STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY
2018-2020

INTRODUCTION
New Jersey’s non-profit community is an integral part of a strong economy and vibrant quality of life for the people of our state. Non-profits enhance our daily lives by caring for our most vulnerable people; preventing and treating illness and disease; protecting our parks and beaches; offering artistic and cultural enrichment; providing inspiration and spiritual fulfillment; mentoring our children; educating youth and adults alike; organizing for social change; providing vital services from infancy through senior years; and serving as an outlet for generosity, creativity, grief and hope. Non-profits are also an essential part of our economic well-being, through direct employment as well as training to help people find and keep jobs; payroll taxes; relationships with local merchants and businesses; and countless programs, services and amenities that make communities appealing places for employers to locate, and for customers and employees to visit, live, and work.

The Center for Non-Profits was founded in 1982 in recognition of the indispensable role of non-profits for ALL New Jerseyans. This commitment, to the individual and collective vitality of non-profits in furtherance of the public good, continues to fuel the organization today.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS
Between May and October of 2017, the Center for Non-Profits undertook a process to update our strategic plan for the three-year period between 2018 and 2020. Our goal was to identify changes in the environment since the previous plan, assess their potential impact on the non-profit community, and gain consensus on an appropriate set of priorities, goals and strategies for inclusion in the new plan. As it did three years ago, the Center again engaged Abby O’Neill, principal of Abby O’Neill Consulting, LLC, to facilitate the planning process.

The process was informed by a combination of new and existing data and research:

- The Center’s previous plan covering 2015-2017.
- The Center’s latest annual survey of non-profits and sector trends report.
- A kick-off session at the Princeton Area Community Foundation with representatives of the Center’s Staff, Board and funders. Asked to consider the implications of a continually evolving economic, political and demographic landscape for the non-profit sector, participants shared their perspectives on a host of issues, challenges and opportunities for the Center to consider in planning for the next three years.
- One-on-one interviews with 30 stakeholders including staff, Board, funders, organizational allies, members, non-members, and government officials.
- An interview with a national non-profit association chief executive officer.

The results of these activities were synthesized and disseminated first to the strategic planning committee which reviewed them and then crafted an agenda to guide a one-day retreat with the full Board and staff. The purpose of the retreat was to reach consensus on a set of priorities and goals to be achieved over the next three years.
KEY STAKEHOLDER RESEARCH THEMES

The Center’s Strengths
- **Ability and integrity** of the entire staff
- **Advocacy** efforts and role as the *voice of the non-profit sector* in NJ
- The reputation of the Center’s CEO as one of the non-profit association network’s best advocacy experts
- Ability to **do so much with limited capacity** through the full range of its programs and services

The Center’s Challenges
- The acute need to increase **organizational capacity** sufficiently to be able to broaden reach and scope and to fulfill the vision and expectations of its stakeholders
- The need to increase the Center’s level of its **visibility** through communications and outreach
- Most state associations struggle with the **external demands** of an extremely **complex policy environment** at the local, state and federal levels.
- Narrowness of funders’ areas of focus

Top Three Issues Facing the Non-Profit Community
1. The chronic and growing **gap between demand for services and the resources necessary** to provide them to constituents in need
2. The challenge of dealing with a **continually changing public policy environment**
3. How to meet the need for **leadership development capacity** including the transition to the next generation of executive directors, governing boards and emerging professionals, especially **women and people of color**

Most Important Opportunities on Which to Focus the Center’s Resources
1. Promoting a positive **public policy climate** for non-profits and combatting negative policies
2. Fostering non-profits’ **access to capital** (monetary, human, other resources)

Within this context, the preliminary plan framework begins on the next page.
SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Mission
To build the power of New Jersey’s non-profit community to improve the quality of life for the people of our state.

Vision
• The Center for Non-Profits is a high visibility, high impact leader, champion, convener, and resource for and about New Jersey’s non-profit community.
• The non-profit community in NJ is strong, vibrant, appreciated and possesses the financial, human and knowledge resources needed to improve the quality of life in our communities, state, nation and across the globe.

Value Proposition & Programmatic Framework

The Center for Non-Profits:

• **Champions and protects** the non-profit community as an indispensable part of the social and economic well-being of New Jersey and its residents.
  o Public Policy Advocacy/Lobbying on non-profit issues and concerns
  o Public Education/Research/Promoting Awareness of the social and economic importance of non-profits

• **Advances knowledge and promotes best practices** to foster effective, ethical organizations in furtherance of the public good.
  o Professional Training
  o Helpdesk
  o Webinars

• **Convenes and fosters connections** between and among non-profit organizations and their champions, as well as partners in government and for-profit business, in order to enhance collective strength.
  o Annual conference
  o Local/regional town halls and networking events
  o Affinity gatherings / strategic partnerships to further goals and engagement
  o Issue-specific task forces/working groups
  o Member engagement activities and services
Areas of Emphasis

Increase the depth, breadth and impact of the Center’s advocacy work on behalf of the non-profit community in New Jersey

The current public policy and economic climate present a wide array of challenges and opportunities for non-profits. In order to preserve and strengthen the ability of non-profits to fulfill their missions in this environment, the Center must continue to increase its own advocacy and influence on behalf of the non-profit community among policymakers, business leaders, the media and the public.

➢ Increase understanding and appreciation of the non-profit community, and visibility/stature of the Center and its representatives among policy makers
➢ Develop and pursue a policy agenda that fosters increased access to capital for and a positive environment for non-profits

Grow membership and deepen the Center’s visibility and engagement with members and with the non-profit community at large.

Increasing and diversifying the Center’s membership will expand the Center’s reach and programmatic impact for non-profits, and will also magnify its influence, and that of the non-profit community, with policy makers and other key stakeholders.

➢ Increase membership by at least 50% and increase membership revenues by 33% by the end of 2020; ensure that the diversity of the non-profit community is fully represented in our membership.
➢ Increase membership retention

As applicable and feasible, plan and conduct programs and activities through the overarching lenses of:

➢ fostering non-profits’ access to capital;
➢ advancing a public policy framework conducive to non-profits’ missions for the public good; and
➢ enhancing access to leadership pathways in non-profits, particularly for women and communities of color.

Increase the Center’s capacity to achieve the above priorities over the next three years through strategic investment in personnel and robust resource development activities.

Expanding the Center’s human resource capacity is absolutely critical to achieving the vision and key priorities over the next three years, and will result in a stronger, more sustainable organization in service to the non-profit community.

➢ Expand staffing capacity with a special emphasis on fund development and administrative support
➢ Explore ways to derive new revenue through programming