

GIRLS INC. Of Chattanooga

2019 – 2023 STRATEGIC PLAN



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Background

In the last two years, a number of important changes have occurred at Girls Inc., including the hiring and onboarding of a new Chief Executive Officer, the selection of several new board members, an increase in in-school and community-based programming and changes at both the local United Way of Greater Chattanooga and Girls Inc. national. In light of these, the Girls Inc. board of directors decided to undertake a strategic planning process to develop a comprehensive plan for the next five years of the organization's work.

The process began in August 2018 with a meeting of the board Planning Committee, a document review, interviews with the leaders of peer Girls, Inc. organizations and an input meeting with staff. The plan was completed in spring 2019. This summary captures the main strategic planning decisions made by the board that are being used to guide the completion of a 12 to 18-month implementation plan.

Planning Process

In August 2018 the consultant met to scope out the strategic planning process with the CEO and the Planning Committee of board members. It proceeded in three phases. Phase I included an examination of the organization such as board minutes, financial information and work programs as well as telephone interviews with regional Girls Inc. executives and a scan of other relevant organizations.

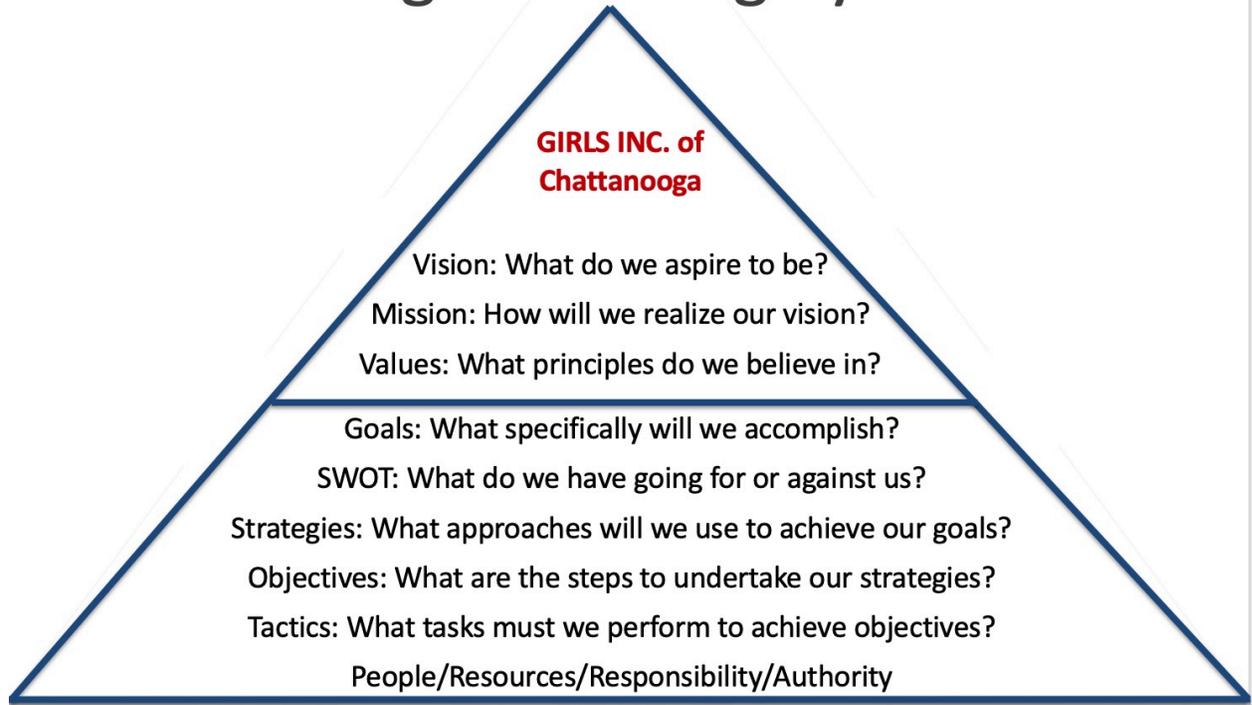
Phase II was structured around two half-day interactive strategic planning sessions for board members and the CEO facilitated by the Consultant. These included a review of the environmental scan, visioning and values exercises, goal setting and a SWOT analysis.

Phase III focused on working with staff to finalize key strategies to achieve each goal and on creating specific tasks and timetables for up to the first 18 months of the strategic plan. The board of directors adopted the five-year plan in April 2019.

PLANNING SESSION PARTICIPANTS

Kathy Black
Sue Collins
Betty Cowart Conroy
Ashley Curbelo
Deborah M. Fowler (guest)
Abby Garrison (guest)
Dan Gilmore
Stacy Gray
Sonya Jaffar
Kim Lawrence
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Jeff Olingy
Emily Ramsey
Rachel Ragghianti
Tiffanie Robinson
Patricia Russell
Arch Willingham (guest)

Strategic Planning Pyramid



Environmental Scan

The environmental scan began with a review of Girls Inc. documents and financial information for the past several years. These included board minutes, by-laws, past strategic plans, program summaries, the website and agreements with Girls Inc. national. Consultant also reviewed website content and the Girls Inc. national current strategic plan.

Four senior executives of regional Girls Inc. organizations agreed to telephone interviews and each had some knowledge about Girls Inc. Chattanooga and its programs. Consultant also scanned the programs and organizational outlines of these four organizations and two others in the region to provide background information on how other Girls Inc. organizations are structuring and presenting their work. A number of helpful documents were obtained from them, for example a fund-development plan and sample school system contract from Sarasota, Florida Girls Inc. and a strategic plan summary from Girls Inc. of Memphis.

Interviews with Peer Organization Executives

Those interviewed were:

Connie Hill, Girls Inc. of Central Alabama, Birmingham

Angie Stringer, Girls Inc. of Sarasota County, FL

Deb Hopkins, Girls Inc. Region 4 (Former Girls Inc. affiliate Executive Director)

Robin Rose, Girls Inc. of Jacksonville, FL

Questions

1. *Describe the scope and context of your work.*
2. *Talk about your experience with growing your programs.*
3. *What are your fundraising models and practices?*
4. *What challenges and opportunities do you see ahead for Girls Inc. around the US?*
5. *What advice do you have upon starting strategic planning?*

Summary of Input

Girls Inc. organizations around the region, much like non-profits in general, are operating in a changing environment that will likely have long term consequences for fundraising, community support, staff tenure, programming and board engagement. These changes include shifts in donor trends, tighter job markets and pressure to “do more with less.”

At the same time, Girls Inc. organizations have more specific challenges facing them as affiliates of Girls Inc. national. The national office provides resources to local affiliates, but also sets standards and policies that affiliates must try to align with. National issues such as the #metoo movement and heightened concerns for the safety of minors with non-custodial adults also impact the responsibilities of Girls Inc. Below is a summary of feedback from regional Girls Inc. executives.

In general these organizations are:

- Working to **align** policies, programs and growth **to the national organization** while continuing and creating **innovative local programs**
- Experiencing the **stresses of growth** and its **sustainability challenges**
- Working to **diversify funding sources** and **grow major donors**
- Working to **help board members be more effective** and better supported in various roles
- **Increasing use of data/outcomes** to **fundraise, solidify partnerships** and **communicate relevance**

They:

- Recommend **expanding and solidifying partnerships** of all kinds
- Point out the **crucial role of school systems** and the **challenges of working with them**
- Urge others to learn to go at their **own pace** and realize that **change takes time**

Peer Organizations Review

Non-profit organizations of similar size, scope and mission can provide valuable information and perspectives to one another since they tend to share similar challenges and opportunities. They are sensitive to industry trends that may not be relevant to other organizations. In this respect, Girls Inc. of Chattanooga has more in common with its affiliates around the US than with many other local non-profit organizations.

Organizations reviewed included Girls Inc. in Sarasota, FL; Birmingham, AL; Jacksonville, FL; Memphis, Knoxville and Oak Ridge, TN. Girls Inc. organizations are among the oldest local organizations working to better the life prospects of girls, with the Birmingham program starting in 1938 and the others well over 40 years old. Some are based at well-established centers such as in Sarasota which has a 10k square foot educational building, a gym and swimming pool in addition to outdoor tennis courts and soccer field. Others, such as in Knoxville, operate all programs through outreach – locating programs in neighborhood facilities such as schools. As facilities costs rise, along with the costs of transporting girls to centers, many Girls Inc. organizations are depending more on outreach to deliver programs.

Girls Inc. affiliates use a variety of development strategies to support themselves although historically many have been heavily dependent on United Way. This is changing as United Way across the country is having to shift its own strategies, thereby offering a less dependable large portion of any organization's annual budget. Most organizations hold annual fundraising events, and combine these revenues with grants, major donations and endowment income. All report they are having to be creative on fundraising strategies backed up with solid cases to the community for why they are making a difference for girls. They are also focusing on attracting new donors in the younger generation.

Programmatically most are aligned with the priorities of Girls Inc. national but also do programming that is popular locally. Sarasota conducts a copyrighted program called MicroSociety Afterschool, that helps young people create their own functioning "town," incorporating real world experiences into basic curriculum. Teachers facilitate but students do the work of organizing and running all sectors of their town. All Girls Inc. affiliates reviewed are dealing with how to serve more girls, meeting their changing needs and challenges and delivering a program based on good data that has measurable results. The examples served as food for thought during the strategic planning process and may be resources for Girls Inc. of Chattanooga in the future.

Vision, Mission and Values Statement for Girls Inc. of Chattanooga

Vision

A vision statement serves as an aspirational statement of the future that the organization hopes to bring about by performing its mission. It is qualitative and subjective and often inspirational. During the planning process participants reviewed the vision statements of peer organizations, Girls Inc. national and those of other local non-profit organizations as well as past visionary statements by Girls Inc. of Chattanooga. The following vision statement was crafted by the board of directors with staff input.

Girls Inc. of Chattanooga leads the way in empowering girls in an equitable society – helping girls pursue their individual dreams and opportunities to reach their full potential for impacting the world around them.

Mission

A mission statement should be a clear and concise description of what the organization does to work toward achievement of its vision. It should be distinctive and objective. The board and staff wanted the statement to be short and to the point while incorporating the strong, smart and bold vocabulary of the national organization.

The mission of Girls Inc. is:

Girls Inc. of Chattanooga inspires and equips girls to be strong, smart and bold leaders within their families, their community and society.

Values

Value Statements form the basis of beliefs that board members hold in common about the importance of the work of the organization and the reason for their attachment to it. They provide a powerful answer to the question of why the organization exists.

Girls Inc.

- *Recognizes and supports the strength in every girl*
- *Respects the dignity of each human being and demonstrates genuine care and concern for the wellbeing of others*
- *Understands and appreciates diversity, embraces inclusiveness and advances equity*
- *Collaborates for impact*
- *Drives for results anchored in integrity and accountability*

Girls Bill of Rights

These were established by Girls Inc. national and are often used as value statements for Girls Inc. organizations. The board believed these were important statements of the rights of individual girls and could be considered as a supplement to the value statements above for the Chattanooga organization.

- Girls have the right to be themselves and to resist gender stereotypes.
- Girls have the right to express themselves with originality and enthusiasm.
- Girls have the right to take risks, to strive freely and to take pride in success.
- Girls have the right to accept and appreciate their bodies.
- Girls have the right to have confidence in themselves and to be safe in the world.
- Girls have the right to prepare for interesting work and economic independence.

Analysis of Girls Inc. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

Girls Inc. board members completed a goal-setting exercise to determine broad comprehensive goals for the next five years of the organizations' work. (Described in Goals Section below.) In the second board planning session, they considered what the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were that would influence the development of strategies to achieve those goals. As a concluding exercise, participants voted on the most important items in each category and the items receiving votes are shown in the tallies below.

Strengths

Strengths are characteristics of an organization that serve as assets in its work. These should be built on and used effectively to its advantage.

VOTES	STRENGTHS
6	Attention to operating effectiveness, particularly financial, by the Chief Executive Officer
5	Girls Inc. offers a solid range of programs of proven success.
4	The Bookworm program and the Unbought and Unbossed (UBUB) event. The alumni of Girls Inc. and of UBUB are particularly strong assets.
3	Girls Inc. meets a tangible need to make girls college ready. Staff have personal connections with the girls that helps their work be more impactful.
2	Mentoring practices and the success of scholarships
1	Dedicated and knowledgeable local staff, a healthy financial position, a good connection to Girls Inc. national

Weaknesses

In contrast to strengths, weaknesses are characteristics internal to the organization that need to be overcome or minimized to increase the effectiveness and impact of Girls Inc.

VOTES	WEAKNESSES
9	Staff in general have not been with the organization very long and there was a high level of turnover in the months leading up to and during strategic planning.
4	The organization's transportation infrastructure is aging.
3	Girls Inc. lacks the ability to effectively measure outcomes, has trouble affording top talent, and has challenged middle and high school programs.
2	There is a lack of enough sustaining individual donors, lack of ideal buy-in from Hamilton County Schools, and often difficult work locations for staff – no building as a center that could help serve more girls.
1	Lack of a well-oiled machine, a low volunteer base, and lack of a risk management plan

Opportunities

Opportunities can be thought of as "the wind at our back" and consist of characteristics in the external environment outside of Girls Inc. itself that could help positively impact the work of the organization. Strategies should be developed to take advantage of these opportunities.

VOTES	OPPORTUNITIES
8	There is no overall formal partnership between Girls Inc. and Hamilton County Schools, but there are good productive working relationships with the schools that could be used as the basis for creating a more comprehensive partnership.
5	Girls Inc. national has a strong focus on supporting its affiliates that provides new opportunities, corporate and college partnerships could be developed, and there are opportunities to increase the number of girls in the program who are in local schools.
3	A new generation of donors and volunteers exists to support Girls Inc. work, and the alumni and UBUB network could be better utilized as resources.
2	The climate exists for us to be a voice (#metoo) to attract volunteers.
1	Girls Inc. is positioned to connect to where the girls actually are. There are opportunities to increase brand awareness, particularly by using digital media.

Threats

Threats can be thought of as the “wind in our face” and include characteristics in the environment external to Girls Inc. that could be hurdles to success. It is important to create strategies to work around these threats or to turn them into opportunities.

VOTES	THREATS
7	Non-profit pay limitations make it difficult to recruit and keep top talent.
6	Donor fatigue among all kinds of donors is widespread in the Chattanooga area.
5	Community stakeholders have shifting priorities, such as the changes underway at the local United Way organization.
3	The community in general lacks awareness of Girl’s Inc. afterschool programs and of their value.
2	There is keen competition locally for non-profit donors. The local job market with low unemployment makes it hard to compete for and keep top workers. Girls Inc. cannot always count on access to the facilities it needs for programs. Liability for the responsibilities of working with minors is serious and should there be a problem, the damage to the organization’s reputation could be considerable.
1	New programs for young people are always popping up. The lack of public transit makes access to girls difficult.

2019-2024 Goals and Strategies

Goals are broad statements of what the organization intends to accomplish over a specific time frame, in this case for up to the next five years. A goal statement should be outcome oriented, measurable and broad in scope. The goals taken together should be comprehensive of the full scope of work of the organization. The Girls Inc. board developed seven broad goals and their associated strategies, listed below. The goals are comprehensive in nature and should serve as is until the next strategic plan is undertaken, although strategies will be updated over time.

Goals answer the question of **what** the organization works on and strategies answer the question of **how** it will go about achieving its goals. Undertaking the strategies sets new wheels in motion or uncovers new information – thereby informing next steps and aiding in updating or creating new strategies. Therefore, the lists of strategies below are the starter strategies, so to speak, and others will be developed over time to accomplish the goals. Preliminary objectives are listed under their associated strategy. In the implementation plan, strategies are further broken down into objectives, tasks, assignments and completion target dates.

The first three goals are external in nature, meaning they are outward focused on the impact the organization works to have on the community and on individual girls. The remaining four are more internally focused to create the kind of organizational structure and operation that can fuel the work of the first three goals.

Goal 1. Program Growth

Improve our program model for building sustainable growth in the number of girls served and program hours delivered.

- Strategy 1.1 - Build stronger relationships with key stakeholders at current and future program sites; i.e. HCDE, school-specific leaders, YFDCs, and other youth-serving organizations.
- Strategy 1.2 - Maximize the capacity of all dedicated classrooms at a center each day during the academic school year.
- Strategy 1.3 - Maximize attendance and enrollment for each program and camp.
- Strategy 1.4 - Maximize each program coordinator's efficiencies to serve girls.
- Strategy 1.5 - Offer more (shorter) theme-based camps during summer months at more locations.
- Strategy 1.6 - Ensure all enrolled girls receive the comprehensive experience and complete 50 hours.
- Strategy 1.7 - Work with key stakeholders to assess the future need/location of a more permanent center.

Goal 2. Program Effectiveness and Evaluation

Implement a framework to measure quantifiable outcomes for girls from Girls Inc. programs, communicating our individual and community impact and enabling strategic decisions about programming.

- Strategy 2.1 - Enhance staff capacity to adequately measure and report on outputs and outcomes in a timely manner.
- Strategy 2.2 - Complete a current assessment of what and when data is currently collected for each program curriculum.
- Strategy 2.3 - Proactively identify what KPIs and/or how changes in skills, attitude and knowledge will be measured for each curriculum prior to start of programs.
- Strategy 2.4 - Work with district-wide school champions and parents to enhance access to all girls' records and identify other pertinent KPI's.
- Strategy 2.5 - Determine how to best use TRAX, WooFoo and other platforms to maximize data outcome measurements and reduce inefficiencies.

Goal 3. Communications and Awareness

Elevate our brand and increase local awareness of the importance of the Girls Inc. work and advocate on behalf of girls and young women.

Strategy 3.1 - Create and execute an integrated multi-year marketing and communications plan to incorporate digital media, public relations and other components as necessary.

Strategy 3.2 - Define the Girls Inc. role in advocacy at the local, state and national level, including advocacy training and girl-led advocacy initiatives.

Strategy 3.3 - Expand the current volunteer program by identifying gaps and opportunities to maximize volunteer experience, engaging more vested volunteers and by utilizing volunteers more intentionally as part of the Girls Inc. overall strategies.

Strategy 3.4 - Create messaging on long term evidence of the impact of Girls Inc. through tracking of girls aging out of Girls Inc. and their college, career and life success.

Goal 4. Development

Strategically grow Girls Inc. annual revenues, balancing the mix of funding sources and improving prospects for long term sustainability of the organization and its work.

Strategy 4.1 - Increase the percentage of the annual giving that is contributed by individual donors to support annual budget and long-term investment strategies.

Strategy 4.2 - Build more collaborative relationships with corporate partners that financially support Girls Inc. and engage them with volunteer, speaker and event opportunities.

Strategy 4.3 - Develop a comprehensive plan to manage current grant funding, grant cycles and their respective programming, financial and marketing requirements; to identify and pursue new grant funding opportunities as resources allow.

Strategy 4.4 - Evaluate current and new fundraising events for profitability.

Strategy 4.5 - Determine any capital funding needs that result from the needs assessment conducted as part of Goal 1, Strategy 7.

Goal 5. Operational Effectiveness

Enhance the operational effectiveness of Girls Inc. to deliver on strategic plan goals, via updated systems, processes, procedures, budget management, capital assets and expenditure management.

Strategy 5.1 - Develop and execute a risk assessment to include internal written and approved procedures for on-going risk assessment activities.

Strategy 5.2 - Complete a comprehensive capital needs assessment for major purchases, transportation infrastructure and administrative office space to support the growth targeted in the strategic plan.

Strategy 5.3 - Complete a systems assessment to include all software and interfaces.

- Strategy 5.4 - Update and document administrative and budget/finance procedures to ensure consistency and efficiency.
- Strategy 5.5 - Evaluate current program revenue model and assess opportunities to increase income from programs and camps.
- Strategy 5.6 - Manage overall operations and programs within budget.

Goal 6. Board of Directors Development

Enhance Board Members' capacity to achieve strategic plan goals and help fulfill the Girls Inc. mission in the community.

- Strategy 6.1 - Assist board members in developing their skills and effectiveness as Girls Inc. board members.
- Strategy 6.2 - Create a structured approach to board composition and recruitment: identify specific skills/qualities needed to be effective, diverse and representative of the community.
- Strategy 6.3 - Assist board committees in achieving their goals and objectives.

Goal 7. Talent Acquisition and Development

Increase staff capacity and align talent and resources that will foster a high-performing team and a culture that delivers on strategic goals and objectives.

- Strategy 7.1 - Identify the talent and resources necessary to support growth planning, fund development and operations.
- Strategy 7.2 - Ensure Girls Inc. staff compensation and benefits are competitive and help attract and retain new talent.
- Strategy 7.3 - Update human resource policies and the Employee Handbook to ensure consistency and aid in employee retention.
- Strategy 7.4 - Create and execute an integrated, multi-year professional development plan supported in the annual budget with adequate financial and human resources.
- Strategy 7.5 - Review current succession plans for key staff; identify any gaps and create plans.

Implementation Planning

Implementation planning began in late 2018 following the conclusion of the two board strategic planning sessions. This phase of planning is meant to identify specific objectives, tasks, timetables and resources needed for up to the first 18 months of the planning period. The work is arranged on spreadsheets for each strategy and is offered as an appendix to this strategic plan. The spreadsheets can be used for day-to-day accountability of all implementation steps and can be updated as work items are accomplished or changed, and new ones can be added throughout the five-year planning phase. Worksheets were completed in summer 2019.