



CLARETIAN ASSOCIATES

Building Community in South Chicago

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 - 2025

FEBRUARY 24, 2023

Dear Claretian Associates Supporters,

Claretian Associates (CA) has grown over the past two decades from a staff of less than 10 to now over 100. We experienced some unexpected growing pains but continued to invest in strengthening our operating infrastructure to provide the necessary human resource management, operations expertise, and technology investments to transform CA into a sustainable organization. As everyone struggled with the devastation caused by the COVID pandemic, our staff worked tirelessly to adapt our service delivery model to continue supporting the community during these challenging times.

Since our last strategic plan, the South Chicago area has increased in value as three major initiatives have begun. These include the selection of Jackson Park (a nearby neighborhood) by the Barak Obama Foundation as the new location for the former President's official library, the Tiger Woods Foundation has selected South Shore (an adjacent neighborhood) for the creation of its new golfing facility, the Invest SouthWest initiative, a \$180MM business development program led by the City that has chosen South Chicago as the site for a catalytic RFP site. This only strengthens CA's' position, having been selected as one of nine nationwide recipients of the \$20MM Empowering Black Futures' initiative (EBF) by 53rd Bank. This initiative affords CA \$2MM in unrestricted philanthropy funding to address some of CA's organizational and project needs, along with \$18MM in access to debt/equity investments, which will move some of our most vital projects forward. Looking at creating new for-sale housing and mixed-use residential/commercial buildings, CA is poised to continue strengthening South Chicago as a Community of Choice.

As we prepare to implement CA's new 2023-2025 strategic plan, our board and staff worked together to craft a plan focusing on key community priorities and CA's infrastructure. During our planning process, we examined our internal and external environments. We agreed that CA must go beyond the provision of meeting basic needs to help families self-actualize the things they feel they need to thrive and be self-sustainable. Our planning process produced a new vision for the families in South Chicago and new core values that align with our commitment to the community and CA's workforce. For example, we stand ready to secure the commitment of vacant parcels within our area to resume homeownership projects. Recognizing that the work in South Chicago cannot be completed by one organization, CA looks to expand partnerships and joint venture opportunities to increase our ability to move quickly and stabilize housing for families that have weathered the storm and want to now benefit from the upward mobility the neighborhood is bringing.

Our strategic priorities also include our programs and services to increase economic security, educational attainment, and the general improvement in social determinants of health within the community. We look to continue working with families around "building community value" and how the current environment changes within the Southside will be better addressed for them by purchasing over renting in South Chicago. Our efforts will begin by focusing on residents that are beginning to approach the 50% AMI benchmark and have expressed interest in owning homes someday. With the introduction of a survey to our multi-family rental residents, we can begin to collect further data that will help with improving programming aimed at increasing the economy. Maintaining consistent engagement with families through our resident services program, we can begin to craft plans for how these families can access the needed assistance to move towards their dreams of homeownership.

Having completed our first year being located at the newly developed SALUD Center (a 40,000 sf previously shuttered YMCA), we now possess space to expand programming and attract co-location partners to provide services that CA does not have the capacity for. In the early stages, we have co-located Center for Changing Lives (a HUD-certified counseling and employment coaching agency), the Special Service Area 5 (a 501-c-4 business development service provider), and the University of Chicago Cancer Resource Center, as well as partnered with TechCorp, an Ohio-based technology training program focused on training youth in technology careers.

This year we plan to build creative partnerships around operations of our on-site fitness center, freshly blessed with \$70,000 of Peloton equipment. These new partners will not only provide additional participants for CA to engage and serve but will do so without overwhelming our capacity and with the ability to collect much-needed data. CA will continue to work with funding partners to share both data and devise needed accompaniments to assist families in achieving greater self-sufficiency. We can work with partners to assist families in gaining additional education to access better jobs and increase earning abilities and support non-traditional education that may lead to business creation/entrepreneurship. Within our fundraising plan, we will focus on increasing the number of individual donors (including family foundations) that can support this endeavor with unrestricted funding. The focus will be on how this pilot project is working to increase the self-sufficiency of our residents by moving them up the economic mobility ladder through homeownership and small business creation/support.

In addition, CA's continued focus on building development will assist in creating quality spaces for small/micro business rentals, as well as larger commercial spaces that more substantial businesses can occupy with a target of hiring locally. CA will continue its transitional employment programming (currently focused on safety programs) with the intent of engaging the staff around interest in obtaining/maintaining stable housing and homeownership. The project will be a great opportunity to leverage CA's current capabilities and partnerships to increase our resources, capacity, and impact.

We appreciate your partnership in CA's continued growth and maturation while serving the amazing communities of South Chicago and beyond!



Angela Hurlock
President and CEO

CLARETIAN ASSOCIATES' HISTORY

Claretian Associates (CA) was established in 1991 as an independent 501c3. CA has deep roots in the South Chicago community, having started as a program for the oldest Chicago Mexican-American immigrant Catholic parish, Our Lady of Guadalupe. With over nine steel mills in the area employing over 100,000 residents within the neighborhood, the industry's decline hit hard. Still committed to our early focus of affordable housing for the most vulnerable populations within the neighborhood, predominantly minority, the demographic of families over the years has shifted, with South Chicago now claiming a population of 70% African American and 20% Latino. Today, the community has a population of 27,000 with a median family income of \$40,000, and 30% of the population has a high school diploma. In addition, CA still owns almost 200 rental units, with 75% being senior-focused and resident services being provided. Over the last few months, we strategically transitioned our property management over to a third-party vendor to better right-size the organization's capacity, efficiency, and overall impact.

Claretian's long history/upstanding reputation has allowed us to be selected as the lead agency with both the largest local intermediaries (LISC & United Way) as well as land yearly increasing government contracts to work on violence reduction programming. Working diligently to position ourselves as a leverager of resources, we partnered with a national nonprofit developer to purchase a 101-unit senior building with 40,000 square feet from the YMCA and focused on repurposing this space into a community center. Shortly after, we found ourselves in the midst of construction when COVID arrived in 2020 and again was sought by government and philanthropy partners to be a conduit for critical care provided to residents surrounding housing and food stability and violence reduction. For FY2023, we anticipate having a \$5MM+ budget with almost 100 employees, with approximately \$3MM of that budget NOT being related to housing or real estate development.

Having paused its home-building activities over 15 years ago with the 2007 economic crash, Claretian Associates' plan began focusing more on its programs and multi-family rental developments. A 2017 Crain's article detailed how, after ten years, the 60617 zip code had not even resumed 50% of its original home values compared to a 60610 (Chicago downtown area) zip code that had regained its original value plus a significant increase. As vacant buildings and lots are beginning to see increased interest from outside investors, it is the perfect time for CA to return to developing homes and two flats as a means to continue to increase revenue and strengthen the community with less transient stakeholders. Being directly adjacent to the last 600 acres of developable lakefront property in the City (South Works), this is the time to leverage increasing opportunities. Housing eventually planned for the South Works site may be less than affordable for current residents, who continue to express concerns over the ability to remain stably housed in South Chicago and achieve their personal goals and increase economic mobility. CA can be the impetus to merging these competing yet complementary interests.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Claretian Associates started its planning process by deeply diving into understanding what changes were occurring in the communities served. This examination focused on identifying community changes and understanding whom the changes might impact. Claretian Associates staff engaged with area residents to better understand their perspectives about changes in their communities and whether these changes positively or negatively affect their confidence or desire to continue living in their community. Numerous findings and observations about the external environment helped determine Claretian Associates' new strategic priorities.

Starting with the planning retreat in April 2022, Claretian Associates' board and staff carefully reviewed the last strategic plan to determine the factors contributing to not achieving all of the goals. Staff surveys highlighted growing concerns about the organization's workforce capacity and the need for more human resources support to help address various issues associated with insufficient staff capacity to meet obligations. Finally, the state of the financial management department remains one of the most severe concerns with staff turnover and incomplete processes to handle the needs of a growing organization. The following pages highlight many of the points the board and staff identified and ultimately contributed to the new strategic priorities.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

- Vacant lots – opportunities
- Increase focus on youth in the community
- Ensure we are attentive to the needs of residents – Met. Fam Services
- Residents had a mixed reaction to changes in the community
- People we serve: population loss
- Surrounding developments (Obama library, 79th/89th/83rd that will bring their own attention and residents)
- Changing demographics – how will it impact the community in the future
- Decreasing/loss of population
- Loss of Latinx population
- Lack of education and impact on residents – can they afford CA – could impact crime
- Median age – 34.4 but a lot of senior housing
- Greater representation of diversity of immigrant population and different needs
- More development in the community and how local residents are employed
- Changes in community – 5th 3rd focus on increasing black wealth, job opportunities and businesses
- Redistricting of the area – USX controlled with 7th ward
- Dichotomy of people by age and the different needs of each population
- Partnership with other organizations
- Higher income residents – larger number?

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

- Strong theme regarding lack of communication
- More clarity regarding mission, vision, values, priorities
- Looking inside for promotions within
- Is the data reflective of the entire staff?
- Retention is a cause for concern
- Need greater investment in people and staff training
- Career path opportunities
- Stronger HR presence to help
- Opportunity for the board to engage each other
- Inadequate financial management system
- Fund development plan – we don't have one
- Board and staff exposure below senior level
- Board development- expectations
- Expand the board and/or diversity of expertise
- More way to expand individual donors?
- Lack of diversity of the board/staff consistent with population
- Need for stronger systems – technology, operating as noted in last strategic plan, lack capacity to support advancement of the organization
- Need for more board structure, active working committee, skill sets, establishing terms
- Move to create more permanent jobs versus based on grants

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

- Training managers on lower levels – in general
- Need to build local leadership
- Program and Services
- Safe passage program- 1st
- Violent prevention – 2nd largest program
- SCNN – around mental health – 5 years some youth development
- Unity Squad – transformation of youth
- ERAP/ Summer – Hoops in the hood, playstreet
- Salud center –open gym, partnership with Techcorp to introduce technology to youth. Peloton bikes
- Chicago connects – educate families around technology – digital literacy classes to families
- Resident services – providing residents in housing with support services
- Mostly government funded programs – limited coverage of admin expenses
- Programs are not breaking even
- We don't do evaluation enough to know if we are making an impact
- Cashflow is challenging
- Affordable housing – Five developments we own
 - Housing developed
 - Housing we manage
 - 4 we handle property management
 - 2 making money, 2 not good
- Looking to restructure , concern for deferred maintenance
- Turn over in accounting department impacts managing cashflow
- Villa – working to restructure debt – no reserve for Villa, over 30 years old, rent has not increased much.
- Salud center is a top priority, cooling, pool- expensive?
- Black industrial site – need community input
- Sacred – secured funding, questions regarding pricing, design
- Café Rudish – getting access to property, owners passed – keep or move?
- Nature Play-based – working in two phases, larger collaborative effort with other partners
- New Homes – portfolio of two-flat and single family housing. Starting with rentals. Targets people moving towards home ownership. Using local contractors

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Critical outcomes of the environmental analysis included the selection of four strategic priorities. Collectively, these priorities serve to help Claretian Associations lift up areas that must be addressed and require attention in the new strategic plan.

Financial Sustainability - Supported by diverse and renewable streams of revenue, the organization operates with a sound financial management system and sufficient financial reserves.

Neighborhood Investment – Recognizing the changing dynamics and trends within the communities served, continue to deploy innovative strategies to tackle inadequate housing stock, vital services and public safety concerns.

Service Delivery Excellence – Staff and collaborative partnerships work to support the needs of community residents by delivering high-quality programs and services that demonstrate measurable impact.

Organizational Culture and Infrastructure – To be guided by internal cultural values that empower staff accountability, encourage work-life balance, and is supported by a robust, technology-infused operating system.

OUR NEW VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES STATEMENTS

As part of the 2022 planning process, Claretian Associates developed a new vision, mission, and core values statements. These statements incorporate a shared understanding of the changes in Chicago's southeast region communities. The statements also reinforce why Claretian Associates' work is vital to the youth, adults, seniors, and families residing in these communities who desire to remain in their communities and thrive. The new vision and mission statements ultimately clarify the desired outcomes from Claretian Associates' work that impacts residents and the entire service area. As Claretian Associates continues to grow, the new core values serve as necessary connectors for all existing and new board members, staff, and volunteers as everyone contributes their gifts, time, and talents to advance the organization's work.

VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Vision Statement

The Southeast Chicago region is a vibrant, affordable, and thriving place for people to live.

Mission Statement

Carrying on a rich and collaborative tradition, Claretian Associates provides housing and vital services in South Chicago and surrounding communities, benefitting our residents' and families' safety and wellbeing.

CORE VALUES

Strong servant leadership and advocacy

Diversity, equity, and inclusion

Enabling the evolution of the organization

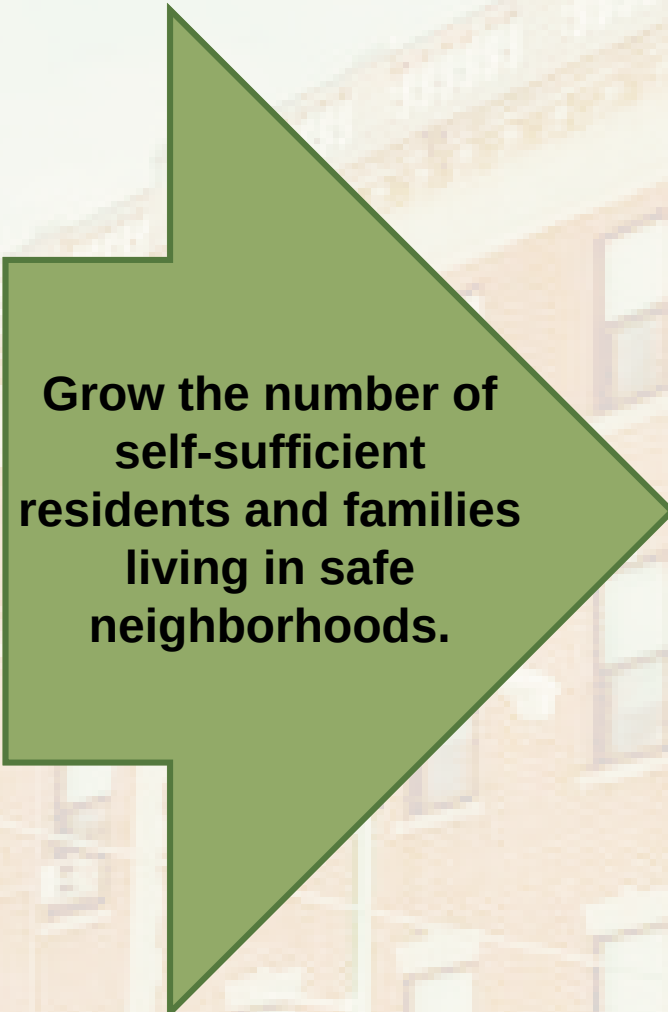
Integrity and accountability

Financial transparency and sustainability


**The continuing legacy of Claretian Founders
in serving the needs of the community**

TWO OVERARCHING GOALS

Claretian Associates' new strategic plan reflects two overarching goals. These high-level goals elevate the importance of advancing Claretian Associates' work in the community and building a sustainable organization.



Grow the number of self-sufficient residents and families living in safe neighborhoods.



To operate as a financially sustainable, community-centered organization

KEY RESULT AREAS

Claretian Associates recognizes to achieve the new goals, there are several key result areas requiring action with the expectation these areas will demonstrate meaningful and measurable progress over the life of the plan. The following are the key results areas identified as important drivers for the new plan.

Housing Development	Vital Services Supporting Adults and Youth	Community Awareness and Engagement
Leveraging Partnerships	Neighborhood Safety	Small Business Development and Land Use
Retain Current Residents	Fund Development	Board Development
Operational Efficiency	Financial Management	Data Management and Evaluation

PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS

The planning process resulted in several new strategies to support the two overarching goals. These strategies align with the key result areas and focus on building upon work already underway and finding ways to address staff capacity concerns while continuing to strive for excellence in service delivery. While Claretian Associates has made great strides with its housing developments and other vital offerings, the planning process highlighted some of the organization's internal challenges. The new plan reflects strategies that address identified internal concerns and position the organization for growth and long-term sustainability.

Goal #1 : Increase the number of self-sufficient residents and families living in safe neighborhoods.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES

Housing Development

Increase the number of new housing units built.

- Create and execute a 5-year development plan that reflects the proper number of staff required to lead the work and appropriate funding sources.
- Provide case management services/programming for residents to ensure they can access and maintain their housing.

Vital Services Supporting Adults and Youth

Increase the number of youth and adults building their skill sets and securing employment.

- Assess available youth and adult programs in the area to identify possible gaps in educational and employment opportunities needed.
- Partner with other organizations that are already successful in this area to deliver additional programs and services.

Community Awareness and Engagement

Reach more diverse residents with programs and services.

- Increase the visibility of Claretian to create more awareness of who we are and the services we provide.
- Expand use of services provided at Salud Center including using the space for community events and activities.

Leveraging Partnerships

Increase the number of partnerships working with Claretian Associates to provide needed services in the community.

- Acquire additional services/partners needed to address service gaps in serving the community.

Data Management and Evaluation

Effectively document and measure the impact of our work.

- Design and implement an evaluation plan to support offerings across all departments to demonstrate our impact.
- Build a data management system to monitor the performance of programs and services and capture metrics on residents served.

Goal #1 : Increase the number of self-sufficient residents and families living in safe neighborhoods.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES

Small Business Development and Land Use

Bolster the expansion of small businesses and diversity in land use throughout South Chicago.

- Continue to provide space for partners to offer workforce development and business development training to support local hiring opportunities.
- Build attractive, safe and well designed, affordable spaces that will attract business and patrons.
- Serve as a resource connector to direct other building owners to support for upgrading their properties to improve safety and ultimately decrease barriers to entry for small businesses in the area.

Neighborhood Safety

Improve overall neighborhood security

- Target acquisition of troubled housing and properties and redevelop to relocate groups attracting violence or other factors that endanger neighbors.
- Explore ways to increase community camera and lighting in/on Developments.
- Find ways to expand roaming security (SSA) throughout the service areas.
- Promote neighborhood blogs and posts of activity.

Retain Current Residents

Ensuring current residents can continue to live, play and work in the community they call home.

- Strengthen current programs that will allow current residents to be retained with any new developments, economic or demographic shifts in the neighborhood.
- Explore the creation of a Claretian "Residents Board" to solicit feedback from a diverse group of people offering insights regarding how CA can assist them.

Goal #2: To operate as a financially viable, community-centered organization.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES

Fund Development

Increase and sustain diverse streams of revenue

- Develop additional relationships with government, corporations and foundations with commitments to longer term investment.
- Hire a fund development director or outsource company to implement fund development plan that includes conducting research to identify potential opportunities to be cultivated.
- Expand efforts to cultivate more individual donors.

Board Development

Operate with a fully-engaged and community-reflective board

- Implement functioning committee structure that aligns with board member expertise and the overall goals.
- Provide training with board members to encourage greater engagement in supporting the work of the organization.
- Increase local resident participation on the board.

Operational Efficiency

Improve the efficiency of overall operations

- Hire a COO or Director of Operations to lead priorities associated with the organization's operations and projected growth.
- Improve efficiency through the use of technology throughout the organization.
- Implement a new change management system to support the organization's operational needs and ensure greater accountability to improve efficiency.
- Bring the human resources function in-house to lead workforce priorities as the organizations continue to grow.

Financial Management

Strengthen the organization's financial management system to support planned growth.

- Restructure the accounting department to include possible outsourcing of certain functions.
- Continue automating/streamlining financial processes.

Strategic Planning Committee

The following Claretian Associates board members and staff served on the strategic planning committee (SPC) and committed time to participate in numerous meetings over the past several months and completing various assignments to move the strategic planning process forward.

Board Members

- Fr. Mark Brummel
- Manvel Robinson
- Eben Smith

Staff Members

- Cory Davis
- Tevonne Ellis
- Adrian Gibbs
- Angela Hurlock

Strategic Planning Consultant: Partec Consulting Group, Inc.