



CLIENT SNAPSHOT

FAIR CHANCE

every child deserves a fair chance to succeed
www.fairchancedc.org

Background

Fair Chance is an intermediary organization that leverages the power of community-based organizations to transform lives. Each year they select a cohort of promising, youth-serving nonprofits working in the most underserved neighborhoods of DC and provide up to two years of free comprehensive expertise in organizational management. Since 2002, Fair Chance has supported more than 90 nonprofits serving a collective 80,000 children and youth tackling critical issues such as school readiness, healthy life choices, literacy and job skills. After a Fair Chance partnership, nonprofits report an increase of 50 percent in both revenue raised and number of children served.

After setting strategic growth goals, the board and staff determined that in order to truly live up to its name, Fair Chance needed to do more than improve the performance and sustainability of youth-serving nonprofits. Ultimately, they committed to increasing life-changing results for children and youth living in poverty. To achieve this, they needed to change the way they talked about themselves, the outcomes they would be measuring and focus their work more intentionally on helping nonprofits measure impact.

In summer 2015, Fair Chance contracted the Forum for Youth Investment to facilitate this critical outcomes discussion.

“The Forum’s **expertise** and **forward way of thinking** helped provide us with a compelling approach toward our new mission that will help secure the future for our organization.”

GRETCHEN VAN DER VEER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The Ask

The Forum was approached because of our track record in helping leaders arrive at focused goals and strategies that don’t oversimplify the realities of what is needed to address complex challenges such as lifting children out of poverty.

Using what we call a “Big Picture Approach,” our consultants worked with the executive director to design a series of progressive meetings with the board program task force/strategy committee and the management team, as well as a group of their nonprofit alumni partners.

We learned about the end goals and identified inconsistencies in current plans. We learned about the local context and brought in recommendations on how to align goals without abandoning core principles. We gauged organizational capacity and did only the things that staff couldn’t do. We took responsibility for documenting discussions and recommendations to keep meetings efficient and ensure transparency as we moved between groups.

The Results

Fair Chance staff and board committee members are ready to present to the full board in October. They have:

- revised the organization’s vision, mission, strategies and outcomes statements to reflect the new commitment to outcomes.
- embraced a broad evidence based framework for poverty alleviation that allows them to present a powerful pallet of outcomes to potential investors that also resonate with their partners and staff.
- introduced new vocabulary and heuristics that will help everyone understand how Fair Chance will enforce the new expectation that partners will achieve measurable outcomes while being true to their mission of serving community-based nonprofits.
- documented how current partners and alumni “map” into the proposed outcomes framework to demonstrate its utility.
- asked the Forum consultants to come back for a few more hours to work with their capacity building team to help them finalize their plans for implementing the new programmatic supports.