EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Strategic Plan is CRF’s road map for 2022, 2023, and 2024 and positions the organization for continued prominence, capacity, and growth as the field of civic education evolves.

Building on the vitality and creative excellence of CRF’s first 60 years of service, the aim of this plan is to raise funds and awareness of the organization, support staff, improve infrastructure, and increase the reach of programs. Successful implementation of this three-year plan will create a strong foundation for engaging, educating, and empowering future generations with the working tools of a healthy pluralistic democracy.

VISION

NEW: For a society in which all young people become lifelong, knowledgeable, and confident participants in our democracy.

MISSION

CURRENT: Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) seeks to instill in our nation's youth a deeper understanding of citizenship through values expressed in our Constitution and its Bill of Rights and to educate young people to become active and responsible participants in our society. CRF is dedicated to assuring our country's future by investing in our youth today.

NEW: CRF inspires lifelong civic engagement through interactive programs and resources for teachers and youth because our democracy depends on informed participation by all.

We achieve this by: CRF seeks to instill in our nation's youth a lifelong commitment to the principles expressed in our Constitution. CRF does this by leveraging the commitment of teachers and amplifying the voice of young people. CRF civic education resources are interactive and non-partisan with an emphasis on civil discourse. They are research-based and aligned to standards. We aim to engage young people to become active and empowered participants in our democracy.

CRF is dedicated to removing barriers, especially for underserved communities, to assure equity and justice in access to civic education.

CRF is a non-profit, non-partisan, national and community-serving organization. The CRF Board of Directors is comprised of professionals and thought leaders from the fields of law, business, government, education, entertainment, and the community. CRF staff include educators, lawyers, community organizers, fundraisers, designers, writers, and editors.
Annual Impact

- 4.6 million unique visitors to the CRF website
- Hundreds of thousands of educators, students, and families in all 50 States where CRF resources are used
- 235,000 youth across the country who participate in CRF’s Civic Action Project
- 31,000 Bill of Rights in Action subscribers
- Thousands of students who participate in the California Mock Trial competition
- Up to 100 first-generation college bound students who receive guidance and are placed in internships in Southern California counties through Expanding Horizons Institute

Overall Organizational Goal

CRF’s goal over the next three years is to become one of the most effective and prominent non-profit civics education organizations in the United States. We aim to expand our reach and impact nationally and to be recognized as a premiere partner and employer in the field. This increase in reach, impact, and prestige will necessitate strategic initiatives in the areas of (1) raising funds and external profile, (2) organizational capacity and operations, and (3) programs.

We are also aware that recent developments due to the pandemic, the increasingly polarized political climate, and a dynamic economy have necessitated change and flexibility. Working remotely, while challenging at first, provided new opportunities as well, such as greater reach and the capacity to have programs across geographic areas through hybrid programming. The political climate has been a reminder of the importance of our non-partisan point of view; the connection between civic literacy and a secure democracy; and the need to plan programs and policies using a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Economic shifts have sharpened our focus on providing resources for underserved school districts and access to civic education to close the learning gap.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Article 1. Raising funds and external profile (years one, two, and three)

A. Fundraising

Over the years, CRF’s funding model has evolved as government funds and some national foundations significantly decreased their support of civic education. That gap was partially filled by an increase in local foundation support and the continued success of the annual event that generated a very large portion of CRF’s unrestricted revenue. However, over the last several years, securing event revenue has become increasingly challenging, and the Board had already started a discussion of how to decrease the organization’s dependency on one event when the pandemic hit. While CRF was able to convert two thirds of its 2020 dinner pledges to operating support grants, it was clear to all that dependence on one event is simply not sustainable. During the pandemic, the Board utilized CRF’s reserve fund for emergency operations and an
unexpected repair of its headquarters. However, the reserve fund needs to be protected as well. The Board and the staff set about to explore new revenue options including more intimate events, educational workshops, new strategies for individual and planned giving, and stronger outreach for national funding.

**Goals:** Raise enough revenue to cover all operating expenses, increase staff and operations, upgrade infrastructure, and replenish reserves. Current cash flow projections show the organization in a deficit for 2020 and 2021, with significant impact to the reserves in both years. The aim of this plan is to continue to invest in staff and infrastructure in 2021 and 2022. We expect there may still be a deficit in 2022 because of the extensive building repairs, a commitment to upgrade systems and equipment, and a need to build staff. However, the goal of this plan is that, by the end of year one of the plan, 2022, the deficit will be stabilized or at a minimum reduced significantly from 2020 and 2021, and by the end of year two, 2023, the organization will be operating in the black. To achieve increases in and stabilization of revenues, we aim to reduce dependence on the annual celebration and increase unrestricted gifts from the Board, other individual donors, corporations, foundations, government contracts, and planned gifts.

**Objectives:**
- Increase staff capacity.
  - Hire a senior level development specialist.
  - Continue to integrate development into all job descriptions.
- Diversify and build the Board.
  - Increase diversity of background to better reflect the community we serve.
  - Increase diversity of industry to reduce reliance on the legal community.
  - Maintain diversity of thought to preserve non-partisan nature and reputation.
  - Grow the Board giving to 100% compliance with Board Expectations.
- Increase giving from the existing donors.
  - Create and implement a stewardship plan for existing individual donors.
  - Resume relationships with and increase giving from existing foundations and governments.
- Identify and cultivate new funding options.
  - Diversify the donor base with an emphasis on entertainment, financial services, and high-tech industries.
  - Build foundation support, both nationally and locally.
  - Build new state and federal government sources.
  - Connect to high-net worth individuals and new sources through Board and existing donors.
  - Increase donors of multi-year funding.
  - Explore smaller events such as private home events, comedy night, and community educational programs.
  - Increase access to Cy-Pre Awards.
- Build on current planned giving program.
  - Formalize arrangements with current benefactors.
B. External Profile

While CRF has proven success at communicating with educators and other users of its programs, marketing the organization to raise the profile externally requires a different skill set. One of the most common concerns from Board and staff is that, despite its broad reach and high quality of programs, CRF does not have high brand awareness among donors, major funders, thought leaders and media. CRF needs to be recognized as a leading provider of civic education among national funders, legislators, and other stakeholders who are exploring the future of civic engagement. Now, more than ever before, the need for responsible civic engagement is front and center in our national dialogue and CRF must play a pivotal role.

Goals: Increase CRF’s visibility, reach, and profile nationally, statewide, and locally by participating in advocacy and public debate about civic education, by increasing media exposure and by increasing marketing efforts to expand the reach and impact of CRF programs. Measures of success will include numbers of media hits, increased presence on social media, publication of articles and opinion pieces, and reach of marketing materials.

Objectives:

- Increase staff capacity.
  - Hire a Marketing and Communications specialist.
  - Continue to integrate marketing and communications into all job descriptions.
- Create messaging suited to CRF’s diverse audience.
  - Build on the existing social media efforts and increase followers.
  - Update and implement current marketing plan and media strategy.
  - Work closely with the development department and program staff to ensure high quality and consistent branding and messaging.
  - Create a strong inventory of personalized student and educator stories as well as compelling evaluation data to help communicate the CRF message.
  - Strengthen the website and all collateral materials to better reflect the impact of the organization.
- Coordinate with the field of community partners to participate in advocacy and partnership opportunities.
- Create engagement opportunities for Board and volunteers.
  - Provide the Board and volunteers with strong outreach materials, both general and program specific, and key data supporting the CRF model, all of which will allow them to tap into their personal passion to promote the organization’s mission and values.
  - Reconfigure the Emeritus Board to serve as consultants and ambassadors of CRF in the community.
• Improve marketing materials to increase constituency of educators and students.
• Improve co-branding of CRF with Mock Trial, BRIA, and CAP.
• Improve messaging on impact of CRF programs.
• Create short PSA type video with options to use shorter or longer format.

**Article 2. Organizational Capacity and Operations (years one and two)**

While a small core staff continues to produce a high volume of quality resources for educators and youth, the capacity of the organization is challenged. There is a need to fully staff specific operations within the organization and to improve systems and equipment. During 2020 and 2021, the organization undertook significant capital improvements to the building. This brought to light numerous problems of outdated infrastructure. Additionally, the pandemic heightened the need for our systems and equipment to be upgraded so all communications and programming could continue without interruption or system failures. Finally, over the years, and even more so during the pandemic, security breaches to the building and online heightened the need for greater building security and cyber-security.

**Goals:** Provide efficient administrative and operational services to support organizational growth. Upgrade systems and equipment. Create better communications among program, development, and accounting staff.

**Objectives:**
- Increase staff capacity.
  - Organize IT and finance staff to streamline processes.
  - Provide professional development opportunities in IT and finance.
  - Review human resources practices and implement changes to align with current trends.
- Ensure systems are up-to-date and integrated including:
  - Constituent Relations Management systems,
  - Accounting systems, and
  - Data and technology systems.
- Promote ongoing effective communications throughout the organization.
  - Continue training and implementation to ensure a positive work environment for staff.
  - Continue to build internal processes and systems to be more effective and more efficient.
  - Provide opportunities for staff from different teams to work together and leverage best practices.
  - Promote safety practices for staff and throughout the facility.

**Article 3. Programming (years two and three)**
CRF continues to deliver high-impact and high-quality programming for its educators and youth. CRF has a strong history with numerous civic and law-related education networks throughout the country. CRF will continue to utilize these networks for outreach and to partner on specific projects. However, the organization needs to focus on building its capacity to collect quantitative data to track its growth, measure impact, and assess effectiveness of its programming. CRF can also strengthen and increase its collaborations with other institutions. CRF will continue to expand its programming on a national and statewide basis while maintaining a strong presence locally. CRF will explore bringing appropriate programs to scale by expanding from local or a small number of locations, to national initiatives.

**Goals:** CRF will increase its reach to educators and youth. In addition to reaching more people, the impact will be more meaningful as programs are analyzed and evaluated through new metrics and research.

**Objectives:**
- Refine protocols for producing programs.
- Continue to build programs in collaboration with other organizations throughout the county, state, and country.
  - Continue to expand Los Angeles-based programs nationally.
  - Continue to explore partnerships with community-based organizations and national funders in other counties and states.
- Continue to develop policies and strategies for monitoring and measuring the reach, impact, and efficacy of key signature programs.
  - Improve data collection and reporting.
  - Continue to explore up-to-date survey reporting methods for program feedback.
  - Create consistency of methods and systems for program evaluation.
- Continue to respond and adapt to changing times and trends.
  - Continue to create real-time resources in response to news and current events.
  - Work longer-term to create new models and use new technology to provide civic education.