



In 2019, Search Institute adopted a new mission, vision, and set of values. From 2020-2025, the organization will put those commitments into practice as it works to achieve the five big goals of its strategic plan. Search Institute's strategy for the future is summarized in this document. To read the full strategic plan including the specific tactics Search Institute will use to implement the strategies and achieve the goals of the plan, please visit www.searchinstitute.org/strategic-plan/.



2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

Vision

All young people have what they need to thrive.

Mission

Search Institute partners with organizations to conduct and apply research that promotes positive youth development and advances equity.

Values

In our work, internally and externally, we value:

Diversity: We embrace diverse perspectives, experiences, ways of learning, and forms of wisdom.

Equity: We strive to understand systems of access, opportunity, justice, and power in order to eliminate barriers, recognize strengths, and meet the needs of all.

Curiosity: We are driven to learn.

Scientific rigor: Our work is grounded in high-quality research.

Youth focus: Positive youth development is the ultimate purpose of all we do.

Relationships: We strive to build developmental relationships. ■



What Search Institute Does

Search Institute achieves its mission in three primary ways:

1. Generating knowledge and insight through mixed-methods research

We conduct and communicate findings from quantitative and qualitative studies to deepen understanding of and re-frame critical issues in youth development and education.

2. Developing and disseminating resources based on our research

We design and deliver workshops, surveys, and other practical resources that help adults and youth improve the connections they build.

3. Partnering to improve outcomes:

We bring together the knowledge that is generated and the resources that are created through our research to deeply collaborate with organizations to put youth on the path to thriving. ■



Strategic Goals & Benchmarks

Goal 1: Strengthen the Capacity of Adults to Build Developmental Relationships with Youth

By 2025, Search Institute will have a suite of research-based resources that have been shown to significantly strengthen developmental relationships between adults and young people in youth-serving organizations and between parenting adults and children in families. These resources for building developmental relationships will include workshops, surveys, consulting engagements, youth and family activities, and a wide range of practical tools for starting and strengthening relationships.

Strategies

- 1. Research:** Conduct and synthesize research to inform the creation of tools and resources to strengthen developmental relationships between adult staff/volunteers and young people and between parenting adults and their children.
- 2. Prototype:** Establish partnerships with youth-serving organizations through which research-based resources for strengthening developmental relationships are prototyped.
- 3. Disseminate:** For the tools and resources that show promise of effectiveness and for which there is demand, attract and enlist clients to broadly disseminate the resources.
- 4. Evaluate:** Evaluate the research-based tools and resources to test and continually improve them over time.

Benchmarks To Be Set And Reported Annually

- **Number of Participants:** The number of people who use or participate in a relationship-building resource from Search Institute.
- **Impact on Practice:** The percentage of people who use or participate in a relationship-building resource from Search Institute who report on a follow-up survey that using or participating in the resource improved their experience of developmental relationships.
- **Impact on Research:** Number of publications and citations of articles in journals for researchers and practitioners describing findings from Search Institute's effort to achieve this goal.

Goal 2: Empower Young People to Build Social Capital Through Developmental Relationships

By 2025, Search Institute will have a suite of research-based resources that have been shown to significantly strengthen the developmental relationships young people create and sustain with their peers, parents, and other adults, including those within and across lines of difference.

Strategies

- 1. Research:** Conduct foundational research and analysis to inform the creation of tools and resources to that empower

young people to strengthen developmental relationships and build social capital.

2. Prototype:

Establish partnerships with youth-serving organizations

through which research-based resources for strengthening developmental relationships are prototyped.

3. Disseminate: For the tools and resources that show promise of effectiveness and for which there is demand, attract and enlist clients to broadly disseminate the resources.

4. Evaluate: Evaluate the research-based tools and resources to test and continually improve them over time.

Benchmarks to Be Set and Reported Annually

- **Number of Participants:** The number of young people who use or participate in a youth empowerment resource from Search Institute.
- **Impact on Behavior:** The percentage of young people who participate in a youth empowerment resource from Search Institute who report on a follow-up survey that the program empowered them to strengthen developmental relationships in their lives, including those within and across lines of difference.
- **Impact on Research:** Number of publications and citations of articles in journals for researchers and practitioners describing findings from Search Institute's effort to achieve this goal.

Goal 3: Mobilize Relationships in Organizations to Improve Youth Outcomes

By 2025, Search Institute will have developed, disseminated, and published studies of an organizational change process that significantly improves the social, emotional, civic, and/or academic outcomes of young people from marginalized communities by building developmental relationships between and among young people, staff/volunteers, and parenting adults.

Strategies

1. Research: Conduct and synthesize research on the ways that organizational environments influence the social, emotional, academic, and civic development of young people from marginalized communities.

2. Partner: Establish partnerships with youth-serving organizations to implement the organizational change process to improve youth outcomes through developmental relationships.



3. Evaluate: Conduct a randomized controlled trial or quasi-experimental study of a subset of the organizations utilizing the change process in order to explore the causal associations between strengthening developmental relationships and improving youth outcomes.

Benchmarks to Be Set and Reported Annually

- **Number of Organizations:** The number of organizational sites that implement the organizational change process with fidelity
- **Impact on Outcomes:** The percentages of young people in these sites whose social, emotional, civic, and/or academic outcomes improve.



- **Impact on Research:** Number of publications and citations of articles in journals for researchers and practitioners describing findings from Search Institute's effort to achieve this goal.

Goal 4: Grow Financial Resources

By 2025, Search Institute will have grown top-line revenue by 50% and built up a board-designated reserve equal to four months of operating expenses to enable the organization to fully achieve its mission and ensure the stability of the organization.

Strategies

- 1. Enhance and Expand Grants and Contracts:** Develop and implement a proactive process for continually cultivating new grants and contracts that advance the goals of the strategic plan and achieve annual benchmarks for growth in revenue from those sources.
- 2. Develop Solutions for the Field:** Develop and implement an effective product and services development process to design, deliver and improve upon workshops, surveys, engagements, and other tools.
- 3. Engage Potential Clients:** Develop and implement comprehensive and compelling marketing and sales strategies

for all products and services.

4. Enhance Organizational Efficiency: Develop and implement practices to continually improve organizational efficiency and maximize effective use of human and financial resources.

Benchmarks to Be Set and Reported Annually

- **Revenue Growth:** Annual increases in revenue from the following sources needed to meet the top-line revenue goal by 2025: grants, contracts, workshop sales, survey sales, consultative engagement sales, sales of other tools, and fees from licensing of intellectual property.
- **Financial Reserve:** The number of months of operating expenses that a board-designated reserve could fully support.

Goal 5: Strengthen Staff and Board Engagement

By 2025, 90% of Search Institute board members and staff will report that they are meaningfully engaged in advancing the mission of Search Institute.

Strategies

- 1. Recruit and Retain:** Build a staff and board with the mix of skills and backgrounds needed to fully achieve the objectives of this strategic plan by 2025.
- 2. Embrace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** Create and/or maintain workplace defined by authentic and consistent commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- 3. Strengthen Staff Effectiveness and Satisfaction:** Develop formal and informal processes that enable all Search Institute staff to help Search Institute achieve the organization's mission and vision while being their whole selves at work.
- 4. Ensure Board Effectiveness and Satisfaction:** Develop formal and informal processes that enable members of the board of directors to help Search Institute achieve the organization's mission and vision and to achieve their personal goals for serving on the board.

Benchmarks to Be Set and Reported Annually

- **Board Engagement:** Percentage of board members reporting they are meaningfully engaged in the work of Search Institute.
- **Staff Engagement:** Percentage of staff that report they are meaningfully engaged in the work of Search Institute.
- **Staff Retention:** Percentage of staff who continue to be employed by Search Institute from one year to the next. ■