- Decision made on translating HousingLink’s information
- Underserved populations identified and strategies developed to reach them
- Improvements in the usability of HousingLink’s website
- Website redesign that works well on mobile devices

2) Expand services within the region and in Greater Minnesota increasing housing choices for all Minnesotans.

Strategies:

- a) Expand supportive and transitional housing information to the seven-county metro area and all of Greater Minnesota.
- b) Explore and offer, if financially feasible, a package to support housing authority Section 8 Voucher administration.
- c) Work with partners to expand key services geographically.
- d) Continue to respond to additional opportunities to serve greater Minnesota.

Measures of success:

- Expansion of supportive and transitional housing tool MATSH to be statewide
- Package developed and offered to housing authorities in greater Minnesota
- hList available statewide
- Explore statewide expansion of Section 8 Voucher payment standard and utility allowance information to aid in increasing equity and housing choice.

3) Develop and implement an accessible housing initiative, increasing housing choices and access to units with accessibility features.

Strategies:

- a) Work with the disability community to determine their needs.
- b) Modify HousingLink core services to meet their needs.
- c) Work with the state to implement the changes outlined in the Olmstead Plan.

Measures of success:

- Outreach and development of strategies and plans to serve the disability community
- HousingLink's core services are adapted
- Increased usage of our core services by people with disabilities

4) Market proprietary HousingLink data and services to the broader industry.

Strategies:

- a) Create a niche market report drawing on our unique data set of smaller properties including a demand index of searches vs. listings.
- b) Take the next step toward developing a centralized project-based Section 8 waiting list.

- c) Explore the viability of subscription-based information for landlords and/or community planners.
- d) Explore a centralized Section 8 Voucher waiting list (pending HUD program).

Measures of success:

- Niche market report published and sold profitably, Twin Cities Rental Revue
- Centralized Project-Based Section 8 waiting list advanced
- Secure funding commitments for development Centralized Project-Based Section 8 waiting list tool
- Subscription concept explored and decision made on how to proceed
- Section 8 Voucher waiting list explored/feasibility determined

5) Continue to build a strong, financially sustainable organization.

Strategies:

- a) Continue ongoing development of the Board of Directors.
- b) Continue to grow staff capacity to advance our goals and strategies.
- c) Keep technology resources and staff current
- d) Ensure sustainable support of all new initiatives.
- e) Build HousingLink’s capacity to generate earned-income through developing and marketing products.
- f) Increase capacity for development activities.
- g) Increase the financial support from individual donors.

Measures of success:

- Annual board self-assessment surveys
- Performance appraisal process
- Staff have access to professional development on technology/technology is current
- Sustainability plan developed for all new initiatives
- Earned income (total amount and amount as percent of total revenues)
- Increased staff or contractor time devoted to development/total dollars raised
- Total dollars raised from individuals
- Assign role of web developer to one staff person and support with necessary training, may be a shared position.