

TREE FUND STRATEGIC PLAN: 2019 TO 2021

ACQUIRE RESOURCES (LEAD: DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE)

- Continue to grow the endowment toward a \$7.0M goal, while also raising sufficient unrestricted funds to fully cover annual operations, by adding at least \$350,000 per year in permanently restricted payments, pledges, or planned gifts (*Review results annually in January*)
- Identify new sources of donation support from outside the green industry (*List of new prospects to Development Committee annually in October*)
- Identify and implement community engagement events with strong return on investment, both financially and organizationally (*Establish annual calendar of events and set Tour des Trees dates and schedules each October as part of budget process*)
- Revitalize planned giving program (*Formally re-launch Heritage Oak Society in July 2019*)
- Increase use of digital marketing aimed at potential donors (*Conduct social media and web audits annually, beginning in October 2019 and testing different months in years ahead*)

ALLOCATE RESOURCES (LEAD: RESEARCH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE)

- Ensure that grant and scholarship application documents are clear, distinct, and precise and in line with TREE Fund goals and research priorities (*Review all RFPs for upcoming year annually in September; also set application calendar for upcoming year at same time; evaluate recommendations and findings from May 2019 Research Workshop and incorporate more specific foci for grants to be awarded in Fall 2019 season through Fall 2021 season by July 2019*)
- Review and revise, if necessary, the mechanisms, criteria, and weightings used to score grants for research, education, and scholarships to ensure efficiency and effectiveness for selection of the recipients that best fit the goals of each program (*Review application structure annually in September, along with work documented in prior bullet*)
- Evaluate separating Research and Education Committee into two component committees, each chaired by a Trustee. (*As part of Fall 2019 grant review process, to support decision-making at December 2019 Board Meeting*)
- Evaluate grant applications and make recommendations to the board as required by our Declaration of Trust (*Twice annually in May and December*)

COMMUNICATE OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTCOMES (LEAD: COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE)

- Continue to establish TREE Fund as the premier funding source for its research priorities (*Review final grant-making levels in February annually for alignment with development and research goals, and prepare annual public report by March annually*)

- Strengthen the brand of TREE Fund through (a) widespread reporting of research outcomes, and (b) building stronger relations with sister organizations (*Conduct social media and website audits annually, testing a different month each year, beginning with October 2019; create and launch new website by March 2019; conduct annual review of current and new partnerships in October annually in conjunction with Development Committee*)
- Target desired audience groups and use various media to inform and educate them about TREE Fund activities (*Develop annual media calendar by January 2018 and review monthly*)
- Develop improved strategies for disseminating research outcomes (*Conduct reviews in June and January annually after grant awards, and actively disseminate research outcomes through all outlets*)

REGULATE GOVERNANCE AND OVERSEE MANAGEMENT (LEAD: EXECUTIVE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE)

- Annually review and update, when necessary, CEO job description to incorporate changes and opportunities in our industry (*CEO evaluate job description annually in July and make recommendations to Executive Committee*)
- Oversee the CEO per defined standards on governance and management roles (*Monthly conversations with CEO as part of Executive Committee meetings*)
- Frequently evaluate job performance of the CEO, and make contract and remuneration recommendations as appropriate (*CEO provide self-assessment biennially, beginning in June 2020; Executive Committee conduct performance evaluation biennially, beginning in August 2020, with recommendation for changes in compensation, if any, to Board biennially at September/October conference call, beginning in 2020*)
- Measure organizational effectiveness by (a) monitoring CEO reports, (b) conducting self-assessment surveys and (c) examining external surveys of clients, patrons and new potential donors (*Evaluate CEO reports to Board in advance of May and December board meetings annually; conduct Trustee and management self-evaluations as part of December meetings annually; conduct customer satisfaction review annually in January*)
- Conduct a compensation survey to ensure CEO and staff salaries are equitable and in line with industry standards (*Complete compensation survey by March 2019 to support 2020 budget*)
- Periodically review governance documents, policies and procedures for clarity, consistency and relevance (*Review annually in January*)
- Research, cultivate, and solicit new Trustees to ensure the Board remains at its maximum membership, in accordance with approved Board Composition Matrix and Trustee Recruitment and Mentoring guidelines (*Develop list of Trustee prospects annually for September/October conference call*)
- Conduct annual assessment to ensure that TREE Fund continually performs its due diligence both ethically and financially (*Review annually in October*)

- Annually evaluate Strategic Plan to review prior year's activities and add subsequent year's strategies and goals (*Re-convene Strategic Planning Task Force annually in February to prepare update plan for Trustee approval in May*)

SUPERINTEND FINANCES (LEAD: FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE)

- Maintain TREE Fund as a financially sound 501(c)3 non-profit organization that operates in a cost-effective and responsible manner (*Review CEO reports monthly; review CEO-prepared budget in October and submit to Trustees for approval in December annually*)
- Oversee the development, review and approval of the annual budget (*CEO submit budget annually in October, including macro three-year projections based on recent trends and known changes/opportunities; present to Trustees for approval annually in December*)
- Make financial recommendations to the board regarding investment options and their performance (*Establish alternate investment management firm to supplement Chicago Community Trust by July 2019, in accordance with approved investment allocation plan; review performance of CCT annually at December meeting, and review performance of new investment management firm at end of each fiscal quarter, rebalancing or reallocating when necessary; make recommendation to Trustees by August 2019 as to whether incomplete endowment pools at CCT should be transferred to new investment management firm, and how new contributions to complete endowments at CCT will be invested, e.g. can we split an endowment pool between two managers*)
- Arrange for annual audit and supply all requisite documents for the audit (*Complete audit engagement annually in November; ensure audit is complete annually in April to support on-time tax filings; present audit results to Trustees annually in May; conduct evaluation in October 2020 on whether to engage current auditor for another five years, or issue RFP to evaluate alternatives*)
- Maintain financial solvency by (a) maintaining appropriate cash reserve, (b) limit exposure to financial risk, and (c) allocating sufficient resources to support management's daily operations (*Evaluate and document a cash reserve policy in June 2019 reflecting new FASB guidance on liquidity; review all insurance policies annually in June; ensure operating budget results in positive net unrestricted income as part of annual budget process each October*)

SATISFY CLIENTS AND PATRONS (LEAD: LIAISON COMMITTEE)

- Engage and retain clients, patrons, and friends in the following ways: (a) quantify TREE Fund's outputs, outcomes and contributions to the tree-care industry and urban forest health, safety and resilience, and (b) along with the Research/Education and Communications Committees, gather, track and disseminate grant outcomes and impact (*Release annual findings documented in Research/Education and Communication Committees sections above to Chapters via Liaisons annually in December*)

- Ensure that donors understand the impact of their contributions (*CEO provide signage and related materials to all Chapters via liaisons annually in January to support conferences, etc.*)
- Provide public recognition and appreciation of clients and donors (*Work with Development and Communications Committees to prepare and disseminate a formal annual report of gifts and impacts by May each year, after Audit approval*)
- Promote “friend-raising” by sharing TREE Fund successes, outcomes and impacts (*Ensure TREE Fund representation at all ISA, TCIA and related conferences, with focus on outcomes and impacts, not retail fundraising; CEO develop annual calendar with Liaisons in January annually*)
- Develop mechanisms that open the circle to new groups of prospective donors, supporters and partners (*Work with Development Committee on list of prospects annually in October*)