



Strategic Plan 2024-2026

Introduction:

Cause Collective was formed in 1980 under the name Human Services Federation to connect nonprofit agencies in Lincoln to one another for better information sharing. Over time, the organization has evolved to offer education to its member organizations, create a space for intentional collaboration and promote advocacy for the role of nonprofits and for their missions.

Cause Collective successfully completed its last strategic plan in December, 2022. This plan included an ambitious rebrand and growth goals around membership and programming which were all achieved. In the past 5 years, membership has grown 93% and services for members has increased 185%, while the budget has only increased 52%. At only 1.5 FTE staff, the organization is at capacity and cannot do more without more funds.

Stakeholders were surveyed and an idea generation activity was held with members to provide board and staff with a comprehensive look at member wishes and needs in preparation for this strategic plan. In addition to generating ideas around advocacy and education, members were also asked to weigh in on two major questions:

1. Should Cause Collective have a more visible space? If so, what would it look like?
2. Should Cause Collective require members to adhere to a code of ethics?

Of members who filled out the survey, 36% believed the Cause Collective should look into a new location with the 20% indicating “no.” The majority of members (43%) were unsure, leaving the board to consider the costs and benefits associated with staying at the same location versus trying to find a location with visibility and opportunities for members while considering the budget. After thorough discussion, the Cause Collective board decided to stay in the current location at Region V Systems. The current cost of rent is unbeatable right now. Staff find the current space suitable and there is room for growth if additional staff were hired. While signage might



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increase some brand awareness, the board agreed that it wouldn't help with understanding the mission. Other marketing methods would be better suited to raise awareness of the mission. While there was member input suggesting some shared training spaces might be nice features to have, the board believes there are plenty of existing spaces in the community for these purposes.

Regarding the question of a code of ethics, 63% of those that filled out the survey agreed that this should exist. Many others were unsure or took issue with whether this was within the mission of Cause Collective. After a lengthy discussion, the board determined that the existing disclaimer on the Cause Collective membership application asking potential members to understand and support Cause Collective's diversity statement covered the Equity and Inclusion standard that nearly 80% of members who filled out the survey wanted to see.

The board is concerned that Cause Collective doesn't have the capacity to *enforce* a lengthy code of ethics but understands there is an overwhelming interest in ethics from the membership. Recognizing this interest in and importance of ethics, Cause Collective will explore two things as capacity is increased. First, provide more educational opportunities around ethics, best practices, and board governance to help members become stronger nonprofits. Second, add a code of ethics for the agency itself and add this into the membership application asking that new members affirm the statement, similar to the diversity statement.

The board envisions Cause Collective being a role model to other agencies regarding ethics and transparency and is committed to helping nonprofits be the best they can be.



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The Cause Collective volunteer board is strong, passionate and diverse. Over the next three years, they intend to lead Cause Collective toward opportunities to make a greater impact. By investing in additional staff and marketing, Cause Collective strives to be the premier professional organization for nonprofits in Lincoln.



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SWOT Analysis:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Passionate board members ● Competent executive director ● Financially strong ● Growing number of members ● The number of services/benefits offered are increasing and members are satisfied and using them ● Making an impact by meeting the mission ● Positive reputation in the community, especially with existing nonprofits and community leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of community awareness ● Small staff for the amount of work asked of them ● Existing members understanding and utilizing current benefits ● Cause Collective competing for same funds as members (local funders) ● Intentional collaboration
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add staff ● Improve awareness to stakeholders before they need Cause Collective ● More connections in the community (businesses, consultants, elected officials, etc.) ● Reach more existing nonprofits ● Continue to improve quality and types of educational opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limited capacity of current staff to continue to scale at existing pace ● Lack of budget increases given growth in members and services ● Long term sustainability given growth ● Potential staff burnout



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Strategies:

1. Increase revenue 20% in 2024, 15% in 2025 and 10% in 2026
2. Increase staffing to accommodate current and future programming
3. Increase awareness, especially to those that may be starting nonprofits
4. Add programming related to education, collaboration and advocacy as staffing becomes available

Strategy Objectives:

1. Increase revenue 20% in 2024, 15% in 2025 and 10% in 2026
 - a. Increase membership by at least 5 each year
 - b. Add 2 new large (\$1M + annual operating budget) nonprofit members each year.
 - i. Identify potential large nonprofits to approach.
 - c. Increase sponsorship dollar amount by 15% each year
 - i. Identify new potential sponsors to approach.
 - ii. Seek 100% sponsorship renewal
 - d. Develop operating grant dollar goal for each year, necessary to reach the revenue goals based on estimated other revenue
 - i. Identify list of potential operating grants to apply for this year
2. Increase staffing to accommodate current and future programming
 - a. Scaling Committee work with Jason to identify future staffing needs
 - b. Increase budget to accommodate the addition of staff



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3. Increase awareness, especially to those that may be starting nonprofits (Marketing Committee)
 - a. Develop outreach plan to lawyers, bankers, attorney general, etc
 - b. Develop landing page on website with information about "Start-Up Nonprofit Guidance."
 - c. Develop social media plan that highlights Cause Collective's programs, especially LinkedIn and starting Instagram
 - d. Consider marketing budget to promote Start-Up Nonprofit Guidance and board trainings:
 - i. Optimize SEO for phrase "how to start a nonprofit"
 - ii. Billboards to promote Start-Up Nonprofit Guidance and board trainings
 - iii. Sponsoring events where attorneys, bankers, etc might be present (golf, etc)
4. Add programming related to collaboration, education and advocacy as staffing becomes available
 - a. Evaluate fees on all trainings. Consider raising fees, especially for nonmembers.
 - b. Pilot on-demand, online trainings for a fee for members. Create goal to define success of pilot.
 - c. Add educational programming, resources, and coaching for agencies around ethics, transparency, fiscal responsibility, diversity/equity/inclusion/ nondiscrimination, leadership, etc.
 - d. Consider adding additional programming prioritized by members including:
 - i. A nonprofit event calendar*
 - ii. Sending delegates to a national nonprofit advocacy conference to learn more and bring back ideas to better serve in this area*
 - iii. A meet and greet breakfast or luncheon with policy makers/elected officials from Lincoln (state senators especially)*
 - e. Explore additional programming based on membership survey

*Ideas generated and prioritized by members



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Committees:

Board Committees:

- Executive Committee
- Scaling Committee (New)

Member Committees:

- Advocacy
- Community Engagement
- Education
- Marketing
- Membership
- Networking
- Social Justice



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TIMELINE

Strategy #1: Increase revenue 20% in 2024, 15% in 2025 and 10% in 2026

Start Date	Complete Date	Activity	Who is Responsible?
July 2023	June 2024 (repeat annually)	Increase membership by at least 5 each year	Staff, Membership Committee
July 2023	June 2024 (repeat annually)	Identify and add 2 new large (\$1M + annual operating budget) nonprofit members each year.	Staff, Membership Committee
July 2023	June 2024 (repeat annually)	Identify new potential sponsors to approach.	Staff
July 2023	June 2024 (repeat annually)	Increase sponsorship dollar amount by 15% each year. Seek 100% sponsorship renewal	Staff
Jan 2024	March 2024 (repeat annually)	Develop operating grant dollar goal for each year, necessary to reach the revenue goals based on estimated other revenue. Identify list of potential operating grants to apply for each year.	ED, Executive Committee



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Strategy #2: Increase staffing to accommodate current and future programming

Start Date	Complete Date	Activity	Who is Responsible?
January 2024	March 2024	Scaling Committee work with Jason to identify future staffing needs	ED, Scaling
July 2024	July 2024	Increase budget to accommodate the addition of staff	ED, Executive Committee
July 2025	2025	Increase budget to accommodate hiring additional staff as needed	ED
July 2026	2026	Increase budget to accommodate hiring additional staff as needed	ED



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Strategy #3: Increase awareness, especially to those that may be starting nonprofits

Start Date	Complete Date	Activity	Who is Responsible?
April 2024	June 2024	Develop outreach plan to lawyers, bankers, attorney general, etc	Marketing Committee, Staff
Jan. 2024	March 2024	Develop landing page on website with information about "Start-Up Nonprofit Support."	Marketing Committee, Staff
July 2024	Ongoing	Develop social media plan that highlights Cause Collective's programs, especially Linked In and starting Instagram	Marketing Committee, Staff
October 2024	Jan. 2025	Investigate costs to promote Start-Up Nonprofit Support: -Google ad words for "how to start a nonprofit" -Billboards to promote Start-Up Nonprofit Support -Sponsoring events where attorneys, bankers, etc might be present (golf, etc) (Execute in 25-26 if budget approved)	Marketing Committee, Staff



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July 2024	Oct 2024	Consider marketing budget for Start-Up Nonprofit Support promotion	Marketing Committee, Staff, Executive Committee
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Strategy #4: Add programming related to collaboration, education and advocacy as staffing becomes available

Start Date	Complete Date	Activity	Who is Responsible?
April 2024	July 2024 (repeat annually)	Evaluate fees on all trainings. Consider raising fees, especially for nonmembers.	ED, Executive Committee
July 2024	June 2025	Pilot on-demand, online trainings for a fee for members. Create goal to define success of pilot.	Staff, Education Committee
January 2024	Dec 2024	Add educational programming, resources, training around ethics, transparency, fiscal responsibility, nondiscrimination, etc.	Education Committee
April 2025	Ongoing	Consider adding additional programming prioritized by members including: -A nonprofit event calendar -Sending delegates to a national nonprofit advocacy conference to learn more and bring back ideas to better serve in this area	Staff, Community Engagement, Advocacy, Education Committees



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		-A meet and greet breakfast or luncheon with policy makers/elected officials from Lincoln (state senators especially)	
January 2025	Ongoing	Explore additional programming based on membership survey	Education Committee

Plan approved by Cause Collective Board of Directors

11/13/2023

DATE APPROVED

Board Chair

Executive Director



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Plan Completed by:

