



End-of-Year Essentials: *Setting Your Organization Up for Success in 2026*

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As we approach the close of 2025, it's time to reflect on your organization's journey and prepare for the year ahead. For those of us leading nonprofits serving girls of color, year-end isn't just about closing the books—it's about honoring the work we've done and positioning ourselves to go even further in 2026.

Celebrate Your Wins (Yes, Really)

Before diving into logistics, take a moment to acknowledge what your organization accomplished this year. Whether you served five girls or five hundred, expanded programming, or simply kept your doors open during challenging times—that matters. Document these wins. Share them with your board, your team, and your community. These stories aren't just feel-good moments; they're essential narratives for your funding proposals and annual reports.

Get Your Financial House in Order

December is your final chance to ensure your records are clean. Review your expenses, reconcile accounts, and gather receipts for all donations. If you haven't already, send thank-you letters to every donor—personal acknowledgment strengthens relationships and keeps donors engaged. Consider a year-end giving campaign if you haven't hit your fundraising goals. People are most generous during the holiday season, and a clear, compelling ask can make a real difference.

Review and Refresh Your Board

Your board should reflect the communities you serve. Are there gaps in expertise, connections, or lived experience? Now's the time to identify potential board members who can help you grow. Equally important: if board members aren't actively contributing, have honest conversations about their capacity to serve. Your organization deserves committed champions.

Assess Your Programs Through Their Eyes

Talk to the girls you serve. What resonated with them this year? What fell flat? Their feedback is invaluable for refining your 2026 programming. Don't just collect data—actually use it. The most sustainable programs are the ones that truly meet community needs, not just what we assume those needs are.

Plan for Sustainability, Not Just Survival

Small organizations often operate in crisis mode, but year-end is your opportunity to think strategically. What would it take to move from grant-to-grant scrambling to stable, predictable funding? Explore monthly donor programs, earned revenue opportunities, or partnerships that could diversify your income streams. Even small steps toward financial sustainability compound over time.

Document Your Processes

You know that thing you do every year and have to figure out from scratch each time? Write it down. Create simple templates for your grants, event planning, donor communications, and program evaluations. When everything lives in your head, your organization can't scale and you can't rest. Documentation isn't bureaucracy—it's self-care.

Dream a Little

Finally, give yourself permission to envision what's possible. What would your organization look like with adequate resources? What impact could you have if you weren't constantly worried about making payroll? Write it down. Share it with trusted advisors. Sometimes the act of naming our aspirations helps us spot opportunities we might otherwise miss.

You're doing critical work in communities that are often overlooked. Your year-end tasks aren't just administrative obligations—they're investments in the girls who depend on your leadership and vision. Take care of your organization so it can continue taking care of them.