



Closing One Chapter, Opening Another: *Year-End Reflection and Planning for Girl-Serving Organizations*

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As the end of the year approaches, nonprofit leaders serving girls of color face a unique moment: the space between reflection and renewal. This transition period offers more than administrative housekeeping; it's an opportunity to ground your organization's future in the lessons of the present.

Creating Space for Honest Reflection

Begin by gathering your team for candid conversations about the past year. What programs deepened their impact? Where did your girls show up differently than expected? Which partnerships strengthened your work, and which drained resources without proportional return?

Document both victories and challenges without judgment. Perhaps your mentorship program exceeded enrollment goals while your STEM initiative struggled to gain traction. Maybe you discovered that transportation barriers, not interest, kept girls from participating. These insights become the foundation for strategic planning.

Acknowledging the Shifting Landscape

The environment for organizations centered on identity-specific programming has grown more complex. Funding streams that once prioritized equity-focused work are shifting, and some supporters are reconsidering their commitments to targeted programming. Rather than viewing this as purely negative, consider it an invitation to sharpen your messaging.

This moment calls for clarity about your mission's universality. The skills, confidence, and opportunities you provide to girls of color benefit entire communities. Leadership development, educational access, and personal growth aren't political positions, they are investments in human potential. Your year-end planning should include refining how you communicate this value to diverse stakeholder groups.

Diversifying Your Sustainability Strategy

Financial resilience requires creativity beyond traditional grant seeking. As you plan for the new year, explore revenue diversification: fee-for-service programs that can subsidize free offerings, corporate partnerships anchored in shared outcomes rather than identity categories, and individual donor cultivation that emphasizes impact over demographics.

Review your donor base with fresh eyes. Who has remained committed during turbulent times? These supporters deserve deeper engagement. Consider implementing a recurring giving program or mid-level donor circle that builds predictable revenue while strengthening relationships.

Centering What Matters Most

Amid external pressures, return to the girls themselves. Gather feedback through surveys, focus groups, or informal conversations. What did they gain from your programs this year? What do they need next? Their voices should guide your strategic priorities more than any external narrative.

Plan programming that serves your mission while remaining relevant to evolving needs. If college preparation remains central but girls are expressing anxiety about career paths, integrate career exploration earlier. If social-emotional support has become more critical, allocate resources accordingly.

Building for Resilience

As you draft next year's plans, prioritize organizational resilience over expansion. Strengthen core programs before launching new initiatives. Invest in staff development and retention. Your team's stability directly impacts program quality. Build financial reserves, even modestly, to weather unexpected challenges.

The work of serving girls of color has never been simple, and this moment adds layers of complexity. Yet organizations like yours have navigated difficult environments before. Your year-end reflection and planning process isn't just administrative; it's an act of commitment to the girls who need you most.

As you close this year's books and open next year's possibilities, trust in your mission's importance. The girls you serve are counting on your steadiness, your vision, and your unwavering belief in their potential *and your own*.