5-Year Strategic Plan (2022-2027)

FosterClub is the national network for young people in foster care. Although foster care provides a critical safety net in our society for children and youth, being in foster care is generally a very difficult experience for a young person. This is why FosterClub exists: to improve life in foster care. Our strategy engages Lived Experience (LEx) Leaders in doing two things:

1. Provide direct support to young people who experience foster care, and
2. Drive change in the foster care system driven by lived experience.

We believe when young people have the support they need and opportunity to drive change in their life, they become self-determined and do better. We also believe when the system listens to young people, it does better. Our vision is that every young person who experiences foster care has what they need to become self-determined.

FosterClub has developed significantly since its founding in the year 2000. FosterClub has established itself as the leading youth engagement organization in child welfare, but further has changed the way youth engagement is viewed and exercised in the field and by policy makers.

The FosterClub logic model provides a sturdy foundation on which to build the vision for the future of the organization. Included in the logic model are five Critical Assumptions that pertain to the mission and work of the organization. These Critical Assumptions run through all of the work of the organization, and therefore should be considered as threads that run through the priorities that are elevated through the 5 Year Strategic Plan. FosterClub’s Critical Assumptions are:

- The child welfare system should and must improve
- Young people benefit from programs & services designed specifically for them
- Our work requires partners willing to engage in Youth/Adult Partnerships
- Young people must serve as catalysts for change: “Nothing about us without us”
- All young people benefit when the well-being of those disproportionately impacted by child welfare are prioritized

As FosterClub prepares to enter its second quarter-century, leadership is setting a bold path forward to include goals to position the organization for growth and sustainability. With substantial input from staff and Lived Experience (LEx) Leaders, a vision for FosterClub in the year 2027 was established. The Board identified four goals the organization will seek to achieve:

**GOAL 1: A strong COMMUNICATIONS platform positions FosterClub as the go-to connector/resource for young people who experience foster care and serves as a leading conduit for those who want to support them.**

Bold, strong communications contributed to FosterClub’s position in the child welfare field. However, FosterClub’s LEx Leaders, Staff and Board unanimously recognize the need to substantially build the organization's communications to all of our audiences: young people, child welfare stakeholders, and the public. By conclusion of the 5 year period:

a. Ends: FosterClub is recognized as the leading expert and changemaker of the foster care experience.
b. Ends: Grow by 5x communications to young people to help them access and connect to our community.

c. Ends: Child welfare advocates and policymakers deeply understand the necessity of LEx Leaders and their critical role in transforming foster care as demonstrated by documented best practices and the FosterClub model shared widely.

d. Ends: Concerned citizens understand what we do, why it matters, and how they can support young people through FosterClub - as demonstrated by an individual donor base of 500.

GOAL 2: A resilient and sustainable LEADERSHIP structure provides a strong foundation for FosterClub’s next quarter-century.

In an effort to promote growth and remain sustainable, a strong leadership structure is critical. By conclusion of the 5 year period:

a. Ends: Executive team will be appropriately staffed and have clarity regarding roles and span of authority, including plans for emergency and succession.

b. Ends: Board reflects diversity and exemplary governance, as evidenced by Board and staff feedback regarding the Board’s effectiveness and concrete succession plan for Board officers.

c. Ends: FosterClub is a place that attracts experienced and dedicated professionals and is known as a great place to work, and staffing supports include professional development plans and career ladders.

d. Ends: Alumni of FosterClub programs will have a pathway to stay connected to the organization and contribute to FosterClub’s mission.

GOAL 3: Dependable, unrestricted revenue streams provide FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY and FLEXIBILITY for FosterClub.

Over the past five years, FosterClub has experienced great improvements to its financial position. Staff has appreciated the generous participation and leadership of the Board in this area. There is still tremendous room for growth in diversification of revenue, including individual donations, corporate sponsorships, and product sales — all of which provide a foundation for sustainability, while also providing flexible funding to carry out the work of the organization. By conclusion of the 5 year period:

a. Ends: Increase the size of FosterClub’s endowment to $2 million (baseline $650,000).

b. Ends: Unrestricted donations comprise 10% of FosterClub’s revenue annually (baseline to be determined in year 1).

c. Ends: Gross revenue from product sales reaches $300,000 annually (baseline $135,000).

GOAL 4: FosterClub doubles its REACH TO YOUNG PEOPLE, with a special focus on young people under the age of 16.

LEx Leaders from FosterClub expressed that expanding the reach of FosterClub should be viewed as top priority. As an organization, we maintain varying levels of engagement/ intervention with young people. As part of its logic model, FosterClub outlines its Ladder of Participation: Prospect (I’ve met FosterClub), Learner (I’ve learned something), Member (I belong & contribute), and Leader (I am integral to the work). FosterClub has made great progress on the Leader and Learner rungs, but there is much work to be done to reach youth at the Prospect and Member levels. By conclusion of the 5 year period:

a. Ends: Establish reliable ways to capture metrics at each level of FosterClub’s Participation Ladder and establish baseline numbers to build from.

b. Ends: Develop and implement strategies to double the number of Prospects and Members.

c. Ends: 400% growth in the number of youth under the age of 16 (engaged at any level).

d. Ends: Program teams reach young people where they are, intentionally and consistently, using the communications used most by young people.