



Strategic Plan Summary

July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2023



Mission



Facilitate equitable growth in academics, social emotional skills, and self-esteem through mutually beneficial mentoring relationships. We believe in cultivating a brave space that amplifies the voices of young agents of change in a diverse and inclusive community.

Vision



Be a leading nonprofit for fostering belonging alongside young people, families, and community.

Strategic Plan: 2021-2023



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Overview



Having only recently celebrated the end of my first year as Executive Director at Affinity Mentoring, I am thrilled and honored to present to you, alongside our board of directors and my teammates, a well-researched, evidence-based, highly innovative, and community driven strategic plan.

Stepping into this role during lock down from the pandemic and spending the entire first year almost completely virtual, it took great intentionality to remember to plan for more than the next round of payroll or the next week of programming. However, we continued to be reminded that one day this pandemic life would end, and organizations and communities that had not been planning for it would suffer.

Initially we felt a sense of bewilderment at our organizational space of thriving rather than surviving after such a difficult year, but after taking a look around it is not so surprising after all.

- ▶ Our talented team, against all odds, accomplished so much this year through sheer determination, passion for students, and the willpower to be able to continue to provide social-emotional support to students.
- ▶ The creativity and growth that the Board of Directors have shown and the expertise that they share with us instills a sense of confidence, support, and strength.
- ▶ We are surrounded and uplifted by an outstanding community that provides support, feedback, ideas, and encouragement.
- ▶ And most of all, the students and families that we are privileged to work alongside have overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles this year.

My gratitude and honor at being able to be a part of this process, this organization, and this Affinity Mentoring community are the only feelings that can compare with the excitement and energy that I feel looking forward through the lens of this strategic plan and seeing where we are headed. We hope as you read this you are as excited about the future as we are and can find a place where you feel you fit; you are invited to join us in the years to come.

We thank you for your support, invite your ideas, suggestions, and accountability, and we look forward to supporting students, families, and mentor matches thriving now and in the future.

Sincerely,

Cassandra Kiger, Executive Director
ckiger@affinitymentoring.org | 616.209.8435

Timeline of Strategic Planning Process

FEB 2019: Affinity nearly doubles the previous years' year-end giving campaign.

OCT 2019: Nonprofit Technical Assistance Grant is awarded to contract with Kennari Consulting to create advancement and capacity building plans.

MAY 2020: BOD hires new Executive Director, Cassandra Kiger.

JUL 2020: BOD creates Finance, Governance, and Executive Committees.

SEP 2020: Staff and BOD begin strategic planning process.

OCT 2020: Created new fundraising event Cuentos y Comida, Affinity's first bilingual fundraising event.

JAN 2021: Staff co-create Affinity's new mission and vision to more accurately reflect the organization's work, with BOD approval.

FEB 2021: For the third year in a row, Affinity exceeds increased year-end giving goals.

JUN 2021: Staff create Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Events, and Donor Development Committees.

2019

APR 2019: The annual gala is revamped to be more mission-focused and include more stories of impact, students, and mentors. Event is renamed, Better Together Benefit Dinner.

OCT 2019: Board of Directors (BOD) undergoes a comprehensive assessment and creates an actionable plan.

2020

JUN 2020: Successful completion of 2017-2019 strategic plan.

AUG 2020: Monthly recurring giving continues to increase annually and maintains high donor retention rate.

OCT 2020: GLPS requests middle school mentoring program.

2021

JAN 2021: Community Listening Project (CLP) is launched in English and Spanish. Gathered data informs strategic planning.

JUN 2021: Development team creates comprehensive Advancement Plan to support Affinity's growth and expansion. BOD reviews in detail the proposed strategic plan and accompanying budgets and approves them with a full confidence vote.

2022

Community

Give space and priority for the community to determine and support the future of Affinity Mentoring.



1. Identifying gaps in corporate/community partnerships with specific communities and intentionally creating space, such as:

- ▶ Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC),
- ▶ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA), and
- ▶ Small Businesses

2. Create a regular cycle of public feedback on our work, and give power to the community to speak into where we will direct our resources and which projects we will prioritize.

- ▶ Plan, build, and implement an advisory committee with parents and mentees
- ▶ Disseminate Community Listening Survey annually (in English and Spanish)
- ▶ Connect with Affinity Mentoring alumni
- ▶ Increase partners and network within Wyoming and surrounding area
- ▶ Grow connections with local higher education institutions

3. Add key community members to board of directors and committees to better represent our service areas in our future growth, such as:

- ▶ BIPOC business owners,
- ▶ Mentors and/or school alumni, and
- ▶ Education leaders



“I am now in a good place to give back to my community and thus when I heard of Affinity Mentoring I knew that through this organization I could finally support someone through mentorship just as I once was.”

Juan Mascorro-Guerrero
SWCC Mentor



Equity

Make equity the foundation of every aspect of work and decision-making at Affinity Mentoring.



1. Develop public support plan and follow up actions for groups of people in our service areas who are often dismissed or unsafe in our community (IE immigrant, LGBTQIA, and Black communities).

- ▶ Board training and development design, plan, and implementation
- ▶ Include community partners in equity focus and training
- ▶ LGBTQIA public support plan and follow up actions

2. Build Internal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) staff-led committee.

- ▶ Review program accessibility for great inclusion of students (ie. special education, speech concerns, etc.)
- ▶ Provide all materials at minimum bilingually (English/Spanish)
- ▶ Improve equity standards for wages for all positions, with policies for regular review

3. Create communications campaigns for:

- ▶ Specific needs for Middle School mentees
- ▶ Students' social emotional needs after COVID

4. Connecting mentoring to the future, diverse workforce.

- ▶ Director analysis of DEI training needs for mentors and implementation of training plans



“La ayuda con su lectura y segunda lengua, ya que inglés no es mi primer lengua, no me siento capacitada para ayudarles apropiadamente. Creo que ellos han improvisado demasiado bien con la ayuda de sus mentores.”

Parent of student mentee

[The help with reading and their second language, because English is not my first language, I don't feel that I can appropriately help. I think that they have really improved a lot with their mentors.]



Financial Sustainability

Procure varied and consistent income to ensure consistency and follow through in all programming.



1. Build Major Donor/Donor Retention Committee

- ▶ Focus on donor retention and donor stewardship
- ▶ Continuing to diversify donor base
- ▶ Expand monthly giving program

2. Build Events Committee to support and increase revenue at annual fundraising events.

- ▶ Continue to diversify donor base
- ▶ Repeat and expand Cuentos y Comida community-based fundraising event

3. Create and utilize yearly Advancement Plan

- ▶ Strategically incorporate board members' skills, talents and connection for growth and sustainability
- ▶ Provide opportunities for smaller businesses to become community partners

4. Explore income-generating revenue streams

- ▶ Apply to speak at conferences and lead workshops
- ▶ Begin process for consultation work



"I admire the way all of you at Affinity have not only been able to pivot, but also be successful as a nonprofit during this difficult time. It is more important now than ever that nonprofits doing the work that you do continue. With school being so different this year for students, we can never fully know the impact that having a constant caring adult will have on their future."

Anonymous Donor



Growth

Increase programming capacity based on school relationships and community support.



1. Build and Launch Godfrey Lee Middle School Mentoring Program

- ▶ Pilot Middle School Mentoring Steering Committee and launch a communications campaign highlighting specific needs of Middle School mentees and the Social Emotional need after COVID-19.
- ▶ Launch GLPS Middle School Mentoring Site.

2. Godfrey Lee Elementary School Mentoring Program

- ▶ Grow mentoring from the ECC site into the GLPS Elementary School.



“Education is the key to self reliance and discovery, and the staff at Lee Middle School believe that each student deserves an education that is challenging, supportive and sensitive to the individual needs of each student. Supporting Affinity Mentoring allows Lee Middle School to provide a research based program that will create relationships and enhance the outcomes for a student population that is Hispanic, low income and 90% of students receive free or reduced lunches.”

Jim Jensen

Godfrey-Lee Middle School Principal



It takes **all** of us.



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