



**Shenango Valley
Urban League**

Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc.

Strategic Plan

2025-2029

Approved December 18, 2024

Board Chair

President/CEO




ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. is one of 88 affiliates of the National Urban League Movement located in 34 of the 50 states. Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. was organized in 1968 and is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit agency governed by an interracial, professionally diverse board of directors. As a United Way Member Agency, The League strives to secure additional funding from foundations, government, businesses and donations to better serve the community. The Urban League has grown from its early existence on Idaho Street to its present location on Indiana Ave. in Farrell, PA (formerly Eckles Elementary School).

MISSION

The mission of the Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. is to ensure equal access and opportunity for African Americans and others in need; to empower individuals to cultivate and exercise their full human potential. The mission is implemented through advocacy, bridge building, direct services, and cooperation with other entities and partners.

VISION

Our vision is a community where all citizens have equal opportunity to achieve their fullest potential, where everyone contributes to improving the quality of life and sharing in prosperity.

The Shenango Valley Urban League's Vision and Priorities

STRATEGIC AGENDA

The Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. has been a longstanding civil rights organization in Mercer County for 56 years and has provided social services for thousands of individuals and families during this timeframe. The organization has provided services such as Women, Infants, & Children (WIC), housing counseling, housing and life readiness, sickle cell treatment and testing, youth programming, human relations, and employment services. A new program such as the Teaching E-Commerce & Computers to the Homeless (TECH) Program looks to provide on-the-job training for the homeless while generating revenue through the sales of the TECH snack box. Over the next five years, the Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. is looking to grow program offerings, increase fundraising and donor base, grow the agency budget, and explore housing development to help the organization stay viable. Without the WIC program, the organization will work to generate revenue and diversify funding streams.

STRATEGY

The Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. will follow the National Urban League guiding principles of the "Opportunity Compact" strategy for pursuing its mission. The strategy is as follows:

- Ensuring that our children are well-educated and equipped for economic self-reliance in the 21st century.
- Helping adults attain economic self-sufficiency through good jobs, home ownership, entrepreneurship and wealth accumulation
- Ensuring our civil rights by eradicating all barriers to equal participation in the economic and social mainstream of America
- Advocate that everyone has a job that allows them to earn a decent wage that provides a reasonable standard of living for themselves and their families.

STRATEGIC AGENDA

To achieve our mission, the Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. will concentrate on these strategic priorities over the next 5 years. These priorities include:

- 1.) **Marketing, Branding and Public Relations-** The agency will broaden its web and social media presence by continuing to do social media content creation and increase program impact storytelling and email marketing.

- 2.) **Fundraising and Resource Development** – The agency will work to diversify funding streams, by increasing recurring donations, increasing fundraising opportunities, and also exploring self-sustaining social enterprise ventures.
- 3.) **New Program Development and Assessment**- The agency will work toward increasing program and services offerings through program development and seeking grant funded programs; federal, state, local. In addition, enhancing program evaluation assessment tools and methods.
- 4.) **Housing Development**- Develop programming that focuses on addressing homelessness and lack of housing throughout Mercer County.

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT was conducted with three separate groups; board members, staff, and a diverse group of community members. Each group gave their perspectives on the Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Agency longevity	Lack of corporate contributions	Third floor renovation to utilize the space	United Way funding cuts
Sound fiscal management	Lack of an annual fund	Third floor possible revenue source	Building costs of upkeep
Knowledgeable of other area resources	Lack of Grant Writer	Partnerships on new programs/initiatives	Loss of revenue from WIC program
Good reputation	Lack of a Director of Development	Additional staff professional development	Slow reimbursements
Dedicated staff	Building security	Social enterprise for self-sustainability	Old equipment
Strong leadership	Staffing level/Capacity	Utilize board members more in fundraising	Physical threats
Ownership of office building	No elevator	Build up membership program	Government attack on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
Social media presence	Lack of community awareness of what we do	Regional expansion	Government plan to cut programs/federal funding
CEO presence in the community	SVUL organization as a whole was overshadowed by WIC	Identify/apply for new grant funded programs	
Ability to develop programs	Storytelling of program(s) successes/impact	Increased marketing efforts for agency	
	Not appealing to young adults	Create SVUL and TECH Program merchandise	
	Fundraising		

		Build donor base/recurring donations Expansion of workshops/programs and services offered Renting first floor space Doing more social media content/series Housing development Homeless shelter Develop monthly newsletter	
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OBJECTIVES TO MEET STRATEGIC AGENDA

MARKETING, BRANDING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Agenda Goal	To enhance the Shenango Valley Urban League's image, visibility, brand and community awareness of what SVUL does.
Desired Outcomes	A clear understanding of what programs are provided by individuals who may or may not receive or seek services
Key Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to broaden community knowledge of the Urban League. • Continuous year-round recruitment to fill and maintain board member seats • Continue to update website with current information • Maintain regular mass email communication with updates, events, and program success stories and highlights via Constant Contact emailing online tool. • Establish and/or maintain partnerships with local higher education institutions to offer internships and opportunities for establishing long lasting relationships with teachers and students • Continue fostering relationships with legislators to keep them informed of funding needs • Develop monthly or quarterly newsletter. • Create organization and program merchandise as "walking advertisement." • Increase branding efforts and storytelling of all programs offered impact so that we are not identified only as the "WIC office."

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalize on and utilize all social media sites (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok) to advertise • Continue to post social media content about SVUL and programs
Measuring Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media and public easily recognize Urban League brand and logo • Media relationships and contacts are built • Programmatic fact sheets are readily available • SVUL becomes “go to” organization on community social justice issues • Board members and staff are able to articulate the mission/vision and agency programs and services offered when asked • SVUL is recognized as not only having ever provided just WIC
Primary Operational Responsibility	Marketing/PR board committee, Board President, Staff, President/CEO
Timeframe	Ongoing

FUNDRAISING AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Agenda Goal	To increase financial support through resource development to ensure the sustainability and longevity of the organization through increased donor support, increase organization fundraisers, and revenue generating strategies and ventures.
Desired Outcomes	New funding opportunities that will position the organization for growth and self-sustainability.
Key Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research social enterprise revenue opportunities that are in line with the organization mission and vision • Research fund diversification • Research self-sustainability strategies and best practices of other Urban League Affiliates • Reorganize membership strategy to increase membership base. Focus on asking businesses to participate in corporate memberships • Research effective strategies for implementing an annual fund and building a donor base • Continue signature agency fundraisers; Anniversary banquet, MLK Day of Remembrance Breakfast • Develop a board member focused fundraising event • Evaluate cost of third floor renovation to be able to utilize it as a workforce development floor/revenue stream • Develop annual mailing distribution campaign to solicit donations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with a grant writer to identify and write for federal, state, and local programs and funding • Increase efforts to get more monthly recurring donors/donations on donorbox • Offer Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training as a revenue generator
Measuring Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent donor outreach through newsletters and informational mailings to broaden donor knowledge of programs and services • Increased interest of resources to support programs/departments, i.e. volunteers • Ability to increase clients served • The organization is not completely dependent on federal, state, or local funding for agency survival
Primary Responsibility	Finance committee, Building committee, Fiscal Director, President/CEO
Timeframe	Year 1; Ongoing

NEW PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT

Agenda Goal	New program development to increase organization programs and services
Desired Outcomes	Increase of program offerings and stable funded programs.
Key Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review opportunities to contract with a grant writer to secure a federal/state programs • Research opportunities for state and local funding to support youth and education entrepreneurial, technology programming • Fostering partnerships with higher education institutions for STEM/STEAM programming • Reviewing program assessment methods and developing effective evaluation and assessment tools. Also, reviewing quality program assessment tools currently used by other Urban League Affiliates. • Research of programs that are in line with organization mission • Development of new programs • Bringing in grant funded programs that have the ability to cover cost of hiring staff • Research steps/apply for school licensing credentials
Measuring Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased staff capacity • Increased staff satisfaction with pay • Increased staff development opportunities

Primary Operational Responsibility	Program and objectives board committee, President/CEO
Timeframe	Year 1; Ongoing

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Agenda Goal	Explore opportunities to develop housing throughout Mercer County to address the lack of housing stock.
Desired Outcomes	Develop individual homes and/or rental unit developments
Key Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an affordable housing development program specific to this area that is geared toward underrepresented developers • Develop and foster relationships with local municipalities and county government • Develop connections with corporate decision makers • Research housing development grant funding opportunities through corporations that have a footprint in Mercer County • Develop connections with seasoned builders and construction contractors • Identify areas of highest need for development • Research
Measuring Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased revenue stream for the organization • Decrease in homelessness throughout Mercer County • Increased housing stock throughout Mercer County
Primary Operational Responsibility	Building Committee, President/CEO
Timeframe	Year 1-2; Ongoing

SUMMARY: The Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. 2025-2029 strategic plan emphasizes positioning the agency for increased marketing and re-branding after the loss of the WIC program. There is emphasis on growth and self-sustainability, providing new programs and services, fundraising, and housing development. Growing the organization will allow opportunities for additional staffing, increased budget, increased program offerings. There will be increased opportunities for forming new relationships with potential donors and corporate funders to fund new initiatives and ventures. The strategic plan is an on-going work in progress document. The organization is now 56 years old and has demonstrated longevity in the community. It is important for the organization to be innovative, relevant, and willing to be open to new possibilities with funding streams and new relationships that will help push the mission forward.