

**Crisis** ..... **Transition** ..... **Stability** ..... **Growth** ..... **Abundance**

When clients get stuck in crisis, community organizations can get stuck with them. ELM's Pathway to Sustainability model is designed to help organizations intentionally focus their organizational impact based on mission, expertise, and experience so that they can work together to leverage resources for maximum impact. The Pathway helps agencies stop asking, "What can we do to help you?" and start asking "What can we do to help you not need us anymore?"

**1. Crisis**

- Likely unemployed & struggle to meet basic needs
- May rely entirely on family, friends, agencies, & other assistance to get by
- May struggle with addiction & mental health issues
- May even engage in illegal activities to survive
- Feel hopeless, helpless, isolated

**Focus Areas**

Homeless Shelters . Mental Health Crisis Care . Law Enforcement  
Hospital Emergency Care . Domestic Violence programs  
Basic Needs (food, clothing, shelter, utility assistance)

**2. Transition**

- May have obtained part-time employment but still struggle to make ends meet
- Begin to access government and other resources
- Have found a safer living environment
- May enter recovery programs
- Begin accessing legal services

Transitional housing programs . Health care programs . Child care assistance . Transportation assistance . Mental health & substance abuse & recovery . Legal services & Court system  
Job skills & employment programs

**3. Stability**

- Earn an hourly wage & regular paycheck & benefits
- Can pay their bills on time & reduce debt
- Have found permanent, safe, affordable housing
- May increase skills and education
- Rely more on their own resources with less outside assistance

Affordable housing . Education & certification programs . Quality child care programs . Workforce development . Financial counseling  
Health care & insurance

**4. Growth**

- Permanent employment with good pay, benefits, & opportunities to advance
- May become homeowners
- May even start a business & employ others
- Comfortably meet needs & some wants

Home ownership programs . Financial institutions . Investment advisers . Two & Four year colleges . Wellness centers  
Entrepreneurial programs . Personal & spiritual growth

**5. Abundance**

- Become self-reliant with a sense of having enough & some to spare
- Plan for retirement and build wealth
- Continue to give back by being generous in many ways, including mentoring others
- Worry less & experience peace of mind

Philanthropy . Volunteering & mentoring programs . Civic engagement & leadership development . Lifelong learning opportunities . Asset creation & growth . Spiritual development

Progress on the Pathway is not linear but progress is possible. Each client's journey will be unique and organizations will need to work with each client on an individual basis to understand and provide support for their journey. This is not an exhaustive list of client experiences in each phase of the Pathway. It is also not a complete list of possible Focus Areas. Each organization may determine what their clients' experience looks like and where the organization can intentionally focus its efforts to be most effective.

# Pathway to Sustainability

## *A Focus Guide for Organizations and Boards*

### **Why We Created the Pathway to Sustainability**

Our vision is to end generational poverty. We believe that is only possible by working with one client at a time and making intentional investments to break down barriers to progress. We know we can't do it alone. We work with a variety of community partners who share our vision to close service gaps and help our participants move toward self-reliance.

We started the Community Connections project to help create a community wide collaborative care network that now has almost 200 organizations working together on our network. The next step is to create a community model to help each organization on the network find a focus and work in their area of strength. We hope that, as a result, we will all better serve our clients, reduce duplication of services, and leverage community resources.

Using inspiration from change models in other communities, we have created the Pathway model with input from local organizations. We hope the model will start a community conversation about focusing on what we each do best as we work together to help our clients progress toward self-reliance.

### **Finding Your Focus**

No one organization can meet all of any one client's needs. It takes a collaborative effort to help clients progress on the Pathway. Use the following questions to help your board and staff identify your place on the Pathway and how you can work with others to help clients move forward.

- What do we do? How do we do it?
- What challenges do our clients experience most often? Which Pathway Phase best describes that experience?
- Where should we intentionally focus our time, effort, and resources? How can we make the greatest impact?
- Who can we work with to leverage our impact?
- How can we help our clients make progress on the Pathway? How can we help them not need us anymore?

**Use the following chart to help find your focus area.**

Organization Strengths	Client Strengths
Organization Challenges	Where our clients tend to be on the Pathway
Our Focus Areas <i>What we do best (No more than 3)</i>	What we can do to help clients move forward
Other organizations that can partner with us	What we do to help our clients not need us anymore