

Literacy for Life Foundation Strategic Plan

October 3, 2025



Strategic Planning session facilitated by

Ursula Sherwood

Executive Director

Community Futures Highwood

Governance

A review and clarification of the roles and responsibilities of a Governance Board of Directors (BoD) and the Executive Director (ED) was conducted.

The following points were discussed during the session:

Governance Board Roles and Responsibilities

- Responsible for setting the strategic direction for the organization; “what and when”
- Responsible for the legal framework of the organization, such as Bylaws, Articles of Association, etc.
- Responsible for all policies, including creation of policies
- Fiscal responsibility, including the approval of the annual budget, regular review of FS, monitoring of expenditures, and ensuring that appropriate internal controls are in place
- Performance of an annual self-assessment
- Forming of committees: recommendation to form an audit and finance committee and a governance committee
- Succession planning for both the Board and the ED
- Advocacy
- Hiring, evaluating and if necessary, termination of the ED. The ED is the only employee of the BoD.
- NOT involved in the day-to-day running of the organization

Board Director’s Responsibilities

- Attending all meetings and letting the Board Chair know ahead of the meeting time if unavailable
- Coming prepared for all meetings, having read the respective packages in advance of the meeting
- Asking questions about the package contents (incl. financial statements) ahead of the meeting, to ensure that accurate answers can be provided
- Declaring all potential conflicts of interest
- Preserving confidentiality
- Actively participating in the meeting

Executive Director Role and Responsibilities

- Only employee of the Board

- Hires, monitors and terminates all other staff
- Runs the everyday operations of the organization following the strategic plan set by the BoD
- Stays within the approved budget and informs the BoD if there are any significant deviances
- Works collaboratively with the BoD on items such as budgets and policies
- Establishes procedures within the organization that support the policies approved by the BoD
- Communicates primarily with the Board Chair unless extenuating circumstances are present

Organizational Pillars and Desired Outcomes

*The BoD and ED identified organizational pillars and associated outcomes during the strategic planning session, **with the understanding that these pillars and outcomes represent an ideal situation and do not constitute a strategic plan.** In addition, these operational outcomes may help inform future strategic planning.*

Organization

1. As part of the Board succession planning, the Board has a recruitment and retention strategy in place, ensuring diversity on the Board.
2. Staffing levels are adequate for the organization and an ED succession plan is in place.
3. New Board members receive a thorough orientation to the organization and their role and responsibilities as a Board member.
4. All Board and Staff related roles and responsibilities are clearly identified and recorded.
5. Bylaws exist and are reviewed on an annual basis.
6. All necessary policies are in place, which comply with current legislation, and are reviewed on a rotational basis, at minimum no less than every 3 years.
7. The organizational culture is positive, and open communication exists between all members of the BoD and staff.
8. The organization has Mission and Vision statements in place that reflect its purpose and goals.
9. Adequate insurances are in place.
10. Annual fundraising is executed.
11. Current and future risks are clearly identified and mitigated as much as possible.
12. An up-to-date IT infrastructure is in place, ensuring all sensitive data is protected.

Financial

1. Financial 'housekeeping' processes are in place, including:
 - a. Regular monthly financial reporting
 - b. Tracking of all funding sources
 - c. Suitable financial systems (such as bookkeeping software, etc.)
2. An annual budget is developed and approved by the BoD.
3. All reporting conditions and KPIs for funders are met in a timely manner.
4. A capital expenditure plan is in place.
5. The organization has a reserve fund with clearly identified fund categories.
6. All funds received are allocated in a timely manner (i.e. casino funds).
7. Staff are competitively compensated.

Mastery

1. A plan is in place for ongoing Board development.
2. Board members are prepared for all board meetings and attend regularly.
3. All staff have a personal development plan in place, ensuring ongoing professional development (incl. the ED).
4. A system is in place to track all training completed by Board and Staff.
5. Annual performance evaluations are being conducted on time for Staff.
6. An annual Board self-assessment is completed.
7. A volunteer training plan is in place.
8. All expectations are clearly articulated and recorded.
9. Board and Staff are aware of political and regulatory changes.
10. Instructions are in place relating to Board member advocacy.

Community

1. The organization listens to identified needs and puts programming in place to address these needs.
2. Client and community feedback indicates that their needs feel seen, recognized and understood by the organization.
3. The organization is perceived as a valuable resource in the community.
4. The organization regularly advertises in the communities it serves and continues to increase its exposure to the public.
5. The organization's brand is very visible in the community.
6. Volunteers are engaged and feel appreciated.
7. The organization has developed a strong volunteer base.
8. Small businesses and larger corporations in the service area are aware of the organization and its programs and services.
9. The organization has connections to formal education providers.

10. The organization has several external organizational clients.
11. The organization is connected to multiple non-profit organizations.

Clients

1. Our programs and services are clearly identified and relevant.
2. Our programs and services cater to a diverse range of clients.
3. Our programming and services continue to expand.
4. Marketing strategies are in place and are being executed.
5. New client streams continue to be identified.
6. A client communication plan is in place.
7. All necessary information is collected from the clients and used to further develop our programs and services.
8. The organization regularly receives and reviews client feedback to ensure the effectiveness of its programs and services.
9. An increasing number of clients are being converted from clients to volunteers or facilitators.
10. The organization is increasingly partnering with organizational clients.
11. Clients are tracked to identify repeat clients.
12. All required grant KPIs are tracked.

Environmental Scan (SOAR):

Identified Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results

Strengths

Organizational

- Unique organization
- New location
- History and Legacy
- Having a solid major funder
- Existing partnerships
- Good reputation and visibility
- Knowing our lane
- Good money management with low overhead

People

- Great people: both BoD and Staff
- Adaptive, responsive, flexible and resilient

- Good communication
- Low staff and facilitator turnover
- Integrity, Culture, Diversity, Positive Attitudes

Programming

- Solid core programming
- Program participation success rates
- Home-based programming
- Minimal restrictions to programming
- Mobility

Opportunities

- Increased capacity for volunteer recruitment, retention and engagement
- Rejuvenating the BoD; setting new directions, new burst of energy, board engagement
- Find additional funding sources
- Utilize existing casino funding in the best way possible
- Looking at more sponsorships and fundraising opportunities
- Expanding our client base by breaking into the indigenous population
- New partnerships
- Engaging more youths and expanding related programming and services
- Creating an outreach program for the senior population
- Increasing online programming
- Increase school outreach
- Explore collaboration and engagement opportunities with other CALPS

Aspirations and Results

- Organizational focus on a strong governance foundation, including:
 - o Having all necessary policies and procedures in place
 - o Conducting annual performance evaluations
 - o Having adequate staffing levels
 - o Financial management efficiency
- Being less dependent on one key funder
- Have a full BoD
- Have a succession plan in place and implementing it

- Every Board Director has a clearly defined role and responsibility
- Have a resource list (who to talk to about what) in place for the Board Directors to utilize when talking to clients/communities
- Targeted advertising, more branding, bigger digital footprint
- Being the No. 1 choice for clients
- Conduct Board development independent of the ED
- Have a clearly set-out strategic plan in place with focus areas and timelines
- Protect our strong core programming

Goals ED

Pillars	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Organization			
	Solidify job description for new position Solidify bookkeeping position	Find a way to hire another PT staff Create 'cheat sheet' / resource list for BoD	
<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Board mtg package ready 1 week before Board meeting</i>	<i>Board mtg package ready 1 week before Board meeting</i>	<i>Board mtg package ready 1 week before Board meeting</i>
Financial			
	Complete financial literacy training for ED		
		Find more funding sources	Find more funding sources
	Casino fund plan suggestions for BoD		
Mastery			
		Implement staff training	Implement staff training
Community			
	Gather data from clients for marketing plan: how did they hear about LFL?		
	Increase volunteer recruitment, engagement and retention	Increase volunteer recruitment, engagement and retention	Increase volunteer recruitment, engagement and retention
Clients			
		Develop a marketing plan if an outside contractor is found	
<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Maintain, monitor and track current</i>	<i>Maintain, monitor and track current</i>	<i>Maintain, monitor and track current</i>

*programming and
review quarterly with
BoD*

*programming and
review quarterly with
BoD*

*programming and
review quarterly with
BoD*

Goals Board

Pillars	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Organization	Develop the calendar (1) Choose a vice chair (3) Create committees (policy/finance/governance) (4) Define board roles and responsibilities (5) Develop orientation package & plan (6) Develop new mtg. process	Develop a Board matrix Board recruitment Review & develop policies as needed to be reviewed every 3 years Team Building Refine/change mtg. process if necessary	Board recruitment Review & develop policies as needed to be reviewed every 3 years Team Building Refine/change mtg. process if necessary
Financial		Create a fund development plan Find more funding sources	Find more funding sources
Mastery		Conduct annual self-assessment Implement board training	Conduct annual self-assessment Implement board training
<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Ensure all Directors are well prepared for meetings (2)</i>	<i>Ensure all Directors are well prepared for meetings</i>	<i>Ensure all Directors are well prepared for meetings</i>
Community		Advocacy	Advocacy