



Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center (INRC) 2021-2023 Strategic Plan: *Executive Summary*

A History Steeped in Community

Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center's (INRC) history is rooted in the advocacy of neighborhood leadership, and the citywide collaborative efforts of the public, private and not-for-profit sector. In 1991, the United Way of Central Indiana (UWCI) and Lilly Endowment, Inc. convened a group to discuss the idea of a training center to build leadership capacity in neighborhoods. After reviewing several proposals over a two year period, in November 1993 INRC held its first official meeting of the Board of Directors. In January 1994, Indianapolis Mayor Steve Goldsmith issued a press release announcing the formation of INRC to provide training and technical assistance to neighborhood-based organizations. INRC then established its headquarters and the rest is history. In 2019, INRC celebrated its 25th Anniversary and throughout this time, the organization has upheld its core focus on local neighborhoods through providing programs like Public Allies, Indianapolis Community Building Institute, Neighbor Power Indy, Youth Community Building Institute, and Creative Placemaking. In large part, these programs have been successful at engaging with community members and supporting local neighborhoods but, like the rest of the world, INRC was turned on its head during its 26th year of operations in 2020.

An Unprecedented Year

No one can deny that 2020 was a tumultuous year that affected every corner of our society. The fallout from COVID-19, Black Lives Matter protests, and a contentious presidential election left many organizations evaluating what their role is in responding to these crises and how to adjust to changing community needs. Locally, INRC was no exception. Throughout 2020, INRC pivoted by spearheading a passionate and necessary revitalization of its programs to center around antiracism and equity. Although this work is a priority and value to everyone on the team, the additional work required has highlighted continuing capacity issues within INRC. In addition to its critical antiracism work, INRC has also been exploring revenue-generating opportunities to support long-term sustainability for the organization. These efforts coupled with simmering questions around the true value of the organization's membership structure have left INRC unclear about its mission and disconnected from its impact. This lack of clarity at a high-level is filtering down and generating confusion about the effectiveness of INRC's operations including staffing structure, board roles, and fundraising practices.

Intentionally Refocusing for 2021 and Beyond

Recognizing the critical organizational elements that need to be resolved, INRC's staff and Board of Directors came together in late 2020 to intentionally refocus the organization through the development of INRC's 2021-2023 Strategic Plan. The process that the board and staff went through when developing their next strategic plan included:

- **Internal Review**

With the help of a volunteer consultant, INRC gathered and reviewed several existing pieces of research to guide decision-making. Internal documents utilized included:

- INRC's Annual Membership Survey
- INRC's Annual Staff survey
- Annual Budget
- INRC Policies, Procedures, & By-Laws
- Programmatic Documents

In addition to these internal documents, a snapshot of comparative research was done on Prosperity Indiana's membership structure since INRC's membership structure is a particular focus. Finally, with the existing progress INRC's Antiracism Taskforce had made throughout 2020, their efforts were integrated throughout INRC's Strategic Plan to ensure a holistic focus on antiracism efforts. Using these pieces of information, an "INRC Themes Overview" document was developed for the board and staff to be referenced during the two upcoming retreats.

- **Visioning Retreat**

INRC board and staff came together in November 2020 during a three-hour Visioning Retreat where key questions and topics were discussed to help INRC come to decisions about reshaping INRC's programs to be most impactful, moving forward with INRC's membership structure, and developing long-term sustainability for the organization. To help organize the group's discussion, INRC has opted to utilize a four-quadrant framework that will help support a holistic view of the organization. The four quadrants include:

- **Programs & Impact**
- **Leadership & Culture**
- **Marketing & Culture**
- **Finance & Development**

- **Action Planning Retreat**

INRC's board and staff came back together in December 2020 for a three-hour Action Planning Retreat to review a goal and strategy outline that resulted from the earlier Visioning Retreat. After reviewing the overall plan framework, INRC board and staff broke out into groups to begin drafting quarterly action plans for each strategy.

- **Strategic Plan Adoption**

After the retreats, INRC board, staff, and volunteers reviewed and finalized INRC's Strategic Plan Framework and Action Plans together. Additionally, an interactive dashboard was developed using feedback from staff and board members.

Pivoting for a Strong Future

Despite its existing setbacks, INRC has many opportunities for creating a strong future. Based on conversations with INRC's board and staff throughout the process outlined above, several themes critical for INRC maneuvering through these challenges successfully rose to the surface, these include:

- **Supporting INRC Staff**

INRC's biggest asset is its staff and the passion that each team member brings to INRC and its impact. This level of dedication will be necessary for INRC to transition successfully through the multiple changes it is facing in the upcoming years. It will be further necessary for INRC's board of directors to provide ample support, transparency, and collaboration for staff members when assessing options for the future and making decisions, particularly as it relates to organizational restructuring and ensuring team members see a development paths within the organization.

- **Prioritizing Long-Term Sustainability**

Of the utmost importance for INRC's future is prioritizing revenue-generating activities into INRC's programming and operations. Through discussions with staff and board, there is ample opportunity that exists within programming that could assist INRC with building much-needed savings. In addition to exploring revenue-generation practices for events like Neighbor Power or other specialized trainings, the INRC team has also identified strengthening its grant strategy as a solution for garnering more funds.

- **Intentional Transition Time**

When zooming into the details of INRC's 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, Action Plans will reveal that INRC intends to utilize the first year of its strategic plan to make key decisions around the organization's programming, operations, and staffing. Along with the process of making these decisions, the first year will also focus on other transition-related tasks and laying the groundwork for strong launches, pilots, and implementation in 2022.

- **Aligning Needs with Strengths**

INRC's board and staff have identified that a priority over the next year is to assess INRC's current programming to ensure efforts are being focused on the most impactful and that the organization is truly leveraging its strengths to make the deepest impact in its service area.

In support of those themes, the goal and strategy framework below were intentionally created to guide INRC successfully through organizational changes during its 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, with the following 2021 objectives:

Goal 1: INRC is operating holistic, neighborhood-based programs that reflect internal values, leverage the organization's strengths, and yield effective outcomes.

Strategy 1.A: Evaluate INRC's current programs and prioritize based on value to stakeholders and clear connection to INRC's outcomes.

Strategy 1.B: Assess the benefits of INRC's membership-based structure to determine if it continues past 2021.

Goal 2: INRC's internal operations are tied directly to organizational impact and intentionally fosters equity and accountability.

Strategy 2.A: Orient the INRC Board of Directors' structure to meet organizational needs, increase accountability, and maximize impact.

Strategy 2.B: Implement strengths-based realignment, accountability processes, and cross-functional communication to increase internal infrastructure and capacity for organizational needs.

Goal 3: INRC has a diverse funding model with clear paths for sustainability and collaborative fiscal management tied to organizational impact.

Strategy 3.A: Pursue development opportunities shaped around INRC's most impactful programs.

Strategy 3.B: Establish transparent & collaborative fiscal policies, processes, & positions that connect directly to INRC's impact & support shared decision-making.

Goal 4: INRC is known as the resource for improving the effectiveness of neighborhood leadership and their organizations.

Strategy 4.A: Create a holistic, centralized marketing plan for 2021, inclusive of establishing internal infrastructure for marketing, based on core programming and membership direction.