Real Change 2019-2021 Strategic Plan
with a focus on projects for 2019

Our Mission
Real Change exists to provide opportunity and a voice for low-income and homeless people while taking action for economic, social and racial justice.

Our Vision
We envision a just, caring and inclusive community, where people are no longer marginalized by racism and classism and have the means to live with dignity.

Our Values
- **Courage**: Telling the truth and taking risks
- **Community**: Fostering healthy relationships across differences
- **Creativity**: Pushing beyond the obvious to promote change
- **Compassion**: Treating everyone with respect and accepting them as they are
- **Integrity**: Doing what we say and taking responsibility for our mistakes
2019-2021 Strategic Plan Initiatives and Goals

Strategic North Star for 2019-2021

Our work is to center and amplify the voices of those most affected by economic, social, and racial injustice. Real Change’s power to transform lives is grounded in building human connection between vendors and readers, where each of our vendors is a hub of caring community.

RC will focus over the next 3 years on four priority initiatives that support the Real Change mission and are aligned with our strengths and Strategic North Star.

Focus on Vendor Success

- Increase the stability of our vendors through resource referral and housing connections.
- Create new opportunities for vendor success through vendor-identified training and employment.
- Grow our vendor community with new strategies for recruitment and organizational involvement.

Build Caring and Engaged Community

- Make it easy and attractive for readers to find and support our vendors.
- Develop and employ new communication strategies that expand readership and support.
- Attract new partnerships that broaden our definition of community.

Lead with Quality Journalism

- Seek new project-based funding and marketing opportunities to increase newsroom resources and readership.
- Innovate in telling vendor stories through new strategies and mediums.
- Lead from strength to support the North American street paper movement.

Tend to the Foundation

- Provide tools, training, and opportunity for vendor voices to effectively impact public policy.
- Promote staff retention and increase opportunities for professional growth.
- Build equity from the inside out through Racial Equity Adaptive Leadership (REAL) process.
- Diversify income and strengthen infrastructure to secure long-term financial stability.
FY2019 Priority Strategic Plan Objectives and Projects

Staff workgroups will meet January to March 2019 to develop detailed workplans, budget, and SMART goals for each project. Progress will be assessed quarterly. Deadline for workgroup task completion is EOB March 11.

Focus on Vendor Success

Objective 1: Increase Stability of Vendors through resource referral and housing connections.

Foster relationships between Real Change and housing services to build toward increased options for vendor housing.

- Explore possibilities for projects with Mercy Housing, the Block Project, and LIHI.

Create the caring capacity to better meet basic vendor needs through resource solicitation, partnerships with other agencies, and vendor education. Examples of possible activities include:

- Hold twice monthly information sessions to inform vendors of available resources.
- Contact the mobile dental van to see if they’d be willing/able to stop by the Real Change office.
- Reach out to Got Green about bringing fresh bucks to Real Change and doing a quick class on ways to eat healthily when living outside or in shelter.
- Reach out to local cosmetology schools to see about students coming in to give haircuts.

Objective 2: Create New Opportunities for Vendor Success through Vendor-Identified Training and Employment.

Develop a series of life skills classes that offer opportunity for vendors to build stability and resilience.

- Examples of possible classes include budgeting, stress-reduction, effective communication skills, and using social media to build customer relationships.

Objective 3: Grow Vendor Community with new strategies for recruitment and organizational involvement.

Hold one external vendor orientation each month in partnership with aligned organizations.

- Possible spaces for community outreach include Goodwill, supportive housing facilities, libraries, Millionair Club, and foodbanks.

Building a Caring and Engaged Community

Objective 1: Make it easy and attractive for readers to find and support our vendors.

Develop store relationships and co-marketing opportunities that build visibility for our vendors and recognition for supporting businesses. Examples of possible activities include:

- Identify key spots with selling potential: brainstorm locations in each neighborhood and feature spots in post alley. Highlight South Seattle neighborhoods
- Businesses to display “Support our vendor” signs in window
- Store Appreciation Week: Weeklong event highlighting the stores that support our vendors
- Run monthly ad or vendor profile in paper featuring a store and the vendor that sells there
Increase Venmo sales through marketing, vendor education, and increased visibility of our electronic payment option. Examples of possible activities include:

- Regular Venmo training schedule that features vendors success through Venmo.
- Work with Guenther Creative to make a Venmo video and other marketing peripherals.
- Venmo Week: weeklong emphasis on Venmo on social media, with vendor handouts, in the paper, etc.
- Venmo secret shopper: Regular Board or Volunteer position.

**Lead with Quality Journalism**

Note: Work on this Initiative is postponed until the new editor joins the staff in February.

**Objective 1: Seek new project-based funding and marketing opportunities to increase newsroom resources and readership.**

Explore and secure new foundation funding and other new forms of support to increase Real Change capacity for timely, impact-driven journalism.

Increase online and social media impact of our journalism by investing in tools that allow Real Change to modernize our website and be more of a resource for breaking news.

**Objective 2: Innovate in telling vendor stories through new strategies and mediums.**

Elevate vendor and other homeless voices through Real Change sponsored events and other mediums that reflect vendor lived experience.

**Objective 3: Lead from strength to support the North American Street Paper movement.**

Provide Real Change 501c3 fiscal sponsorship to the North American Bureau of the International Network of Street Papers. Showcase strengths of Real Change as a reader-supported, vendor-centric, activist newspaper.

**Tend to the Foundation**

**Objective 1: Provide Tools, Training and Opportunity for Vendor Voices to Effectively Impact Public Policy.**

Strengthen vendor involvement in Homeless Speaker’s Bureau, Editorial Committee, Vendor Organizing Committee, Vendor Advisory Board, and monthly vendor meetings through leadership development, incentives, community building, and promoting participation through multiple means that meet vendors where they’re at. Examples of possible activities include:

- Create the consistent means for vendors to learn of and engage in a range of advocacy opportunities.
- Highlight advocacy engagement more in new vendor orientation.
- Make better use of advocacy/volunteer/editorial wall displays to engage new and current vendors.
Create Vendor “Lived Experience Snapshots” to help engage vendors in advocacy in ways that relate to their personal histories and situations. Examples of possible activities include:

- Create vendor profiles detailing what programs and experiences they have had (e.g. section 8 housing and misdemeanor on record).
- Conduct a confidentiality analysis and explore for vendor concerns and feedback.
- Development of NationBuilder database to hold and access information.

**Objective 2: Promote Staff Retention and Increase Opportunities for Professional Growth.**

Establish a schedule of staff trainings to both enhance staff safety and wellness and encourage professional growth. Examples of possible activities include:

- Identify and schedule essential trainings, such as de-escalation and suicide prevention, that will must repeat on a regular basis.
- Explore available training resources and align with staff priorities.
- Budget for regular training based on identified topics.

Perform benefit and compensation review to identify possible areas for improvement. Examples of possible activities include:

- Explore feasibility of health benefits for part time employees.
- Modification of professional development funds to be more flexible.
- Organizational review of pay structure and philosophy.

**Objective 3: Build Equity from the inside out through the REAL (Racial Equity Adaptive Leadership) Process.**

Participants will apply the principles and techniques of Adaptive Leadership through a racial equity lens, a practical framework for leading complex change, particularly during times of uncertainty or when there are no easy answers. Activities will include:

- Leadership development for Directors with use of analytical tools such as EQ Insight assessment and 360-degree Leadership Circle evaluation.
- 2 day staff retreat and quarterly all staff coaching to examine race, power, white privilege, and institutional racism and deepen understanding and practices around adaptive leadership for racial equity.
- Monthly Leadership Team and Executive Coaching.

**Objective 4: Diversify income and strengthen infrastructure to secure long-term stability**

- Increase grant funding and sponsorship income.
- Evaluate and upgrade technology security and effectiveness for staff and vendors.
Final FY2019 Plan will be completed by March 18, 2019

Strategic Plan staff process history:

- In October 2018, there was a two-day staff/board strategic planning retreat.
- In November 2018, the Real Change Board approved initiatives and objectives for a Three Year Real Change Strategic Plan.
- Staff selected objectives that were a priority to move forward in FY2019, and staff-led work groups were formed in December to rough out project ideas under each of the priority objectives.
- At the January Staff meeting, these work groups presented project ideas and staff “voted with dots” on their top choices to move forward.
- Guided by these preferences, the Leadership Team met on January 14 to select the projects that will be the focus of our work in 2019.

Next steps for staff:

- Workgroup participants will slightly modify to ensure appropriate staff representation. A common template to capture task development, resources, timeline, and leadership assignment will be sent to workgroup leaders by January 23.
- Research will be conducted prior to February 14 to put dollar amounts to plan items that require budget.
- Workgroups will meet as needed to finalize project tasks by EOB March 11.
- Department heads will build strategic plan tasks into their staff workplans.