



Q STRATEGIES

STRATEGIC PLAN
2023-2025

CHATTANOOGA FESTIVAL OF
BLACK ARTS & IDEAS

PREPARED FOR
CHATTANOOGA FESTIVAL OF
BLACK ARTS AND IDEAS

Table of Contents

<i>Strategic Planning: Executive Summary</i>	3
<i>Messaging:.....</i>	4
<i>Our organizational goals:.....</i>	6
<i>Collaboration:</i>	8
Thinking long-term, the Board should continue to consider:.....	9
<i>Alternatives:.....</i>	11
Alternative 1:	11
Alternative 2:	12
<i>Research overview:</i>	13
Some important comments we heard during our interviews.	14
<i>The Board’s Development Plan & Fundraising Efforts:.....</i>	15
<i>Board member recruitment and community awareness:.....</i>	16
<i>Juneteenth destination events:</i>	16



Q STRATEGIES Strategic Planning: Executive Summary

The Chattanooga Festival of Black Arts & Ideas launched Chattanooga's first Juneteenth celebration in 2018 before it was an official holiday. Though the event was small, it was successful and continued to grow and gain recognition. After Juneteenth was declared a federal holiday in 2021, the group saw an influx of interest in the event, especially from potential sponsors, corporations, and foundations.

With a small but mighty team of volunteers, the group has grown its events and expanded its reach. Despite COVID setbacks for events in general, the group continued to grow, and in 2022 held 20 events in June of 2022.

The group has set a high standard of professionalism and is respected by musicians, artists, and the nonprofit community for everything from staging and sound equipment to quality of performances and their incredible diversity of events.

With growth, comes the need to set a strategic plan, apply consistent goals to the organization, and consider the best path to grow, hire staff, and ensure Juneteenth is a community-wide celebration in Chattanooga for decades to come.

The research, interviews, and board discussion created clarity around several goals including the need for:

- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Board governance
- Donor development
- Fewer events in June, but with higher visibility and attendance
- Transitioning sub-Festivals to other times of year

The most consistent goal and measure of success we heard from both the Board and in our interviews was the desire for a high-profile celebration that draws crowds from surrounding states. A must-attend Juneteenth festival for locals and visitors alike!

What does success look like for the organization?

- Streamlined operations
- Active and consistent leadership from the Board, with clearly designated roles and responsibilities
- Increased name awareness and brand recognition (within target markets) across the community
- Steady fundraising activities
- Festivals outside of Juneteenth
- Hiring of a part-time Executive Director or an administrative leader
- Engagement from local Black youth in Juneteenth and other arts celebrations
- People traveling from surrounding counties and states to attend the CFBA&I Juneteenth Celebration

Target markets:

- People who are already interested/active in the Black arts community
- Surrounding counties across the Tennessee Valley without direct access to diverse arts events
- The Black community, especially young people who are often unaware of the rich talents offered by Black artists
- Those interested in community events
- Anyone looking for diverse cultural experiences

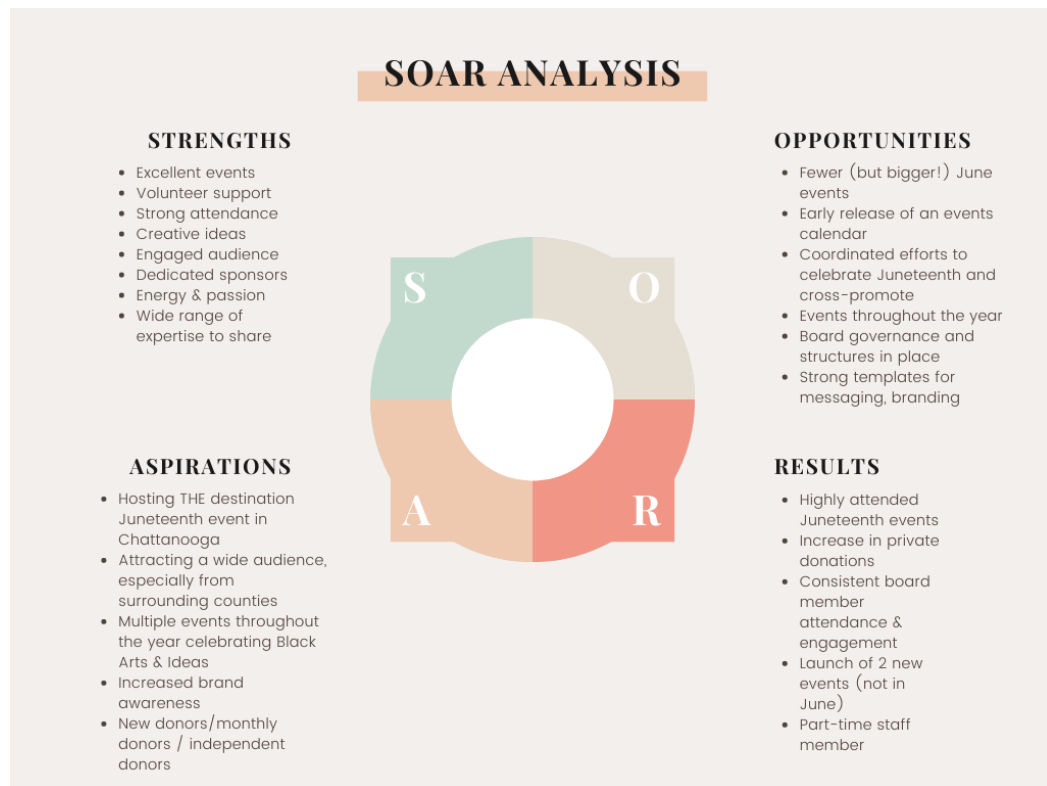
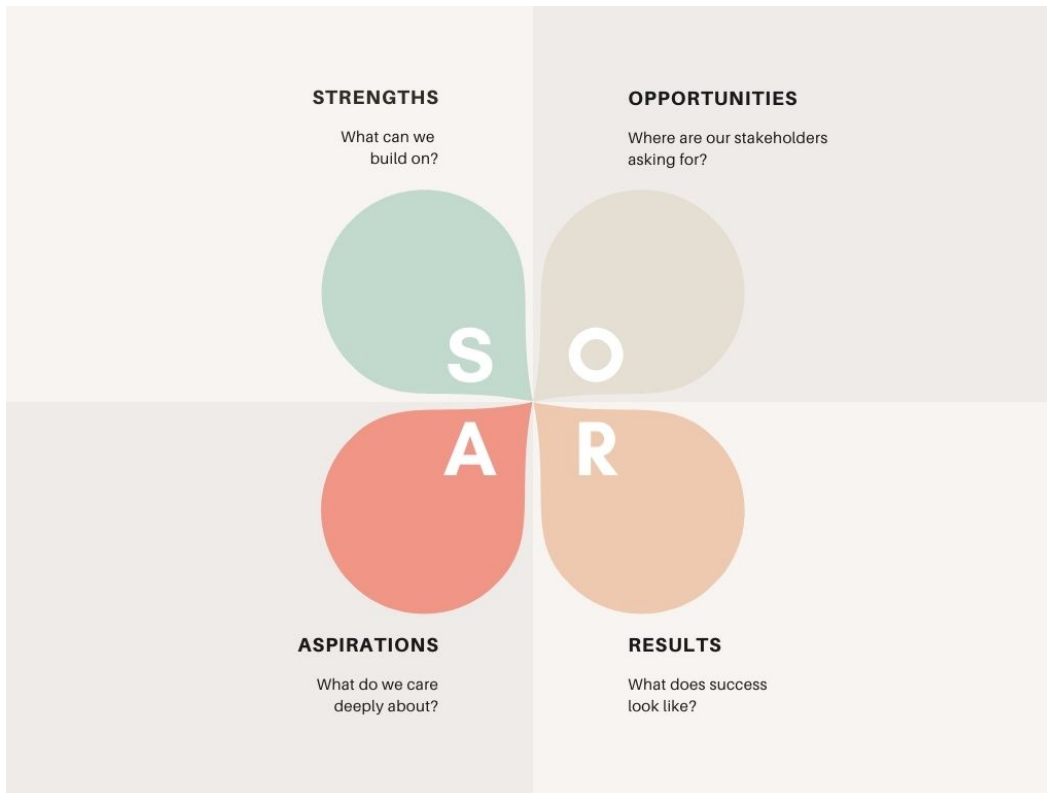
Messaging:

CFBA&I aims to lead – especially among our own community. Our events showcase the incredible variety and talent among local Black artists, authors, musicians, and community leaders.

Working together, we partner with other community organizations to highlight and promote all the events happening to celebrate Juneteenth in our community.

By engaging youth, we offer education and transformation – to showcase what is now, and what can be in the future.

We believe Juneteenth is unique in its ability to draw every community together to celebrate Black arts and artists.



Our organizational goals:

Transition the board's focus to oversight, governance, and setting the direction for CNAP and the CFBA&I, by January 2024.

- Establish an active Governance committee with conflicts of interest policies, board member expectations, understanding of the budget, and governance requirements (recruit additional expertise in this space as needed)
- Using the Community Foundation's Governance checklist, evaluate the items missing and prioritize goals
- Build out clear roles and responsibilities for board members, volunteers, and CEO
- Set every other month or quarterly meetings alongside member rotation and roles
- On months when there is not a board meeting, committees will meet – especially committees outside of just events – to focus on governance, fundraising, and marketing
- Create shared documents, templates, branding guidelines, and event calendars to lay a foundation for growth

Launch a new festival (outside of June) by January 2023. (This will open opportunities for capacity-building grants with ArtsBuild and the Community Foundation)

- Publicize new dates for one of the festivals already tested such as the Katherine Dunham: Juba Dance Festival
- Ensure early announcements and communication, especially in communities outside of Chattanooga
- Launch a third festival by 2025

Establish a plan to hire a part-time executive director by 2024 – including a pathway to funding, job description, and forming a hiring committee. (Alternative: hire a part-time board administrator that focuses on governance and operations)

- Create a search committee of board members and trusted volunteers to lead your efforts
- Identify the role of the new position as a community leader to build the reputation and visibility of the organization (not as an event planner)
- Focus on fundraising and community reputation in your job description
- Apply for seed funds from the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga
- Apply for ArtsBuild funds once you have established a lineup of events and programs outside of Juneteenth

Create a Development Plan that can grow and be implemented over the next three years.

- 2023 - Grow the Text2Give or QR code component to Festival communications (especially at free events) to encourage \$5 donations - this will help build a potential donor list and add to your communication list
- 2023 - Develop a list of potential major donors - assign each board member two or three donors to cultivate (handwritten notes, personal updates on the organization over coffee, VIP invites for behind-the-scenes tours at events)
- 2024 - Request funds from those cultivated donors to gain a commitment to support the growth of the organization (not restricted funds based on a specific event)
- 2025 - Development committee in place to actively fundraise, seek sponsorships, and apply for grants throughout the year to support the organization's overhead
- Send prompt, personalized thank-you notes after commitments are made for sponsorship

Establish CFBA&I as a regional Destination Juneteenth festival across the region by June 2025

- Work with community partners, CVB, and other nonprofits to market and advertise Juneteenth as a destination event – include a hop schedule that includes all the Juneteenth events. Cross-promote events rather than competing.
- Establish a set schedule for the main events – just as the Saturday and Sunday closest to Juneteenth
- Launch a schedule of the main weekend events by the end of January in order to advertise and publicize the main attractions regionally
- Work with the CVB, ArtsBuild, EPB, and others to gain advertising sponsors and bring visitors to town for the main weekend of events
- Review all events for financial support – analyze which ones are the most financially viable, which are viable long-term, and which need more sponsors. Consider removing the lowest performing events or transitioning some events to other times of year when they can receive more attention

Collaboration:



"We can do better, together. Don't be competitive, be collaborative! When hosting community outreach events, we should always consider, are we doing this for ourselves or truly to uplift and enrich our city." - Sponsor

Sponsors, community leaders, and artists were clear in their feedback. They want collaboration across fewer total events with better advertising, more advanced schedules, and a big main event weekend to advertise a collective Juneteenth in Chattanooga.

Though we have determined that joint events are not a solution, we believe a collective calendar of events that is not branded as a single organization could be an excellent alternative. ArtsBuild or the CVB would be an option to discuss the possibility of owning and branding the digital and printed calendar. The CVB already does this on their website. It would show sponsors collective action, help attendees understand what events are happening when and where, and support your goal of making Chattanooga a destination for Juneteenth.

Because of your leadership and well-established position with Juneteenth, we recommend you take the first step, invite others to join you, and offer some funds to pay for printing of the schedule if ArtsBuild or others take over the management of collecting all the events and marketing them. We also recommend making it a point not to schedule your events during the main times of other events such as the Juneteenth Jubilee.

Consider promoting a selection of your main events on this calendar. For example, the Father's Day brunch is generally for locals. It also sells out and is not directly related to Juneteenth. Focus on the joint Juneteenth Chattanooga promotion by picking events that are close to the actual Juneteenth date that need larger attendance.

Most of this work has already been done! Applying for advertising dollars with the CVB will help you attract new attendees to your events, and it demonstrates goodwill and collaboration to donors and foundations.

“There should be a committee of all the organizations - anyone that has done anything in the last six years. Each of the groups is approaching Juneteenth from a different perspective that they think is ‘right,’ but there is room for lots of celebrations. Competing is not the spirit of Juneteenth - everyone can do something, but we need a clearinghouse. We want to see a focus on two days, and we need a comprehensive schedule of events at the least.” - Sponsor, Artist, Participant

A Chattanooga Juneteenth Hop was appealing to the City’s Diversity & Inclusion as well as the Arts & Cultural departments and both are interested in cross promotion and funding.

The City envisions that the Juneteenth Festival Hop would showcase Black and Brown businesses, bring people together from all ages and ethnicities, include a parade, and the hop would be hosted Friday – Sunday the weekend before Juneteenth (if Juneteenth falls on a Monday – Wednesday).



“A Hop would create a cultural mecca for residents and a destination for tourists during the month of June. We would be excited to hear next steps about how to begin working with partners to plan Chattanooga’s 2023 Juneteenth Festival Hop.” - Potential Partner

Thinking long-term, the Board should continue to consider:

Outside of the goals we have established above, several important questions remain for the board to review, consider, and revisit. The strategic planning process is an ongoing one and the leadership needs of an organization with big aspirations, will continue to change. The strategic plan should be revisited and analyzed annually if not more often.

There are two different brands, names, and mission statements at play. How will this work long-term? Does this benefit or hamper the organization’s ability to fundraise and grow? Is it clear that the CFBA&I are programs under ChattaNap, and if not, how can we clarify that? If you plan to focus on the mission of ChattaNap and create community festivals, who needs to be added to your board to ensure that these communities are represented and at the table as these events and strategies are planned? Is this a reasonable goal to have before staff are added?

Regardless of the decision – the websites of both organizations need to increase transparency, include the board members and their titles on each site, and clarify how the organizations work together and how funds are shared.



It's not unusual for the board, staff, major donors, and community leaders to see things a bit differently. In fact, some conflict is a positive. A board that simply nods and agrees with the executive director fails to lead. An executive director that keeps silent rather than arguing passionately for their priorities to the Board will not accomplish their goals. However, there seems to be a lack of clarity in this group and possibly a frustrating communication dynamic. This may stem in part, from a lack of clear roles and responsibilities. It may also be because individual board members are (understandably!) focused on their role in the events, rather than on the organization more broadly.

To move forward, this board must take a leadership role, actively recruiting new board members, tackling difficult topics, and taking ownership of fundraising and governance. At the same time, as Founder, Ricardo must steer the organization toward its mission, while recognizing the limitations of an all-volunteer organization, and defer to board on when they set limits.

This board is well known for putting on exceptionally run events from a run of show perspective. The stage, lights, speakers, and all the details are well planned and organized. However, other items are just as important, and we heard multiple times that these items need more attention – governance for the organization, clear expectations for the CEO as well as board members. Marketing, brand consistency, professionalism of materials, thanking sponsors and donors, promoting events early and often - these must all receive the same attention to detail that the performances and events receive in order to achieve long-term success.

Before any additional events are added or current events expanded, the board must review, consider the demands that are currently placed on volunteers, and decide what should be removed, what should move to a different time of year, and which events have the most opportunity for growth and need more resources. The board must be at the table, decide as a group, and vote to direct resources to a new event or Festival. This cannot be a unilateral decision.

Ask yourselves:

- What events are most financially successful?
- Which events are most well attended?
- Which events require the most time and volunteer-power?

Even if an event is well attended – if it takes up all the oxygen and capacity of the board and volunteers – it may not be one you should try to continue. Can sponsors be asked to transition their support to another event? Or are there ways to simplify or combine events to reduce the stress and time from volunteers? As the group launches other Festivals outside of Juneteenth, it is essential for your long-term success to establish a rigorous process for the board to review ideas for growth and consider where to allocate resources.

Alternatives:

There are two other alternatives to consider.

The accomplishments of this energetic group of volunteers are astounding. Many groups with paid staff have failed to put on even one event at this level of professionalism and success, much less 20.

Alternative 1:

Before we move forward with expansion, paid staff, and a development plan, the board should ask themselves, “Is there an argument to focus on one Annual Juneteenth celebration weekend, and nothing more?” The Board could cut the number of events, have the RGB Ball, and then a single weekend of events to expand the size and scope of the weekend festival. You could drive more sponsors to fewer events and expand by bringing in bigger acts (not more events) and focus on increasing attendance. This does not achieve your goals around adding unique festivals with more events celebrating Black arts – but it is achievable without all the challenges of funding and employing staff. The group stays small and nimble – with clarity for volunteers to focus on this set time being very busy but doable.

Alternative 2:

Another way to achieve your goals without hiring your own staff and tackling the immediate challenges of growth, is to consider finding a nonprofit with staff and a strong foundation. Explore if another nonprofit would become both a home for the Juneteenth Festival and put staff and resources behind the other festivals. The Board transitions to being a committee, with perhaps two or three of your current board members transiting to the board of the organization, providing the 501c3 status as well as the stability of staff, marketing, and resources such as HR and payroll. CFBA&I has a strong pitch to a nonprofit. At a time when successful events are nearly impossible to launch, CFBA&I comes to the table with committed sponsors and a track record of success for both the RBG Ball and a wide array of events, including a successful Juneteenth celebration.

The benefits:

- Volunteers can focus on events and sponsorships, with all the groundwork already in place
- Administrative, marketing, and fundraising resources mean that staff are in place to support many areas of the events that are currently draining volunteer energy
- Limited need for committee structures, governance, policies, and procedures
- No hiring staff or board member recruitment, only recruitment of additional volunteer committee members would remain
- No maintaining of your own 501c3, annual reporting, government fees, etc.

On the other hand, executive director changes and board member shifts at the nonprofit could change, and as a committee your position might be less secure than other programs. Although your place in the organization would be very strong initially, it could change over time.

The downsides:

- Loss of one of the few, Black-led nonprofit organizations in Hamilton County
- Limited control over mission/vision
- Shifting organizational autonomy pending organizational changes

Research overview:

Only a few people took our survey, but we've included some highlights, as well as some feedback from the board.

There were 26 responses to the event survey. Note that we've included the comments and results as a PDF. Here are some significant highlights.

- 37% said they were most interested in events that combine multiple art forms alongside vendors, food trucks, and activities
- Following that, 16.7% selected music and the same percentage indicated that the more general "multiple art forms" were what they were most interested in attending
- 100% rated you 4 or 5 when asked, "In the events I attended, I felt welcomed and comfortable."
- 84% said they were interested in attending events monthly

When looking at the survey responses from the Board, we wanted to take note of a few items.

- 7 respondents said there were too many events in this year's June calendar of events
- The majority of respondents do not feel that either nonprofit brand is well recognized
- Full-time or part-time staff was identified as a must for the organization to succeed
- There were many comments about needing more volunteers and (a better) understanding how much work is being asked of Board members.

"We struggled, as a team, with volunteer engagement. The volunteer recruitment timeline needed to be moved up and we need to establish the vendor/volunteer dates well before the festival to ensure strong attendance." – Board Member

"It appeared that we did not have enough volunteers to cover all of our events and we relied heavily on our board members." – Board Member

"The fact that neither of us are getting paid for a ton of work that has to be done for this festival needs to be taken into account. We should all be mindful of each other's time and efforts!" - Board Member

We interviewed participants, artists, community leaders, and sponsors.

The overwhelming responses were positive. Not only was CFBA&I recognized for leading the way in celebrating Juneteenth in Chattanooga, but the group was known for its attention to detail, professional event management, and ability to engage the Black community and build excitement for a wide variety of events.

"We need more Black voices to be active in this community, especially in the arts. I was thrilled to bring my own mother to a past Juneteenth event that Ric organized. As a Black family, you might think we had a Juneteenth tradition, but we don't. This was a wonderful way to celebrate." – Black Artist and Sponsor Representative

"Poetry events, film, music - I love it all but it's getting lost in CFB&I's June events - it is overwhelming. This should be what Chattanooga festival of Black Arts and Ideas is doing quarterly, or across the whole year, that would be awesome. But all in one month? It is just daunting. I'm exhausted trying to attend all these things. Chattanooga is an events town, but this is too much. I would be thrilled if they expanded to another time of year and kept Juneteenth to a single weekend." – Artist and Sponsor Employee

"I loved participating as an artist in their events, I've known Ric for years and he brings passion and awareness to black artist in our community that are often overlooked. Most importantly I know the event will be organized and I'll have a good experience working with the team." – Black Artist

Some important comments we heard during our interviews.

The below comments do not represent the feedback we received as a whole, which was very positive, but we believe they are important to include.

As discussed earlier, the organization, and the staff in particular, were identified as approaching Juneteenth with a "scarcity mindset" – this exact phrase was used more than once and was unprompted. This was said by people who had direct involvement with the team.



“There seems to be this tension that CFBA&I brings to the table, because they were first, and that everything else that is being done now is taking something away from them and their events. But we need folks in our own community, the Black community, to work together. We already have so many things working against us. We need to be showing sponsors and the City, everyone, that we can work well together. I think young people are really good at working together and some of us old folks need to let them do that and not bring any angst to the table. We need shorter memories.” – Community Leader and Activist

There are a couple of negative comments about the survey itself, which is typical. You’ll note that there appear to be two people who rated most items negatively. Certainly, any customer-facing location should expect an unsatisfied customer or two, and we wouldn’t consider this number to be a red flag of a bigger issue.

The Board’s Development Plan & Fundraising Efforts:

The Development Committee should set annual goals for fundraising and every board member must participate in fundraising efforts. These goals should be relationship-based, especially in 2022 as it’s important to build relationships prior to requesting donations.

Each board member should identify or be assigned 2 to 5 individuals that they will personally develop as potential donors. The committee should set quarterly goals to keep the board on track and include detailed and measurable activities like, each quarter, take one potential donor to coffee or lunch and update them on the organization’s overall progress, plans to expand, strategic plan, upcoming event, etc.

Hold two or three specific online fundraising campaigns, rather than frequently posting asking for donations. All board members should share to their networks via social media and email.

Set days and campaigns when the full board can engage with a Fundraising Campaign rather than constantly asking the board to fundraise throughout the year (which can quickly lead to burn-out). A joint goal approach creates an opportunity for collective success. Letting board members know they will be asked to fundraise online via social

media, email, and in personal handwritten notes at set times each year means you can combine your efforts to achieve your goals.

Because the organization isn't well known, it will help to utilize your newly expanded events to drive your online fundraising campaign. This gives the Board an option to engage with their contacts with an invitation to buy a ticket or attend a free event rather than repeatedly asking for a financial donation.

Consider applying for the UNfoundation grant for funds to launch your new Festival. I would recommend asking for funds to pay artists or provide free tickets to an event for Black students, or otherwise increase access for youth rather than requesting funds to market the event. theunfoundation.org/tips

Board member recruitment and community awareness:

Once your new growth strategy is solidified, and either a part-time executive or other plan is in place, consider a community "roadshow" to build awareness of your organization, mission, events, and new leadership.

- Consider opportunities to speak at Breakfast Rotary and Nooga Nights Rotary, Kiwanis, as well as regional Chamber events to build awareness and promote events (these should not include direct asks for funds.)
- This new leader should meet with donors, other nonprofit executives, and Foundations to share their vision, and create opportunities to partner

Juneteenth destination events:

Look to Atlanta, Memphis, New Orleans, and many others for impressive Juneteenth festivals that draw a crowd. Many include a parade alongside musical performance or have multiple events at different locations. All are over a weekend, and most are only 1 day, except for Memphis, which holds a 2-day event, and Atlanta which can draw large local and regional crowds across a 4-day event. But it's all in the same location and features more than 400 vendors, and its 2023 dates have already been announced. This consistency gives them a big advantage from a marketing perspective. (See attached spreadsheet for more examples.)

Summary:

Our research and survey work has outlined clear priorities for the organization's next phase of growth. Firstly, the Board must determine its structure - whether to remain independent or partner with another non-profit with a larger staff.

If the board determines the best course of action is to remain independent, the next step is to begin methodically tackling the projects that would lead to the shared definition of success for the organization:

- Streamlined operations
- Active and consistent leadership from the Board, with clearly designated roles and responsibilities
- Increased name awareness and brand recognition (within target markets) across the community
- Steady fundraising activities
- Launch a hiring committee
- Focus on festivals outside of Juneteenth
- Hiring of a part-time Executive Director or an administrative leader
- Engagement from local Black youth in Juneteenth and other arts celebrations
- People traveling from surrounding counties and states to attend the CFBA&I Juneteenth Celebration

The challenges you face today are normal and healthy signs of growth within any organization. Your work to this point has laid a strong foundation to tackle these next steps and find continued growth and success for the organization.