



**THE BRIDGE
FOR YOUTH**

MISSION

The Bridge for Youth centers youth voice, justice, and equity in all we do, and empowers youth experiencing homelessness through safe shelter, basic needs, and healthy relationships.

VISION

All youth feel safe, accepted, and supported.

Contact:

Lisa Mears

President

l.mears@bridgeforyouth.org

(612) 508-1279

Board of Directors

Candidate Interest Packet



A Call for Collective Action



The 2022-2024 Strategic Direction for The Bridge for Youth includes a new mission, vision, and values centered in youth voice, racial justice, and equity.



**My
Voice
Matters**

Core Competencies

- › Minor-aged youth homelessness in Minnesota
- › Pregnant and parenting youth experiencing homelessness
- › Disparities amongst youth experiencing homelessness that identify as BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+
- › Centering youth voice in all we do

VISION

All youth feel safe, accepted, and supported.

MISSION

The Bridge for Youth centers youth voice, justice, and equity in all we do, and empowers youth experiencing homelessness through safe shelter, basic needs, and healthy relationships.

VALUES

Patience

We give space for youth to make decisions on their own timeline in their own way.

Love and Caring

We believe in acceptance, empathy, and non-judgment.

Communication

We engage in intentional dialogue to understand each other's truths.

Integrity

We actively learn, grow, and change to align our actions in equity and justice.

Co-Creation

We seek connection to amplify the voice of youth and each other.

Community

We stand together for youth and for each other.

Youth Voice and Leadership is a Catalyst for Change to Disrupt and Prevent Homelessness

At The Bridge, youth hold the wisdom, power, and resilience to thrive. By being journey oriented, The Bridge activates youth to recognize the interconnectedness of the past, present, and future as they decide their goals and achieve them. We believe youth are changemakers, both independently and within community. By engaging youth experiencing homelessness, family conflict, violence, and/or inequities in systems and institutions, The Bridge creates intentional opportunities, as well as provides a platform, for youth to exercise their wisdom and power.

Our response and commitment: The Bridge for Youth will invest resources in developing a nationally reputable model of youth engagement, leadership, and changemaking alongside youth experiencing homelessness. By authentically engaging youth and centering their voices, their proposed solutions act as a catalyst for the necessary changes needed at The Bridge, across systems, and in the community.



**I have
a voice**



The urgency to address youth experiencing homelessness is clear. In Hennepin County, **1,324** minor-age youth represent **33%** of the homeless population.

Expand Options for Pregnant and Parenting Youth Experiencing Homelessness

What gap do we need to fill:

- The Bridge for Youth Transitional Living Program - known as Marlene's Place – is consistently full at capacity to serve 5 youth and their children.
- Once youth transition from Marlene's Place, there are drastically limited site-based housing options with culturally responsive case management and supportive services – such as parenting, education, employment, and healthcare - available for young families.

Our response and commitment: The Bridge for Youth will work with community experts in housing and policy in a space of co-creation and imagination to develop a culturally responsive spectrum of services - from prevention to safe shelter to transitional living to permanent housing – for youth who are pregnant and parenting, including minor-age youth. This includes expanding Marlene's Place and adding permanent supportive housing for pregnant and parenting youth to our portfolio.



**Listen
to My
Voice**

Youth
Voice

Surveyed Youth Indicate Important Programming Areas

50% ask for support for
pregnant/parenting youth

87% recognize the need for
resources as early as possible

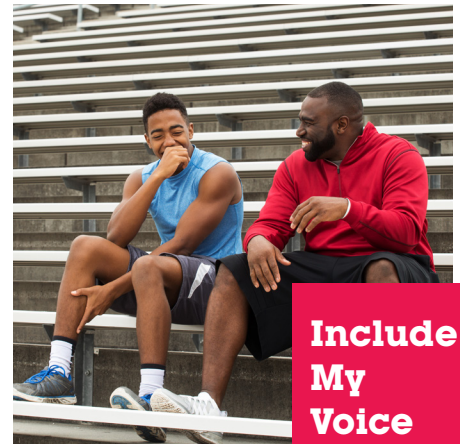
Staff Are Representative, Skilled, Satisfied, and Supported

Youth voice matters. During the strategic planning process, youth shared they want staff and board at The Bridge that look like them, have the same identities, share their experiences, and celebrate same cultures.

Staff voice matters too. Staff shared they need increased mental health supports as they navigate crisis work and the traumas they experience in community. They need sustainable wages and benefits, and the opportunity to grow professionally at The Bridge to stay at the organization long term.

Our response and commitment: Liberation is love at The Bridge where all feel safe and are inspired to show up as their true and authentic selves free from conflict, judgement, harm, and oppression. The mission of The Bridge is achieved by co-creating a loving and supportive community where everyone can thrive and experience belonging.

Based on feedback from youth, The Bridge immediately shifted its practices, prioritizing hiring staff and recruiting board members with identities, experiences, and cultures that align with those of youth in program, and building a succession plan to assure organizational leadership alignment. In February 2022, The Bridge increased the organization's minimum wage to \$20, matching Hennepin County's \$20 minimum. The Bridge will continue to invest resources in maintaining competitive and equitable wages and trauma responsive benefits, and advocate on behalf of staff needs in funding and legislative conversations.



**Include
My
Voice**

Facilities and Infrastructure are Welcoming, Impactful, and Safe for Youth and Staff

What gap do we need to fill:

➤ Did you know, due to recent programmatic expansion, we have outgrown space The Bridge?

Our response and commitment: From September 2021 – June 2022 youth and staff of The Bridge partnered with three 5th year architecture students from Dunwoody College and the Joy Collaborative in a research and design project to understand what is possible in our current facilities and reimagine their capabilities. Based on feedback from youth and staff and the input of our architecture team, the new design will be spacious and welcoming, trauma responsive, grounded in culture that represents our youth, centered in art of youth and community, and conducive to healing activities. We anticipate contracting with an architect in 2023 for final design, unveiling design and capital plans, and launching a campaign within the next 12 – 18 months.



**A Safe
Place for
All Youth**

The Bridge for Youth Commitment to Our Strategic Plan

About the Strategic Planning Process

In September 2021, The Bridge for Youth completed a 9-month strategic planning process with prioritization on centering youth and staff voice, and advancing racial justice and equity. It was a collective process driven by shared voice. Leveraging Dr. John-Paul Chaisson-Cardenas, PhD, MSW, we engaged community partners, peer organizations, thought leaders, funders, elected officials, board, staff, and youth. The evaluation was a Mixed-Methods quant-QUAL; comprised of individual surveys, focus groups, and 1:1 interviews. Data analysis was divided into phases – a qualitative review of internal survey responses; and a themed based quantitative analysis of the qualitative data of the internal and external surveys, which were overlaid on the information gathered by focus groups and one-on-one interviews. Special consideration was given to inclusion, diversity, and equity; prioritizing racial justice.

The 2022-2024 Strategic Framework for The Bridge, approved in September 2021, reflects a new mission, vision, and values, centered in racial justice and equity, and is grounded in youth voice. Over the next three years, these strategic goals will be implemented through specific strategies, objectives, and deliverables that further advance racial justice, expand and align new service delivery with the voiced needs of youth and drive systemic change.

Are you inspired by the 3 year vision of The Bridge?

We need you to be part of the journey!

- > Advocate
- > Volunteer
- > Foster Connections
- > Make a Financial Investment

Learn more at bridgeforyouth.org/strategic-framework or contact:

Lisa Mears

Executive Director

Email: l.mears@bridgeforyouth.org

Direct: 612-230-6659

Christina Woodlee

Senior Director Strategy & Partnerships

Email: c.woodlee@bridgeforyouth.org

Direct: 612-230-6645



bridgeforyouth.org |    



Vision

All youth feel safe, accepted, and supported.

Mission

The Bridge for Youth centers youth voice, justice, and equity in all we do, and empowers youth experiencing homelessness through safe shelter, basic needs, and healthy relationships.

Values

PATIENCE

LOVE & CARING

COMMUNICATION

OUR VALUES

INTEGRITY

CO-CREATION

COMMUNITY

Visit us online at bridgeforyouth.org

The Bridge is here
24/7/365 to help!

TXT4
HELP
24/7

612
400-SAFE
7 2 3 3

The Bridge for Youth provides
safety and stability for youth
ages 10-21 through:

- ✓ Youth Response Center
- ✓ Emergency Shelter
- ✓ Transitional Housing
- ✓ Outreach and Support

Our Location

1111 West 22nd Street
Minneapolis, MN 55405
612.230.6601

Engage with The Bridge

bridgeforyouth.org



A Safe Place for All Youth



Programs at The Bridge

Emergency Shelter

Resilience House

Emergency shelter for youth (ages 10-17) focused on family reunification whenever safe and possible. Youth have access to temporary shelter in a welcoming and safe environment, along with support, meals, access to healthcare and case management. Resilience House is a safe and welcoming place for ALL youth, including youth who identify as BIPOC and LGBTQ+.

Gloria's Place

The only emergency shelter in Minnesota for pregnant/parenting youth (ages 15-17) and their children (ages 0-3). Youth have access to temporary shelter in a safe and welcoming environment, along with support, meals, access to healthcare and parenting education, and case management.



Supportive Housing

Marlene's Place

The only site-based transitional housing program specifically for pregnant/parenting youth (ages 16-20) and their children (ages 0-3) in Hennepin County. Provides housing, case management, access to healthcare, and parenting education.

Rita's House

An intentional living community for youth (ages 18-21) providing affordable rental housing, case management, and independent living skills.

Need Help?

Text: 612.400.7233

Call: 612.377.8800

Outreach and Support

Connects with youth in the community through street, site-based, and mobile outreach; school partnerships; community education; counseling; aftercare; support groups; and specialized case management for crime victims and youth who identify as LGBTQ+.

Youth Response Center

Available 24/7/365 provides immediate support and resources for youth and families. The Bridge also hosts YSNMN, a mobile app that connects youth with available shelter and resources in real time.

Counseling & Aftercare

Individual and family therapy, and family meetings, as well as community-based referrals and resources for ongoing mental health support. Families and youth who call or text the Youth Response Center are offered therapeutic support to mediate conflicts and prevent homelessness.

Therapeutic Supports

Support groups focused on creativity, culture and identity, health, fitness, life skills, parenting, mental health, resiliency, relationships, and boundaries. Community partnerships for pet, art, and music focused therapeutic groups.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS POSITION DESCRIPTION

The Bridge for Youth centers youth voice, justice, and equity in all we do, and empowers youth experiencing homelessness through safe shelter, basic needs, and healthy relationships.

Our vision is all youth feel safe, accepted, and supported.

PURPOSE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS: The Bridge for Youth Board of Directors governs the overall execution of the organization's mission. Principally, the Board manages organizational finances and sets long term priorities for programs. Additionally, the Board oversees the Executive Director, who is responsible for day-to-day management of the organization.

COMPOSITION: Membership consists of a diverse group of interested persons who are committed to the mission of the organization. The Board of Directors has up to 21 voting members.

TERMS: Terms are approximately 3 years commencing upon election to the Board, and each ends on the September 30 closest to a full 3-year term. Members may be re-elected to serve no more than three consecutive terms.

OFFICERS: Officers of the Board of Directors include Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. The Executive Committee is composed of the Officers as well as the Chairs of the Board's Governance and Development Committees.

Fundamental Legal Duties

Duty of Care — Each board member has a legal responsibility to participate actively in making decisions on behalf of the organization and to exercise his or her best judgment while doing so.

Duty of Loyalty — Each board member must put the interests of the organization before their personal and professional interests when acting on behalf of the organization in a decision-making capacity. The organization's needs come first.

Duty of Obedience — Board members are responsible for the organization's continued adherence to its mission. Unlike a firm, a nonprofit cannot simply change its mission without the threat of losing either its nonprofit status or tax-exempt status, or both.

The overall responsibilities of a member of the board of directors

Approve the organization's vision, mission and purpose.

Hire, support, evaluate and set compensation for the Executive Director with the goals of the organization in mind.

Ensure effective organizational annual and strategic planning.

Assure programs are aligned with mission and strategic plan, and monitoring progress toward goals.



MISSION

The Bridge for Youth centers youth voice, justice, and equity in all we do, and empowers youth experiencing homelessness through safe shelter, basic needs, and healthy relationships.

VISION

All youth feel safe, accepted, and supported.

PATIENCE

LOVE & CARING

COMMUNICATION

OUR VALUES

INTEGRITY

CO-CREATION

COMMUNITY

Approve annual budget aligning the organization's strategic and financial goals.

Hold fiduciary responsibility for management of organizational capital, review monthly/annual financial statements, review financial policies, and ensuring appropriate filings with federal, state, and local authorities consistent with the organization's status as a Minnesota based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Adhere to legal and ethical standards and norms.

Establish and regularly review policies, which govern the organization according to nonprofit best practices.

Evaluate the structure, effectiveness, composition, and engagement of the board of directors annually.

The individual board members responsibilities

Act in alignment with the vision, mission, and values of The Bridge for Youth and center youth voice, racial justice, and equity in your governance and leadership.

Make a commitment to being an engaged champion of the organization. This includes working with the Executive Director, board chair and committees to discuss opportunities and develop a plan for your engagement on the board and in the organization.

Invest at a leadership level in the organization through monetary donations – the amount at your discretion - such that 100% of the board of directors are contributors and support a board-level annual giving goal.

Serve on at least one committee - Finance, Engagement & Development or Governance – and/or participate in other ad hoc groups, such as Racial Justice Cohort, Human Resources, Strategic Planning.

Strive to attend all board and committee meetings and functions, such as special events and invitations from the Executive Director. Provide as much advance notice as is reasonable in the event a conflict prevents attendance.

Arrive at meetings well-prepared and ready to engage in thoughtful dialogue. Review agenda and supporting materials prior to board and committee meetings. Differences of opinion will likely arise. Board members should keep disagreements impersonal. By practicing discretion and accepting decisions on a majority basis, the board can accomplish unity and confidence in its decisions.

Stay informed about the organization's mission, services, policies, and programs, as well as developments in the field.

Actively participate in the recruitment of potential board members who can make significant contributions to the work of the board and the organization.

Follow all Board policies, including but not limited to conflict of interest, confidentiality, and whistleblower.

Refrain from making special requests of staff. In general, the Executive Director communicates with Staff, and Board members communicate with each other and with the Executive Director.

Board Member Name _____

Board Member Signature _____ Date _____



THE BRIDGE FOR YOUTH BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPLICATION

First Name:

Last Name:

Street Address:

Cell phone:

Email Address:

Occupation/Title:

1. What do you know about The Bridge for Youth and why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?
2. Our Board is an engaged, governance Board. We ask every Board member to do the following: attend board meetings regularly, participate on one board committee, contribute financially (amount of your choosing), engage in events, and participate in development activities. The full board meets every other month, a minimum of 5 times per year; committees meet once each month; development activities happen four times per year. Can you fulfill this commitment for at least one, three-year term? Yes ☐ No ☐
3. How do you see yourself contributing to The Bridge for Youth in terms of your unique experience, passion, knowledge, and abilities? What do you wish your legacy to be on The Bridge for Youth Board of Directors? For what do you want to be remembered?
4. Please describe your professional or personal experience which would contribute to the diversity of the board from lived experience, race, ethnicity, gender identification, sexual orientation, socio-economic status?



THE BRIDGE FOR YOUTH BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPLICATION

10. Board meetings are typically every-other month in person at The Bridge for Youth on Thursday 5:00 PM – 7:30 PM. Will this conflict with any other obligations?

Yes ☐ No ☐

11. Do you have any direct pecuniary or financial interest in the Bridge for Youth?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please explain.

12. Do you know any of the current Board members or staff? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please explain.

Please return this form to Lisa Mears, President, l.mears@bridgeforyouth.org.
Contact Lisa at 612-508-1279 with questions.