

# **Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc. Three-Year Strategic Plan 2015**

741 8th Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003



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# THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

*Sasha Bruce Youthwork holds itself accountable not just for action...but also results. We are driven by a commitment to make a difference in the lives of at-risk youth, families, and communities.*

- Deborah Shore, Executive Director, SBY

## Overview

The mission of Sasha Bruce Youthwork (SBY) is to improve the lives of runaway, homeless, abused, and neglected at-risk youth and their families in the Washington, DC area. SBY achieves this by providing shelter, counseling, life skills training and positive youth development activities to approximately 1,500 youth and 5,000 family members each year.

For 40 years, Sasha Bruce Youthwork has used comprehensive, competency-based approaches to offer these services to youth and their families. SBY's services and resources lead to family reunification and life-changing opportunities for our youth. Recent indicators of success include:

### FAMILIES STABILIZED

90% of runaway youth entering SBY shelters have reunited with family.

### YOUTH EDUCATED

75% of the youth entering our transitional living program had dropped out of school; at exit, 77% of those had a diploma, GED or were enrolled in college.

### YOUTH EMPLOYED

85% of youth in our workforce development program were not employed at entrance; at exit 96% had jobs and stayed employed at the six-month follow-up.

### YOUTH SAFELY HOUSED

85% of youth went to a stable living situation upon exit from transitional housing.

*Currently in the District there are fewer than 300 beds designated for homeless youth – the gap between need and available housing is astounding.*

*DC Alliance Of Youth Advocates,  
Youth Homelessness Issue Brief 2015*

## Why Now?

SBY has a decades-long track record of supporting increased access to opportunity for youth in the DC metropolitan area. In preparation for the organization's 40th anniversary, SBY determined that it would be helpful to center the organization on its strategic priorities for the next three years. In partnership with Compass, a pro bono consulting organization, the Strategic Plan was developed through a two-year process that engaged key internal and external stakeholders. The plan is intended to position the organization for the future and account for the changing social services landscape shaped largely by limited traditional funding sources and increased client needs. By maximizing the efficiencies across the organization, SBY can continue to expand sustainable programs that provide the maximum impact on clients.

## Program Overview

SBY programs focus on empowering young people and their families to build on their own strengths to transform their lives. SBY provides youth with the support and skills they need to survive, thrive, and build their own successful futures. SBY programs are organized into three pillars. Within each pillar, there are multiple programs and initiatives that work together to advance SBY's mission.

SBY programs draw youth from all over Washington, DC, although the organization has historically focused its services on Wards 5, 6, 7 and 8, from which SBY draws 80% of the client population. Communities in these wards suffer disproportionately from poverty, drug-related activities and violent crimes. Of the estimated 1,500 youth served last year, an estimated 57% were female and 43% were male. Ninety-five percent were African-American.

SBY plays a unique role in caring for youth in the DC metropolitan area. Sasha Bruce House is the only open-access shelter in Washington for a general youth population not referred for services by the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. SBY has been designated by the District to be the single point of access for assessment and disposition for any unaccompanied youth of whom any government agency or nonprofit becomes aware. SBY's Safe Place Hotline, a 24-hour phone and emergency pick-up operation, is the only one of its kind in the District of Columbia.

## SBY Program Pillars

<b>Safe Homes</b>	Promoting housing, family reunification, and employment
<b>Life Skills Development</b>	Supporting improved family communication, safe-sex practices, and improved academic performance
<b>Workforce Development &amp; Educational Opportunities</b>	Providing industry-recognized certifications, post-secondary educational and job placement services, and teaching entrepreneurial and business skills



## History of Excellence

Deborah Shore founded Sasha Bruce Youthwork in 1974 as the Washington Streetwork Project. At that time, suburban street kids and out-of-town runaways congregated in the Georgetown and Dupont Circle areas. With a small staff and a few volunteers, Shore counseled these young people on the streets. The Washington Streetwork Project established its first home when Christ Church in Georgetown donated basement space for a youth drop-in center. The organization's early work focused on counseling and reuniting young people with their families.

In 1976, Shore and the Washington Streetwork Project came to the attention of Evangeline Bruce, wife of Ambassador David Bruce, following the tragic death of their daughter Sasha. Evangeline Bruce donated funds to start a youth shelter in memory of Sasha, who had helped troubled youth as a volunteer during her college years. Shore opened Sasha Bruce House in 1977 to provide youth with a safe haven from the dangers of the streets.



The Washington Streetwork Project grew and changed over the next two decades in response to the changing needs of DC's troubled young people and families. Programs were added to bridge the gaps in available support services for youth. As street work became only a small part of the organization's activities, the name of the organization changed to Sasha Bruce Youthwork.

Today with 19 professionally staffed programs, SBY is one of the largest and most experienced providers of services to youth in Washington, DC. In recognition of SBY's ground-breaking work in youth and family service development, Executive Director Debby Shore has received numerous accolades. Shore received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Network for Youth in 2008 and is currently the Chair of its governing board of directors. She received the Champions of Change Award from the White House in 2012 for her work preventing youth homelessness. In 2014, she was inducted into the Washington DC Hall of Fame in recognition of her historic contributions to civic and community development in the nation's capitol.

With 40 years of experience meeting the growing needs of DC's youth and families with innovative programs, SBY continues to work toward achieving its vision of a community in which young people and families have access to opportunities and services they need to succeed. SBY's

work helps young people find safe homes, achieve and maintain good health and mental health, create and strengthen supportive and stable families, explore opportunities in education and careers, and become tomorrow's leaders. Notably, a 2013 survey of homeless youth in DC conducted by a team from the University of Nebraska found that a large majority – over 80% – of the survey respondents who had accessed services at Sasha Bruce Youthwork either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that those programs were accessible, safe, assisted in achieving independent living, and accommodating of people of various cultural backgrounds and sexual orientations. Eighty-nine percent said that they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the services they received.

### **Strategic Planning Process and Continuous Improvement**

In the first year of the strategic planning process, the focus was on conducting a current state analysis and examining the youth development services landscape to identify best practices. Since the process to create a Strategic Plan began in September 2013, SBY has already started to implement changes that lay the groundwork for many of the plan's objectives. To provide clarity and increase shared resources, programs have been structured into three pillars. SBY has adopted a new financial system that allows for increased visibility into budgets and spending. To better measure outcomes, SBY has started implementing the non-profit benchmark outcomes software Efforts to Outcomes. Logic models have been constructed for the program pillars, and adoption of the software is in progress across the organization. Throughout this process, SBY has continued to serve its clients and expand its service efforts.



In the second year, the team used an iterative process of gathering input from key stakeholders to develop goals and objectives. The Strategic Plan builds on the organization's diverse and impactful work in the youth development space, providing a framework for strengthening organizational structures and practices, bolstering program sustainability, and expanding services to meet the evolving needs of young people. To support implementation of the Strategic Plan, an Action Plan was developed that provides additional detail regarding Year 1 activities. It also sets forth key structures to support SBY in implementing the Strategic Plan. SBY expects to share its progress in implementing the Strategic Plan with stakeholders on an annual basis.

### **The Next 40 Years**

With the successful implementation of the plan, SBY hopes to maximize the positive impact it has on at-risk youth in the Washington, DC, area and be able to continue this work for the next 40 years.





# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Over the last several years, the challenges faced by young people in the community have increased due to a variety of factors, including economic pressures and reduced support at the federal and local levels for needed services for this vulnerable population. A 2013 survey of homeless youth in DC conducted by a team from the University of Nebraska found that homeless youth in the District had a variety of critical service needs, including job training and help finding a job, a safe place to live, and education. Survey respondents continued to confront barriers to shelter, including a lack of knowledge about where to look for housing and lack of capacity at the existing shelters in the city. Indeed, the Sasha Bruce House shelter receives an average of 30 calls per month from youth and families seeking shelter that cannot be accommodated.

At the same time, the funding landscape has grown more complex, necessitating a more sustainable pipeline of funding to support the essential services that SBY provides. To address these needs, and build on SBY's legacy of support for youth, SBY has adopted five strategic priorities for the next three years.

## Strategic Planning Goals

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**Provide opportunities and resources for the professional development of client-facing staff.**

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**Strengthen SBY's infrastructure and governance to improve oversight and organizational efficiency.**

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**Develop and maintain a sustainable portfolio of services which continue to address the needs of clients and the broader community.**

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**Demonstrate and effectively communicate impact on young people and community.**

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**Increase access to high-quality services to continue to expand SBY's support for young people.**

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# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

In collaboration with the Compass consultants, Sasha Bruce Youthwork leadership, staff, and stakeholders have developed detailed, annual objectives to support the organization in realizing its ambitious strategic priorities. The objectives, to be addressed over three years, will help SBY more fully realize its mission of improving the lives of runaway, homeless, abused, and neglected at-risk youth.

*I don't know how I could have made it at all without Sasha Bruce. Sasha Bruce has powered my dreams.*

*- Kenya Massie, Independent Living Program resident*

## **1 Provide opportunities and resources for the professional development of client-facing staff.**

SBY is an organization centered on people -- the young people it serves, and the highly skilled and trained staff who work directly with clients. To continue to maintain its standard of caring, nurturing support as the organization grows, SBY plans to invest in the development of its client-facing staff, to ensure they are equipped with all that they need to support and inspire young people, and to grow with the organization. SBY believes that striving for new heights of employee engagement will result in even stronger outcomes for at-risk youth. Ultimately, SBY aims to become one of the Washington Post Top Employers or be listed in the Washingtonian 50 Great Places to Work.

### OBJECTIVES AND ACTION STEPS:

*Review existing professional development offerings for employees and ensure that offerings are linked to key job competencies and identified needs of staff.*

*Develop formal incentive and recognition programs to recognize the most highly effective staff and share effective practices.*

*Leverage All Hands meetings to build team spirit and increase connectedness with organizational core values.*

*Conduct "core values" exercise with staff in which staff are invited to define the principles, standards, or qualities which SBY embodies.*

*Recognize top performers who best represent SBY "core values" at regular intervals.*

*Incorporate team building exercises, guest speakers, State of SBY*



*discussions, breakout training sessions, and Board participation into All Hands meetings.*

*Initiate new programs for staff orientation, training, team building, and professional development.*

*Establish Management Training Initiative to prepare management to lead other staff, which could include workshops, training sessions, 1-on-1 meetings, behavior assessment tools such as Myers Briggs, Strengths Finder, or DiSC.*

*Initiate annual employee satisfaction surveys to establish benchmark for progress measurement.*

*Establish annual performance reviews with all employees. This will include: standardizing job descriptions across programs, aligning individual performance goals across programs, and conducting reviews.*

***I went from rock bottom to high heaven once I went to SBY YouthBuild. It changed everything for me.***

*- Charmia Carolina, YouthBuild graduate*

## **2 Strengthen SBY's infrastructure and governance to improve oversight and organizational efficiency.**

As an organization with a \$9 million annual operating budget across 19 programs, SBY leverages a skilled, dedicated staff to provide operational support for its unique services. In the past decade, operational demands have grown as services have expanded to meet need, and funders have increased program and reporting requirements. SBY stands poised to accelerate its impact and, by investing in infrastructure and governance at this crucial moment in the organization's history, SBY will reach an even greater level of efficiency and effectiveness.

**Finance** To further automate key processes and allow for an even greater level of review of program expenditures, to identify savings and adjust to real-time conditions.

**Organizational Oversight** To build a deep bench of operational support that can meet the growing demands of an expanding organization and allow SBY to tackle new challenges.

**Knowledge Management** To share best practices more readily across the organization, multiplying the impact of successful programs and continuing to develop staff capacity to support young people.

***Parents themselves: In a recent "point in time" study of youth homelessness conducted by DCAYA, 47% of the respondents were young parents.***

*DC Alliance Of Youth Advocates,  
Youth Homelessness Issue Brief 2015*

## OBJECTIVES AND ACTION STEPS:

### **Finance**

*Select and implement online payroll system that will feed directly into the accounting system.*

*Develop a plan to expand Program Manager responsibilities for developing and adhering to program-level budgets, ensuring that Program Managers are adequately trained to assume these responsibilities, that their job descriptions include them, and that they are evaluated accordingly.*

### **Organizational Oversight**

*Define differentiated responsibilities for staff in Finance, Human Resources, Programs, Facilities, IT, and other back-office departments. Assess need for additional resources to support.*

*Develop and implement a lasting framework for SBY's governing bodies that will guide their effective collaboration in oversight of the organization's operations.*

*Benchmark methods and scope for quality assurance. Determine how to meet quality assurance needs, either through adding staff capacity at the pillar level to support oversight, or through development of a quality assurance process/system.*

*Determine the ideal structure for a SBY senior management team and identify the resources that team will need to assume responsibility for its areas of accountability.*

### **Knowledge Management**

*Assess needs for Knowledge Management (that is, the dissemination of information throughout an organization) and conduct a gap analysis of existing Knowledge Management tools (e.g. organizational update memos, intranet, share drive, etc.).*

*Implement knowledge management system, including deploying system and providing staff training.*



***In 2011–2012 only 61% of the city's young people graduated high school within four years and college completion rates were well below the national average.***

*DC Alliance Of Youth Advocates,  
Youth Workforce Development Issue Brief*



### **3 Develop and maintain a sustainable portfolio of services which continue to address the needs of clients and the broader community.**

SBY holds its staff and programs to the highest level of excellence. The organization has changed and grown over the past forty years, but its North Star continues to be its clients, the young people of the DC metropolitan area. SBY strives for continuous evaluation and improvement of its program offerings to ensure this portfolio of services is maximally effective.

SBY is establishing a formal, organization-wide framework for evaluating proposed and current programs that will increase its ability to systematically refine existing programs and examine potential new offerings. In the midst of challenging economic circumstances for youth development providers, SBY will build on its impressive track record of identifying funding to support this crucial work by diversifying its funding sources, with an eye toward further expanding its services in the decades to come.

#### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTION STEPS:**

To promote strengthened infrastructure for evaluating programs and services, SBY will:

*Define and implement evaluation criteria to inform the decision whether or not to pursue newly proposed programs and services*

*Define and implement criteria to evaluate SBY's existing portfolio of programs to ensure viability of each pillar over a two-year period*

*Implement annual review process of programs and initiatives using evaluation criteria*

To provide a foundation for sustainable funding for the next forty years of service, SBY will:

*Broaden its funding base*

*Expand donations from corporations, individuals, and foundations*

*Hire a Director of Major Gifts to propel this funding growth*

**More than 7,000 youth are estimated to experience homelessness in the District annually. This number does not include youth over the age of 18, nor their children, so the number is actually much higher.**

*DC Alliance Of Youth Advocates,  
Youth Homelessness Issue Brief 2015*



## 4 Demonstrate and effectively communicate impact on young people, community.

SBY has a laser-like focus on meeting the needs of young people, as reflected by the thousands of stories of support and success that the young people have shared over the past forty years. Serving a community where institutions and systems are broken and young people and their families are struggling to overcome obstacles, SBY provides youth the tools they need to curb high-risk behaviors, stabilize their living situations, and lead meaningful and productive lives.

To ensure that the broader community, including key stakeholders, government officials, and funders are fully aware of this impactful work, SBY will seek to refine its approach to outcomes measurement and strategic communications. SBY has long been looked to as a leader in the youth development community; building on these efforts in Year 3 of the plan, SBY will seek to increase its proactive thought leadership to extend its impact on young people beyond the DC community.

### OBJECTIVES AND ACTION STEPS:

#### ***Communications Strategies***

*Engage the community through tailored communications collateral and other means to raise the visibility of organizational services to increase referrals to SBY, in-kind donations, and volunteers.*

*Develop and socialize a short elevator pitch with key points centered on pillars, aligned to organizational mission and programs. Throughout materials and for all outreach efforts, connect programs to pillars to simplify and standardize messaging about SBY offerings.*

#### ***Outcomes Measurement***

*Determine key performance and outcomes measures for each pillar and funding source and establish a process for collecting these data.*

*Establish a process for reporting on key performance and outcomes measures that include accountability and incentives for compliance. The information gained from the implementation of the outcomes measurement processes in the first two years of the strategic plan will also enable SBY to multiply the impact of the organization through thought leadership.*

#### ***Thought Leadership***

*Use SBY's expanded experience with outcomes and performance measurements to strengthen SBY's role in thought leadership in the area of youth development.*

***Young people also struggled to find entry-level employment opportunities which serve as important foundations for lifelong success. Just 13.2% of 16-19 year old District residents were able to find paid, unsubsidized employment in 2011.***

*DC Alliance Of Youth Advocates,  
Youth Workforce Development Issue Brief*



## 5 Increase access to high-quality services to continue to expand SBY's support for young people.

SBY's tremendous impact in the DC metropolitan area is due in part to its responsiveness to the evolving needs of the youth it serves. The programs that are most effective in supporting young people today may not be the programs that are needed tomorrow. Through daily interaction with young people, SBY gains insights into their most fundamental needs.

SBY has identified two key areas where additional capacity is needed to help young people thrive:

**Long-term housing** The DC metropolitan area lacks sufficient longer-term supportive housing options for young people, to ensure that they are able to stay on track to meet their goals and achieve their dreams. An increasing number of young adults are "aging out" of the foster care system, and there is currently a dearth of social service programs targeted at this population. Thus, SBY plans to continue to expand its current programs to provide more housing and other support services to youth ages 18 to 21.

**Health care and prevention services** An ongoing, pressing need of young people is convenient, affordable access to health care and prevention services. Young people need services tailored to their individual needs that are easily accessible.

Additionally, SBY seeks to add capacity to connect young people with a comprehensive set of services by better leveraging other community resources. Through strategic partnerships, SBY can focus on its core services while providing youth access to a wider range of supports that will help them move toward a successful future.

### OBJECTIVES AND ACTION STEPS:

*Develop new, longer-term options to expand programs in areas such as health and housing.*

*Conduct assessment of health care needs that are currently unmet. Evaluate whether SBY can best serve need or whether needs of young people would be best served through strategic partnerships.*

*Create plan for a long-term supportive housing initiative, including establishing a Board committee, researching areas of need within the community, developing a budget and tactical plan to raise funds, and creating an implementation plan for new housing initiative.*

**Older youth struggled to find employment as well; for example less than 42% of the city's 20-24 year olds were employed full time.**

*DC Alliance Of Youth Advocates,  
Youth Workforce Development Issue Brief*

*Develop a strategic partnership model that provides a consistent approach to sourcing and managing partnerships with area non-profits that offer complementary services to youth.*

*Create plan for Strategic Partnerships initiative, including assigning an SBY team member to lead the initiative; build a shared inventory of existing and historical partnerships; identify potential Strategic Partners that could complement SBY's capabilities; and prioritizing areas of unmet need.*

*Expand advocacy efforts in support of youth development in the Washington Area, working with other non-profits with similar interests.*



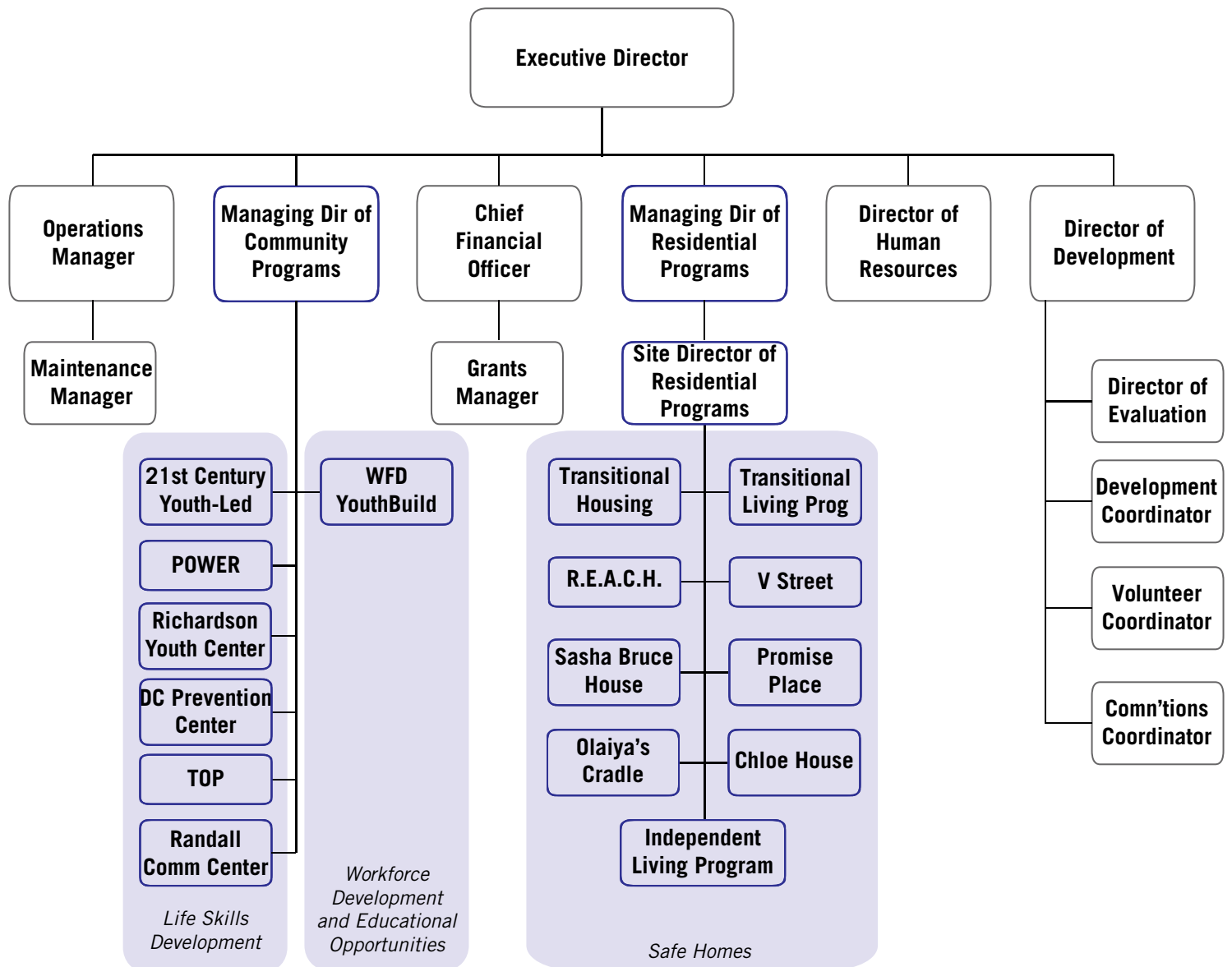
***Over 14,000 young people in the District (ages of 16 - 24) were able to be categorized as "disconnected youth" - meaning they were neither enrolled in school nor were they employed.***

*DC Alliance Of Youth Advocates  
Youth Workforce Development Issue Brief*



# APPENDIX

## Sasha Bruce Organizational Chart



## Strategic Plan Implementation Timeline

Goals	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<b>Provide opportunities and resources for the professional development of client-facing staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core Values and Staff Recognition Program</li> <li>Management Training Initiative</li> <li>Employee Satisfaction Surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs for New Hire Orientation, Training, Team building, and Professional Development.</li> <li>Alignment of Individual and Organizational Goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Washingtonian Great Places to Work</li> </ul>
<b>Strengthen SBY's backoffice infrastructure and governance to develop stronger oversight and increase organizational efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online Payroll System</li> <li>Roles &amp; Responsibilities for Back-Office Functions</li> <li>Knowledge Management Needs Assessment</li> <li>Lasting Structure for Governing Bodies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professionalizing Program Management</li> <li>Knowledge Management Implementation &amp; Training</li> <li>Quality Assurance Benchmarks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizational Structure for Senior Management</li> </ul>
<b>Develop and maintain a sustainable portfolio of services which continue to address the needs of clients and the broader community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Program Evaluation Criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program Alignment and Sustainability Criteria</li> <li>Expand Corporate Funding Opportunities</li> <li>Expand Individual Funding Opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Program Review and Renewal Program</li> <li>Expand Foundation Funding Opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrate and effectively communicate impact on young people, community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tailored Materials to Engage the Community</li> <li>Elevator Pitch and Organizational Clarity of Mission</li> <li>Standardization of Performance Measures by Pillar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanded Thought Leadership Role in Youth Development</li> <li>Succinct and Consistent Marketing Materials</li> <li>Alignment of Incentives around Performance Measures</li> </ul>	
<b>Increase access to high-quality services to continue to expand SBY's support for young people</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared Inventory of Past and Promising Partnerships</li> <li>Assessment of Unmet Healthcare Needs</li> <li>Implementation Plan for Long-Term Housing Initiative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate Healthcare Partner Model</li> <li>Fundraising Plan for Long-Term Housing Initiative</li> <li>Expanded Advocacy for Youth Development</li> </ul>



## Sasha Bruce Program Pillars

	Safe Homes	Life Skills Development	Workforce Development Educational Opportunities
Current SBY Programs	ILP TLP PHP REACH THP Bruce House Promise Place Chloe House Olaiya's Cradle	Richardson Dwellings Randall Comm Center Prevention Center POWER TOP 21st Century Youth-Led	Workforce development and entrepreneurial endeavors
Outputs / Outcomes	Employment Family reunification Admission to post-secondary institution Housing	Improved family communication Community action plan Safe-sex practices Improved academics	Job placement Post-secondary educational placement Entrepreneurial and business skills Industry-recognized certifications

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*Compass' mission is to inspire the active engagement of business professionals with their local nonprofits to transform communities. Compass recruits, trains and supports teams of volunteers, mainly MBAs from top business schools, to provide pro bono consulting services to nonprofits serving the DC and Philadelphia communities.*

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

