

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2022-2027



Dear New Orleans Youth Alliance Community:

It's been five years since our organization was formed and we are so very proud of the strides we have made towards our mission to "foster youth-centered policies and to cultivate a system of high-quality, well-resourced youth development organizations." Over the past five years we have been guided by our community's directives for the organization as captured in the [New Orleans Youth Alliance Strategic Plan 2018-2021](#). We are proud to share that we have met all the priorities outlined in that plan and are grateful to the NOYA team and all of our partners and stakeholders for helping us to build an organization that is living our values and meeting the challenges faced by young people and the youth programs that serve them.

Here are a few highlights from the past five years at the New Orleans Youth Alliance. In the past five years, NOYA:

- Grew our NOLA YPOI Partner Organizations from 28 youth programs at 38 sites in 2018 to 49 youth programs at 51 sites in 2022.
- Increased training participants from 459 in 2018 to 935 participants in 2022.
- Launched our Soul Rebels Professional Development Series in 2020 on trauma-informed practice, racial equity and healing justice and have trained over 1000 participants in this curriculum.
- Modified our NOLA-Youth Program Quality Initiative in 2019 to make it more sustainable by streamlining the intervention for partners and by investing in the development of local partners and NOYA staff as advanced trainers.
- Almost [doubled the amount of training options](#) offered by NOYA to develop and enhance the skills of youth development professionals.
- Launched the Queer Inclusive Youth Engagement training, Authentic Youth Engagement Training and the Youth Organizing Training, all of which were co-created and co-facilitated with youth. Combined, NOYA has trained over 250 participants on these topics.
- Released the [NOYA racial equity assessment tool](#) in 2020 in our ongoing commitment to promote more equitable and healing-centered youth programs. To date, 34 youth programs have completed assessments, 35 have completed equity plans, and 86 equity goals combined.
- NOYA also developed and released its [Authentic Youth Engagement assessment](#) in 2020, and a Trauma-Informed Youth Programs Checklist in 2022. Both are being piloted in 2023.
- Launched the [NOYA Youth Leadership Fellowship](#) that develops youth ages 16-24 to serve in leadership and consulting roles in programs and initiatives impacting youth and families in New Orleans. Fellows have served on the boards with the New Orleans Youth Alliance, Energy Wise Alliance, EQA Schools, CYPB and others.
- NOYA Fellows launched the [Rebuilding Our Village NOLA Policy Platform](#) in 2021 focused on universal basic income for youth 14-24, the expansion of mental health services for youth in the city and the expanded use of restorative practices in schools, the juvenile justice system and other systems that impact young people. In total, the Fellows received endorsements from 31 organizations and agencies including NOLA Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Henderson Lewis, District Attorney Jason Williams, and the Mayor's Office of Youth & Families.
- In 2023, NOYA Fellows issued \$40,000 in grants to youth-led and youth-centered initiatives through its Rebuilding Our Village Youth Fund.

- In 2020, NOYA developed and released the [Youth Programs Directory and website](#) with the technical support of youth from Operation Spark.
- This same year, NOYA released the [Youth Well-Being Data Dashboard](#) as one of the data tools central to the Youth Master Plan Process.
- NOYA serves as a key partner with the Children and Youth Planning Board and the Office of the Mayor's Office of Youth and Families on the Youth Master Plan. The [Youth Master Plan](#) is a 10-year roadmap to improve child well-being throughout the city of New Orleans developed through a collaborative process involving youth, families, community and sector leaders that outlines 30 solutions within 6 Youth Master Plan (YMP) areas and centers on 5 developmental stages from birth to 24.
- Opened the [Reengagement Center](#) in the summer of 2021 focused on helping youth ages 16-24 who are disconnected from postsecondary education and work to reconnect with postsecondary education, career training and employment through postsecondary transition counseling, ongoing outreach and supportive services/barrier removal.
- Lead the Functional Zero Opportunity Youth Collaborative alongside the Children and Youth Planning Board that convenes 16 key systems partners across K-12, higher education, city government, community based organizations, youth leaders, training partners and a variety of agencies all concerned with strengthening the system of programs and services that support Opportunity Youth in New Orleans.
- Launched a Wellness Cohort to support youth development professionals in learning strategies to maintain their wellness and mitigate the deleterious impacts of youth work.
- Developed [Wellness Standards](#) for youth programs to establish structures and practices across the industry to support the well-being of youth development professionals.
- Engaged over 6000 community stakeholders through a variety of community engagement activities including panels, advocacy events, community outreach initiatives, and other related activities.
- Grew the organization from a staff of three to a staff of 10 and additional team of consultants and contractors who help us work toward our mission.

As we enter the next phase of our work, we are encouraged by the continued support and partnership we have with local youth programs, community and national partners. We are also excited about what is next for our organization. NOYA's mission, vision and values continue to evolve, leading us to expand our focus on intersectional equity with an explicit emphasis on driving the transformation of systems to better serve young people.

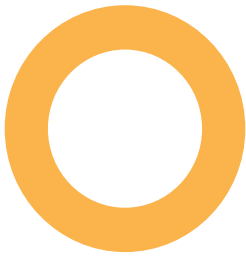
This strategic plan charts an exciting course for the New Orleans Youth Alliance that will help us continue to deliver high quality professional development, organizational development and policy and advocacy initiatives for youth programs across New Orleans. As always, thank you for your continued support.

Onward,



Rashida H. Govan, Ph.D.  
Executive Director





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## OUR HISTORY

The New Orleans Youth Alliance (NOYA) promotes youth-centered policies and cultivates a system of high-quality, well-resourced youth development organizations centered on racial equity and youth leadership. NOYA was founded in 2017 and born out of the YouthShift initiative, a multi-year effort of a group of community stakeholders including government, philanthropic leaders, and youth-serving organizations to understand the landscape, map needs, and build solutions toward improvement of youth outcomes in New Orleans. The establishment of the New Orleans Youth Alliance came as one of five recommendations from YouthShift, which involved more than 1,000 local youth development leaders, community members, and youth in more than six years of planning through surveys, focus groups, and planning meetings that established shared priorities for all children and youth in New Orleans. NOYA is an award-winning youth development intermediary focused on facilitating change across the myriad of systems that impact young people. For this work, NOYA was named the 2020 Nonprofit of the Year by New Orleans CityBusiness newspaper and received the 2021 Love Your City Youth Award.

### OUR PROCESS

Guided by our strategic planning partner, Griffin Rodgers & Associates, and fueled by the achievement of our goals from the previous strategic plan, we embarked upon this process with two primary objectives. First, we sought to develop guidelines for the continued fulfillment of our high impact mission. Second, we sought to fortify our maturation from startup to sustained growth.

From June to September of 2022, we engaged staff, local youth programs, funders, community partners and the Board of Directors to gauge our current and future impact. Our process included review of internal reports and strategy notes as well as interviews and focus groups with internal and external stakeholders. Data collected informed our considerations for the strategic direction of our programs, organizational structure, staffing needs, and financial resources.

## OUR IMPACT

### OUR REACH

Since 2018, our work to drive transformation of systems to better serve New Orleans youth includes:

- Engaging nearly 20,000 community members, community leaders, and Opportunity Youth throughout Greater New Orleans
- Training and coaching more than 3300 youth development professionals and educators
- Providing services for more than 150 youth development organizations across 90 different sites
- Conducting more than 75 assessments of program quality and structural equity
- Developing more than 30 youth leaders who are impacting youth and families in New Orleans and across the country as organizational board members or system initiative consultants



# OUR STRENGTHS

NOYA's presence and contributions are revered throughout the ecosystem. Stakeholders readily identify with our commitment to youth voice and engagement, endorse our prioritization of racial equity, and respect our unwavering operationalization of our core values in this work. NOYA's growth in programming, engagement, reach, and fundraising is a direct result of strategic initiatives to deepen the organizational impact and broaden the organizational influence. We bring added value to programs, services and partnerships by way of these strengths:



## COMMITMENT

NOYA is committed to excellence. We apply evidenced-based tools and strategies that bring value to our work, our clients and our partners.



## APPROACH

Our staff is relatable, youth-centered and community-driven. We drive success with healing-centered practices which prioritize the disruption of systemic oppression as a pathway to healing and center love and compassion in our practice.



## LEADERSHIP

NOYA's board, executive leadership and program staff are energetic and enthusiastic about this work. They model care and support for clients and each other.



## WORK CULTURE

Employees consider NOYA a great place to work. We embody our organizational values internally and externally. We support learning through trial and error, informed risk-taking, and internal definitions of success. Our employees develop competencies that rival and surpass peers with similar work histories.

**“The communities of practice and the opportunity to bring everyone together is a huge strength. What NOYA does is really push people out of their silos.”**

**— Laura Patterson,**  
Trainer and former Executive Director,  
Make Music NOLA

# OUR ENVIRONMENT

As the world emerges from the stressors of the 2019-2022 global coronavirus pandemic, economic and political uncertainty still looms for many organizations, including ours.

Political divisiveness, funding priority shifts, as well as crime and poverty narratives create ongoing threats to organizational stability and sustainability for nonprofits, in general, and youth development organizations, in particular. NOYA is also affected by job market shifts as many employable, skilled candidates are migrating away from the city and the state.

To date, NOYA has successfully addressed the needs of youth and youth development organizations in the areas of skill development, program investment, free & low-cost resources, youth leadership, supportive relationships, and burnout. Stakeholders value our contributions while simultaneously marveling and cringing at our size. NOYA is viewed as a mighty force in need of reinforcement. However, the needs are ongoing. As a result, the requests keep coming. The community wants more. More collaboration. More partnerships. More convening. More training. More engagement. More advocacy. More resources. More guides. More guidance. More fellowships.

**The 2022-2027 strategic plan will guide NOYA on the path to answer that call.**

## WHO WE ARE

As we examined our work and impact through the strategic planning process, we emphatically recommitted to the core ideals of our mission, vision, and values. We added modest revisions to the mission and values to reflect the evolution of our work and our organizational identity.



Guided by our community, and grounded in racial equity, intersectional equity and youth leadership, New Orleans Youth Alliance fosters youth-centered policies and cultivates a system of high-quality, well-resourced youth development organizations with the intent to drive the transformation of systems to better serve youth.



Youth and adults work together to ensure that all young people - especially those who are marginalized - are safe, secure, and thriving.



# VALUES

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Youth voice guides the work of the organization and leads to better outcomes for young people. We will be responsive to the immediate and long-term needs of young people. We will encourage youth-serving organizations to prioritize adults and youth partnering in the design, decision-making, implementation and evaluation phases of their work.

## EQUITY AND SOLIDARITY

We will inclusively engage and authentically honor the power of youth, families, and community-members by centering their voices and building trusting partnerships.

## CRITICAL SOCIAL ANALYSIS

We will be explicit in naming the root causes of inequity and addressing the ways in which systems and power structures contribute to the disparities experienced by young people of color and other marginalized youth.

## WELLNESS

Youth and youth serving organizations should have what they need to be, grow, and flourish. We will prioritize the holistic development of mind, body, heart and spirit for youth and youth development professionals.



# THE NEXT FIVE YEARS



## GOALS

The goals established in the 2018–2021 strategic plan represent the heart of our organization. We work hard to build a strong community of youth-serving organizations, to convene and support youth-centered policy, research and advocacy efforts, to maximize investments in youth-serving organizations and to build bridges between the youth development and other sectors. We will continue this work through 2022–2027, further guided by a new slate of goals that support our vision of youth and adults working together to ensure all young people are safe, secure and thriving.

### **Goal 1: Lead transformation by maintaining and strengthening the portfolio of programs, services and partnerships**

1. Extend impact by continuing to increase:
  - a. awareness with potential partners and participants
  - b. participation in NOYA's programs and services portfolio
  - c. youth presence and voice in communications and coalitions
2. Deepening and expanding relationships with city officials and policy influencers
3. Developing new partnerships across all strands of NOYA's work
4. Developing additional strategies to document and communicate the value and impact of our work
5. Developing pathways for volunteers and ambassadors to participate and engage with NOYA programs
6. Developing new assessments for program and service participants
7. Developing a formalized youth advisory board for the Reengagement Center

### **Goal 2: Improve organizational capacity and systems to support continued growth**

1. Develop a succession plan for senior leadership and program level managers that allows the continuity of success in times of transition
2. Hire appropriate staff to manage operational responsibilities and drive areas of growth in order to create opportunities for the executive director to focus on strategic direction and initiatives
3. Develop a mechanism that supports decision-making and prioritizing between managing current portfolio and adopting new projects
4. Develop an organizational work plan that considers the evolving staff needs relative to engagement, connectedness, teambuilding, wellness, workload, career and professional development, and hybrid working environments
5. Improve internal work systems for greater efficiency



### **Goal 3: Further develop board of directors to drive increased impact and sustainability**

1. Assess board needs. Expand board composition to fill identified gaps
2. Further support board for strategic, critical engagement including fundraising, relationship development, and barrier removal
3. Continue to identify appropriate board engagement with staff, program participants and partner organizations
4. Establish annual board goals. Assess performance biannually

### **Goal 4: Strengthen financial position through expanded funding sources and innovative revenue streams**

1. Identify funding opportunities with individual donors
2. Secure operational/programming funds from public funding sources at the local, state and national levels
3. Increase revenue from programs and services, including, but not limited to:
  - a. Implementation of YPQI Champions membership
  - b. Expanded research & evaluation consultation services
  - c. Developing professional certifications
  - d. Developing programs and services in the areas of
    - i. healing justice practice in youth development
    - ii. authentic youth engagement



**“NOYA does a good job living their values of youth leadership. They encourage all of the partner organizations to find ways to involve youth in leadership and decision-making. And they model that very well.”**

**-- David Shepard, Director of Policy for YouthForce NOLA.**



# PRIORITIES

1. Establish NOYA as a national model for youth development intermediaries, particularly in the areas of equity, healing justice, trauma-informed practice, and authentic youth engagement.
2. Develop continuation plan for Re-Engagement Center.
3. Full development of NOYA's policy unit including appropriate staffing and regular policy brief development and dissemination.
4. Full development of a research & evaluation unit to support quality improvement for NOYA's internal functional areas and the system of youth development organizations impacted by NOYA's work.
5. Earmark resources for emergency and basic needs assistance for Opportunity Youth and youth development professionals.
6. Develop targeted external communications to shift the narrative about New Orleans youth.

# PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

We will continue our mission of fostering youth-centered policies and cultivating a system of high-quality, well-resourced youth development organizations through our suite of programmatic and service offerings. We established priorities in specific areas to guide our responsiveness to immediate and anticipated needs of our youth and the organizations that serve them.

## **Convening and Networking**

We will continue creating forums for peer networking and professional exchange among youth, practitioners, policymakers, funders and other stakeholders through communities of practice and affinity groups.

## **Resource Development and Dissemination**

We will continue helping to shape a vision and framework that defines the field through assessment tools, training curriculum, resource guides and other materials. We will work to make these resources broadly available including brokering access to funding, technical assistance, training and other resources.



## Standard Identification and Setting

We will continue working with youth and youth organizations to identify best practices, relevant staff competencies, and resulting outcomes for youth.

## Organizational Effectiveness

We will continue locating and creating training programs, developing training consortia, providing training directly, and referring organizations to other training sources. We will also provide coaching and advising on topics such as board development, financial and facilities management, and information technology.

## Advocacy and Representation

We will continue representing the contributions and needs of youth and youth development organizations to government, private funders, and others on issues including funding, policy and legislation.

## Internal Assessments of Existing Programs

We will continue developing assessment guides, monitoring processes, participating in program documentation, and providing evaluation oversight and management.

## Promotion

We will continue to gather information about existing youth development organizations and share that information with youth and families.

## Maturing the Profession

We will continue establishing standards and certifications, providing professional development, and publishing research for youth workers.

## Incubation

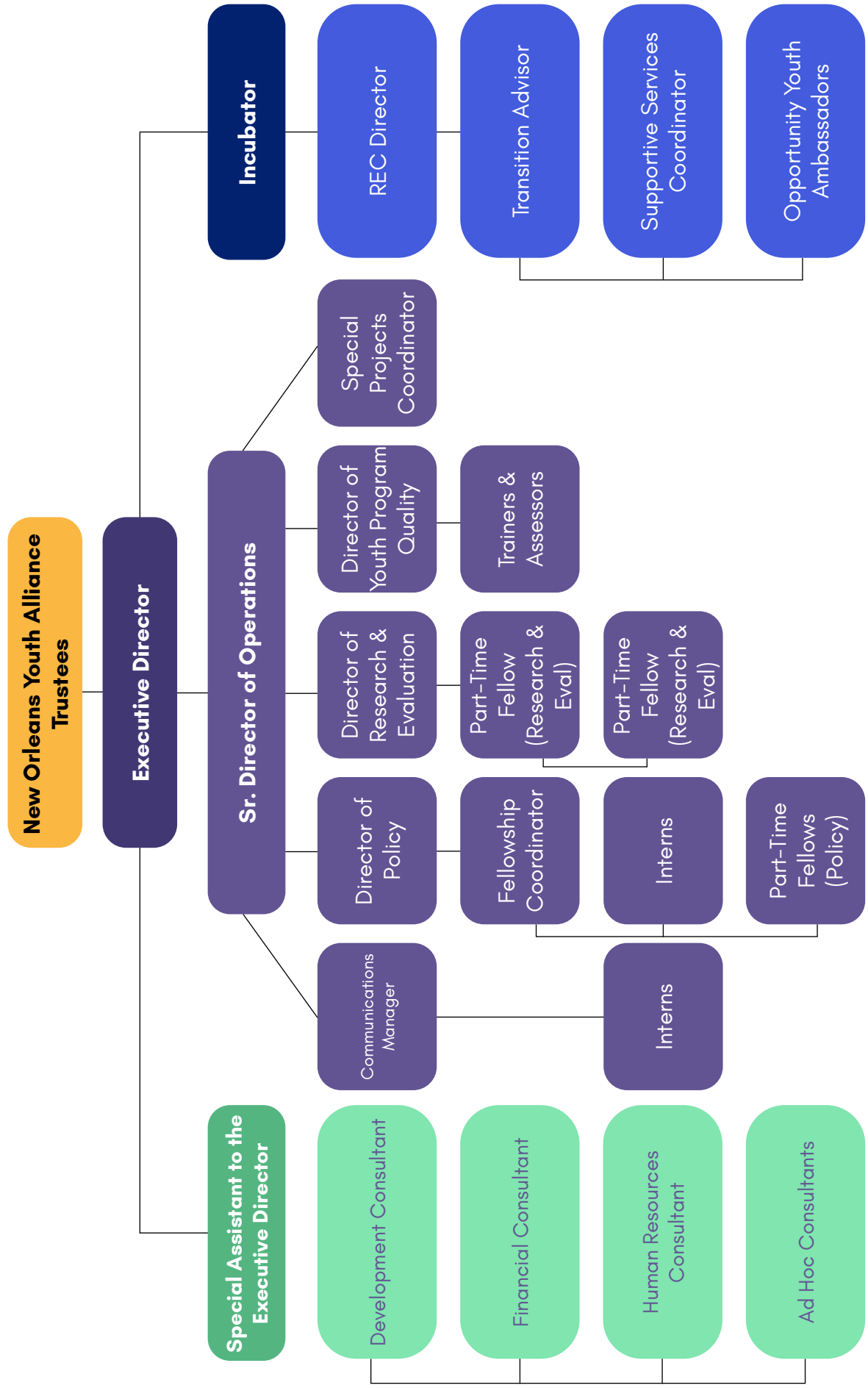
When appropriate, we will serve as an incubator for initiatives that support a system of high-quality, well-resourced youth development organizations.

“NOYA constantly roots equity in what they do and how they show up for young people, and subsequently, passes this value and how to practice it to the organizations they work with. They have made this work digestible and approachable.”

— Ashley Shabankareh,  
Director of Operations and  
Programs, Trombone Shorty  
Foundation.

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Expanding NOYA's organizational capacity requires additional staff positions. This proposed organizational structure supports the four goals and six priorities of the 2022-2027 strategic plan.





# WE ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR FUNDERS WHO MAKE THIS WORK POSSIBLE



THE ANNIE E. CASEY  
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THE ASPEN INSTITUTE  
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