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## Resource Development SWOT Analysis to Improve Organizational Sustainability for a Grassroots Nonprofit Organization

Felicia Rosetta Frances Wilson  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Health Sciences & Public Policy

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Felicia Rosetta Frances Wilson

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
and that any and all revisions required by  
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University  
2023

Abstract

Resource Development SWOT Analysis to Improve Organizational Sustainability for a

Grassroots Nonprofit Organization

by

Felicia Rosetta Frances Wilson

MS, Walden University, 2018

BS, University of Phoenix, 2015

Professional Administrative Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Public Administration

Walden University

August 2023

## Abstract

There are approximately 1.54 million nonprofit organizations in the United States. However, without a resource development plan in place, or unforeseen emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, some nonprofits struggle to meet annual fundraising goals. The purpose of study was to conduct a strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis of an organization's fundraising plans to assist in creating an annual resource development plan. This qualitative case study explored nonprofits within black and brown communities as to what they needed to generate and maintain funding greater than \$500,000. Five interviews were conducted among organization leaders, managers, program coordinators, program directors, and directors of program evaluation within the nonprofit sector to understand sustainable short and longer-term development strategies. In addition, five expert nonprofit professional participants in fundraising, board development, and leadership were recruited for in-depth semi structured interviews. Funding indicated in the pursuit of organizational growth and mission alignment, a SWOT analysis resource development plan has played a crucial role. Through the pivotal role of ongoing consulting support, public administrators possessed the power to proactively plan, allocate resources, and manage finances in nonprofit organizations, thus shaping a more equitable and resilient future for communities and fostering positive social change for the benefit of society.

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## Dedication

I dedicate my doctoral journey to those who have profoundly influenced and supported me. I sincerely respect my ancestors, who blazed trails and conquered countless obstacles. Your strength and courage have laid the foundation for my success, having made immeasurable sacrifices and harbored dreams they could never fulfill. I carry your heritage with great pride, honoring your resilience and wisdom.

My extraordinary sons, Malachi and Jeremiah Judge who have been witnesses to my unwavering pursuit of knowledge. Your unwavering love and encouragement served as my greatest motivation to make it to the finish line. Because of you, I strive to create a better world, providing you with the opportunities I never had as a child. I am grateful for the privilege of guiding you on your journey through life.

To my beloved husband, Mathews Judge, your unwavering support, patience, and unwavering belief in my abilities have been my constant throughout this arduous endeavor. Your presence by my side has been an anchor in the storms, and I am eternally grateful for your unwavering faith in me.

This achievement is a testament to the love, sacrifices, and guidance bestowed upon me by each of you. From the depths of my heart, I extend my deepest gratitude for your contributions in helping me reach the finish line.

"Education is not just about acquiring knowledge; it's about cultivating curiosity, critical thinking, and a lifelong love for learning." Dr. Danielle R. Moss

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## Section 1: Introduction to the Problem

### **Introduction to the Study**

Child welfare is a broad and necessary component of a healthy community. Child and family services meet their broad mandate by delivering services to children, youth, and young adults in foster care who transition into adulthood. One example is New York's state child welfare services for youth and young adults in the foster care system who may not have the same support as their peers. Delivery of services and programs is often left to organizations such as Strive Forward Incorporated (fictitious name) to fill the gaps and bridge the divide between the government and the community. Strive Forward Incorporated is a typical community-based nonprofit organization striving to meet clients' changing needs while maintaining financial health. A lack of diversified funding sources and resources from individual donors to support Strive Forward Incorporated's mission makes it challenging to offer quality programs that assist, nurture, and guide youth and young adults transitioning into adulthood.

Programs with documented positive outcomes that strive to benefit many foster youths and young adults in Western New York are geared around personal and professional development, housing, and health care coordination services. Financial access to funds allows the organization to hire alums with lived experience to become mentors and receive payment as consultants to carry out services in the capacity voiced by youth and young adults. Implementing different resource development strategies to help secure funding from the community and additional financial resources will play a pivotal role in driving Strive Forward Incorporated's mission forward to provide

programs and services that nurture, motivate, and create a solid resource development plan that will strategically place Strive Forward Incorporated in a position to gain visibility and financial support from the community, foundations, banks, and government grants. Contracts are another way grassroots organizations can fund startups and maintain their efforts within child welfare. These are ideal ways to help foster youth and young adults create the success they envision for themselves.

In this section, I focused on how foster youth and transitioning adults are among the most vulnerable population and rely on services provided by nonprofit organizations to create the stability they desire after leaving foster care. In addition, the lack of funding in newer organizations was discussed, and the consequences Strive Forward Incorporated will encounter if their organization cannot reach the \$500,000 mark to be considered for greater funding from donors to stay open and provide services to the individuals that rely on them the most. Next, I discussed how incorporating a well-thought-out resource development plan, and SWOT analysis can help new organizations such as Strive Forward Incorporated leverage funding and financially sustain themselves through fundraising, grants, sponsorship, and individual donations. I focused on how incorporating a resource development plan with great recommendations and actions can financially leverage nonprofit organizations serving Black and Brown communities. Finally, I addressed how this professional administrative study contributes to the public administration field by emphasizing the importance of nonprofits in incorporating diversified resource development plans to help them scale upward by building upon using effective long-term methods.

### **Problem Statement**

The problem that was addressed through this study is the lack of an organizational strategic resource development plan. Strive Forward Incorporated was experiencing an ongoing struggle to secure adequate funding. In addition to straining its current operations, it cannot raise enough money that would otherwise make it eligible for more considerable funding opportunities. According to Gregory and Howard (2009), nonprofit organizations that build upon a vital, robust infrastructure such as systems, programs, fundraising processes, and skills training have a better chance of success than organizations with no infrastructure set up properly correctly. Lack of funding in the grassroots organizations in the child welfare system can cause a significant divide in services and leave transitioning foster youth and young adults vulnerable to falling through the cracks subjecting them to experience pipeline systems. Youth and young adults transitioning out of foster care are among the most underserved, forgotten, vulnerable, and unrepresented populations in the United States.

African American youth who experience the foster care system are amongst the most underserved and account for roughly 14% of the foster care disparity population (Child Welfare Practice to Address Racial Disproportionality, 2021, p.2). Very few programs focus on improving the outcomes for those in and out of the foster care system. With organizations lacking focus on improving outcomes, many of these youth and young adults will end up falling through the cracks (Juster, 2011). According to Abioye (2020), a foster child can be supported in many ways. Supporting youth and young adults until they reach the age of 26 years is not the only way to guide and assist them. Helping

young people until they reach the age of 26 years will not change the needed and necessary outcomes for them (Abioye, 2020).

Nonprofit organizations such as Strive Forward Incorporated are the guide to helping to transition youth and alums to create the lives they desire to live and reach outcomes to live in actual fulfillment. Foster care alums that identify as black and brown often do not receive adequate resources, mentorship, or skills training they need to live productive, sustainable, and successful lives in adulthood. Strive Forward Incorporated assists and guides alums of color in Western New York with the motivation, material support, and community they need to shift their mindset from surviving to thriving (Fostering Greatness Inc, 2021). Therefore, the problem surrounding Strive Forward Incorporated is that it cannot run programs due to limited or no funding. Since its launching on June 15, 2020, Strive Forward Incorporated has generated \$46,000, which were used to pay foster care alum rent (backlogged), buy young adult's groceries, and necessary items for mothers with babies.

Strive Forward Incorporated had multiple fundraisers since its launch in 2020. The biggest fundraiser was during foster care awareness month in May 2022. They held ongoing events to raise awareness around foster care and the needs of youth and young adults transitioning into adulthood. In addition, the organization raised money in March 2022 for its Luggage of Love event. Finally, in November 2022, Strive Forward Incorporated held a national homeless awareness event to raise awareness about the importance of stable housing for young adults into adulthood and has raised \$5,000 thus far.



Lack of funding can contribute to the organization's downfall if they do not incorporate an effective system, such as a resource development plan centered around a strategic plan and SWOT analysis to combat sustainability issues. Combating sustainability will position Strive Forward Incorporated to scale if they take on the task of pushing forward and engaging their community by attracting new allies while operating from a growth mindset. According to Forbes Nonprofit Council (2020), sustainability should include diversified concepts while emphasizing the importance of financial planning. Focusing on different concepts require Strive Forward Incorporated to understand what would be financially needed and required to deliver the services and programs, as this is where a large portion of the revenue would come from (Forbes Nonprofit Council, 2020). Lastly, conducting business differently would play an important part in how Strive Forward Incorporated lasts in a competitive market if they refuse to explore innovative and creative ways to deliver services to alums within the foster care population in Western New York (Naslund, 2019).

### **Purpose of the Study**

This qualitative study aimed to collect data that allowed me to help the organization create an annual resource development plan and additional long-term guidance to help them create a stable foundation for their organization. Qualitative research designs should be considered when the researcher focuses on empowering a specific group of individuals (Creswell, 2013). The project focused on many ways to foster sustainability while navigating community needs for their clients through significant gift programs, annual fundraiser drives, and fundraising events. Recruiting

and equipping the board for fundraising and digital development are additional ways nonprofit entities can generate monetary support. In addition, individual donations, sponsorships, fundraising, direct services, and grants would also help the organization leverage funding.

According to Bowman (2011), there are hardships and challenges present, whether in the non-profit or for-profit industry, when trying to establish and create both financial sustainability and capacity building which are crucial and the main ingredient within any organization and their functioning to succeed. The gap in the organization's plan to build and develop a plan to secure funding for programs, activities, and services was addressed. Strive Forward Incorporated would have a map of how to navigate its funding challenges and move beyond the stuck phase. Moving beyond the stuck phase will allow Strive Forward Incorporated to bridge the gap in its community by providing services with the availability of funding.

Strive Forward Incorporated does not have a resource development plan in place on how to secure funding using different strategies. At this time, there is no vetting process being utilized on their behalf to engage donors or the community around them to help access finance through community engagement. Such employment and financial support areas can include foundations, financial institutions, campaigns, and government grants and contracts. Implementing these economic regions into the resource development plan can help fill the gap Strive Forward Incorporated is experiencing to leverage both short- and long-term financial sustainability. A strategic fundraising strategy will be significant to ongoing funds to support programming. Hence, one must

remember that fundraising has a means to a specific end but no end within itself (Hartshook, 1996, p. 34).

### **Research Question**

The following organization-based primary research question provides a foundation for the study and recommendations: How can one grassroots nonprofit organization establish long-term sustainability through a diversified resource development plan?

### **Nature of the Administrative Study**

The specific research design was a standard qualitative approach that includes a case study to address the research question. The researcher conducted a SWOT analysis of the organization and its resource development efforts to create an annual resource development plan. The researcher examined how grassroots organizations utilize their leaders, such as board members, management, and leadership team. Programs to generate funding that would serve them in meeting the needs of individuals in the communities they operate and represent. Interviews were conducted with the Strive Forward Incorporated board members, leadership, and management teams. In addition, the researcher conducted one-to-one interviews with other nonprofit leaders to identify how they helped to grow their nonprofits over time.

This qualitative analysis provides a foundational and fundamental understanding of what needs to be done so that newer organizations, such as Strive Forward Incorporated, can last in a competitive market where funding is extremely scarce to help organizations launch from the ground. According to Schwarz and Stensaker (2015), a

phenomenon emphasizes research that can document, conceptualize, and capture both managerial and organizational interest that sparks and drives knowledge forward to help create advancement by exploring issues. Qualitative research can include a topic, problem, or subject and is investigated based on experience and perspective. It is often used to identify, explore, and challenge significant issues that occur in real-time by building upon a more profound understanding of phenomena that speaks to the level of “subjective reality” (Qutoshi, 2018).

Since I investigated the subjective experiences of various stakeholder groups, I utilized a general qualitative research design. My methods included semistructured interviews among paid staff and volunteer leaders involved in or responsible for fundraising. I conducted a document review of by-laws, policies and procedures, and the company goal statements. Lastly, I reviewed Strive Forward Incorporated's organization and program budget, current strategic plan, financial trend analysis, board role and responsibilities, 990 forms, and financial statements.

Orientation, training materials, and board responsibility were assessed to ensure that the duties align with the organization's mission and vision. According to Brown (2015), mission statements highlight the organization's purpose and why they are operating. The organization's current strategic plan will be reviewed to address programming/programs and systems being used that may need to be revised or altered to maximize its funding opportunities. Furthermore, Strive Forward Incorporated's budget will be analyzed to gain insight into the company's overall budget, trend analysis of financial statements, and current program budgets.

Participants in the study gave their perspectives based on their experience working within the nonprofit industry. Sharing such expertise aided in helping newer organizations, such as Strive Forward Incorporated, to understand what they need to do to diversify funding through multiple and ongoing revenue streams. Different perspectives from different leaders helped form a SWOT analysis that contributed to an effective strategic plan. All responses to the questions were documented in Microsoft Word, stored on a hard drive, and labeled with each participant's initials. Interviewee responses were referenced in the professional administrative study, and the data was transcribed in a written format. All data for the professional administrative study is saved and secured on a hard drive until the fifth year of the study has been concluded.

### **Significance**

This study was significant regarding positive social change because it helps to fill a gap by introducing an applied research method that is proven to help nonprofit organizations grow and scale significantly long-term in and out of a crisis. Strive Forward Incorporated will be provided with an intense standard resource development plan that will focus on fundraising and resource development strategies that may impact whether they have longevity in a fierce market that continues to be competitive. Additionally, having an effective resource development plan with great recommendations and action may leverage organizations such as Strive Forward Incorporated, which services a community of predominantly Black and Brown youth and alumni up to the age of 35 years.

Inadequate funding can substantially impact Western New York if they fail to implement the recommendations for the youth of color. Youth of color are at much more risk of hitting pipeline systems, such as incarceration, homelessness, and lack of education. These youth are more susceptible to such realities in the foster care system, transitioning out or aging out. Without funding to run programs and pay staff, they will not survive past the 5-year mark. According to Gonzalez (2020), funding Black and Brown nonprofits is one of the most beneficial ways to help center the focus on equity in the black and brown communities while also focusing on the overall long-term infrastructure of funding.

Focusing on the internal infrastructure of financials will give Strive Forward Incorporated an advantage by helping them gain adequate and long-term investments that will help them build and develop agenda financially powered plan over time. Next, solid financial stability gives the organization a pathway to set goals, create shared strategies as a team, and make demands that foster effective and strategic growth for the organization to draw the attention of private and public funders. Once the \$500,000 mark is reached, Strive Forward Incorporated can advocate and compete with organizations in their community that identify as nonprofits serving transitional foster youth in the Western New York foster care system. Being able to raise noise and advocate for free streams of income means that the organization will be able to make the necessary change to organizations that are often denied funding and become one step closer to building such infrastructure that is usually required to complete and conduct system level change (Gordon, 2020).

This administrative study aimed to contribute to the public administration field by emphasizing the importance of nonprofits in incorporating diversified resource development plans to help them scale upward by building upon financial sustainability using effective long-term methods. The success of Strive Forward Incorporated and its use of diversified funding streams can be replicated by other grassroots organizations. The implementation of this study contributed to the gap in knowledge around nonprofit resource development and how it can be utilized to help newer organizations create a solid infrastructure that speaks to their financial sustainability.

This organization promotes social change by meeting the needs of foster youth and foster care alums who need continual and ongoing support in and out of the child welfare system. Strive Forward Incorporated incorporates change at various levels, observed and seen in the programming and services provided. They serve families and the community where foster youth and alums live and contract with other nonprofits and government entities to assist with filling the gap by offering services on which these organizations do not focus. Lastly, this study helped encourage and move organizations forward by helping to create possibilities, foster ideas, and bring action in real-time by using a resource development planning tool.

### **Summary**

Strive Forward Incorporated Inc is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization in Western New York. The organization is maintained and guided by a volunteer board and leadership team. The organization is responsible for providing ongoing support, such as programs and services to foster youth, alums, and adults that have had direct contact with

the foster care system. Strive Forward Incorporated is a small grassroots organization struggling to generate adequate funding to hire staff, run programs, and provide services needed to help bridge the gap for one of the most vulnerable populations. The organization's ability to leverage funding has been. It continues to be a challenge causing the organization to experience the danger zone of being in the red.

Before this professional administrative research, there was limited information on directing nonprofit organizations to create a strategic pathway forward by developing a qualitative approach using a solid foundation such as a resource development plan. Without a clear understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, Strive Forward Incorporated is moving in the opposite direction of streaming upward. To continue to bring forth positive social change within their community, they must put significant emphasis on building the organization's infrastructure to stand on a solid foundation. Getting feedback from the researcher on ways to incorporate the SWOT analysis into their resource development plan will help them create a concrete pathway to sustainability and financial growth.



## Section 2: Conceptual Approach and Background

### **Introduction**

I identified the lack of funding Strive Forward Incorporated is experiencing and its ongoing struggle to secure \$500,000 to be eligible for more considerable funding opportunities. With a lack of resources and the ability to grow upward, the focus of this study was on how one grassroots nonprofit organization establishes long-term sustainability through a diversified fundraising plan. This professional administrative study was conducted using qualitative research to guide Strive Forward Incorporated in strategizing and creating a resource development plan focusing on numerous ways to foster sustainability while navigating community needs for their clients. Creating sustainability can come in many forms: partnerships, service fees, planning, and special events. In addition, collaborations, alum training, individual donations, and direct services are among other things that can be utilized to generate funding for the organization.

Section 2 focuses on the conceptual framework of a resource development plan, SWOT analysis, and strategic plan that will contribute to the long-term success of Strive Forward Incorporated's organization. This section demonstrates the purpose of the SWOT analysis, how it will be used to identify an organization's internal and external factors, and how understanding the benefits of having one can benefit the current and newer organizations. In addition, this section will shed light on how well-established nonprofit organizations have utilized relationships with stakeholders, their organization's mission and vision, and marketing plan to build capacity and financial stability. Altogether,

section 2 focuses on how one organization's financial growth can be sustained using diversified funding strategies to grow and last in a competitive market where funding is often scarce.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework used in this study consisted of industry standards for creating a standard resource development plan, including a SWOT analysis and a nonprofit strategic plan. In conjunction with the resource development plan, the SWOT analysis gives perspective to the organization's internal and external factors and demonstrates relevance to why the resource development plan is needed. According to Jean- Francois (2015), a strategic plan helps to target an organization's budget, marketing strategy, and how donors can be reached to secure funding. Strategic planning is linked to a nonprofit's long-term and ongoing success. The financial planning and sustainability of how the organization can grow and maintain itself into the future are created by having a strategy to follow. Lastly, creating a strategic resource development plan will move Strive Forward Incorporated in a direction that promotes and foster nonprofit sustainability over time through different funding streams and resources.

A SWOT analysis is a planning tool to generate factors that include multiple strategic initiatives (Dyson, 2002). Jean-Francois (2014) views a SWOT analysis as a tool used to analyze and "identify internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to the success of an organization" (p.87). This includes the organization's vision, mission, objectives, and goals. For many nonprofits to reach sustainability, they will need to use a SWOT analysis to match their organization's capabilities and resources

within their environment. Nonetheless, an organization's SWOT analysis is a strategic formulation used to guide an organization's strategic plan (Jean-François, 2014).

Conducting a SWOT analysis entailed nonprofit organizations making the process a collective effort with all required team members working together to set and reach specific outcomes. Internal factors of a SWOT analysis include strengths and weaknesses, and external factors include opportunities and threats. Nonprofit organizations can modify their internal factors, but their external factors are beyond the company's control (Jean-Francois, 2014). Nonprofit organizations aware of their organization's needs can begin to take proactive steps in the right direction to increase their ability to build resources that have a lasting positive outcome. According to Nyambi (2012), SWOT analysis helped determine the characteristics of programs and what areas of improvement can be made.

An objective of a SWOT remains a crucial component of any nonprofit organization. It must be able to be altered and tailored to fit current circumstances and proven effective. SWOT analysis is used to help achieve the strategic goal of reaching benchmarks against key rivals that identify as competitors (Nyarku & Agyapong, 2011). Nyarku and Agyapong (2011) stated that "SWOT is derived essentially from the notion of 'strategic fit and results in an audit'" (p.12). Overall, SWOT analyses often help organizations and businesses stay ahead of change and create strategic flexibility within businesses as needed. Lastly, organizations should use SWOT analysis to reach long-term lasting goals that align with managing and addressing challenges of organizations to make sound decisions.

The approach that was taken to complete the strategic resource development plan will be an interview approach to gaining adequate and resourceful knowledge from eight leaders within the nonprofit sector that contributed to their organization's sustainability over time. According to Kalra et al. (2013), qualitative research puts a greater focus on understanding research in either a romantic or a humanistic way. Such research is often used to help the researcher understand individual beliefs, attitudes, interactions, and behavior (Kalra et al., 2013). I did not gather numerical data through interviews but obtained clarity and insight from participants using their lived experiences once Walden University IRB approved.

Conducting interviews of leaders in the nonprofit sector allowed the researcher to understand how nonprofit organizations grew over time, managed strategic relationships, fostered collaborations and partnerships, and accessed funding needed to secure their way into longevity. Strive Forward Incorporated saw it could not leverage funding or compete in a competitive industry without a solid strategic resource development plan. Strive Forward Incorporated's survival results were broken down and detailed in the resource development plan by first listing their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, followed by a structured strategic plan. Altogether, conducting interviews, the SWOT analysis, and the strategic plan creates a resource development plan that Strive Forward Incorporated can utilize in real time to achieve its desired success.

There is little data on the effectiveness of resource development plans that contribute to nonprofit grassroots organizations' overall success. Data obtained from the SWOT analysis and strategic plan prepares Strive Forward Incorporated's board of

directors to see the possibilities and what they need to implement and practice in real-time if they want to see diversified funding coming into the organization. A resource development plan may contribute to Strive Forward Incorporated's financial stability as the organization will be clear and straightforward. According to Carroll and Stater (2008), when nonprofits' financial revenue is diversified, it demonstrates that the likeliness of the organization closing its doors is far from happening, and program expenses were not affected. Therefore, a strategic resource development plan may stabilize Strive Forward Incorporated's financial condition while decreasing its revenue dryness (Carroll & Stater, 2008).

Helms and Nixon (2010) stated that SWOT analysis is a strategic tool often used to address problems complex problems and provide information that can aid those in improving decision-making. Numerous businesses, practitioners, and marketing companies often use SWOT to help them identify their strengths and weaknesses. SWOT is often the primary stage of building a company's strategic plan (Helms & Nixon, 2010). In addition, SWOT analysis is a tool used to help companies brainstorm with different viewpoints in mind using internal strengths and weaknesses.

These components are financial resources, capacity, and efficiency (Helms & Nixon, 2010). Helms and Nixon (2010) mentioned that external indicators for threats facing companies include partners and suppliers, competitors, and social changes. Dyson (2004) mentioned that a SWOT analysis is a foundation for resource-based and strategic planning. Strategic planning by implementing a SWOT analysis is the blueprint for a nonprofit organization that guides the organization in accomplishing its goals. According

to Love (2022), a strategic plan is often compared to a flow chart because each section of the chart is connected to another area and can lead to the outcome of achieving the goal at hand.

Like any plan put in place to move a company forward, there are different elements of a strategic plan and put significant emphasis on moving the plan in the direction to reach a result with the best strategy to sustain the organization. Love (2002) stated that the first element of a strategic plan “is the overarching strategic plan. This speaks to the general rules of the goal that the organization desires to reach. Second, the business strategic plan looks at the organization's objectives that focus on achieving the organization's general goals. The last phase of the strategic plan emphasizes developmental strategic planning. It focuses on how the organization will fund initiatives and programs with the goal in mind of how the organization intends to achieve them.

Strive Forward Incorporated will need to implement the following stages of a strategic plan to successfully build adequate and realistic resources that can serve its organization in real-time. First, the organization must know the goals and why they are creating a development plan. Next, they must be open to seeking feedback from stakeholders that fund efforts they are looking to generate funding. Third, identifying and determining necessary fundraising and marketing strategies will be crucial (Love, 2022).

In addition, Strive Forward Incorporated will also need to establish objectives and benchmarks that guide its organization's path to reaching larger goals for programming and services. The organization, board, and executive director must create intentional tactics that support each goal set (Love, 2022). When looking at the importance of SWOT

analysis and strategic planning, Strive Forward Incorporated isn't the first nonprofit to utilize such strategies to create a pathway to financial sustainability. Nonprofit organizations that have utilized strategic plans and SWOT analysis include Habitat for Humanity, The Denver Foundation, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, and Covenant House. Many government companies such as the New York City Administration for Children Services, the New York City Department of Education, and the New York State of Children and Family Services have used strategic plans and SWOT analysis to guide their efforts to achieve goals, whether financially scaling upward or incorporating services around the need of the population being served.

### **Relevance to Public Organizations**

Moderate literature and research are presented on resource development planning around nonprofit organizations and how to scale them further financially to create sustainability. Limited literature was found on nonprofit resource development planning for grassroots organizations. However, research was conducted on the Nonprofit Research Development from Individual Donors for Operating Expenses (Ford-Byrd, 2021). Multiple qualitative studies have been undertaken to address the challenges faced by nonprofits and how nonprofits can stabilize themselves through fundraising and fund development planning but demonstrated that there needs to be more done on the resource development side to enhance the chances of nonprofit organizations being around a long time to serve the community in need.

Crisalli and Kramer (2018) pointed out that a gap in adequate resources and securing funding for nonprofits led and run by African Americans remain an ongoing

challenge today and, if not addressed, will lead to a significant divide and ongoing struggles. Researchers in the nonprofit industry believe that to address the need and reach outcomes of financial sustainability, an organization must be able to create robust resource development. Implementing a plan can diversify any organizations funding with a focus in mind that includes an organization's best practices, organizational culture, leadership, and ongoing ability to balance both capacity and stability while incorporating the significant importance of building a profound revenue strategy (Hurt, 2021).

Nonprofit grassroots organizations that range in small size and struggle to thrive are led by people of color and face funders' underinvested challenges and hardships limited to no resources or due to the organizations lacking infrastructure or ability to produce programs the funders believe are worth investing into (Crisalli & Kramer, 2019). Without the ability to measure outcomes due to poor or little funding, African American nonprofits are at a significant disadvantage in securing financing in speaking to what works through data presented to measure and reach outcomes. Inadequate resources and financial support from funders damage such organizations as those nonprofits are deeply rooted in their communities and the individuals needing ongoing support (Crisalli & Kramer, 2019).

Focusing on the overall financial success of any nonprofit organization will remain the primary goal of leadership. Nonprofit board members and their leadership teams must understand their role when it involves economic sustainability and the organization's survival to grow and maintain its longevity (Schatteman, 2017). According to the literature, an organization without resources has extraordinarily little chance of



surviving, leaving its organization to be dismantled (Mitchell, 2019). Like many organizations, researchers believe that creating the financial stability wanted must come from the organization's leadership team.

Well-established nonprofits have been able to address economic sustainability issues by developing different fundraising plans, fostering effective relationships with investors, defining their organization's mission and vision, and developing a nonprofit marketing plan (Sontag-Padilla et al., 2012). Sontag-Padilla et al. (2012, p. 14) mentioned that using partnerships to achieve financial sustainability is a strategic way to respond to the environmental shift in resources and mitigate competitive funding. Collaborations help nonprofits look to partner resources and decrease financial uncertainty they may not be aware. Such collaborations can help organizations offset their financial costs while providing them a chance to serve their communities and focus on the needs of those being served.

When reviewing available literature, the researcher saw that nonprofits that can reach financial success and capacity did so by having an emergency plan that covered both short- and long-term threats and hurt the organization's finances. Nonprofit leaders need to know and understand diverse ways to strategize on building diverse funding streams using a resource development plan to secure future financial sustainability. In closing, economic sustainability refers to the up-climb building of financial capacity. It includes resources used by nonprofit organizations and their competence to mitigate threats (Watson et al., 2020).

To reach financial sustainability, leaders must understand the skills they need to attain and create financial stability, which leads to using the resource development plan. Putting together a well-thought-out resource development plan will require nonprofit organizations to acquire different resources by interacting and engaging with those individuals, funders, and communities that have the resources they need (Henderson & Lambert, 2018). According to Sacristan (2016), many resources may not be available due to scarcity. In closing, the ongoing challenge to reach financial sustainability within new and upcoming nonprofits will evaluate the overall gain of an organization.

With nonprofit organizations, especially those of color, leaders must remember that grassroots organizations must understand the significance of resource development plans and why there needed to help nonprofits scale upward financially to conduct their mission. Without multiple avenues of raising financial support and securing resources, nonprofit organizations will face the pitfalls of enduring debt to render services. Strive Forward Incorporated's leadership is focused on securing funding of \$500,000 and more using diversified financial strategies to build capacity to reach economic sustainability to keep their doors open and programs running to aid those in need in the Western, New York, foster care system. Lastly, the organization focuses on creating longevity within the nonprofit sector and bridging the gap between foster care youth, young adults, and alums within their communities.

### **Organization Background and Context**

Strive Forward Incorporated is a 501 c3 organization established in 2019, located in the Western part of New York State. The organization's mission is to assist in

transitioning foster youth and alums into adulthood with support and guidance. Strive Forward Incorporated helps transition foster care alums of color from ages 16-35 years with housing stability, career advancement, and life skills. Healthcare coordination, personal and professional development, and leadership development are added components to assist and guide youth to be independent as much as possible so they can continue to thrive into adulthood. Currently, the organization has a board that includes five members. These members hold positions in education, executive leadership, youth services, alum programs manager, health management coordination, and director of case management.

Strive Forward Incorporated has three part-time staff that are responsible for the day-to-day activities of the organization. The first part-time position held by staff includes a program coordinator. The role of the program coordinator is to assist the organization with all planning and coordination of its services and programs. Next, the office assistant is responsible for scheduling and taking calls from stakeholders and customers served by the organization. Third, the youth assistant's responsibilities include helping the executive director navigate recreational, educational, and any enrichment activities the organization carries out to support their community and population of youth and young adults being served.

Since its launching in 2019, Strive Forward Incorporated has partnered with Independence to Adulthood (fictitious name), located in Western New York, as a collaborative effort to guide and offer those in underserved communities and the unemployed an opportunity to navigate the workforce and land jobs (About — Strive

Forward Incorporated," 2022). According to Strive Forward Incorporated (2022), the collaboration will engage youth, young adults, and foster care alums in a wraparound approach. This approach includes career coaches, stable housing, childcare for working mothers, and any other support required to help reduce barriers that may stagnate gaining employment and growing into a career.

Organizations wanting to work with Strive Forward Incorporated are hesitant because the organization lacks a significant amount of funding as a newer organization and lacks the infrastructure to put staff on salary. Although they have a clear mission, Strive Forward Incorporated struggles to engage the community and funders around their efforts to support those in the foster care community. Therefore, the organization must find alternative funding streams for the paid staff, board, and volunteers. They require a realistic resource development plan to guide their organization in the short term and prepare it for multi-long-term income. Hence, to create a resource development plan, I conducted a SWOT analysis to guide them in navigating a long-term strategy to secure stable funding. I anticipate the method may include more significant organizational strategic considerations such as board development, fundraising training, and program development. This may become part of the planning. By incorporating a resource development plan based on SWOT analysis data combined with contemporary fundraising practices, the organization will know how much change is needed to ensure its success and strategic direction.

According to Karlo (2021), a SWOT analysis is a valuable tool often used to help a company or organization formulate a strategy. "An organization's overall planning and

performance measurement is determined around the organization's SWOT analysis results through different approaches such as collaboration, advocacy, and strategizing" (Jean-François, 2014, p. 87). A strategic resource development SWOT analysis plan will help the organization build multiple funding streams that support how it can generate funding and the strategy to take the initiative. A standard resource development plan can guide nonprofit organizations in understanding how different organizations can gain resources by being matched within the same environment they operate. Lastly, utilizing a resource development plan can help in the overall guidance and direction in which the organization can formulate a strategy and grow (Jean-François, 2014, p. 87).

### **Definition of Terms**

*Advocacy:* The act and process of supporting, pleading, or defending a cause on behalf of oneself, someone else, or a group of people (Jean-François 2015).

*Board member:* Make up the governing body of a nonprofit organization and contributes to the organization's actions by holding them legally accountable. Board members are responsible for their beneficiaries, supporters and for overseeing the company's purposes (McRay, 2017).

*Financial planning:* A process that is utilized to help determine the strategic financial goals alongside the objectives of an organization, including the resources and timeline needed to reach them (Jean- Francois, 2014).

*Leadership:* A process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2021).

*Financial sustainability:* When a nonprofit organization can maintain its financial capacity long-term and remains the centerpiece of a nonprofit organizational function (Sontag-Padilla et al., 2012).

*Management:* To structure and coordinate various functions within organizations (Northouse, 2021).

*Resource development plan:* Outline a framework for ensuring appropriate financial resources for the organization and a good process to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of all resource development activities. The resource plan should include diversified income sources to avoid dependence on a single source (Standards for Excellence Institute, 2014).

*Stakeholder:* Any individual that can be affected by or affect an organization. These are the individuals that have a stake in the work that is being conducted. These individuals include volunteers, businesses, vendors, donors, and internal staff. Such individuals are needed to help fulfill an organization's mission and often feel the consequences of your organization's choices and actions (Castillo, 2021).

*Strategic partnership:* A partnership that is intentional and purposeful collaboration with the intention of both parties to reach the same goals long-term and activities on a larger scale (Jean-Francois, 2014).

*Strategic planning:* The processes in which an effort is made to bring about actions and decisions to help guide, shape, and move the organization into the future. Strategic plans guide the direction in which the organization desires to go (Masilamony, 2010).

*SWOT Analysis:* The breakdown of an organization's internal strengths, weaknesses, and external opportunities and threats in an environmental setting. Internal components identify the organization's resources, core competencies, and capabilities while utilizing a conceptual approach to review the company's finances, marketing, infrastructure, management, and innovation. The internal breakdown of the SWOT analysis helps the organization see and understand its competitive advantage over another organization. Organizations' external factors help to identify potential threats and see opportunities within that market (Sammut-Bonnici & GALEA, 2015).

### **Operational Definitions**

*Funding model:* nonprofit organizations often use the institutionalized approach to raise money to help with programs and services (Ibrisevic, 2022).

*Participant:* An individual that participates in a study, experiment, or investigation by completing tasks asked of them and answering questions by the researcher. Participants can also be identified as subjects who want to keep their identity from being disclosed (American Psychological Association, 2022).

*Researcher:* The individual conducting the study and studies someone that identifies as a subject. The researcher studies the subject to discover new information or reach a new understanding (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

### **Role of the Researcher**

As a leader and executive director of a nonprofit and for-profit organization in Brooklyn, New York, I consult with child welfare agencies and nonprofit organizations on both local and state levels. In addition, I facilitate and train foster parents in parent

development for agencies governed by the local and state agencies that oversee them. These nonprofit organizations are governed by local and state children's services to ensure that nonprofits are following caring for foster youth and young adults in their care. Foster parents are responsible for providing care and support for New York's most underserved and vulnerable children when they are removed from the home environment pending child abuse allegations such as neglect and physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.

As an executive director of a New York City-based nonprofit, I manage the day-to-day management and operations of the organization. These functions include engaging the communities being served, providing insight to the board of directors into the organization's activities, recruiting volunteers and mentors, and engaging funders around the organization's mission and vision. Next, I track and scale different fundraising efforts, evaluate programs, and collaborate with government—nonprofit officials to develop, design, and provide analytical information. Lastly, I develop organizational policies and procedures and plan and develop workshops for mother-baby and expectant mothers, and fathers that identify as having child welfare engagement once transitioned out of child welfare.

As a for-profit business, I focus on engaging parents in understanding the dynamics and importance of co-parenting, and the significance of meeting the needs of both parents and their child or children from the lens of “the whole family approach.” Engaging parents within the special needs community that are in the transition phase with their children remains a top priority for me. The age range of these parents' children starts



at kindergarten and expands to the 12th grade. Lastly, speaking the same language and a different language to what parents are asking for and need remains at the forefront and drives how I help them navigate their challenges in and out of their home environment.

Many of the areas I guide parents in whether foster parents or a parent having a child with challenges include parenting from a one and two-parent household, cultural parenting, parenting children with love and understanding, disciplining teenagers without guilt, and effective positive communication. In addition, I help parents navigate conflict between siblings, and understand the importance of focusing on positive behaviors of their children with limited focus on the child's negative behavior patterns. My motto is "parenting from a traditional foundation with a modern-day approach." This is the center of my parent model using the "theory of change" to promote social change in the nonprofit industry and the for-profit sector.

My role as the researcher in this study was voluntary. I attended a foster care conference in Baltimore, Maryland, in 2019 and met the executive director of a new and upcoming nonprofit organization. I have collaborated with the executive director of Strive Forward Incorporated on several occasions to raise awareness around the importance of lived experience and leaders in child welfare being able to utilize those that grew up in the foster care system to reach youth and young adults transitioning into adulthood and beyond. Lastly, I attended an annual foster care event held by Strive Forward Incorporated for foster care awareness month in Western New York.

In this project, I aimed to find ways to guide Strive Forward Incorporated in carrying out a well-rounded resource development plan that sheds light on the importance

of the organization's financial growth, diversifying funding, and the prestige of a successful development plan to create financial stability. I partnered with individuals that serve in different nonprofit financial capacities and have attended Walden University, which has profound knowledge of the research topic of fundraising, fund development, and fiscal management. I interviewed leaders, managers, and board members within Strive Forward Incorporated and outside nonprofit organizations to better understand the steps needed to improve the organization's chances of securing funding through diversified funding streams. Understanding the organization's needs has provided the researcher with important context for a healthy approach to the resource development plan beginning with a SWOT analysis and then for a strategic plan.

Strive Forward Incorporated was able to utilize the resource development plan implemented by the researcher to find funders and investors that want to support their mission and provide resources that aid them in sustaining themselves. The researcher provided the organization listed above with a professional administrative study focusing on applied research that can be implemented immediately. Upon implementing the resource development plan, Strive Forward Incorporated will be able to adjust the resource development plan as they grow. Lastly, the organization can use each component of the resource development plan separately.

### **Summary**

Section 2 consists of the conceptual framework used for this professional administrative study and what took place for Strive Forward Incorporated to grow its organization and create long-term economic sustainability. With the literature detailing

and being specific to a well-thought-out resource development plan, the information and guidance provided may assist Strive Forward Incorporated in improving its overall strategy of attracting donors and securing annual funding for longer-term financial and programmatic growth. Through a general qualitative approach using SWOT analysis and individual interviews, the conceptual framework may help the organization to see all the possibilities of their growth if they incorporate the resource development plan and include their team members, including the board of directors, leadership, and development teams, and committee members. In the next section, I showed questions to those individuals in leadership positions within the nonprofit industry and focus on what strategies they used to help their organization grow, maintain financial sustainability, and diversify funding. Results retrieved from nonprofit leaders will be utilized to help Strive Forward Incorporated create an achievable annual resource development plan.

### Section 3: Data Collection Process and Analysis

#### **Introduction**

The problem that was addressed through this study was the lack of a strategic resource development plan to meet the funding needs of the programs and services for Strive Forward Incorporated. They are experiencing an acute and multiyear struggle to secure adequate funding. In addition to straining its current operations, it cannot raise enough money that would otherwise make it eligible for more considerable funding opportunities. According to Gregory and Howard (2009), nonprofit organizations that build upon a vital, robust infrastructure such as systems, programs, fundraising processes, and skills training have a better chance of success than organizations with no infrastructure set up properly correctly. Lack of funding in the grassroots organizations in the child welfare system can cause a significant divide in services and leave transitioning foster youth and young adults vulnerable to falling through the cracks subjecting them to experience pipeline systems. Youth and young adults transitioning out of foster care are among the most underserved, forgotten, vulnerable, and unrepresented populations in the United States.

In section 3, I focused on Strive Forward Incorporated's organizational problem and how using their board of directors, managers, and leaders can guide the organization in generating funding to reach the \$500,000 mark. Using current nonprofit experts were also explored to shed light on how they grew their organization's funding streams to help sustain the non-profit organizations they work. Third, how participants were recruited and what data was reviewed to support Strive Forward Incorporated's resource

development plan were included. Furthermore, strategies used to recruit participants included advertisements sent to participants through email and non-profit leaders working in child welfare.

### **Practice-Focused Question**

#### **Organizational Problem**

Currently, the problem faced by Strive Forward Incorporated, like many other grassroots nonprofits, is the ongoing ability to reach the \$500,000 mark to be considered for funding assistance from philanthropic organizations to help them fill the gap and bridge the divide of support needed for foster youth, young adults and alums of the Western, New York foster care system. The organization does not have a resource development plan to assist its leadership, management, and human resources department in diversifying funding that will help, guide, and nurture their efforts to access, gain and maintain economic sustainability. Implementing an intense and profound foundation to grow its capacity creates significant opportunities and a transparent approach to scaling upward with a SWOT analysis resource development plan and a strategic plan to bring the resource development plan full circle. Including Strive Forward Incorporated's leadership team, management team, and board of directors in the process of capacity building and financial growth helps to ensure that the organization is pivoting in the right direction. Everyone agrees with the approach the organization must go if they want to remain and stand firm within a competitive market.

The individuals within the case study were current and past nonprofit professionals, experts, executive directors, and leaders familiar with fundraising, fund

development, strategic planning, and resource development. These participants were well versed and had used these components in their leadership roles in helping nonprofits attract funding and had been managers who had spearheaded organizational development that pushed their organizations to secure financing through productive relationships and networking. The participants comprised different age groups ranging from 40-65 years of age and came from diverse and varied backgrounds. Through their affluent knowledge, the participants were well-grounded and active. They had consulted with nonprofits throughout their careers to direct them toward securing financial sustainability and preparing for the future if an organization faced an economic crisis.

These leaders held substantial knowledge about strategic plans, nonprofit infrastructure, capacity building, and nonprofit policies and procedures required to govern well-run companies serving people in need. Participants were familiar with the purpose of a SWOT analysis and its significance in bridging the gap to meet nonprofit organizational needs, long-term company goals, and the importance of pivoting when something no longer served its purpose. Strive Forward Incorporated was expected to meet the financial needs of the organization by first understanding the reason for needing funding, ensuring that their vision and mission were aligned with philanthropic efforts to fund programs, and recognizing indicators that they had to shift when necessary to remain competitive in a market that spoke a financial language of its own. Furthermore, the leaders recognized the importance of establishing solid relationships with potential donors and stakeholders, leveraging these connections to secure the necessary financial support for Strive Forward Incorporated and its programs.

### **Practiced Focus Questions**

The problem that was addressed through this study is the lack of a standard resource development plan. Strive Forward Incorporated is experiencing an ongoing struggle to secure adequate funding. In addition to straining its current operations, it cannot raise enough money that would otherwise make it eligible for more considerable funding opportunities. According to Gregory and Howard (2009), nonprofit organizations that build upon a vital, robust infrastructure such as systems, programs, fundraising processes, and skills training have a better chance of success than organizations with no infrastructure set up properly correctly. Lack of funding in the grassroots organizations in the child welfare system can cause a significant divide in services and leave transitioning foster youth and young adults vulnerable to falling through the cracks subjecting them to experience pipeline systems. Youth and young adults transitioning out of foster care are among the most underserved, forgotten, vulnerable, and unrepresented populations in the United States.

The operating function of Strive Forward Incorporated was to bridge the gap in services needed for foster youth, young adults, and alums of the New York foster care system to live a productive lifestyle both in and out of foster care, enabling them to transition into adulthood and beyond and live successful lifestyles that aided them in their overall success. This study focused on the significance of one nonprofit organization's ability to utilize a resource development plan with an incorporated SWOT analysis and strategic plan to guide their organization in diversifying different funding streams and creating desired economic wealth. Creating economic wealth would ensure their

organization remained capable of reaching longevity in an economy that could sometimes be uncertain. Additionally, the organization recognized that establishing a solid financial foundation would be better equipped to adapt to changing economic conditions and sustain its mission of supporting foster youth, young adults, and alums of the New York foster care system in the long term.

Even though the founder and executive director of Strive Forward Incorporated have experience in leadership roles within the nonprofit industry, the executive director is not fully trained nor equipped to run a nonprofit without adequate support and guidance to grow her efforts. Interestingly, there is a fundamental need and approach that she and the board must take to leverage their needs and strategy around what resource development is and what it must include. Before the organization launched and operated, the goal of the organization should have prioritized focusing on financial advancement through training on economic sustainability, capacity building, board development, employee hiring and retention, and transparency. Foster care organizations, young adults, and foster care alums utilize Strive Forward Incorporated to assist them in navigating services and support from a lived experience perspective on what individuals are seeking and asking for that had some child welfare engagement, whether it be short or long-term living.

Different entities and individuals rely on organizations such as Strive Forward Incorporated to visualize success if the individual is willing to work and create the lifestyles, they feel they deserve. Strive Forward Incorporated lacks the ability and functioning to operate fully due to a lack of equipped staff who understand what needs to



be done through an organizational lens. To meet the demand for economic growth, Strive Forward Incorporated will need to shift its focus on recruiting the proper board members that are experienced and have diverse backgrounds, understand fundraising efforts, and can tap into their direct networks of support that can assist them with raising money in the capacity of peer to peer fundraising. Strive Forward Incorporated must be able to recruit board members, volunteers, and mentors for the young people served by their organization who understand their vision and mission to contribute to the company's upward direction.

Strive Forward Incorporated will need the support of its board of directors, who are well-rounded within their roles of financial contribution and the overall understanding of organizational development for growth. Nonprofit consultant input was crucial to the organization's direction because, without proper nonprofit guidance and sound advice, Strive Forward Incorporated may be forced to close the organization's doors within the next three years. Having guidance from a consultant that knows how funding and resource development planning works is crucial as it guides the organization on how to connect to their overall community, land collaborations, and partnerships and fundraise utilizing different strategies and techniques around goals set to operate and run programming. Receiving proper guidance from an experienced board of directors and nonprofit consultant can positively impact the community around the efforts to help Buffalo's most vulnerable population.

If these efforts were not considered, Strive Forward Incorporated's infrastructure would have remained weakened, posing a risk to the organization's continuity.

Unfortunately, due to the absence of proper systems, the organization could not assess the outcomes of its services as it operated below the capacity to be funded to employ staff for consistent programming and data collection. Consequently, Strive Forward Incorporated encountered difficulties showcasing its services' effectiveness and impact, impeding its ability to attract additional funding and support. As a result, the organization faced obstacles in expanding its reach and fulfilling its mission of assisting a broader population of foster youth, young adults, and alumni.

### **Preliminary Interview Questions for Nonprofit Experts**

Before conducting the interviews, participants were presented with questions pertaining to their knowledge and understanding of financial sustainability, nonprofit leadership, strategic planning, and resource development (see Appendix C: Preliminary Interview Questions for Nonprofit Experts). As part of their engagement in the roles of nonprofit leadership and management, participants were involved in discussions about "resource development plans and their function in guiding nonprofits." Once each potential participant had provided background information and their definition of resource development planning, the researcher selected five leaders from the nonprofit industry to participate in the study. The researcher then provided these selected participants with the necessary details and logistics of the professional administrative study, along with a clear definition of resource development planning. As stated in the Standards for Excellence Guiding Principles (2014), resource development is a collaborative effort involving both the staff and the board of directors of an organization.

It is heavily dependent on their ability to contribute to the financial stability of the nonprofit, as well as the principles of stewardship and integrity.

### **Sources of Evidence**

Qualitative data and feedback from the case study participants were gathered during the interview process. As emphasized by Creswell (2013), qualitative research emphasizes inquiry and collects data using open-ended questions. The data sources utilized included Strive Forward Incorporated's bylaws, responses from nonprofit leaders, managers, and board members, and the organization's mission statement. Furthermore, the company's policies and procedures were examined to assess the responsibilities of leaders, managers, and board members. Additionally, a trend analysis of financial statements was carried out to acquire data and gain insights into the financial aspects of Strive Forward Incorporated. The data resources employed provided supporting evidence pertaining to the research question at hand.

The feedback from participants in the nonprofit industry offered a broad perspective on how nonprofits could effectively utilize funds and establish productive relationships with philanthropic organizations capable of providing the necessary capital for growth and long-term sustainability. The participants were asked specific questions (refer to Appendix C: Preliminary Interview Questions for Nonprofit Experts), and their responses were shared with the researcher. Each participant's answers focused on their capacity to act as the initial funders, contributing monetary gifts through their respective boards and specifying the intended allocation of funds. The questions posed to the participants explored the impact of past and present donations on the organization's

mission, vision, and future projections, particularly if they were not the ones making the initial donation. As the researcher, I had confidence in the accuracy of the information provided by the participants, and I believed their responses reflected their best efforts and the knowledge acquired through their roles.

## **Evidence Generated for the Administrative Study**

### ***Participants***

Five participants were selected to participate in the study, and data were collected on various aspects, including length of service working in the nonprofit industry, holding leadership positions within their organization, and demographic representation. Both male and female participants were invited for interviews, allowing them to choose their preferred interview format to share their knowledge and experiences. The recruitment of participants was facilitated through connections with individuals of significance, including the Strive Forward Incorporated executive director, board members, consultants, and leaders in the nonprofit industry, who played a crucial role as critical participants in the professional administrative study. Additionally, the researcher interviewed leaders from child welfare nonprofits and other nonprofit professionals to understand their paths to financial sustainability in their respective organizations, both past and present.

All participants identified as nonprofit experts were expected to have held or currently hold leadership, management, or fundraising positions within active organizations dedicated to enhancing capacity and ensuring long-term financial sustainability. Following Creswell's (2013) recommendation, the research targeted

individuals with direct experience related to the phenomenon under investigation. Participants were selected based on their professional background and expertise in nonprofit sustainability, fundraising, fund development, and capacity building. For inclusion in the administrative study, participants needed to have worked in multiple nonprofits and held various positions that contributed to their organizations' past, present, and ongoing initiatives. Employing a convenience sampling method allowed me to gather insights and knowledge from participants who were easily accessible and convenient for the study. Stratton (2021) noted that nonprobability sampling methods are subjective, with the researcher either selecting participants directly or receiving referrals from others.

As stated by Patton (2002), the researcher addressed the research and sample size considerations. The sample size of the study aimed to adequately capture the phenomenon under investigation, aligning with the principles highlighted by Lincoln and Guba (1989). The survey included contributors who met the following criteria: (a) being 30 years of age or older, (b) having a minimum of ten years of experience in a nonprofit role as a leader, manager, fundraiser, board of directors, or committee member, (c) having experience in human resources, and (d) having involvement in creating policies and procedures, bylaws, and contracts.

### ***Strategies for Recruitment***

After receiving IRB approval from Walden University (03-01-23-0609784), candidates who met the requirements for the case study were recruited. Personalized email advertisements were sent to nonprofit leaders, including executive directors and individuals known to hold positions within the nonprofit industry. Connections within the

researcher's network in the nonprofit sector were also contacted via text, email, and LinkedIn, specifically targeting those in leadership, fundraising, and strategic planning roles. Individuals who expressed interest in the study and met the requirements were informed verbally and in writing (via email) that they had the option to withdraw from the study at any time. It was ensured that potential participants were not approached to join the study while they were at work or involved in group activities.

After agreeing to participate in the study via email, participants received the research questions to familiarize themselves with the interview content. Data collection for the study involved interviews with participants who volunteered to share their firsthand experiences in the nonprofit industry. To ensure compliance with COVID-19 safety protocols, the interviews were conducted through one-on-one Zoom sessions, utilizing audio and video recordings. The audio recording was preferred to protect the participants' anonymity.

The researcher and participants exchanged email reminders and calendar invites, ensuring mutual confirmation of the interview schedule. Before the interviews, participants provided their consent, both verbally and through agreement, to being recorded for transcription purposes. Participants were informed beforehand that their identities and any disclosed information would be anonymized. Each interview was recorded and lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes, allowing for substantial data collection. The recorded interviews were transcribed into Word, labeled as Interview Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, and subsequently imported and organized in NVivo 12 software. The data were then coded according to the participants' professional titles.

The aim was to recruit participants from the child welfare system and nonprofits dedicated to serving vulnerable populations, including related programs that were legally incorporated as 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations with tax-exempt status. With the assistance of friends, colleagues, and my mentor, I reached out to individuals in their networks and inquired about their willingness to share their experiences. By leveraging my support network, I was able to identify six potential participants who expressed interest in providing valuable feedback on topics such as fundraising, board development, capacity building, and fund development. It is crucial to note that no participant was subjected to any form of pressure or coercion to participate in the research study, neither by me nor by any other nonprofit professional.

Strive Forward Incorporated played a crucial role in supporting and assisting in recruiting board members, leaders, and managers for the professional administrative study. They highlighted the significance of the study and explained how the feedback obtained would contribute to the organization's progress, capacity building, and financial sustainability. During the organization's fundraising event in foster care awareness month, the executive director of Strive Forward Incorporated utilized a research sign-up sheet to gather the names of individuals who expressed their willingness to participate and provide feedback for the administrative project. Additionally, the executive director emailed the leadership teams she was affiliated with, requesting their response within five days. The researcher also sent a participant agreement form to the executive director via email, which she used to engage potential participants in the study.

Strive Forward Incorporated assisted me in identifying potential candidates for the study through their extensive networks. Their insights were particularly valuable in understanding funding strategies for new organizations. As Creswell (2009) mentioned, organizations and individuals who assist researchers in recruiting potential research participants are known as gatekeepers. I utilized my network within the New York City child welfare system and nonprofit industry to recruit an additional 10 participants with a minimum of ten years of experience in growing nonprofits from the ground up as a safety measure in case any participant decided to pull out of the study.

Additionally, participants chosen for the study shared their value in effectively capturing funders' attention by aligning their organizations' mission with the programs they pitched, resulting in successful funding outcomes. A comprehensive summary of the study, outlining its objectives and importance, was emailed to leaders, managers, board members, and individuals with experience in the government and nonprofit sectors. This dissemination of information was essential for the research as it provided valuable insights into the intricacies of securing funding for nonprofits at different governmental levels, including local, state, and federal. Moreover, the synopsis served as a valuable resource for participants, enabling them to familiarize themselves with the study's scope and goals, facilitating their active engagement and contribution during the research process.

An e-message was sent to potential participants, including the purpose of the research, my name, contact information, and the requirement to participate in the study (Appendix A). Potential participants who demonstrated interest in the study were



contacted by email and notified when the study would occur. Once the participants agreed, they received an email detailing they agreed to the research terms. When I received the emails confirming interest, I scheduled interviews via zoom for the staff who wanted to socially distance themselves due to COVID-19 and any other health concerns they had.

### **Ethical Integrity Guidelines**

Questions asked were explained and provided to all participants to clarify the professional administrative study. Each participant who agreed to take part in the study provided their consent through email to participate in the case study. Approval from the Strive Forward Incorporated board allowed the researcher to collect; information such as data and begin interviews. I sent an email detailing the agreement to conduct the research with the executive director outlining all dates and areas on which I interviewed nonprofit participants. Expectations of the qualitative case study were explained before the research and on the day of conducting and engaging participants to obtain their feedback. All verbal answers were recorded using an Eccomum 32 GB Digital Voice Recorder purchased from Walmart and Zoom virtual platform. Participants were given a right to privacy disclosure and reminded that they were entitled to withdraw from the research at any time they chose to (Glesne, 2006).

The security of the participants and the data gathered was ensured through various measures. First, participant consent forms were obtained via email, printed out, and locked in a file cabinet in my office. Additionally, all colleagues involved in the research were provided with copies of the consent form before the commencement of the study.

To address confidentiality concerns, each participant was assigned a fictitious name to protect their employment status or any engagement they may have within the nonprofit industry. This ensured that their identities remained anonymous, and their privacy was upheld.

My primary objective was to create a safe and comfortable environment for the participants to share their experiences. Therefore, no pressure was applied on the participants to provide input. They were encouraged to engage in an open-ended conversation, allowing them to share as much information as they felt comfortable sharing. The researcher approached the participants with calmness, ease, and a comforting demeanor, fostering an atmosphere of trust.

In conclusion, participants were allowed to offer feedback, allowing them to express their perspectives and thoughts on the research process. The insights gained from this feedback proved invaluable in enhancing the study on nonprofit resource development, nonprofit infrastructure, and financial sustainability, as well as addressing any concerns that may have emerged during the research. These measures were implemented to safeguard the well-being and confidentiality of the participants and to uphold the highest ethical standards in research. Furthermore, the study obtained informed consent from all participants, ensuring their comprehensive understanding of the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks while allowing them the freedom to withdraw their participation at any time without facing any adverse consequences.

The feedback provided by the participants played a vital role in maintaining a participant-centered approach and improving the overall quality of the research. These

measures were successfully implemented, prioritizing the participants' security and well-being. As a result, an environment conducive to open and honest communication was fostered, ensuring the confidentiality of their information was safeguarded throughout the study. Lastly, the researcher valued and carefully considered the feedback from participants, utilizing their insights to make informed adjustments that further enhanced the participant-centered approach and the research's overall efficacy.

### **Procedures**

During the data-gathering procedures, various methods were employed. Participant interviews, leadership meeting agendas, and a convenience sampling approach were utilized for data collection. To gain insight into the organization's financials, donor lists, Strive Forward Incorporated financial statements and 990 forms were examined. The professional administrative study aimed to produce a deliverable that could be used in real-time to assist Strive Forward Incorporated in navigating and achieving financial sustainability. The study adhered to the guidance and recommendations from the Professional Administrative Study (PAS) committee and the ethical criteria set by Walden University Internal Review Board (number 03-01-23-0609784).

Additionally, published works such as books, journals, theses, and dissertations in the field of resource development, strategic planning, fundraising, capacity building, and nonprofit board development were consulted to inform the research. Castillo (2019) states that nonprofit sustainability and capacity building involves revenue enhancement, managerial and leadership development, community systems, and programmatic

competencies. These competencies were considered in developing a resource development plan for Strive Forward Incorporated's financial stability. The literature available through the Walden University library, including SWOT analysis and strategic planning, contributed to the resource development plan.

The interviewees were provided with interview questions (refer to Appendix C: Preliminary Interview Questions for Nonprofit Experts) and guidelines, and they were requested to provide in-depth responses that were concise, clear, and honest. Participant Consent Forms were given to all participants via email, and they were required to provide an email responding to the researcher that they consent to participate in the case study. The consent form also included a tentative timeline for data collection, which spanned four to six weeks. Furthermore, as the data collection progressed, regular communication was maintained with the participants to address any questions or concerns that arose during the study.

### **Protection of Participants**

All participants in the professional administrative study were identified using a fictitious name picked by the participants to identify themselves within the study. The nonprofit executive director gave written consent for the researcher to use the organization's name in the research. The executive director's information was protected using a security name on the hard drive that can only be accessed by the researcher conducting the interviews. All data retrieved from Strive Forward Incorporated staff participating in the study will be identified using only fictitious names. Received feedback and information were stored on a hard drive separate from other participants in

the study and locked in a secure file cabinet in the researcher's office. Interviews conducted can only be accessed by the researcher using a login passcode and key.

No participant's name or full identity was disclosed in any published documents, such as journals, articles, or administrative studies. Any direct quotes included in the study were accompanied by written permission from the participants, using their fictitious names. To protect participants working in the nonprofit sector and participating in the study, the researcher kept their current organizations undisclosed. Participants received written notification via email regarding their rights, privacy concerns, and an agreement that the researcher would not publish confidential information. Additionally, participants were informed that any approved information they chose to share, or post would be considered but does not guarantee publication.

All the data I received for the study was stored on a hard drive and securely kept in a locked file cabinet that belongs exclusively to me for five years. After the fifth year when the information was received, it will be destroyed. Before conducting interviews, participants were provided with a privacy notice and informed about their rights to participate in the study. When engaging in discussions with the executive director of Strive Forward Incorporated, she was given a comprehensive reminder of the rules, expectations, and her privacy rights, which she agreed to through email. The researcher was available to address any questions related to the professional administrative study.

Once consent forms were agreed to, participants were informed that all interview sessions would be conducted one-to-one between them and the researcher, via Zoom to ensure privacy and safeguard the participant's health concerns due to COVID-19.

Participants were notified that they had the option to withdraw from the study if they felt unable to contribute information due to privacy concerns or organizational guidelines. Those participants who chose to begin and participate were requested to actively engage and provide supportive feedback until the completion of the study. Participants were informed that their responses would be documented in Microsoft Word 365 and imported into NVivo 12 software for analysis and interpretation after concluding the administrative study. Lastly, individuals were allowed to review their answers for accuracy and were notified by email that they had a five-day window to make any desired changes.

### **Data Integrity**

Data that was collected from participants were logged into Microsoft Word 365 and the NVivo 12 software. The audio files captured by the Eccomum 32 GB Digital Voice Recorder and Zoom were listened to and transcribed using the NVivo 12 software. Upon receiving approval from the Walden Institutional Review Board (number 03-01-23-0609784), written responses were documented in Microsoft Word 365. The data obtained from participants and the written information were stored on a WD - Easystore 1TB External USB 3.0 Portable Hard Drive - Black, purchased from Best Buy and encrypted with a password for secure data retrieval. This stored information on the hard drive facilitated easy access and breakdown of data for transcription and analysis using the NVivo 12 software. The NVivo 12 software was beneficial for the research as it assisted the researcher in analyzing and organizing the unstructured audio from the participants who engaged in the interviews ("statistical & qualitative data analysis software: about NVivo," 2021). The analyzed data were used to develop a resource development plan and

enhance Strive Forward Incorporated's financial capacity through various funding streams, networking, relationship-building, and leveraging core competencies for revenue enhancement.

Once the participants' information was transcribed, the researcher employed narrative analysis. According to Lumsden (2018), narrative analysis provides a distinct approach to understanding, investigating, and exploring the lived experiences of individuals, as well as subjective perspectives. The narrative analysis involves the creation and construction of meaning through the stories shared by individuals who have unique life experiences, enabling them to make sense of the valuable insights they provide within the complexity of their lifestyles, behaviors, or cultures (Lumsden, 2018). Lumsden emphasized that this approach allows researchers to gather information and data from the stories shared by the participants.

Information gathered included the participants' feelings, time sequence, images, and shared feelings. According to Baker and Parcell (2018), meaningful and substantial interpretations focus on different areas such as but not limited to what's the purpose of the participants' story, how the interviews and stories will be performed, how the stories will be structured, and the reason they are being told. Using a narrative analysis helps to bring clarity between the researcher and the participant. In addition, the clarity of both entities can be seen in qualitative research that includes artifacts, journals, interviews, and photographs (Lumsden, 2018).

When employing narrative analysis, the researcher employed a five-step approach. The initial step involved utilizing an inductive method to segment participant

interviews into narratives. These narratives were labeled with corresponding codes, such as "narrative blocks." Subsequently, the researcher reviewed, compared, contrasted, and coded the transcripts of participant interviews using the same labels. During this review process, the researcher noted the participants' similarities and differences, as stated by Delve and Limpaecher (2022). Detailing the similarities and differences among participants was identified as the initial step in the analysis process, according to Delve and Limpaecher.

In the third step, the researcher created multiple nested codes aligned with the research framework. In step four, the experiences of each participant working in the nonprofit industry were compiled using a story structure code. The story codes allowed for a comparison of how non-profit leaders narrated their stories within the broader narratives. Delve and Limpaecher (2022) noted that the researcher documented both the similarities and differences observed among non-profit leaders. The researcher coded these differences to facilitate future analysis of the research (Delve & Limpaecher, 2022).

In step five, the researcher distinguished between narrative blocks by incorporating participant feedback and utilizing the story structure. The researcher specifically focused on examining how the story structure codes were interconnected with the non-profit participants' experiences in the non-profit industry and their financial strategies for sustaining their organizations. Step six involved exploring all narrative blocks to understand how each participant narrated their unique experiences. Delve & Limpaecher (2022) highlighted that the core narratives played a crucial role in enabling



the researcher to comprehend the similarities and differences in approaches to financial sustainability among the non-profit participants.

### **Summary**

Upon completing this professional administrative study, the findings were shared with the executive director of Strive Forward Incorporated. The study included recommendations that aimed to guide the organization's future outcomes. Through interviews with Strive Forward Incorporated's executive director, and leaders in the nonprofit industry, valuable data was retrieved to address the research question posed in Section 2 of the study. Themes such as SWOT analysis, strategic planning, financial goals, building relationships, accountability, fundraising, and evaluation of the resource development plan emerged from the data analysis, providing the researcher with proven strategies and insights from experienced nonprofit professionals.

The study shed light on the importance of a well-thought-out resource development plan for Strive Forward Incorporated's financial sustainability and its ability to attract ongoing funding for its mission. The research also highlighted the scarcity of literature on nonprofit financial sustainability through resource development planning, emphasizing the need to fill this knowledge gap within the nonprofit industry. The study focused on navigating the steps necessary for a nonprofit to guide its financial resources through a comprehensive resource development plan, ultimately increasing its economic sustainability. The study underscored the significance of community engagement, collaborations, partnerships, and networking in supporting the financial stability of programs and driving social change within the foster care community.

Before the organization's establishment, the study recognized the importance of focusing on financial advancement, capacity building, board development, employee hiring and retention, and transparency to ensure the organization's success. Strive Forward Incorporated was advised to recruit board members with diverse backgrounds and fundraising expertise to support its growth. The guidance of a nonprofit consultant was deemed crucial to the organization's direction and success. The study emphasized that without proper systems in place, Strive Forward Incorporated would struggle to measure the outcomes of its services and face the risk of closure within the next three years.

Section 3 of the study outlined the data expectations, ethical guidelines, participant recruitment procedures, project breakdown, and the protection of participants' privacy. It also covered the analysis and synthesis of the collected data and the selection of participants. The section further detailed the procedures followed to ensure the study's ethical integrity, data collection, and data integrity. In closing, this chapter also provided a comprehensive overview of the steps taken to ensure the study's ethical integrity, maintain the integrity of the data collected, and adhere to rigorous data collection procedures.

In Section 4 of the professional administrative study (PAS), data were utilized to present a comprehensive SWOT analysis resource development plan and its constituent components intended for immediate implementation by Strive Forward Incorporated. The SWOT analysis and strategic plan incorporated essential elements necessary for executing the resource development plan. Additionally, considerations were made

regarding various income streams, resource allocation, and the provision of printable attachments. Recommendations were also made for nonprofit training to ensure the organization remained updated on industry changes that could impact its funding sources. In conclusion, Strive Forward Incorporated has now gained the ability to effect the desired social change by employing its resources and strategic approaches, paving the way for future financial growth and success.

## Section 4: Results and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

This study aimed to explore, understand, and differentiate ways to help Strive Forward Incorporated (fictitious name) create a resource development plan and additional approaches to what will be needed to achieve financial sustainability and capacity building to remain in a competitive industry. Strive Forward Incorporated is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization providing services and programs to foster care youth, transitional-age youth, and alumni of color between ages 16 to 35 in Buffalo, New York. The research question in this qualitative study: How can one grassroots nonprofit organization establish long-term sustainability through a diversified resource development plan? It will be examined by nonprofit executives who have spent more than ten years in leadership roles with a significant focus on pushing for social change and navigating strategic relationships that focus on securing funding from top foundations, government entities, corporations, and those individuals interested in helping bring awareness to a well-needed cause.

This professional administrative study captured findings from top executive leaders in the nonprofit industry that support and have implications for the field of public administration and the nonprofit sector that contribute to the overall sustainability and capacity building for newer and smaller nonprofits to grow and flourish. With shared lived experiences, Strive Forward Incorporated can go from simply surviving to thriving. With the findings of the study, many recommendations can benefit the overall functionality of Strive Forward Incorporated for them to reach the pinnacles of financial

success as long as they are willing to listen to those leaders before them and do the work to reap the benefits of their labor. In addition, this section explains the data collected and how it was analyzed using NVivo 12 software for written notes and recorded interviews with participants.

This section addresses the data collection, participant interviews, and study findings. Next, the researcher suggests the deliverables and recommendations for the organization and what will be required to improve financial growth and sustainability. Suggestions on how Strive Forward Incorporated can utilize capacity building around leadership and management are crucial to understanding the importance of nonprofits building solid infrastructures to reach capacity. Finally, the strengths and limitations of the study were included to give the organization an outlook on how they will need to pivot when needed to reach a different outcome to continue to grow upward.

### **Data Collection**

All data collected from semi structured interviews were categorized, analyzed, and evaluated to help identify patterns of similarities and differences to understand and process the changes needed by Strive Forward Incorporated. The client organization in the study must develop, implement, and scale its organization to success to improve its financial ability to remain afloat.

Five participants were considered through networks, relationships, and the professional social media platform LinkedIn. Request for participants included sending an email, or message through LinkedIn asking participants if they would be interested in participating in a study designed to apply research in real-time to help growing nonprofits

navigate financial growth. Once participants expressed interest, I requested their professional emails and attached the participant invitation email (Appendix A: Participant Invitation Email), and participant agreement form (Appendix B: Participant Agreement Email).

Upon agreeing to appendix B, participants were sent the research questions to prepare for the interview. Sources of evidence for the study include data collection from participant interviews that agreed to volunteer and give their lived experience working in the nonprofit industry. Data was recorded through Zoom audio and video one on one. Zoom was the preferred method for the study to ensure safety guidelines were met due to COVID-19. The audio was recorded to conceal the participant's identity.

Email reminders and calendar invites were sent and confirmed between the researcher and participants. Before the interview, participants agreed and gave verbal consent to being recorded for transcribing purposes. All participants were notified before recording interviews that their names would be masked to protect their identities and any information they shared. Each recorded interview lasted between 60-90 minutes to collect sufficient data. Data collected from the interviews were transcribed into a Word document and labeled by participant's fictitious names and then input and logged into NVivo 12 software and coded by their professional titles.

### **Data Analysis**

After receiving Walden University IRB approval (number 03-01-23-0609784), I interviewed five leaders with ten or more years of experience in the nonprofit industry.

All participants could share their experiences of how they look for and attract funders to financially support them in their mission so they can sustain themselves. Four out of the five participants raised more than \$500,000 in past leadership roles or their current leadership positions. Participants with experience in fundraising, fund development, and resource development planning understood how to secure funding and utilize different revenue streams to diversify their funding for longevity in a highly competitive industry. Also, the researcher met with participants using a virtual platform such as Zoom to ensure the health and safety of participants and decrease the chances of COVID spreading.

Qualifications of participants were accepted at face value, and the researcher assumed that the participants selected for the study met the required experience needed to provide adequate and profound knowledge to advance the study. The names of participants were changed to protect their identity and the organizations currently employing them. I reached data saturation with five participants and spent ample time with them gathering in depth information. I realized that some potential participants identified might decline due to their negative experiences working in an industry they often feel unappreciated and underpaid. There were no demographic requirements for participants to participate in the study or sex-identified questions asking them to mention whether they identify as male or female. Lastly, interviews were offered and conducted around participants' availability (Jamshed, 2014).

## **Strive Forward Incorporated SWOT Analysis**

### **Strengths**

As mentioned throughout the study, any organization conducting a SWOT analysis will have internal factors of strength. Some strengths include Strive Forward Incorporated's relatable staff that understands foster youth's challenges because of their lived experience. In addition, the organization has a strong media presence on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, which speaks to one form of its marketing strategy. Furthermore, the organization has a multidisciplinary board of directors comprised of individuals from diverse occupational fields, including education, health care, social services, and human services.

### **Weaknesses**

Like any nonprofit organization, Strive Forward Incorporated shares weaknesses known as internal factors within the areas listed below. The organization lacks the knowledge about supports, laws, and implemented policies that govern youth and young adults' rights throughout their transitional phase leading up to independence. Next, they lack the support of mentors and volunteers willing to step up and support their efforts. Third, they are struggling to attract startup funding from donors and currently do not have a continual funding base set up to generate funding on an ongoing basis. These financial platforms include crowdfunding, GoFundMe, and kick starter.

In addition to not having funding platforms set up, Strive Forward Incorporated lacks sustainable funding to hire staff full-time and put them on payroll or run ongoing programming to serve the most vulnerable population in their community. The



organization lacks a resource development plan to help them navigate different income streams from which their organization can benefit. With Strive Forward Incorporated providing housing support, they are missing expert guidance in the critical areas of what they will need to do to help youth and young adults secure housing before aging out of foster care. Furthermore, the organization is not knowledgeable about the new federal housing initiatives and laws under HUD that mandate states to secure housing before leaving foster care.

When looking at the organization statistics (used for marketing), the information expressed on social media platforms does not speak specifically to foster youth in Buffalo, New York. Data shared is information that speaks for all youth, young adults, and alumni throughout the United States. Marketing data to attract potential donors must be specific to the population served directly. Based on the data presented, no manual guides the organization's mission and its direction within the next 5 to 10 years.

Sadly, Strive Forward Incorporated's vision statement is not listed or mentioned anywhere on its website (the vision is mentioned on the Catch a Fire website). Having a vision statement speaks directly to the organization's purpose and what the organization is working to achieve and reach regarding the population being served. A vision, mission, and values statement make up the core foundation of a nonprofit organization (Jean-Francois, 2015). Lastly, the Board of Directors lack diversity, putting them at a disadvantage to funders.

Harris (2014) mentioned that diverse boards are why organizations perform better than others. Board diversity speaks to the relationships established between boards and

the qualities around the organization's overall performance. Board responsibilities aren't discussed at meetings and don't speak to the accountability of the board member's responsibilities. When Strive Forward Incorporated's Director sends out emails reminding members of quarterly meetings, no one responds promptly, leaving her to constantly reach out through emails, texts, and phone calls.

### **Opportunities**

Like any nonprofit organization, Strive Forward Incorporated (fictitious name) demonstrates excellent opportunities. By incorporating a clear and strategic mission for their organization, they can attract support from donors and the community they are in and outside of it. Using their platform to advocate for the needs of transitioning youth and foster care alumni, they can gain support and potential partnerships with advocacy agencies in education, housing, healthcare, and human and social services. The support offered by Strive Forward Incorporated partnering with research organizations (Annie E. Casey) that sponsor pilot programs would be a significant advantage and attract donor funding.

As the organization grows, Strive Forward Incorporated can develop other programs for different populations that are also considered vulnerable and at risk of hitting a pipeline system that connects to foster care. This organization's great advantage is its ability to shift its vision and mission as it develops and expands within the social service and child welfare sector. Third, Strive Forward Incorporated can create a lived experience hub where they collect data and report back to organizations while presenting feedback on realistic approaches that help them create realistic, attainable, and successful

narratives for foster care youth, young adults, and alumni. They can create initiatives in mental health, education, sex trafficking, and LGBTQ support to bring awareness around the need for community support for programs, services, and funding.

### **Threats**

Strive Forward Incorporated (fictitious name) faces threats that it will have to work towards overcoming. One of the threats they are encountering is that there are more established nonprofit organizations that currently offer youth and young adult support in similar areas they do. Second, they share similar concepts and services that are closely familiar with existing nonprofits or child welfare organizations on a city and state level. Third, familiar programs have larger budgets making it difficult for fostering greatness to compete. Without funding and staff to run programs, the organization may not surpass the five-year threshold and face the possibility of closing its doors.

Strive Forward Incorporated has not made its 990 forms available to the public on its website or annual reports, which puts them at risk of being reported to the internal revenue service and the New York State attorney general Office. Second, not having a steady income can make the organization's budgeting extremely challenging to cover administrative costs before determining what the organization can afford to cover programs and provide services. Third, Strive Forward Incorporated does not operate the organization like its business and lacks the focus to put great emphasis on performance. The organization focuses more on social impact, leaving its business objectives second.

**Table 1**

*Study Participants*

Participant	Participant's Nonprofit Leadership Positions & City
Participant 1: Ella	Chief Executive Officer of Educational Nonprofit Manhattan, New York
Participant 2: Dinah	Executive Director of Community Foundation Binghamton, New York
Participant 3: Anita	Founder and Executive Director of Girl Dance Academy Augusta, Georgia
Participant 4: Angel	Founder and Executive Director Foster Care Alumni Organization Buffalo, New York
Participant 5: Timothy J	Vice President of Intellectual Developmental Disabilities Behavioral Health Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

### **Findings**

This professional administrative study utilized a qualitative approach to collect and gather data on a newer organization operating under five years. I used my network of professionals in the nonprofit industry to contribute to how Strive Forward Incorporated could grow its financial foundation and build out its infrastructure. Strive Forward Incorporated provides services to foster youth, young adults, and alumni of the Western New York foster care system. Sadly, they are struggling to grow their funding base to cover staffing costs, program costs, and services which contribute to identifying the need

for a resource development plan. Below are findings from my review of the organization's archival data and interviews of participants in the study.

Archival data were used to refer to documents Strive Forward Incorporated has. Archival data is the documents inside the organization's internal database stored for future reference and used to provide a more precise understanding of evaluations and research. In addition to the organization's archival data being used for the study, additional sources such as books, videos, company website, Strive Forward Incorporated booklets, journals, and dissertations were used to gather the information that could guide the study and assist the organization with steps to take to help them secure adequate funding for operational cost, programs, and services. Strive Forward Incorporated's internal database was used to confirm the information the organization already had. I used a qualitative standard case study to guide Strive Forward Incorporated SWOT analysis resource development plan.

When interviewing the Founder and Executive Director of Strive Forward Incorporated, there were limited documents available to the researcher for review. The archival documents available for the study include the whistleblower policy, by-laws, and the conflict-of-interest policy. Also, the organization could produce the current strategic plan (when interviewing the founder, she mentioned that the strategic plan needed to be updated). Unfortunately, the documents not available for the study include the organization's 990 long or short forms, financial trend analysis, board roles and responsibilities, and orientation material for onboarding employees, volunteers, or

mentors. Lastly, Strive Forward Incorporated's organizational budget, program budget, training material, financial statements, and annual reports were excluded from the review.

Since its incorporation in June 2020, the founder and Executive Director stated that "Strive Forward Incorporated has raised \$7,500. In 2021, \$20,000 was raised; in 2022, Strive Forward Incorporated raised \$43,000. However, no financial documents, such as financial reports or bank statements, were produced for the researcher to review that could verify such information. The organization has garnered generous donations, such as in-kind contributions and funding from private foundations and organizations that support child welfare efforts, such as What About Me Inc in Brooklyn, New York.

As the researcher, I reviewed the organization's information on GuideStar and found that the population served area stated sexual identity, family relationships, and social and economic status. However, the organization population served should be specific to the foster care population or a similar group of individuals. The populations Strive Forward Incorporated should utilize are young adults, homeless people, out-of-home youth, and low-income people. The NTEE code of housing and shelter N.E.C. applies to the organization because they provide housing support to foster care alumni and their children.

Reviewing additional information, the researcher identified areas of Strive Forward Incorporated subject area and population served on the organization's GuideStar profile. GuideStar lists the organizations ruling year as 2019. Still, according to the New York Department of State Division of Corporations, Strive Forward Incorporated filed and got approval to operate in the state as of June 15, 2020. Two primary goals of Strive

Forward Incorporated are to secure a building in Buffalo, New York, to house and provide services to foster care alumni aging to combat homelessness. The second goal is to expand programs and services outside of Western New York into other areas of the upstate New York region.

## **Findings from Participant Interviews**

### ***Participant 1: Ella***

Dr. Ella is the CEO of a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization that focuses on educational support at the front for high-achieving Latino and black students from underserved communities to get into the top prestigious high schools and colleges. She has spent most of her career working in educational spaces aimed at mitigating disparities. In her current role, she values the organization she works for because they serve and support her in supporting black and brown students achieve academic success. Furthermore, Ella is centered around being social justice oriented around education and stated, “You can’t talk about education without talking about social justice.” This is important for organizations providing educational support to disadvantaged black and brown children.

Dr. Ella’s experience in education and social justice speaks to her acknowledgment and experience in leading organizations and the importance of having a person of color, do it? According to her, being in an executive seat isn’t as glorified as she once thought it would be. Like many other leaders of color (LOC), she experienced moments when she realized that black-led organizations receive far less funding than

white-led organizations. As mentioned by Dr. Ella, “Corporate partners fund us at a lower level, high net worth individuals don’t believe in our leadership, so they don’t give us access to money. But, what they don’t realize is that there is nothing about us without us”.

During her career and holding top-level leadership positions, many white executive directors in New York City (NYC) who funded programs were constantly sent to her doorstep for feedback on their questions, leaving her feeling forced to give free consulting. Giving her counterparts information led to them having many resources she was denied access to. Sadly, one organization in NYC had taken her proposal and presented it to the New York City Board of Education as their own, and it wasn’t their idea. Dr. Ella wasn’t notified or asked if it could be used.

She did not receive an offer or opportunity to come to the table and be included in its implementation. To add, Ella found out about the curriculum once it was published in the newspaper. Following its publication, she and her teammate who built the curriculum were not allowed to apply for the request for proposal (RFP). Dr. Ella lost all recognition for her work and had to remain calm and professional because she would need their resources again.

With the nonprofit industry being a competitive market, Ella referenced the nonprofit industry as a “billion dollar” business in New York; Ella believes it cannot still solve problems because leaders choose not to.” She truly believes that many people are riding on the system. “There is an industry built around human suffering, and it would be difficult to have a conversation without thinking about how to redeploy resources and



people.” Big organizations in the nonprofit industry are receiving roughly 200 million dollars.

Many of these big organizations, according to Dr. Ella, “audit their organization’s contracts and take their cut straight from the top, and unfortunately, this is a great example of human suffering.” Unfortunately, when addressing such issues, “black and brown-led organizations are often on the losing end of the conversation, but someone is winning at our expense.” Knowing the issues can broaden a deeper conversation around how these large organizations benefit from serving populations and they don’t represent them. Furthermore, Bigger organizations lose focus on why they started to begin with because money usually becomes the motive.

When interviewing Dr. Ella, she gave profound information about having experience in fundraising and funding policies. Nonprofit organizations should have functional fiscal policies and specify who handles gifts and how the board processes them. Dr. Ella was keen on the significance of executive directors receiving their own organization’s money. Organizations should have a process that verifies funding coming into the organization. She also mentioned that if an organization’s executive director receives the funding, they can violate the organization’s conflict of interest policy.

Resource development is an important part of all nonprofits and plays a pivotal role in the success of any organization. This needs to be in place, so nonprofit organizations can know, understand, and determine how the money will be raised to sustain the organization. Knowing how much money to raise is also important. Ella has managed multiple-sized budgets in every organization she has held in leadership. The

current organization she works for had a high-end budget (in the millions) upon her coming in.

In addition, she has been able to obtain access to a high-end network and sphere heading and stewarding in partnership with her organization's board. When determining her organization's program costs and program expenses, she determines what's needed to contribute to the success of individuals being provided services. To add, she reviews the previous year's budget and the current market to determine what things will cost. For instance, fuel is more expensive, and the bus companies have to charge more because of the price hikes on gas. This lets her organization know that she may need to increase the program expense to secure the buses to transport her scholars.

When attracting funders to her organization, Dr. Ella focuses on relationships. She puts much attention on listening to her current and potential funders. She doesn't oversell herself in funding meetings and listens to what the potential funder is saying. Dr. Ella hones in on what the funder cares about, what their priorities are, and the commonality of the work you're doing. Fundraising is about relationship building, not your mission.

Funders focus on you being the person spending their money, and they need to know who you are. Dr. Ella's current organization utilizes a SWOT analysis but focuses more on a business plan to expand her organization. SWOT analysis has been done at the request of her board of directors. SWOT analysis and business plans are completed because board members don't work at the organization. Board members don't pay attention to what leaders do, nor do they have full knowledge or understanding of the day-to-day operations and activities.

As the CEO of her organization, Dr. Ella has never had her board of directors object to any of her needs and wants for her organization, especially if she had a plan to gather new funding for the organization. The more money she helped her organization make, the less they bothered her. When asked about her experience with diversified funding, she said she doesn't receive much government funding or support.

Currently, Dr. Ella's organization doesn't utilize diversified funding but is currently working on receiving funding from partnering organizations aligned with their mission. Diversified funding streams her organization uses include foundation giving, individual giving, and corporate giving. Many organizations believe that diversifying their funding is mandatory, but according to Dr. Ella, "sustainability is always an issue in the nonprofit sector." Many funders don't approve multi-year funding, and if multi-year funding is considered, then nonprofit resources and energy would push staff to focus on finding newer support areas.

"If you don't have the right people in the right seat, you don't have an organization."

Dr. Ella, CEO of an Educational Nonprofit Organization in New York City.

***Participant 2: Anita***

One top executive Anita (fictitious name), spoke about challenges around leadership and what was required of her to navigate an industry where she needed to adjust to receiving funding. She stated, "Once you're in a leadership position, you are always in a leadership role. When you make connections, you will always mentor, navigate microaggressions with the people that are following you and looking to you to

help solve problems” (Anita) (fictitious name). Anita spoke about the importance of where her leadership came from, creating social change in her community by realizing the lack thereof for black and brown girls starting with her daughter.

To quote her, Anita stated, “I stand on the shoulders of my grandparents, and the only way to move up is to help others. Giving back is important to me”. The strength and indebtedness were present when interviewing this CEO. Anita operates an organization in Georgia that was created to give young black and brown girls between the ages of 11-19 an opportunity to dance, get mentored, and support their educational needs. With no dance schools in her community of Georgia, Anita created and launched her dance program four years ago. It has grown tremendously and has generated a substantial amount of funding.

Her strength and tenacity to take on challenges lacking in her community exemplify what a true leader is and the path she is willing to take to ensure girls of all races have an opportunity to dance. To quote her, Anita stated, “I stand on the shoulders of my grandparents, and the only way to move up is to help others. Giving back is important to me”. The strength and indebtedness were present when interviewing this CEO.

Anita operates an organization in Georgia that was created to give young black and brown girls between the ages of 11-19 an opportunity to dance, get mentored, and support their educational needs. With no dance schools in her community of Georgia, Anita created and launched her dance program four years ago. It has grown tremendously and has generated a substantial amount of funding. Her strength and tenacity to take on

challenges that were lacking in her community exemplify what a true leader is and the path she will take to ensure girls of all races have an opportunity to dance.

As the founder and executive director of a dance nonprofit 501 (c) (3) based in Georgia, Anita shared her feedback with the researcher on what her experiences were around nonprofit resource development. When asked if she was familiar with fundraising and funding policies, Anita answered yes. She held an executive position as a fund development director at a well-known organization in North Carolina. In that role, she was responsible for overseeing large budgets. According to Anita, “Understanding larger budgets helps you create smaller budgets.

Understanding fundraising is essential, mentioned Anita. One thing she spoke candidly about regarding newer founders and executives was understanding and knowing why they’re doing fundraisers. Nonprofit leaders must make sure that the fundraisers being held make sense and help the organization break even. As stated by Anita, “Nonprofit organizations need a mixture and good combination of funding. Grants should not be an organization’s bread and butter alone. Funding should consist of capital, in-kind donations, and grants, to name a few.

Working in the nonprofit industry has exposed Anita to knowing and understanding what resource development planning is about. Before working in the nonprofit sector, her father worked for a well-known organization in New York City and would have her present, teaching her the material. Stepping into her role as an executive for the Girl Scouts is when she experienced writing an actual resource development plan. She focused on the organization’s brand, values, and money within the plan. According

to Anita, “Resource development plans should cover the organization for at least five years. Resource Development plans should be revisited annually by the organization due to its complexity to capsulize funding.

In Anita’s role as a top executive with an organization in North Carolina, she managed a 1.2-million-dollar budget. This budget came from campaigns, grants, capital, and government funding. She mentioned that “this funding was written into the 21st-century funding”. Lastly, funding was utilized to cover programming costs, case management services, and youth development for African American children.

When looking to diversify her current organization’s funding, Anita engages her community with two major fundraisers. One fundraiser aims to attract and secure \$100,000, and the second will set a goal to secure and solidify \$200,000. By raising such funds, her organization incorporates a plan also to raise funding that can cover the organization’s operating budget for the next five years. Diversifying financing will require the board of directors to work together and devise a strategy to reach its goal. Lastly, when any organization is looking to raise significant funds, Anita stated that “the organization’s board needs to meet weekly.”

This ensures that all board members work to achieve their tasks and reflect on what has been accomplished and is needed. Looking at her organization’s resources and what’s available to cover the company’s operational budget will include different components. Like many organizations, Anita’s resources generally factor in other elements. These components include factoring in teachers to be paid on each grade level.

As mentioned in the interview, grant funds are sometimes moved over to cover the operational cost to ensure teachers can be paid to provide educational support to the girls being served. Anita believes that it's crucial to be specific to funders that they provide funding to support operational costs. Anita stated that her organization has miscellaneous funds, but not much money is in that account. Lastly, resources can always be utilized to fill the gaps in the non-profit industry; however, it's about allocating resources to the organizations that need them more.

Determining program costs to cover expenses depends on how much funding is needed to help a young person get through the year. Program costs are expected to cover notebooks, curriculum, and printed materials. Assessing these funds helps the organization examine costs associated with printing worksheets, buying supplies, and purchasing gifts for the girls that experienced areas of achievement. Furthermore, transportation, hotel cost, and traveling are among the program expenses determined.

When looking to attract funders to her organization, Anita looks at what funders are giving organizations that meet the areas of her organization's needs. Applying for funding may not also require the executive director to know the process of a funder. However, when asking a donor for funding, the executive director will consider what the grant will cover and for how long the budget will be able to last. SWOT analyses are used, and a resource development plan is used to help guide and steer the organization over five years. Incorporating a SWOT analysis and resource development plan gives a projected view of your competition, what areas the organization's strengths and

weaknesses lie in, and who will ensure goals are reached to help the organization financially scale upward.

When interviewing Anita, she was asked if her board ever objected to any funding strategies presented to her organization's board, and she said yes. According to Anita, her board reminded her of the organization's goals, and funding needs to be aligned with the organization's mission. Applying for grants and other funding sources is crucial if Anita's organization wants to survive. Applied areas of funding Anita has experience in are grants, capital funding, government funding, and campaigns.

Having a wealth of knowledge in nonprofit funding has allowed Anita, in executive roles, to understand what was needed to start her organization. Closing the interview, Anita voiced that nonprofit organizations must "have a succession plan implemented in the infrastructure stage." She believes it's imperative to step back and build your organization's infrastructure and cultivate, build, and grow relationships. Furthermore, infrastructure makes capacity, and capacity building allows an organization to grow and sustain itself financially.

"You can't always pay people, but you get what you pay for" Anita, Founder/Executive Director of a nonprofit in Augusta, Georgia.

### ***Participant 3: Dinah***

Dinah is the executive director of a non-profit foundation in central New York. Dinah has been in the nonprofit industry for over twenty years. She has spearheaded organizations such as a regional AIDS service organization, and knows what's needed to



attract funders to pour into a cause they believe in. Dinah understands firsthand what organizations need to strengthen themselves for financial sustainability.

As a community foundation executive director, Dinah has experience in fundraising and funding policies. When being interviewed by the researcher, the participant stated, “Non-profit organizations will need to implement and have a fund development policy in place. No organization should say how much money they will raise without having a fundraising goal. Furthermore, every nonprofit organization must have a fundraising policy before soliciting money from donors and individuals.

Dinah clearly understood what it entailed when asked about familiarity with resource development and its use. Dinah stated, “Resource development allows organizations to grow their resources, acquire, and maintain the necessary funds to carry out the organization’s mission.” Without an implemented resource development plan, an organization can struggle to expand its activities and foster excellent relationships contributing to its financial sustainability. According to Dinah, resource development contains components of funding that include grants, fundraising, fee n for service, and individual donations. Unlike traditional nonprofits, community foundations don’t look for grants. Community foundations are approached by organizations and individuals looking to support a cause and are charged a fee to manage funds placed with the foundation.

Regarding resource development, organizations must diversify their funding to maintain and last outside of just grants. As mentioned by the participant, “It’s important and strategic to look at other organizations to see where funding is received from. This will allow non-profits that share similar work to learn that funder and introduce

themselves. Lastly, money for an organization can be raised by charging a service fee. To add, Dinah expressed during her interview that no organization should give away services for free.

Dinah has managed annual budgets far more significant than \$500,000 as a leader in her past and current roles. Dinah's funding covered staff salaries, rent, special programs, education, and services to the general population. As mentioned during the interview, when Dinah worked for the regional AIDS service organization, she managed and allocated funding to support HIV and AIDS clients, client support groups, a syringe exchange, prevention education programming, services to NYSDOCS inmates and employees, and a food pantry. While working at the regional AIDS organization, she was responsible for governing a \$2,000,000 budget. She manages a \$650,000 operating budget and a \$34 million endowment with the community foundation she works for. When donors contribute funding to cover costs, they can mandate that their donations be restricted or unrestricted.

Restricted charitable donations are when the donor dictates what the donation can cover. Unrestricted donations have no limitations to what they can be utilized for. This kind of funding can be used for whatever the organization needs. When measuring the program's effectiveness, it's essential to look at how many people are being served by the organization. What programs were successful, and which weren't are another component of understanding the effectiveness of programs.

According to Dinah, asking yourself what you would tell someone else doing a similar project is essential. Unlike non-profit organizations that provide donor support via

grants, Dinah's organization doesn't provide itself. Rather it funds programs at other organizations. Funders that often grant organizations operating and programming costs will expect a written report from organizations every six months. Submitting reports to funders every six months will help funders understand the organization's successes, pitfalls, and hardships around programming and the success of the funder's investment in the organization.

Being able to cover operational costs and having readily available resources is extremely important. In Dinah's executive role with her community foundation, she was granted an initial \$1,000,000 grant from a private foundation to cover operational expenses. In addition to donors given operational costs, government funding can cover such expenses. Furthermore, as mentioned by the participant, expenses are broken into two main sections: program funding and operating expenses.

During the interview, Dinah spoke about what is usually used to determine the cost needed to cover the program expenses. First, Dinah looks at her foundation budget from all previous costs with the foundation's finance officer. Second, funding is determined based on the needs of the foundation. This may include basic operational expenses such as rent, supplies, training, conferences, and travel for site visits to funded grantees and those seeking funding from the foundation. Conferences, workshops, and travel expenses are considered essential to the professional growth of staff, and guidance remains crucial for employees to carry out their job responsibilities. Nevertheless, looking at every budget line item, projections for fundraising, and fees on funds and

considering the results of the annual audit, the budget is then approved by the Board of Directors, allowing the foundation to move forward to carry out its work.

Dinah believes the organization's reputation and stewardship are the primary factors in attracting funders. She believes funders are attracted to nonprofits because they demonstrate good stewardship, program success, and transparency. Being able to make decisions that support community members plays a pivotal role in funders wanting to give to an organization financially. To add, Dinah mentioned that funders will donate based on changing needs in the community and the various forces behind those changes.

According to Dinah, a fundraising process will require that the community foundation meets with the donor looking to start a fund and gain information about what the donor is looking to support with their charitable contributions. The community foundation will ask a series of questions to gain insight into how they can best support them with their contributions based upon supporting what matters to the donor most. With that in mind, the one question a foundation is more likely to ask is, "As a donor, who or what are you looking to fund and why?". Dinah's community foundation wants to know the donor-specific area of interest precisely. In closing, Dinah recommended to the researcher that organizations should approach funders they have a good relationship with, know personally, or can be introduced to by someone who knows them. Approaching an unknown funder can be done, but that requires research into what the funder is likely to support, their grant process, and their requirement as to how to approach them by phone call, email, or in person.

Dinah's community foundation does not utilize a SWOT analysis. However, her foundation uses a resource development and community investment plan based on a regional needs assessment. Increasing the organization's growth around financial sustainability and capacity building entails executive staff knowing their leadership style. In addition, it is imperative to incorporate different leadership styles to meet individual needs where they are.

Working with a community foundation, Dinah has never experienced being objected to diversifying funding strategies from her board of directors. When working for the regional AIDS service organization, she was permitted to fundraise with the stipulation that no alcohol is allowed at the fundraising event. Dinah has experience in fundraising using diversified funding streams throughout her career in the nonprofit industry, including experience in individual asks (peer-to-peer funding), direct mail, planned giving, annual campaigns, and special events.

"Leaders must be willing to do the groundwork to grow and not operate out of ego and pride," Dinah, a community foundation Executive Director in Central, New York.

***Participant 4: Angel***

Angel is the Founder and Executive Director of a nonprofit organization in Western New York. She has held several positions in the nonprofit industry in leadership positions. Angel is familiar with some fundraising but not nonprofit resource development. Finally, as an executive director, she focuses on financially scaling Strive Forward Incorporated (fictitious name) forward and upward.

Working in the nonprofit sector, Angel is familiar with fundraising for community events, donations, and drives. In addition, she has experience with peer-to-peer funding, also known as an ask. However, Angel is unfamiliar with and lacks experience with fundraising and funding policies and procedures. When asked to list at least three examples of funding policies practiced by Strive Forward Incorporated, she couldn't share.

As a nonprofit executive, Angel isn't aware of what nonprofit resource development is or its use. During the interview, the researcher explained resource development and how it can be utilized to grow and sustain her organization financially. Throughout her roles in nonprofit leadership, Angel has managed 1.3 million dollars as a leadership development director at Open Horse (fictitious name). In closing, funding covered stipends, facilitations, childcare for program attendees, swag wear, traveling, and lodging.

According to Angel, funding needed to support her organization's mission will require salaries for her organization's staff and consultants to help the organization achieve individual outcomes. When she was asked by the researcher what she would like to make for her salary, she stated, "I would like to make at least \$110,000 annually and have it increase when then the organization is growing its operational costs over time. Two employment positions readily needed at this direct time are an administrative assistant, program coordinator, and alumni advocate. Sadly, due to the lack of financial access and resources, Strive Forward Incorporated is struggling to advance financially and needs to create an alliance with other nonprofits to survive in a competitive industry.

When asked how Angel would measure her program's effectiveness and outcomes when looking to diversify funding, she stated, "Housing programs will be measured by the barriers that speak to foster care youth and young adults and their need for stability. Child welfare agencies didn't have appropriate access to housing vouchers during the pandemic." In addition, housing programs and affordable housing options will be provided within the community. How they depend on each other is crucial for their foundation to grow and thrive. Lastly, how will foster care alumni of the Western New York region be given and attain the necessities they need to survive, thrive, and grow?

According to Angel, young adults transitioning through the foster care system in New York cannot be without stability. Western New York has land parcels and buildings not being utilized. It is essential to have additional workshops and community conversations to learn where the funding is and how it can be obtained. This impactful mission can prevent many young adults and alumni from the foster care system from experiencing homelessness. Angel says, "Money has been allocated on the east side of Buffalo in previous years. However, more funding has been allocated to build up the Eastside over the years."

The accessibility of available funding is determined by whether funders are willing to give or not give to your nonprofit cause. Organizations that are favored that don't have operational budgets receive funding first before grassroots organizations are considered. Much of Strive Forward Incorporated's funding has come from the outskirts of the Western New York jurisdiction. Sadly, when turning to consultants to help her understand how to grow and scale funding as a nonprofit executive director strategically,

she was never taught to include operational expenses in grants or requests for funding. Lastly, when asked how she determines the costs of programs and what's needed to cover program expenses, Angel replied: by the number of people being served and the venue where the event will take place.

When looking for funding, Angel attracts funding from organizations that focus primarily on the foster care population and want to give. She mentioned that she reaches out to organizations that are willing to give. One of the best ways Angel can approach finding funding is to diversify her revenue streams which will also help her to build her organization's capacity eventually. Furthermore, Strive Forward Incorporated must seek funding to cover operational costs and hire staff to reach client outcomes.

The researcher asked the Executive Director of Strive Forward Incorporated if she was familiar with fundraising and a funders process to determine how much funding to ask for. Angel couldn't state the process to the researcher. However, she is accustomed to using a SWOT analysis to gain a broader perspective of the organization's strengths and weaknesses so that a plan can be implemented to steer the organization on the right path. Although Angel's organization utilizes a SWOT analysis, there isn't a nonprofit resource development plan to guide her organization on how to scale financially to sustain itself or build capacity.

According to Angel, her board has never objected to any diversified funding strategies she presented. However, she doesn't have a functioning board and has been recruiting board members to push Strive Forward Incorporated's mission forward. Angel



has received numerous applicants interested in joining her organization. Currently, she's looking to fill board positions soon.

When the interviewee was asked about her approach to diversified funding for her organization, she said, "I foster good relationships with people." She spoke on how she utilizes her experience growing up in the foster care system to create a platform for storytelling and personal narrative. Through sharing her lived experience in the child welfare system, Angel can bring awareness to the challenges of the foster care system and allow her story to impact the hearts of funders who care about the betterment of young people from challenged communities.

"Buffalo is in a progressive time," Angel, nonprofit executive director in Western New York.

***Participant 5: Timothy***

Timothy is the Vice president of a non-profit organization in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, that provides transitional care services to individuals with intellectual disabilities. He has held positions in leadership and management for the past twenty-three years. In addition to working in the nonprofit industry, he has worked for the government sector with individuals in the juvenile justice system. Timothy dedicates his time to working with individuals with disabilities because of his experience of having a son with intellectual disabilities.

When asked by the researcher if he was familiar with fundraising and funding policies, he stated yes. According to Timothy, fundraising is when an organization with a specific purpose raises money. Nonprofit fundraising looks to draw in investors and

donors that are looking and willing to fund causes they believe in. On the other hand, funding policies are guidelines and strategies implemented and put in place to manage an organization's allocation and funding sources.

As mentioned by the participant, funding policies are necessary and required for nonprofit organizations, whether they are just starting, growing, or already established. Some policies needed for nonprofits to stay within ethical boundaries when raising funds and handling donors' and investors' money include debt financing, equity financing, risk management, investment, and capitalization policy. As mentioned by Timothy "having both funding and fundraising policies in place set the foundation for nonprofits of all sizes to succeed long term and build financial sustainability. Having effective policies in place helps strengthen the organization by granting them adequate access to funding sources that contribute to well-established organizations' long-term growth and success. Such policies can help an organization achieve and reach its short and long-term financial goals.

Timothy is aware of nonprofit resource development and was responsible in previous roles for identifying and securing resources, whether donors or investors, that were aligned with the organization's mission and vision that he worked for. According to Timothy resource development involves a strategic plan, SWOT analysis, and identifying resources, support, and funding streams. Most importantly, understanding resource development planning includes relationship building with current and potential donors, community partners, and volunteers. Resource development plans must be leveraged and mobilized so an organization can reach greater heights in its work. Furthermore,

leveraging resources is the way to capacity building and financial sustainability in the communities being served.

Timothy has managed budgets in his previous and current leadership roles as Vice president. In his previous role as a senior director, he oversaw 15 million dollars in funding for programs across 3 residential sites. Timothy is responsible for allocating and distributing 23 million dollars, which covers the organization's travel, personnel, and office expenses. Additionally, he must also oversee and manage professional development and technology expenses. As mentioned by Timothy the Vice president of an organization will usually be responsible and accountable for specified expenses depending on the organization's policies, the Vice President's role, and responsibilities within the company.

When measuring the effectiveness of a program, Timothy measures it by the goals set by his organization and team, outcomes, and measures utilized to achieve the program's goal. Measuring the effectiveness of any program should include outcome evaluation, social return on investment, and cost-effective analysis. According to Timothy impact assessment and process evaluation should also be considered. When looking at the effectiveness of a program to determine the diversification of funds, it requires organizations and their teams to find ways to plan, hold each other accountable, and the appropriate methods to take. Taking such methods helps ensure that the program is being steered in the right direction and on the right path to complete goals while also impacting the population being served.

Timothy identified these resources regarding having adequate resources available to cover organizational operational expenses. As mentioned, the resources available include government grants for operating expenses, special events, and membership fees. In addition, to earned income, his organization generates donations from individuals and corporate and foundation grants to cover the operational cost, expenses, and budgets. Timothy expressed that organizations must seek different funding streams from multiple financial sources to support their operations. Lastly, any nonprofit operating and existing to serve a specific community of people should have a long-term funding strategy as it builds the financial sustainability of a nonprofit organization.

According to Timothy, determining the cost needed to cover program expenses varies. First, he assesses the organization's budget and process. This can include estimating and identifying the resources needed to implement and carry out programs. Many of these resources can include staff salaries, equipment, supplies, office space, and any other expenses that may be incurred. Another way to determine program costs is to work with a nonprofit consultant to help the organization determine what the cost would cover to deliver certain services and programs.

To determine the cost of program expenses, Timothy mentioned that he had to "create a program budget that listed all expenses that were part of the program. This budget included staff salaries, indirect costs, overhead expenses such as rent and utilities, and program supplies that included curriculum, notebooks, or any materials staff needed to conduct their job correctly. Next, a cost analysis is used to determine the total cost of services, the overall program, and what each participant will cost to complete their

program. Such analysis helped his organization see and understand precisely what the total cost would be for the complete delivery of both the services and programs. Timothy mentioned that “understanding total costs also helps his organization ensure that the overall cost of services being provided is reasonable and sustainable.”

When the researcher interviewed the participant about whether he knew and understood a funders process, he said yes and only knew about some steps. According to Timothy, grant writers know more about the funder’s process as they are responsible for locating funding and applying for it. Timothy is familiar with SWOT analysis related to resource development but also expressed that SWOT analysis can be a stand-alone component without the other components of a resource development plan. A SWOT analysis and a resource development plan are used simultaneously to increase an organization’s financial sustainability.

Working with your board of directors is essential in a high-end leadership position. Your goal should always be to keep your board of directors’ attention to new ideas and possibilities to help scale your organization upward and forward. Moving forward and growing is vital as any organization advances in its mission while working towards the greater goal of achieving its vision. As mentioned by Timothy “Anytime you can get the attention of your board of directors to understand diversifying funding and the reason for it, they will support you. “I have only been rejected by a board of directors once in my nonprofit career. I got the board to alter their decision by discussing the challenges of having a child and now an adult living with intellectual disabilities and the

issues it presents for the family and community due to a lack of knowledge and understanding.”

Seeking out funding isn't a hard thing to do. You must know why and tailor it to speak to the heart of the people being served and the individuals that make up the community your organization is targeting to provide services to. Timothy has experience in diversified funding in peer-to-peer fundraising (ask), major gifts, corporate partnerships, and grants. As mentioned by the participant, I have never been positioned to utilize such funding to sustain any organization. However, I have been asked to give my advice and assist my organization's grant writer, fundraising committee, and fund developer on how more funding could be generated to cover program costs and miscellaneous services.

“Leaders in the nonprofit industry represent the fingerprints and footsteps of the lives they touched to help them create the change they wholeheartedly desire” Timothy nonprofit Vice President of Intellectual Developmental Disabilities in Philadelphia, PA.

### **Deliverables to Improve Strive Forward Incorporated Financial Sustainability**

Without a solid plan to financially scale Strive Forward Incorporated forward, it will be impossible for the organization to last in an increasingly competitive sector. With the lack of financial understanding for nonprofits to thrive, the researcher conducted a SWOT analysis (Appendix D: SWOT Analysis/ Resource Development Plan) of Strive Forward Incorporated. Next, the researcher will implement a strategy for the SWOT and build a strategic plan. Following the strategic plan, the researcher will compile the SWOT

analysis (Appendix D: SWOT Analysis/Resource Development Plan) and strategic plan (Appendix E: Strive Forward Inc Strategic Plan) to create the resource development plan (Appendix D: SWOT Analysis/ Resource Development Plan).

Having a nonprofit resource development plan is imperative as it is the guide to helping Strive Forward Incorporated secure short- and long-term funding to sustain itself financially. Nonprofit resource development is a strategic document that outlines an organization's strategies and activities for acquiring and managing the resources necessary to achieve its mission and goals. It is a comprehensive roadmap that guides the nonprofit in identifying, cultivating, and stewarding the resources it needs to sustain and grow its operations. The primary objective of a nonprofit resource development plan is to establish a systematic approach to fundraising and resource acquisition, including financial support, volunteers, partnerships, grants, and other forms of support. It will help Strive Forward Incorporated to engage with potential donors, supporters, and collaborators proactively and effectively.

Having a resource development plan will shift Strive Forward Incorporated's organization by providing a clear direction for the organization's fundraising efforts. It will outline specific goals, strategies, and timelines, enabling the nonprofit to focus its resources and efforts on the most effective activities. Next, it will serve as a strategic allocation of resources. Incorporating a strategic allocation of resources helps the organization to identify and prioritize the organization's resource needs and allocate resources efficiently. It allows the researcher to identify potential gaps and allocate appropriate staff, time, and budget to fundraising initiatives.

Implementing consistency and sustainability will enable the organization to promote consistency in fundraising efforts. Also, it ensures that the organization maintains a steady and diverse stream of resources to sustain its operations and support its programs over the long term. Third, donor engagement and stewardship will be emphasized as it facilitates donors' and supporters' cultivation and engagement. Engagement and stewardship help build relationships, develop personalized stewardship strategies, and ensure effective communication with donors to enhance engagement and retention in organizations such as Strive Forward Incorporated.

Nonprofit resource development promotes collaboration and partnerships across all sectors, whether another nonprofit, government entity, for-profit corporation, private foundation, or community. Having a resource development plan to support Strive Forward Incorporated guides the organization to consider opportunities for collaboration and strategic partnerships. Strive Forward Incorporated will be able to identify potential partners, sponsors, or grantmakers who share similar goals or can provide additional resources to support the organization's mission. Furthermore, resource development plans will guide the organization with measurement and evaluation to establish clear goals and performance indicators.

A resource development plan allows the organization to measure and evaluate its fundraising efforts and determine if they should be changed to meet its financial goal. Such resource development will enable the nonprofit to track its progress now and later, identify needed areas of improvement, and make informed adjustments to its resource development strategies as they grow. Strive Forward Incorporated's nonprofit resource



development plan is a roadmap for effective fundraising and resource management. Resource development will provide a strategic framework to the organization while allowing them to acquire, cultivate, and steward resources to support its organization's mission. Lastly, such a resource development plan will guide and ensure its long-term sustainability and impact, which will financially scale the organization to attract funding continually.

### **Recommendations for Strive Forward Incorporated to Financially Sustain Itself**

#### **Build Organizations Infrastructure**

Focusing on Strive Forward Incorporated's infrastructure allows the organization to function, operate and run effectively. Having an effective and solid foundation provides Strive Forward Incorporated the ability they need to build upon, grow and achieve its mission while ensuring the organization also utilizes their resources wisely. According to Forbes (2021), nonprofits must be willing to adopt a learning platform that's imperative to both building and maintaining a sustainable organization. Implementing a strong infrastructure will guarantee that Strive Forward Incorporated can operate and have systems in place that speak to best practices in technology, management, and human resources.

Having a solid foundation to stand on will guide and assist the organization to attract funding through fundraisers. Being able to attract funding is crucial for any organization and can come from both donors and grants.

## **Develop and Grow the Board of Directors**

Being able to grow to Strive Forward Incorporated's board of directors is challenging for the organization. However, if the organization incorporates the following steps, it can secure and develop a board of directors to help nurture and grow the organization and its mission. In addition to growing the board, board members can provide the organization with profound resources and organizational governance. Board recruitment is a crucial factor in any nonprofit organization, and the quality of its candidates will determine if the organization can steer forward (Roth, 2020). Lastly, Strive Forward Incorporated will be exposed to greater community engagement and can build and foster stronger relationships with stakeholders and the community being served, which can help the organization garner both impact and support.

Building Strive Forward Incorporated board sets the tone for clarity and a chance to engage the board continuously and gain access to the board's member's communities, resources, and funding streams. Next, the organization can focus on building and growing its volunteer base to continue achieving its goals. Raj (2022) mentioned that volunteers are essential for organizations to achieve their work because they help organizations save money and increase donations, can become advocates for an organization's cause, and increase Strive Forward Incorporated's impact. Also, volunteers can bring diverse skills, talent, and visibility to the organization Raj (2022).

**Foster a Culture of Collaboration**

Creating a culture that encourages and promotes teamwork and collaboration among the board members and executive directors is crucial for implementing goals. Fostering strategic collaborations will help the organization build trust and influence a positive environment that ensures board members continue to work together. Penepento (2017) stated that nonprofit organizations are more likely to collaborate with organizations and people they have a relationship with when presented with an opportunity. Building trust among volunteers, staff, and stakeholders by being transparent, reliable, and honest leads to a culture essential for Strive Forward Incorporated's long-term organizational success. Acknowledging contributions by volunteers and staff working together helps to reinforce the significance of collaboration and teamwork.

**Define Board Members Roles and Responsibilities**

Holding board members accountable to achieve what they agreed to be essential so that other board members don't become burnt out and step down from their position. Strive Forward Incorporated must develop comprehensive and clear board job descriptions to combat burnout. According to Boardable (2023), board member responsibilities include (a) duty of care, (b) duty of loyalty, and (c) duty of obedience. In addition, board members should comply with the seven core pillars of leadership.

When defining board roles and responsibilities, the seven core pillars of board leadership are to help nonprofit organizations advance their work and mission. Next, all

board members are responsible for attending board meetings, hiring, and determining proper compensation for the Chief Executive Officer or executive director (Boardable, 2023). Board members currently serving on the board of directors are responsible for attracting new talent to the board. Furthermore, every board member that joins Strive Forward Incorporated should serve on a committee and find digital tools that improve Strive Forward Incorporated's communication (Boardable, 2023).

To assist and guide board members in understanding their duties, responsibility, and roles, Strive Forward Incorporated board members have a fiduciary responsibility to manage the organization and understand the legalities of the local, state, and federal government. Each job description breaks down who's responsible for what and what is required of them while in their position. When board roles and responsibilities are straightforward and clear, potential candidates will commit and do what is needed. According to Ingram (2008, p. 10), board members strengthen the organization by guiding the founder in its mission, selecting the chief executive or executive director, and ensuring the organization has adequate financial resources. Furthermore, members are continuously recruited and build a competent board, enhance a nonprofit's public standing, and evaluate. and support the executive director or chief executive officer and ensure that the planning of the organization's programs and services are monitored and strengthened for the success of the organization's existence.

### **Focus on Board Diversity**

One of the many successes of any non-profit organization is to build a board that reflects the community being served. Strive Forward Incorporated should seek out board members who identify differently by race, gender, and sex. In addition, seeking members that can bring diverse experiences and perspectives to the table sets the tone for what the organization desires to achieve with diversity, equity, and inclusion. Third, board diversity can contribute to better decision-making and reflect the needs and interests of the population served. Fourth, incorporating and implementing diversity throughout the organization can lead to successful services, programs, and impactful initiatives.

A diverse board can help to identify and mitigate blind spots, increase innovation, and improve overall performance. Additionally, having a diverse board can help ensure that the company is more representative of its stakeholders and customers. As mentioned by Creary et al., (2019), board diversity is essential and required for organizations to reach their mission effectively. Still, to move the organization forward, one must be willing to utilize and increase the use of navigating different forms of diversity in action (Creary et al., 2019). Finally, having a diverse board will lead to hiring and sustaining valuable employees and improving cultural awareness for the organization (18 Advantages and disadvantages of diversity in the workplace (Cultural and gender), 2019).

### **Provide Onboarding Support and Training to New and Current Board Members**

Providing onboarding support and training to nonprofit board members is crucial for their success. According to Forbes Nonprofit Council (2021), setting clear

expectations and communicating them effectively is imperative. It's also vital for Strive Forward Incorporated to introduce new members to other people within the organization and integrate them into the culture. Additionally, requesting and receiving feedback from board members can help identify areas for improvement, as mentioned in BoardBuild Team (2020). Providing ongoing training and professional development opportunities for current board members is also essential. Bishop (2022) recommends that the first 90 days are critical for onboarding new hires, but continuous training and support are vital beyond that initial starting period.

If Strive Forward Incorporated supports its board members, whether new or old can ensure that the board and executive director remain active, effective, and engaged. An effective way to offer onboarding support can take place using a mentorship or coaching approach. Mentoring or coaching can build board members and develop their knowledge and skills. The organization can achieve board member sustainability by providing check-in sessions, one-to-one meetings, or group mentoring by experienced board members or utilizing nonprofit consultants.

Providing mentorship and coaching to nonprofit board members is important for several reasons. First, it helps new board members understand their roles and responsibilities more effectively, leading to better decision-making and more productive meetings. Strive Forward Incorporated can also provide mentorship and coaching to help board members develop new skills and knowledge and build relationships with other organization members, the community being served, and current and potential stakeholders. Offering new and current board members mentorship opportunities should

include asking members if they have a specific person, they would like to guide them and if they are looking to develop their skills and knowledge personally, professionally, or both (Herrmann, 2023). Finally, providing mentorship and coaching can help ensure that the organization's leadership remains diverse and inclusive, as it allows for developing a pipeline of future leaders, managers, and executives from various backgrounds with phenomenal experiences.

### **Implement a Fundraising Plan**

Implementing a fundraising plan will require Strive Forward Incorporated to plan carefully and understand what they must do to execute it. To implement a strategic fundraising plan, the organization must take steps to define its fundraising goals. This includes the money they desire to raise and the purpose for which the funds will be used. Ensuring the goals align with the organization's mission, strategic plan, and fundraising plan is vital to successful fundraising.

Like any beginning nonprofit organization, funding will be an area that needs and requires ongoing and strategic efforts. The first step in the fundraising process will be Strive Forward Incorporated learning and planning together. The best way to monetize, grow, maintain, and sustain includes looking to nonprofit consultants and other groups offering ongoing training for board members, staff, and leaders. If the organization can focus on the company mission and strategic relationship building, they have a better chance of donors wanting to fund their cause now and long term. Incorporating various

fundraising methods into the organization allows Strive Forward Incorporated to diversify its revenue if one funding source dries up.

According to Jean-Francois (2014, p. 22), fundraising allows nonprofit organizations to diversify their funding streams. Having one financial stream of funding puts the organization at a significant disadvantage and can affect its goal of creating the financial sustainability they want to achieve. When an organization can create diversity, it must incorporate different funding streams. They can provide pivotal programming to their community using funding from different financial sources. In the end, Strive Forward Incorporated will be able to have stability even if any funder wants to take back the funding they initially agreed to Jean-Francois (2014, p.23).

To implement a fundraising plan, Strive Forward Incorporated must implement the right strategies to reach financial sustainability. First, the organization must define its fundraising goals. This contributes to the organization articulating its goals through its fundraising efforts. Next, the specific amount of funds, the purpose of the funds, and the timeline for achieving Strive Forward Incorporated's goals. Fourth, including the company board of directors and resources will provide the platform to stand financially strong.

Identifying a target audience is essential and determines who some of the organization's donors will be. Strive Forward Incorporated must include diversified areas of fundraising that include individuals, corporations, foundations, and other organizations that align with the company's mission and values. Strive Forward Incorporated should create donor profiles to understand their interests, motivations, and giving capacity. Once



donor profiles have been created, the executive director must be willing to build relationships with the donors to know what motivates them to give when seeking funding to support operating costs and programming.

Developing a compelling case for support and crafting a solid and persuasive message that communicates the impact of Strive Forward Incorporated. Highlighting the difference the organization makes in the lives of those youth, young adults, and alumni being served by the community can attract funding from people interested in the population. Showing potential donors why their support is crucial can lead to additional funding. Furthermore, implementing various fundraising methods to reach different donor segments is critical to Strive Forward Incorporated's longevity and financial sustainability.

Implementing different strategies for fundraising will have to include individual giving. Individual giving can occur by attracting donations through online giving platforms, personalized outreach, campaigns, and direct mail. Strive Forward Incorporated can seek corporate partnerships through businesses that share their mission. This offers an opportunity for corporate businesses to engage their employees and increase and advance the company's social initiatives. Also, grants are essential and can be fulfilled by researching and applying through government agencies, private foundations, and other funding sources that support or speak to the work being done by Strive Forward Incorporated.

Corporate giving, campaigns, and grants are just a few options for the organization to seek funding. Events and campaigns such as galas, charity runs, auctions,

and crowdfunding campaigns can also serve Strive Forward Incorporated. Leveraging social media amongst other virtual platforms to reach a wider audience can help the organization attract great excitement around the company's amazing causes.

Fundraising using major gifts will push Strive Forward Incorporated to cultivate relationships with individuals that are high earners and willing to donate their money for a tax break. Securing major gifts from individuals will require a technique that includes "identifying and prioritizing specific relationships" to secure funding from the individual. According to Cordery (2020), many donors and members of nonprofit organizations want to take on roles other than writing a check to fund an organization or their cause. If relationships are cultivated and stewarded correctly, the donor will help strengthen the organization's infrastructure through the donor's volunteer leadership (Cordery, 2020). Furthermore, developing personalized strategies to engage and steward these donors is key to securing the big ask.

Leveraging existing networks and tapping into the organization's current network of board members, existing donors, and volunteers is another way to secure or attract funding. Encouraging Strive Forward Incorporated's network of partners to advocate for the organization's cause and make introductions to potential supporters is a phenomenal way to cultivate and host events. Building up the organization's network and expanding to engage new individuals interested in its cause can position the company to stabilize its infrastructure and funding. Lastly, sharing partnered organizations and other nonprofit missions will enhance the organization's networking space and increase the organization's connections takes time (Bower, 2022).

Utilizing technology and data will support the organization in fundraising software and customer relationship management (CRM). Donors who believe an organization is building irresponsibly are less likely to give to an organization (Bailey, 2022). Nonprofit CRM systems will position the organization to engage better, understand, and serve its constituents. These systems contribute significantly to nonprofit organizations' long-term sustainability and impact by improving donor management, fundraising efficiency, and relationship building.

Evaluating, adjusting, and assessing the organization quarterly contributes to the success of any fundraising efforts. Suppose Strive Forward Incorporation monitors their key metrics, such as donor retention rates, donation amounts, and the return on its investment. In that case, the organization can remain ahead of a financial fall that can cause them to shut its doors for good. If the organization identifies and finds what works better, it can make the needed adjustments based on data analysis and feedback. Finally, Strive Forward Incorporated must remember that fundraising is an ongoing process that requires dedication, persistence, and a long-term commitment to building relationships while staying true to its mission and engaging donors.

### **Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

This administrative study explored the ongoing financial struggles of a nonprofit organization providing services for foster youth, transitional youth, young adults, and alumni involved in the New York State child welfare system. The first strength of this study is that this applied research study serves as a resource for Strive Forward

Incorporated and other nonprofit organizations serving individuals in disadvantaged communities to excel beyond barriers meant to suppress them within their circumstances. This study adds a perspective on how an organization can scale itself towards longevity in a competitive industry where many organizations close their doors before their first five years. In addition, researchers in the nonprofit sector can gain insight, clarity, and understanding of how they can guide nonprofits looking to diversify their funding, build capacity, financially sustain themselves and build a solid foundation of resources that contribute to the organization's growth. Further, researchers and nonprofit leaders, such as micro, mezzo, and macro-level executives, can see the possibilities in the future to create continued programs and services that speak to social change through nonprofit resource development.

Conversely, several limitations of the study contributed to the results of this standard qualitative approach. The results of this study cannot be compared in simple terms, nor can they be generalized. Such experiences and shared perceptions reflect those of five leaders from different backgrounds and are both men and women and not the entire organization of Strive Forward Incorporated. Lastly, there was no staff for the researcher to interview from Strive Forward Incorporated.

Future researchers in the public administration field and the nonprofit sector will better understand what's needed to help struggling organizations survive so they can continue to fill in the gap and provide services that are often overlooked and cannot provide for those with significant needs. With clear insight and profound understanding, nonprofits can improve their financial foundation and organization's infrastructure. Also,

building capacity, creating strategic partnerships, and understanding who their competitors are can create a guide that is beneficial both short-term and long-term. Moreover, evidence through shared lived experiences and nonprofit leaders' invested time in building their organizations and improving their organization's financial effectiveness and stability speaks to their leadership and commitment to bringing the change they desire to help their communities and drive their organization's mission. Furthermore, future studies around nonprofit resource development and financial sustainability would determine if specific areas of diversifying funding work over others and why when supporting organizations to grow and diversify their revenue.

This study presents implications that affect positive social change. A nonprofit's lack of financial stability and the challenges of finding and securing fundamental resources to help scale nonprofit organizations doing the work to support individuals is a significant concern for an organization such as Strive Forward Incorporated. This professional administrative study can be utilized by other researchers, nonprofit organizations, and government entities to examine different and effective ways to support missions aligned with creating positive social change and a strong and stable foundation to carry out the work. Ensuring that nonprofit organizations can achieve substantial resources to help newer and growing organizations become stable means that organizations can meet the needs of their communities and individuals in real-time without being delayed due to a lack of funding.

Another implication for social change is those future nonprofits that were depleted in resources and financially struggling to maintain can guide other organizations

on ways to grow their resources and raise funds using non-traditional fundraising methods that can be intertwined with traditional efforts while identifying what funding efforts worked and don't work. The findings of the study included both strengths and limitations. A major limitation of the study was the time frame participants had to engage with the researcher and answer questions in depth. Many of the nonprofit executives scheduled their interviews around their heavy workloads and responsibilities. Another limitation experienced by the researcher was that participants that agreed to participate in the study stopped responding to emails sent to them to set up a date and time to be interviewed. Several follow-up emails and messages through LinkedIn were sent to participants, and after no reply, the researcher decided to seek other qualified individuals for the study.

Within the study, there were many strengths presented. All participants have worked in nonprofit organizations and held leadership positions while managing millions of dollars for their organizations. Second, the participants lived in states that included New York, New Jersey, Georgia, and Pennsylvania and gave diverse feedback about past and current experiences navigating nonprofit financial sustainability. Third, all individuals knew and understood what would be needed to help newer, small, and BIPOC organizations scale upward financially over time. In addition, participants came from diverse racial backgrounds and shared similarities and differences about their experience leading organizations in small and large communities.

## **Summary**

Chapter 4 presented the study's findings and identified the steps Strive Forward Incorporated will need to take to weather the storm of financially thriving and surviving in a competitive market. Findings from the participant's interviews identified areas of nonprofit funding that Strive Forward Incorporated can utilize and how to diversify them and attract donors. Also, chapter 4 identifies the organization's capacity needs and how each component of fundraising, board development, and building infrastructure strengthens the organization's longevity. Feedback provided by participants was given through the lens of diverse experiences in past and current roles. Section 5 will describe the dissemination plan for the study results and recommended audiences for this research.

## Section 5: Dissemination

### **Introduction**

Nonprofit organizations, including Strive Forward Incorporated, play a vital role in driving positive societal change, but they require adequate resources to carry out their missions effectively. The process of acquiring and managing these resources, known as nonprofit resource development, is crucial for their sustainability and impact. This dissemination has explored key aspects of nonprofit resource development, emphasizing the importance of strategic planning, fundraising, community engagement, and relationship-building. For Strive Forward Incorporated to achieve financial sustainability, it must identify its specific needs, develop tailored strategies for resource acquisition, and establish efficient systems for resource management.

Being proactive, innovative, and adaptable is particularly crucial for smaller-scale nonprofits like Strive Forward Incorporated to thrive and achieve their goals. By implementing best practices in resource development, capacity building, nonprofit infrastructure, fundraising, fund development, and strategic planning, organizations can maximize their impact and contribute to long-term success. Continued collaboration, learning, and improvement in resource development practices are essential for nonprofits to address societal needs and create lasting social impact in their communities. Through a proactive approach, innovative strategies, and a commitment to ongoing improvement, nonprofits can navigate the ever-evolving landscape of resource acquisition and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those they serve.



## Conclusions

The research findings highlight the diverse resource development strategies that nonprofit professionals and leaders implement, including fundraising campaigns, grant writing, corporate partnerships, and donor cultivation. Successful organizations prioritize relationship-building, community engagement, and strategic networking to secure essential resources. Overcoming challenges in resource acquisition, such as intense competition for funding, limited staff and financial resources, shifting donor priorities, and a lack of knowledge, requires comprehensive strategies and continuous learning. Strive Forward Incorporated underwent a SWOT analysis resource development assessment, providing valuable insights to ensure sustainability and support for the youth and alumni of the Western New York foster care system. A SWOT analysis resource development plan will guide the organization's growth and align with its mission, while ongoing consulting support will assist with fundraising, policy implementation, board development, volunteer engagement, and professional development for leaders and managers.

The aim is to maintain an ongoing partnership with Strive Forward Incorporated as a consultant, providing support in various areas. This includes offering guidance on fundraising strategies, attracting donors and funders, and implementing essential policies and procedures. There will be a specific focus on board development, leadership and management training, volunteer processes and retention, and creating incentives for new employees. Additionally, a mentoring coaching program will be established to enhance

the personal and professional growth of board members, leaders, and managers within the nonprofit industry.

### **Summary**

The goal is to establish an ongoing partnership with Strive Forward Incorporated as a consultant, providing comprehensive support in various areas. This includes advising on fundraising strategies and fund development, attracting donors and funders, capacity building, nonprofit infrastructure, and implementing necessary policies and procedures. Emphasis will be placed on board development, leadership and management training, volunteer processes and retention, and creating incentives for new employees. Additionally, a mentoring coaching program will be implemented to foster the personal and professional growth of board members, leaders, and managers in the nonprofit industry. Lastly, a meeting with Strive Forward Incorporated's executive director will review the organization's findings and outline the next steps for implementing a tailored training plan for board members, leadership, management, and volunteers, ensuring progress towards achieving the organization's mission and achieving financial sustainability.

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## Appendix A: Participant Invitation Email

### Subject line:

Interviewing nonprofit experts, professionals, leaders, managers, and board members in March 2023 (participants will receive a \$20 gift card for participating in the research).

### Email message:

There is a new study about the experiences of nonprofit experts, professionals, and leaders who have financially sustained their nonprofit organizations while understanding what “resource development” is. For this study, you are invited to describe your experiences in fundraising, financial sustainability, resource development, SWOT analysis, and strategic planning. In addition, nonprofit expertise is welcomed in areas of intentional relationship building to secure potential funding, strategies for how to pursue resources, and significant components of a resource development plan are also welcome.

### About the study:

- Participate in an audio-recorded interview session done via Zoom that will take 60-90 minutes.
- You would receive a \$20 Visa gift card as a thank you.
- To protect your privacy, the published study would use a fictitious



name and not your real name.

Volunteers must meet these requirements:

- Nonprofit executives in leadership roles with 10-plus years of experience.
- Nonprofit executives in leadership, management, fund development, strategic planning, fundraising, SWOT analysis, capacity building, and financial sustainability.
- Nonprofit executives who have managed nonprofit budgets of over \$500,000.

This interview is part of the doctoral study for Felicia R. Wilson, a Doctoral Student at Walden University. Interviews will take place during March and April 2023.

Please respond to this email (felicia.wilson3@XXXXXXXX.XXX) to let the researcher know of your interest. You are welcome to forward it to others who might be interested.

## Appendix B: Participant Agreement Form

I am conducting a qualitative research study on Resource Development Swot Analysis and I'm seeking five volunteers who can:

- Determine what strategies will need to be implemented within newer nonprofit organizations to sustain themselves financially past the \$500,000 mark.
- Understand how resource development helps nonprofits build capacity over time.
- How can long-term sustainability be accomplished through diversified funding streams?

Suppose we can guide nonprofit organizations with financial strategies for building sustainability long-term. In that case, grassroots organizations can provide programs and services within the child welfare system to one of society's most vulnerable populations, including children, youth, and young adults transitioning in and out of the foster care system.

This consent form will provide information about the research study, what you will need to do, any risks associated with your input, and the benefits of your contribution. Please know that your participation is voluntary, and you may decline continuance in the study at any time. Please read this form for the full breakdown of the

study. Please let me know if you have any questions. Upon agreeing to this study, you will receive a copy of your consent for your records.

*Study Purpose:* The purpose of this study is to gather information on how grassroots organizations can sustain themselves in a financially competitive industry to provide ongoing programming and services to support children, youth, and young adults in and out of the New York State child welfare system.

*Procedures:* Participants will be asked to provide their input and feedback to questions on fundraising, capacity building, and SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). The researcher may ask participants for their feedback on staff evaluations and financial records. Subject participation will occur over a 4 to 6-week duration, and participants will be notified if additional information is required.

*Voluntary Nature of the Study:* Research should only be done with those who freely volunteer. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

*Audio Recording:* In-person and zoom interviews will be recorded using Eccomum 32 GB Digital Voice recorder. In a written format, the voice recorder will transcribe information into the NViVO 13 software database. Participants will be allowed to listen to their responses upon completing the interview.

*The research will be audio recorded to capture the participant's input and what they share during the interview. It will be used for qualitative research purposes to help*

*the researcher gain insight into what will be needed for newer organizations to generate funding using a diversified funding approach. Recordings will be destroyed five years from the initial date the participant was recorded. You have the right not to be recorded and can refuse at any time.*

*Benefits:* This study offers no direct benefits to individual volunteers. This study aims to benefit society by sharing your experience to contribute to social change within disadvantaged communities. Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by email using a 1 or 2-page summary and can be downloaded by the subject as an attachment in pdf format.

*Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:* Being in this study could involve some risk of minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as sharing sensitive information. With the protections in place, this study would pose minimal risk to your well-being. Being in the study would allow the participants to share their views through lived experience and how it can help nonprofit organizations and their leaders to implement practical knowledge to sustain themselves financially in a competitive industry.

*Privacy/Confidentiality:* The researcher is required to protect your privacy. Your identity will be kept confidential within the limits of the law. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. If the researcher were to share this dataset with another researcher in the

future, the dataset would contain no identifiers, so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by the researcher. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university. **Contacts and Questions:** You can ask questions of the researcher by email at [felicia.wilson3@waldenu.edu](mailto:felicia.wilson3@waldenu.edu). If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant or any negative parts of the study, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 03-01-23-0609784. It expires on February 28, 2024. You might wish to retain this consent form for your records. You may ask the researcher or Walden University for a copy at any time using the contact info above.

*Voluntary Participation:* Participating in this research project is entirely up to the participant. Participants may discontinue providing their input at any time.

*Consent Statement and Signature:* I have read this participant agreement form and have had the opportunity to get any questions or concerns I had answered. I agree to the terms of this research and understand that a copy of this research consent form will be provided to me for my records. In addition, I was informed that all information provided by the participant in the study would remain confidential (this includes my name). Lastly, as a participant, I was encouraged by the researcher to ask questions for clarity and understanding before the beginning of the research.

## Appendix C: Preliminary Interview Questions for Nonprofit Experts

1. As the executive director, CEO, President, or Vice President, are you familiar with fundraising and funding policies and procedures? Please list three examples of funding policies practiced by your organization.
2. Are you familiar with nonprofit resource development and for what it is used? Please explain!
3. Have you managed annual budgets greater than \$500,000? If so, how was the funding used? Please elaborate (ex: funding covered special programs, educational supports, or housing initiatives for homeless youth).
4. How do you measure a program's effectiveness and outcomes when looking to diversify the organization's funding?
5. Are there adequate resources available to you to cover your organization's operational budget? Why or why not?
6. How do you determine the costs needed to cover program expenses? Please explain!
7. What primary factors are considered when attracting funders to your organization?
8. Can you describe a fundraiser's process when determining how much funding to ask a donor for? Does the organization use a SWOT analysis and resource development plan to increase its financial sustainability?

9. Have your board of directors ever objected to the diversified funding strategies you presented to move the organization forward? If so, why, and how did you get them to alter their decision?
10. What areas of diversified funding do you have experience in? Have you been able to guide your organization on using them to sustain itself? Please explain in detail.

## Appendix D: Strive Forward Inc Strategic Plan

### **About Strive Forward Incorporated**

Strive Forward Incorporated (fictitious name) is a 501(c)(3) grassroots organization located in Western New York that assists transitioning foster care youth, young adults, and alumni of color with life skills, housing stability, education, and career advancement, personal and professional development, leadership development, and full optimal health management.

#### **Strive Forward Principles:**

- Change the Narrative and Strengthen Foster Care Alum and their families.
- Through work with alumni and alumna, they will be able to triumph over adversity while guiding them on ways to build a supportive community.
- Focusing on Alumni gifts, talents, and accomplishments, Strive Forward Incorporated will be able to identify each potential, build upon it and provide them with opportunities and support.
- Create Voices of Hope and Resilience that will foster and create a ripple effect of positive social change, ultimately changing the narrative of foster care alumni.
- Encourage Openness and Transparency:
  - Strive Forward Incorporated will actively seek input from young people, adults, alums, stakeholders, leadership, and management to inform the organization's best practices and services.

Strive Forward Incorporated is transparent about its work while respecting the privacy of children, young people, and their families.



**Strategic Direction**

Based upon the Board of Director's development training and overall understanding of Strive Forward Incorporated's (fictitious name) mission, long-term vision, and opportunities and threats, the company will take the next one to three years to make assessments while diving deeper into the work to serve the foster youth population. Simultaneously, Strive Forward Incorporated will provide leadership training and support to provide a different approach to engaging the community and how to engage others in peer-to-peer donations. Finally, this method will attract volunteers and potential board members looking to get involved in a great cause that promotes and brings about social change in Western Buffalo, New York.

Strive Forward Incorporated will work with outside consultants within the human services field, social services, and child welfare to ensure that programs meet the complex needs of foster youth, young adults, and alumni.

Strive Forward Incorporated will conduct an environmental scan to identify gaps so they can bring the gap by providing services through opportunities. This route will allow the organization to expand its service and generate additional funding that leverages its sustainability. This would take precedence within the first three years of assessment.

Strive Forward Incorporated will position their leaders through proper leadership training on how to position themselves to engage with providers that are a part of pipeline systems that foster youth are likely to encounter. These providers can be used as referral providers.

Strive Forward Incorporated (fictitious name) will position itself in the community to expand on the organization's visibility through an intense branding and marketing plan. Creating visibility can be achieved using volunteers and interns. Utilizing volunteers and interns can push Fostering Greatness Inc initiatives and gain phenomenal supporters.

Strive Forward Incorporated will be working on building financial sustainability and financial resources. These resources will provide financial investment into programs that prove effective through mentorship using lived experience. An endowment and maintenance fund would benefit the organization once they have secured property to operate from and house its participants.

### **2023-2026 Strategic Action Plan**

Strategic plans are essential to the success of any organization. Strive Forward Incorporated must be willing and able to utilize its mission to drive its organization forward if they want to see financial sustainability occur. According to Kloppenborg & Laning (2014), turning mission statements into actions is imperative for any nonprofit organization's success. Proper financial growth that leads to an organization's solid financial future happens when it can incorporate its leadership team into the equation. Leaders in leadership positions such as managers, coordinators, and board members take on roles such as team builders, finding partners and building trust, and convincing others around them to join in their cause (Nanus & Dobbs, 1999). They persuade others to commit to the organization's mission and vision. In short, leaders of any nonprofit

organization are the direction setters because their main goal is to understand what activities are in place and utilize them to create many more possibilities.

True authentic engagement to move any nonprofit organization forward is based on the value seen in their leadership team and staff for the organization to achieve equitable and strategic partnerships. All leaders must be acknowledged and feel of value to the organization when it comes to determining what Strive Forward Incorporated needs and measuring its impact on the community being served. This is crucial and significant because the leadership team (upper, middle, and lower management) must create viable and practical solutions that help the organization resolve convoluted social and economic issues they face or may face soon. For Strive Forward Incorporated to achieve authenticity, they must be willing to respect, recognize and step back to see the credibility and value these leaders bring to the table on various levels while also encompassing the organization's core values. This is achievable when Strive Forward Incorporated engages the leadership team's ideas at board meetings, community meetings, staff meetings, and individual leadership evaluations.

Strive Forward Incorporated recognizes the need and the importance of engaging their leadership team and leadership staff around the decision-making process, such as financial sustainability and financial planning, by providing them with a voice to be heard, acknowledging the advice they bring to the table, and giving them respect by wanting to hear what they have to say. The researcher of this professional administrative study understands the organization's needs and has created an action plan to develop a well-thought-out framework to identify the supports the leadership team must navigate to

drive the organization to financial success. Strive Forward Incorporated will leverage its current partnership with the Independent Contractors Guild of WNY (ICG) while networking to build and gain more for collaborative efforts. According to Mendel & Brudney (2018), leveraging current and new partnerships and engaging the community creates a solution that no single nonprofit can achieve alone while embracing a system for social change where none occurred before.

These strategies include:

- Actively involve leaders in the organizational decision process.
- Support the ongoing development of the leadership and management teams around the importance of community engagement.
- Include the board of directors in systems planning policy reform in child welfare and policy and procedure development.
- Develop internal financial structures at various levels of fundraising.
- Revise the board of directors by laws to push fundraising and membership dues.
- Diversify the board so that equity and inclusion push the organization forward to create authentic social change.
- Inventory current policies in place, programs, and services and develop best practice initiatives.
- Formalize collaboration with local, state, and federal governments around HUD housing laws.
- Optimize human capital and workforce engagement.

- Build, incorporate, and implement public awareness through community and policy engagement.
- Enhance performance and technology metrics for broader marketing and branding.
- Build fund development capacity.
- Develop a fundraising strategy that engages donors in the organization's cause through relationship building.
- Build, develop, and implement a resource development plan to advance the organization's resources necessary to carry out the organization's mission, and grow programming and activities to engage youth, young adults, and alumni of the New York State foster care system.

Commitment to *authentic* leadership and community engagement is vital to implementing said strategic plan. Strive Forward Incorporated's organizational culture can work to reflect and uphold the commitment in and out of their work environment because Strive Forward Incorporated recognizes and values the organization's managers, staff, and leadership teams to help promote organizational growth and financial stability by:

1. Promoting organizational ongoing consistency in the foster care community.
2. Build upon a foundation of strategic fundraising with the support of the Finance Committee.
3. Implement and carry out positive social change through collaboration and partnership.

4. Develop and foster consistent relationships with child welfare agencies that focus on diversity and equity.
5. Empower the organization's leadership and management teams through coaching and mentorship that leverages longevity within the organization.

Based upon the Board of Directors development training and overall understanding of Strive Forward Incorporated's mission, long-term vision, and opportunities and threats, the company will take the next one to three years to make assessments while diving deeper into the work to serve the foster youth population. Simultaneously, Strive Forward Incorporated will provide leadership training and support to provide a different approach to engaging the community and how to engage others in peer-to-peer donations. Finally, this method will attract volunteers and potential board members looking to get involved in a great cause that promotes and brings about social change in Western Buffalo, New York.

Leadership Intensive Training (LIT): A quarterly 40-hour intense leadership training focused, comprehensive, and designed to enhance the leadership skills and capabilities of individuals leading or involved in newly established nonprofit organizations. This intensive will prioritize enhancing leadership skills and capabilities of staff leading in newer established nonprofit organizations such as Strive Forward Incorporated. Leadership development will provide the necessary tools, knowledge, and strategy to lead the organization forward and assist them in navigating challenges to grow in such a unique sector while focusing on its mission.

### **Strategies and Goals**

1. Strive Forward Incorporated (fictitious name) will conduct an environmental scan to identify gaps so they can bring the gap by providing services through opportunities. This route will allow the organization to expand its service and generate additional funding that leverages its sustainability. This would take precedence within the first three years of assessment.
2. Strive Forward Incorporated will position their leaders through proper leadership training on how to position themselves to engage with providers that are a part of pipeline systems that foster youth are likely to encounter. These providers can be used as referral providers.
3. Strive Forward Incorporated will position itself in the community to expand on the organization's visibility through an intense branding and marketing plan. Creating visibility can be achieved using volunteers and interns. Utilizing volunteers, and interns can push Fostering Greatness Inc initiatives and gain phenomenal supporters.
4. Strive Forward Incorporated will work towards building financial sustainability and financial resources. These resources will provide financial investment into programs that prove effective through mentorship using lived experience. An endowment and maintenance fund would benefit the organization once they have secured property to operate from and house its participants.

## **Programmatic Goals & Strategies:**

### **Direct Services**

Strive Forward Incorporated (fictitious name) will continue directly addressing the unmet educational, housing, and any other needs of foster care alum. Over the next 3-5 years, Strive Forward Incorporated seeks to expand and deepen its work in program areas: Transitional Housing, Educational Support, Life Skills Training, and Career Development. Also, the organization will push for peer support and mentorship, meeting the ongoing emergency needs of foster care alumni, youth, and young adults. Lastly, the organization will focus on identifying opportunities and ways to design, launch and implement new programs that seek to address additional unmet needs, including workforce development, financial assistance, mental health, and optimal healthcare.

### ***Strategies and Goals***

1. Foster personal and professional growth by providing resources, tools, and support to help individuals unlock their full potential.
2. Create a sense of belonging and community among program participants through networking opportunities, collaboration, and shared experiences.
3. Regularly assess the effectiveness of programs through participant feedback, surveys, and performance metrics. Use this data to make informed decisions, implement program design and improve outcomes.
4. Offer programs and initiatives focusing on developing essential skills and knowledge needed for success in various fields.



5. Regularly assess the effectiveness of programs through participant feedback, surveys, and performance metrics. Use this data to make informed decisions, on program design, and improve outcomes.
6. Establish a support system beyond the duration of the programs. Provide alumni networks, ongoing mentorship opportunities, or continued learning and professional development resources.

## **Resource Development**

### **Strategic Growth**

Strive Forward Incorporated will work on securing extensive multi-year funding from foundations, government grants, and corporate sources. Grant obligations will be prioritized while growing and scaling current programs in place. Scaling and growing current programs increase the organization's impact and reduce the burden of financial obligations by diversifying overall funding to support the organization's efforts in creating social change. Expanding the organization's reach

### *Goals and Strategies*

1. Strive Forward Incorporated will build strategic partnerships, collaborations, and relationships with key stakeholders that support child welfare efforts.
2. Strive Forward Incorporated will build awareness and opportunities that will focus on securing grants from local, state, and federal government (e.g., Administration for Children and Families, New York State Office of Family Services).

3. Ensure future funding is diversified and can cover operational costs and program costs.

## **Resource Development Goals and Strategies**

### **Raise Funds**

Effective resource development strategies require time, effort, and persistence.

Combining various approaches and tailoring them to Strive Forward Incorporated's specific needs can increase their chances of securing funding to foster greatness.

#### *Goals and Strategies*

1. Strive Forward Incorporated will be strategic about funding sources and the financial capacities relative to hiring and filling positions to run programs and provide services.
2. Build and nurture relationships with potential donors and supporters. Engage with them through personalized communications, events, and networking opportunities.
3. Ensure future funding is diversified and can cover operational costs and program costs.
4. Explore multiple avenues for raising funds, such as organizing fundraising events, creating crowdfunding campaigns, or launching corporate partnership programs.

Diversifying funding streams to reduce dependency and increase financial stability.

5. Strive Forward Incorporated will be strategic about funding sources and the financial capacities relative to hiring and filling positions to run programs and provide services.

## **Operational and Infrastructure**

### **Build Infrastructure**

Strive Forward Incorporated will focus on building, growing, maintaining, and sustaining its infrastructure. This is crucial for the effective functioning and long-term sustainability of fulfilling the organization's mission and vision. Infrastructure will help strengthen Strive Forward Incorporated's systems, processes, and resources that support the operations and growth of its organization. Lastly, supporting the organization's infrastructure will help it weather challenges and changes over time.

#### *Strategies and Goals*

1. Expand staff capacity and build employee operations and human resource manual.
2. Establish clear governance structures, develop strategic plans, and implement sound financial and administrative systems.
3. Enhance the organization's capacity to serve its constituents and communities.
4. Develop and establish Strive Forward Incorporated human resources department, including recruiting and retaining staff and volunteers and offering professional development opportunities.
5. Establish efficient systems for managing programs, coordinating activities, and leveraging technology to enhance organizational effectiveness.
6. Improve financial management by establishing robust financial management systems, that include accounting, budgeting, and reporting processes.
7. Maintain and regulate accountability, compliance, and financial transparency with regulatory and legal requirements.

Building Strive Forward Incorporated's nonprofit infrastructure is essential for the organization's stability, effectiveness, and long-term sustainability. It will enable the organization to remain aligned with its mission, enhance capacity, improve financial management, support organizational learning, and foster collaboration. Strive Forward Incorporated can maximize its impact and effectively serve its community by investing in infrastructure development.

**Table 2***Strive Forward Incorporated Foundation Request Strategy Plan*

Strategies	Strategic Action Items	Timeline	Who's Responsible
Create, Implement, and Plan a Strategic Marketing Plan	Implement a strategic marketing plan	Every 6 months	Marketing Consultant and Executive Director
Promote and increase community engagement	Utilize branding and opportunity for partnership with foster care agencies and local and state government entities	Ongoing	Executive Director and Volunteers
Ensure all staff hired have adequate staff training and leadership development training	Provide staff, leaders, and managers a shadow partner for 8 weeks before starting in their position independently	Quarterly	Executive Director and Human Resources
Maximize revenue and diverse funding streams	Utilize small fundraisers and one yearly big fundraiser to engage the foster care community around issues that need attention within foster care in Erie County, Buffalo  Utilize marketing materials such as newsletters, brochures, and social media platforms to gain visibility from donors, potential funders	Daily/Ongoing	Board of Directors Fundraiser Strategist Grant Writer
Secure program Funding for the Director of Leadership and Community Engagement	Contract with well-experienced Consultants that specialize in Nonprofit Leadership and Development	2023-2024	Executive Director
Increase Alumni mentorship	Offer alumni an introductory package at a rate of \$150.00 a month valued at \$325.00 a month. Promote a price cut from \$150.00 to \$75.00 a month for the first one hundred people that sign up and become members while at a community event	2023-2024	Program Coordinator and Community Engagement Specialist

## **Organization Sources of Revenue**

### **Foundation and Government Funding/Grants**

The federal government supports nonprofit organization projects and ideas by providing government grants. These grants assist nonprofits in providing public service while helping vitalize the economy (Grants 101, n.d.). Grants will be able to provide Strive Forward Incorporated an opportunity to financially support its initiatives and many other programs that need funding. The next three years will be crucial, but if government funding is secured, it can assist in fostering greatness with development capacity.

When nonprofits apply for federal grants, funding, and benefit programs, grants go through a Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance. Such a catalog includes funding available to fund programs within the for-profit sector, all levels of government, nonprofits, and additional entities that qualify (Grant Programs, n.d.). To guide the organization's sources of revenue, Fostering Greatness Inc must diversify its eligibility and it can do so. Nonetheless, Fostering Greatness Inc is eligible to apply for funding under the following umbrella of revenue:

- Government organizations
- Public Housing Organizations
- Nonprofit organizations
- Small Businesses
- Individuals

**Table 3***Strive Forward Incorporated 2023 Foundation Request Strategy*

Foundation	Plan Dates	Potential Activity or Project	Funding Request	Deadline
Redlich Horwitz Foundation	2023	Mentorship/Alumni coaching for transitioning youth/Advocacy & Policy Development	\$300,000	12/15/2023
John R. Oishei Foundation	2023	Education/Health	\$200,000	12/1/2024
M&T Bank Charitable Foundation	2023-2025	Education	\$55,000	4/1/2025
Buffalo Community Trust	2023-2025	Development & capacity building	\$125,000	3/15/24
Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo	2023-2025	Workforce Development & Leadership training	\$350,000	2/15/24
New York Funders Alliance	2023-2023	Nonprofit Development	\$25,000	6/1/2024
New York Health Foundation	2022-2024	Optimal Health Management	\$150,000	Ongoing

## **Organization Sources of Revenue**

### **Foundation and Government Funding/Grants**

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- Government organizations
- Public Housing Organizations
- Nonprofit organizations
- Small Businesses
- Individuals



### **Donor Business Support**

Small businesses sponsored Strive Forward Incorporated with revenue over the last year to assist and help the organization move small programs and their housing initiative forward. Since receiving funding, the organization's visibility has grown, and multiple businesses have begun to take an interest in ways they can support the organization. Small business charitable giving stated, "75% of small business owners donate an average of 6% of their profits to charitable organizations annually" ("Infographic: Small business charitable giving - Big impact on local communities," 2019). This is good for nonprofits such as Strive Forward Incorporated because having this impact helps local communities begin the road to sustainability. Small businesses supporting nonprofit organizations create a positive image for the business that donates. In addition, charitable giving from small businesses has increased throughout the years and contributed to employee engagement ("Infographic: Small business charitable giving - Big impact on local communities," 2019).

Conducting business with local businesses in the City of Buffalo will allow Strive Forward Incorporated to land long-term event sponsorships and memberships for small businesses. Having these memberships and sponsorships will allow the organization to raise additional money. Engaging in business with community-based small businesses puts the organization in a position to increase its brand awareness, automate its business, target customers interested in the organization's foster care community, open the door to new networking opportunities, and help those that need ongoing support. According to Croman (2019), Strive Forward Incorporated must understand that building partnerships

between a non-profit entity and business happens over time, with both parties putting in the effort and resources benefiting them both.

### **Major Gift Programs**

Major gifts speak to individuals who give far more than a nonprofit organization may consider average gifting (Arc | For People with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities, 2014). Because the size of the gift is extremely large, it is considered a “major gift.” Usually, for organizations to receive this funding, persistence, and research are looked at when considering if an organization will get this kind of revenue. This is important to Strive Forward Incorporated because if they understand and know why a donor is giving so generously, they can be prepared to utilize it correctly. Before taking on the initiative of a major gift program, Strive Forward Incorporated will need to be able to present to its funder an apparent and solid reason for the support, fundraising plan, and strategy that focuses on the longevity of cultivation.

Next, major gift sponsors will want to know who on your board of directors has a connection to them and how you will stay in touch with them. Looking for a significant gift donor requires that Strive Forward Incorporated understands their giving capacity, how they researched them, steps taken to secure them, and the rewarding process once the donation is sealed and delivered. Nonprofits need to get in the habit of stewardship because keeping them informed helps them determine if they will fund you again. According to Love (2022), stewarding is the process an organization must take to build a relationship with the supporter once the supporter delivers the donation.

## **Annual Fundraising Drives**

Annual fundraising drives are often utilized by churches, nonprofits, schools, and community organizations to fund programs and projects in the early developmental stage. These fundraisers are the primary funding event that happens throughout the year.

Fundraising drives are utilized to support the day-to-day operations to keep the organization up and running. While focusing on the day-to-day duties, these fundraising drives also promote any projects or campaigns the organization is looking to have soon.

An annual fundraising drive is good for Strive Forward Incorporated because it helps build a productive, effective, and strategic relationship with funders. These drives create an opportunity for community small businesses and individuals to support a cause they believe in to bring about change. These funds are raised by various comprehensive strategies, such as campaigns focusing on multiple fundraising efforts. Lastly, these efforts are intentional and target those to solicit on a broader scale (Annual Fund Strategies, 2022).

## **Corporate Donors**

Corporate funders are different from individual donors and major gift donors. Many corporate donations are given due to wanting to be philanthropic. When corporations give funding to organizations, they look for things in return that can benefit them also. As mentioned by Berger (2005), when corporations can see the benefits, they will more than likely review the offer they're being presented with and see if those benefits align with their needs. If the services and programs offered by Strive Forward

Incorporated corporate donors' philanthropic ideas, they will likely receive funding from the corporate donor.

Strive Forward Incorporated can demonstrate this by receiving funding from store retailers and major food chains. Corporate sponsors would benefit from the organization by having them announce the corporate donor and how much they donated to the organization. This is demonstrated when organizations contribute funds and then take a picture with the organization and the board holding the check. Listing corporations in a resource development plan is essential because it can guide and assist Strive Forward Incorporated in pinpointing the organizations that support their mission.

### **Solicitation**

This is the process where Strive Forward Incorporated asks companies and individuals to give to their cause. This can occur in multiple forms, such as email, a fundraising letter, or a personal request (Francois, 2014, p.182). Individuals uncomfortable with asking people directly may be able to do solicitation online. One of the most significant advantages of soliciting funding is that this is seen as the most effective and strategic fundraising method. Suppose the organization's board has a wealthy connection of supporters and friends. In that case, the board can utilize their support to help raise funds for a great cause ("Individual solicitation - Pros and cons | Society for nonprofits," 1999).

### **Stewardship**

All donors will receive a thank you note or letter for their gifts. All notes and letters will include a handwritten note for any donor contributing \$250 to \$1,000.

Newsletters will be distributed to any individual or organization that has provided Strive Forward Incorporated with \$1,000 or more. The newsletter will describe and mention the direct impact of the donation. Annual reports will be sent to the organization that gave donations and will be acknowledged for the gifts and donations, community-shared accomplishments, and what the funds are intended for in the following year.

**Table 4**

*Strive Forward Incorporated Revenue Projections*

Source	2023	2024	2025	2026
Foundation/Government Funding	\$100,000	\$110,000	\$120,000	\$130,000
Donor Business Support	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$40,000	\$50,000
Major Gift Programs	\$75,000	\$80,000	\$90,000	\$100,000
Annual Fundraising Drives	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$25,000
Recruiting & Equipping Board for Fundraising	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$35,000	\$40,000
Corporate Donors	\$75,000	\$85,000	\$95,000	\$105,000
Solicitation	\$55,000	\$65,000	\$75,000	\$85,000

**Strive Forward Incorporated's Fundraising Principles**

- Have fun
- Solicit from diverse funding streams
- Make strategic planning an ongoing priority
- Build effective and long-lasting relationships with donors and funders
- Focus on the organization's mission