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In 2017, as the Ironbound Community Corporation’s Strategic Planning Process began, the environment in which the organization found itself was, in some ways, similar to and, in some ways, very different from the environment in which its last Strategic Plan was developed in 2009.

The national election of 2016 had resulted in changes in immigration enforcement policies that threaten thousands of residents of the Ironbound. An unrelenting attack on universal health care had become fair game for attempts at crippling reductions. People antithetical to their positions had been given cabinet posts in education, environmental affairs, and many other departments that might have an impact on ICC’s programs.

The potential impact on the non-profit sector and funding for ICC’s programs was uncertain.

In 2009, the national economy and foundation portfolios were still reeling from the market collapse and recession of 2008. The economy during 2017 and into 2018 has been robust for investors and top corporate executives, but the impact on the average household has clearly been less beneficial. The United Way’s ALICE Report documents that 43% of households in the country struggle at best to make ends meet and are a minor hiccup away from financial disaster.

On the state level, a shift in government towards a more sympathetic administration was about to happen and the Executive Director of ICC was
given a leadership role in the transition work. Relationships in the City government continued to be collegial, despite alternating between partnerships and maintaining adversarial positions, depending upon the issue.

Real estate development continues to be a major factor in the Ironbound and the need to ensure the availability of affordable housing for its residents remains a major challenge for ICC. Further, municipal housing and economic development policies aimed at stimulating growth city-wide were causing grave concerns among Ironbound residents as Zoning changes were significantly increasing density in the already heavily dense Ironbound. ICC had responded with a grass roots Development Without Displacement campaign and legislative initiatives such as Inclusionary Zoning (endorsed by the Mayor) to preserve and expand affordable homes.

The mix of immigrants has changed a great deal since 2009, and helping to meet the needs of undocumented immigrants in this current environment, when ICE and unscrupulous landlords prey upon our vulnerable neighbors, presents growing, intense demands.

Environmental concerns continue to plague the Ironbound, from air quality and noise pollution, to flood mitigation and disaster preparedness, to the need for accessible fresh quality food at reasonable prices. Today, food justice joins environmental justice as a growing concern.

Since 2009, the Early Learning Center had been built and the Early Head Start program established, although the need for additional resources to sustain program quality is a challenge. And, there is now a need to strengthen the elementary and middle school enrichment programs and to extend services to high school students and provide college and career preparation services. There is also an opportunity to expand the full spectrum of youth development and leadership programs to a new location in East Ironbound.

Surveys of board members, staff, program participants, non-participant neighborhood residents and supporters and friends of ICC informed the current strategic planning process. There was a great deal of agreement among all groups regarding the challenges that community residents will be facing in the next three to five years. The top challenge noted was housing, with immigration, education, jobs and healthcare issues taking the next four spots in varying order. The Board included senior citizen services among their top five priorities. Personal safety and code enforcement rounded out the top concerns. Programs for seniors; mental health services for survivors of domestic abuse; and employment preparation, job training and placement programs were also identified as issues by community residents and staff.
The surveys also asked what challenges ICC will be facing in the next three to five years. Government funding and regulations, supporting undocumented immigrants, increasing private funding, mitigating gentrification in the neighborhood, engaging community residents in its work, retaining staff and developing leadership, utilizing technology well and understanding the needs of the changing neighborhood were the top challenges mentioned.

In addition, there were a number of organizational needs identified by senior staff including: increased administrative support, the development of an HR function and the strengthening of ICC’s development department.

Although all audiences rated all of ICC’s programs above 80%, some staff were unfamiliar with the work being done in community organizing and advocacy. The need for comprehensive staff orientation and cross program communications and marketing of ICC’s services has been recognized as an ongoing need. Increased outreach within the community remains a priority. The ability to track participants in a relational database visible to all program units is a capacity desired by many staff members.

Although strides had been made to brand ICC facilities and to improve maintenance of them as a result of the last plan, there is additional work to be done in evaluating real estate assets and opportunities and to develop a comprehensive plan to optimize their utilization. The facility on Elm Street, in particular, was called out in the surveys for the age and condition of the building.

The 2009 Strategic Plan had provided a framework against which substantial organizational development had been achieved, including adding a COO and Development Director to increase administrative capacity, realizing the development of Riverfront Park, expanding the Early Learning Center, developing Down Bottom Farms, and creating a Financial Opportunity Center with job training and placement, but new challenges have created the need and provided pressing priorities to be addressed in a new plan.

Surveys of board members, staff, program participants, non-participant neighborhood residents and supporters and friends of ICC informed the current strategic planning process.
Impact of the 2009 Strategic Plan

The Vision Statement within a Strategic Plan is a narrative document that describes in detail what the future might look like should the Goals and Objectives of the plan be achieved. The Plan’s Goals and Objectives are the business plan, the operational road map for the years of implementation.

It should be noted that in addition to and despite the intentions of a Strategic Plan, there are unforeseen circumstances that arise in the course of implementation. The responsibility of the organization is to be both prepared and nimble to meet these challenges and to capitalize upon unexpected opportunities that may emerge. Two clear examples of this during the last Strategic Plan cycle are the materialization of a generous donor prepared to fund the development of an Early Head Start program and expansion of the Early Learning Center and the unanticipated loss of our senior citizen service contracts.

In addition, there are some objectives that make it into a Plan, are accomplished, and yet make it back into the next Plan because they need to be updated and/or have an ongoing life. An example of this is the 2009 objective “Develop an ICC model for mental health that meets needs of children & families in programs.” This was accomplished, lasted through seven years of funding, and now needs to be re-established and grown.

This report focuses on some of the accomplishments of the last Strategic Plan as a reminder of what planning and dreaming can accomplish. To illustrate this, we utilize quotes from the Vision Statement and the Objectives of the business plan to demonstrate successes. Please remember that the Vision Statements were written in 2009, but as if they had been accomplished by 2012.

“Investing in our children is an important strategy that has paid off.” Couple this Vision with Objective I.g: “Design a continuum of services to children 0-12 years of age.” Of course, this was realized with the development of Early Head Start and the Early Learning Center with the support of a generous gift. The gift was unplanned, but we were able to seize the opportunity and, eventually, all the benefits that have come with it, including two years of funding for a new Chief Operating Officer and being able to meet Objective 6.a: “Assess, modify finances of facilities (refinance, consolidate, etc.).” By using the new building, we were able to refinance the preschool mortgage and save more than $100,000 annually.
“Importantly, mental health services have developed as a fundamental strategy in strengthening individuals and families.” And Objective 1.m: “Develop an ICC model for mental health that meets needs of children & families in programs.” We succeeded in this with a multi-year grant from the Healthcare Foundation of NJ, however, after seven years, the Foundation moved its funding into other program areas. Now, though, we are getting back on track with a new VOCA/Victims of Crime and Abuse grant and hope to grow services.

“Adult education, housing and financial counseling, and home improvement and weatherization programs provide additional ways to help strengthen and empower individuals and families, supporting them in reaching their aspirations and also contributing to a stable community.” This vision had its successes, although limited. We succeeded for a few years with a weatherization program until PSE&G pulled out. Our housing and financial counseling have grown into a Financial Opportunity Center and a Hub for Newark 2020 job training and employment programs.

“ICC knows how to organize people around both community visioning and pressing needs. For example, eight years ago under ICC’s leadership, the community envisioned and mapped new schools, six years ago the community marched to demand the replacement of the oldest, most crowded schools in the City of Newark, and today children attend two new elementary schools—South and Oliver Street Schools—with Hawkins Street School scheduled to begin next year.” A new Hawkins may not be on the horizon, but South Street and Oliver Street Schools are here, in no small measure due to ICC’s never-ending advocacy.

“Likewise, after years of seemingly endless advocacy and meetings, the vision of residents and staff of a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable community has been greatly advanced. Today, children and seniors can enjoy and learn from our new riverfront park with its meandering walkways, outdoor playgrounds and classrooms, boating dock and performance spaces. Further along the eastern riverfront, soccer fields are being constructed. And further to the east, the Essex County Recovery Plant, the incinerator, is operating at lower levels of emissions than in 2009.” All of the above and more are now a riverfront reality—again, in no small measure due to ICC’s leadership. And while we will always want to see the incinerator cease its operations, it did have upgraded technology (baghouse) installed to improve its emissions.

“The recruitment of a seasoned (chief) operating officer, who assumed responsibility for most aspects of the daily operation of the organization, had a dramatic impact within the first six months, freeing the Executive Director for the important task of representing ICC externally and beginning to cultivate prospects that would expand ICC’s resource base.” As previously mentioned, we were able to meet this objective with the support of a major donor’s gift and, of course, have sustained this critical position in the organization.
Within the first three years of the Strategic Plan, ICC implemented a diversified funding strategy that has markedly increased resources... At the end of five years, a range of individuals and corporations are among ICC’s loyal supporters and an annual event raises money and ICC’s visibility in the community, while publicly recognizing the contributions of friends.” While there is more fund raising potential that we can tap into, we have succeeded in putting on an annual event that does raise our public profile and garners a net of approximately $100,000 annually.

A few more Objectives that were realized: 3.d Add availability of “Handyman” to facilitate repairs, 5.i Ensure that ICC facilities reflect brand externally and internally, 6.p Bring on a Development professional, Senior Staff fundraiser, 7.i Add at least 3 new board members.

In the course of implementation, the staff and Board regularly updated the Plan, as illustrated in the 2016 Priority Objectives list. Overall, while there are some Objectives which were never fully completed, given some of our larger successes, the Plan served us well.

2016 Priority Objectives

1. FUND RAISING
   1.1 Program Administration Fees
   1.2 Indirect Federal Rates
   1.3 Grants Research
   1.4 Culture of Giving

2. HUMAN RESOURCES
   2.1 Compensation & Equity
   2.2 Staff Recognition
   2.3 Junior Managers

3. ADMINISTRATION
   3.1 Vetting New Proposals

4. COMMUNITY ISSUES
   4.1 Development & Gentrification
   4.2 Schools
   4.3 Immigration

5. INTER-PROGRAMMING
   5.1 Joint Program Meetings
   5.2 Community Assessments & Program Planning
   5.3 Calendars
   5.4 Client Data Sharing & Mapping

6. FACILITIES
   6.1 Board Facility Committee
   6.2 East & South Ironbound
The design of the methodology for ICC’s Strategic Planning Process was driven by several important ideas:

- We wanted as many people as possible to have input to the Planning Process in different ways.
- We did not want language to be a barrier to providing input.
- We wanted people at all levels of the organization, including program participants and residents to be able to provide input.
- We wanted to encourage people to think outside of their programmatic units and to think about the organization as a whole and how different program units might be able to work together to achieve certain goals.
- We wanted to pick up on some of the Strategic Priorities from the 2009 Strategic Plan that had not been fully achieved and update the organization’s thinking about them.

One version of design thinking, essentially the one we used, utilizes seven steps: define, research, ideate, prototype, choose, implement and learn. Within these seven steps, problems can be framed, the right questions can be asked, more ideas can be created, and the best answers can be chosen. The steps aren’t linear; can occur simultaneously and be repeated.
We wanted to encourage the planning group to think beyond the kind of incremental changes that sometimes limit Strategic Planning. To be able to think of big, new, challenging and exciting ideas that could enhance the Ironbound Neighborhood, support its residents and increase the impact of the organization.

In order to accomplish these ends, we worked with our Strategic Planning Consultants to develop a unique approach to planning, based on some of the ideas important to Design Thinking. These ideas included solution-focused thinking, iterative thinking, and a mix of analysis and synthesis to encourage cross-disciplinary thinking in a unique, visually stimulating info-environment.

Unlike analytical thinking, design thinking includes “building up” ideas, with few, or no, limits on breadth during a “brainstorming” phase. This reduces fear of failure and encourages input and participation from a wide variety of people in the ideation phases. Design thinking taps into the capacities of staff members that they may not have been aware they possessed, such as, creativity, intuition and empathy. Design Thinking begins with empathy. To achieve divergent thinking, it is important to have a diverse group of people involved in the process.

Parameters are applied to the work in the form of constraints that gives the project team a framework from which to begin—such as cost, available tech, and other practical constraints.

The ICC Strategic Planning Process

Surveys of Board, staff, program participants, neighborhood residents not currently participating in ICC programs, and friends and supporters of ICC

The surveys explored respondents’ thoughts and feelings about how well the organization’s programs were meeting theirs and the community’s needs, how well the organization was living its stated values, suggestions of unmet needs and other program models, and open-ended opportunities for comments and suggestions. Surveys were returned by almost 400 people and could be answered on-line or on paper in three different languages.
Research Phase

Board and staff members did further research on areas of concern that emerged from the surveys or had been identified by staff managers at an earlier retreat. This information became the basis for the ICCscape info-environment created as part of the Strategic Planning process. The ICCscape featured kiosks highlighting possible Strategic Priorities for exploration, along with a summary of research findings and challenge questions for each topic.

Reaffirming the Basics

The Strategic Planning group—comprising a Board member, staff members from different program areas and at different hierarchical levels of

List of Participants

Hazel Applewhite, Financial
Irenes Arce, Family Success Center
Esmeralda Barbosa, Early Learning Center
Grace Blanco, Early Learning Center
Nyheim Carter, Youth Representative
Sheena Cherilus, After-School
Ivelisse Colon, Family Success Center
Drew Curtis, Environmental Justice-Community Development
Joseph DellaFave, Administration
Jessica Duran, After-School
Tanisha Garner, Community Member
Ericka Hernandez, Financial Opportunity Center
Maria Lopez-Nunez, Environmental Justice-Community Development
Marly Mattos, Financial Opportunity Center
Jane Mello, Early Learning Center
Melissa Miles, Environmental Justice-Community Development
Luana Miranda, Early Learning Center
Destiny Moreira, Youth Representative
Isabel Pascual, Adult Education
Emily Perez, Mental Health
Rosa Pizaro, Community Member
Mayra Ramirez, Administration
Rafaela Remelgado, Early Learning Center
Crystal Rodriguez, After School
Ana Saguay, Mental Health
Barbara Sarabando, Early Learning Center
Jennifer Stradiotti, Financial
Emily Turonis, Environmental Justice-Community Development
Daniel Joseph Wiley, Environmental Justice-Community Development
Nancy Zak, Environmental Justice-Community Development
the organization, and community residents (adult and high school students)—reviewed and reaffirmed the existing Mission of Ironbound Community Corporation and slightly revised the existing Values. The Mission and Values had been rewritten during the 2009 Strategic Planning process.

Future Vision and Identification of Strategic Priorities

In parallel process, the Strategic Planning Group brainstormed a future vision of ICC, while interacting with an information rich physical installation called the “ICCscape.” It included an abstract cardboard model of ICC and the neighborhood it serves, banners identifying possible Strategic Priority areas derived from the surveys and incorporating the work of the Research Phase in photographs, quotes, infographics, and challenge questions arrayed on piles of cardboard boxes. During this period of creativity and synthesis, there was a great deal of storytelling about the history of ICC and how the organization had come to this point in its history.

Developing the Business Plan

Once the Strategic Priorities had been agreed upon, the planning group broke into program units to develop Goals and Objectives for each one. Priority was assigned and budget implications and ownership defined, as objectives were spread over the three-year period of the plan.

Throughout the process, decisions were made by consensus.
Mission
Ironbound Community Corporation’s mission is to engage and empower individuals, families and groups in realizing their aspirations and, together, work to create a just, vibrant and sustainable community.

Values
ICC is animated by a core group of values, including: mutual respect, empathy, fairness and transparency, commitment to excellence, and accountability.

- **Mutual Respect**: We accept the importance of each person’s rights, customs and wishes. We are courteous and supportive in all of our interactions with clients and colleagues.

- **Empathy**: We strive to understand what others are experiencing and feeling by trying to see things from their perspectives. We are willing to give our time and energy to the community, and are constantly searching for ways to improve the lives of those we serve.

- **Fairness and Transparency**: We are committed to authentic, two-way communication, willing to listen without judgment and, with respect, express our point of view. We cherish diversity and inclusiveness, embracing the community with its input and feedback.

- **Commitment to Excellence**: We provide the highest quality service possible, earning trust and exceeding expectations. We continuously learn from experience. We approach challenges with creativity and flexibility.

- **Accountability**: We are responsible for the quality and outcomes of the programs we provide, for explaining why deviations from reasonable expectations may have occurred, and for responding responsibly at all times, especially when errors in behavior or judgment have happened.
Map of the Ironbound and ICC Locations
Riverfront Park
Product of ICC’s Planning Advocacy and Partnership with County and City

Family Success Center - West / Admin.
317 Elm Street
Newark, NJ 07105
973-465-0555

Ironbound Community Center
432 Lafayette Street
Newark NJ 07105
973-465-0947

Down Bottom Farms
378-395 Ferry Street
Newark NJ 07105

Family Success Center - East
28 Cortland Street
Newark NJ 07105
973-344-5949
Organizational Priorities & Goals

Cross Program
To support cross-functional awareness and cross-marketing and support of all ICC programs, to enhance accountability, and to ensure the continued relevance of ICC programs.

Human Resources
To create an HR function that will help ensure that each employee embraces and lives the ICC Values and sees themselves as a member of the entire organization, not just the program in which they work. To help nurture the organizational culture, while helping employees realize their full professional potential and ensure ICC’s legal compliance.

Development & Marketing
With ICC’s 50th Anniversary in 2019, the organization has a unique opportunity for increased visibility, for expanding our rolls of supporters and donors, and for raising additional funds. This will require regular communications, outreach, and visibility; extensive and successful 50th Anniversary events; and increased fundraising.

Facilities
To fully realize the mission, values, culture, and vision of ICC by optimizing the use of ICC space and facilities. To recommend alternative approaches and opportunities to increase the capacity of ICC’s facilities.

Program Priorities & Goals

Early Learning and Youth Development
Strengthen afterschool and summer camp programs and develop services for children ages 0 to 18 in the underserved East Ironbound Community.

Family Services
To provide additional services to community residents in three focus areas: mental health counseling for victims of domestic violence and PTSD; transportation and home friends programs for seniors; and support services to members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Immigration
Reaffirm our commitment to offer support and programs to all community members in need, irrespective of their immigration status.

Economic Empowerment
To provide financial education, job training and career development services to support personal development and economic stability for families; to collaborate with Newark 2020, businesses and other organizations to enhance employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for residents.

Environmental Justice—Community Development
To provide a holistic and comprehensive approach in addressing issues of equality and justice, including environmental justice, planning and zoning, housing justice, and urban farming; giving voice to and empowering the people of the community; and working with the community to vision, plan and control their community.

Environmental Justice
To address public health issues and environmental abuses, particularly those resulting from environmental racism; to foster clean air, land, and water; to promote zero waste, neighborhood greening, climate resiliency, and toxic clean-ups; to provide community education, information and organizing around these matters.

Housing Justice & Community Development
ICC believes everyone has a right to a quality affordable home. Ironbound Community Corporation’s vision for Housing Justice is to preserve, improve, and develop new opportunities for affordable housing in the Ironbound.

Urban Agriculture
The Urban Agriculture program supports ICCs Just Transition Framework by capturing land for community control and supporting the production of and demand for healthy food. The program provides healthy, sustainable public spaces, which can be venues for community engagement, economic development and education.
By the year 2021, the Ironbound section of Newark is a vibrant and welcoming community in which people of all backgrounds, ethnicities, races, genders and sexual orientations are included in the civic, cultural and economic life of the community. The community’s diverse cultures constantly come together to attend arts and cultural festivals and neighborhood athletic events, walking in Riverfront Park and other green spaces, tending community gardens, and participating in Farmers Markets, flea markets and block parties. People feel safer walking the streets at all times of the day because residents and merchants watch out for one another and have a strong and trusting relationship with a responsive community-oriented police force.

The Ironbound Community Corporation, having significantly improved its capacity and operations through its 2018 Strategic Plan, has been and continues to be an important catalyst to these developments. During the development of its Strategic Plan, ICC affirmed its mission and values and renewed its historical commitment to justice and equity and serving the most vulnerable and underserved, including undocumented residents, the LGBTQ+ community, those living in the most distressed neighborhoods of east and south Ironbound, and the many threatened with displacement by rising housing costs.

To support this renewed and enhanced commitment, ICC successfully invested in two essential resources, its human capital and physical infrastructure, while expanding its services and initiatives.

The Vision Statement within a Strategic Plan is a narrative document that describes in detail what the future might look like should the Goals and Objectives of the plan be achieved.

**Developing the Organization**

To strengthen the social fabric of the organization and ensure its own accountability, ICC looked internally to improve systems. A key move was investing in a Human Resources Manager to create an HR function that helps ensure that each employee embraces and lives the ICC Values and sees themselves as a member of the entire organization, not just the program in which they work. The human resources professional nurtures the organizational culture, while helping employees realize their full professional potential.
Today, ICC’s mission and values are fully embraced and living in all corners of the organization, and HR ensures they are seamlessly woven into every hiring decision, orientation, staff training, and performance review. The Human Resources function is a key resource to all staff and has ensured ongoing staff development, management training, and succession planning at all levels. Stronger because of their consciously shared values and commitment to supporting one another and all residents, staff enjoy their work environment and decisions are made according to the principle of subsidiarity—at the lowest hierarchical level possible.

Today, living our mission, values, and history means every staff person sees themselves as a service worker, community organizer, and ICC ambassador. Whereas fund raising had been the sole province of the Development Director, today everyone can tell the ICC story and talk about the organization’s impact. While ICC’s activism had been the sole province of the Environmental Justice-Community Development Program, it is now living across the agency, primarily as a result of HR management and the cross-training led by the EJ-CD staff, especially trainings in the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing and the Just Transition Framework—grassroots approaches to building a new sustainable society through amplifying community voices, building community control, prioritizing justice—racial, economic, environmental, gender, and more—and ensuring equity.

Today, ICC fully embodies the adage: “Be the change you want to see in the world.”

These investments in human capital increased ICC’s capacity to plan and to seize emerging opportunities, and supported the organization in completing two ambitious capital projects in the last three years: a redeveloped Community Center on Lafayette Street and a new East Ironbound Community Center. ICC’s Lafayette Street property is now a two-story, 12,000 square-foot community center, complementing The Early Learning Center as another jewel of the organization. More importantly, it serves as ICC’s central hub, housing administrative functions, a family services center including the mental health program, the environmental justice and community development programs, and the restored Senior Services program. The Center includes classrooms for child and adult education and training services, and a continuously busy mobile fruit and vegetable co-op that generates annual revenue to support ICC programs. It is both the main walk-in center for the agency and the central nervous system for outreach and organizing. In all aspects, it is the community’s center.

ICC is also occupying a new East Ironbound Community Center. The Center has a new preschool serving 75 children, job training space, and a robust teen center. The East Ironbound Community Center complements the Cortland Street

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Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing

On December 6-8, 1996, forty people of color and European-American representatives met in Jemez, New Mexico, for the Working Group Meeting on Globalization and Trade. The intention was to hammer out common understandings between participants from different cultures, politics and organizations.

The following Jemez Principles for democratic organizing were adopted by the participants:

1. Be Inclusive
2. Emphasis on Bottom-Up Organizing
3. Let People Speak for Themselves
4. Work Together in Solidarity and Mutuality
5. Build Just Relationships Among Ourselves
6. Commitment to Self-Transformation
Family Success Center and Down Bottom Farms, significantly enhancing the partnership with and services for the neighborhood and connecting East Ironbound with the neighborhoods west of St. Charles Street. As a result of this new facility and programs, gang activity and drug addiction among youth in East Ironbound has decreased.

The historic Elm Street property, having served as transition space during the Lafayette Community Center’s redevelopment, is now being assessed for its own redevelopment as either a domestic violence shelter, a senior housing facility or additional program space, such as for vocational training and entrepreneurial activities, a financial education and counseling center, and a small archive and museum of community development in the Ironbound.

These investments not only strengthened outcomes, they bolster ICC’s public standing, and, with a stronger development department, ICC is now well equipped to keep the world informed of its impact. ICC uses multiple communication channels—both traditional and social media—to tell its many compelling stories and to educate residents about its community plans. As part of a development and outreach effort, the organization is sharing its stories with board, staff, community members and supporters through a regular monthly newsletter and timely social media postings and encouraging them to share the stories with others who are not yet connected with ICC. A concerted outreach program is engaging many staff members in developing community partnerships and establishing collaborations with other organizations and institutions throughout Newark. As a result, hundreds of new names and email addresses are added to the development and community outreach database each year, and from them new ICC supporters emerge, augmenting ICC’s advocacy and donor support.
Building upon this expanded base of supporters, there is a robust program of donor cultivation, including various educational tours spanning from environmental-, housing- and social justice-themed, to programmatic and arts and cultural tours throughout the community. Two annual fundraising/friend-raising events bring donors, supporters, community members, and prospects together. As a result of very successful fundraising efforts, the development department now has two full-time staff.

In 2019, ICC celebrated 50 years of service to the Ironbound community and the City of Newark with a number of great celebrations. Through its events and exhibits, ICC’s story has become much more visible in the city as a whole, and many new partners have emerged to help it move forward. The anniversary provided new ways to tell our story—from a special exhibit at the main branch of the Newark Public Library, to the creation of an anniversary book, movies, and videos, and an ICC History Room at Elm Street to contain an ICC archive and changing exhibits about our work. Having reaffirmed a common mission and values, and having embraced the Just Transition framework, the entire ICC board and staff were taught about ICC history and are ambassadors of “being the change you want to see.”

In the course of these celebrations, a number of longtime financial supporters donated $50,000 each in honor of our 50 years of service. The celebrations culminated in the 2019 annual gala that centered around, of course, the 50th Anniversary. This, too, was a smashing fundraising success that, combined with the special Anniversary gifts, netted a total of $250,000 and spurred renewed interest in Board membership.

Expanding Programs

In the years before, during, and after the 50th Anniversary, ICC implemented and realized the many other goals of its 2018 Strategic Plan. From storytelling to fund raising, from job training to immigrant justice services, from mental health to domestic violence services, from clean air to development-without-displacement advocacy, ICC has continued to deepen and expand its work, and impact.

Adding to its impact as a large employer and economic engine in the Ironbound, ICC has built community wealth and stability through expanded adult education, job training, financial counseling, and entrepreneurial development.
Adult education programs have focused on political education in addition to citizenship, GED, ESL and community college classes. In English-speaking areas, classes in Spanish and Portuguese are offered, enhancing the richness of the Iron-bound’s community fabric and diversity. Partially as a result of its participation in Newark 2020, ICC has become a certified vocational training site and, in partnership with local employers, is preparing hundreds of residents each year and placing them in jobs with living wages and benefits. A fruit and vegetable vendors’ co-op has been launched out of the entrepreneurial development program. Practical life skills, career preparation, and leadership development are enhanced with arts, cultural and athletic activities in an effort to provide a safe and nurturing environment for all.

As a safe center for undocumented immigrants, ICC developed a staff-training program that addresses both empathy-building and informational training to enable staff to understand their limitations, even as they offer classes on immigrant rights and direct undocumented immigrants to needed resources. ICC’s immigrant justice pro-bono attorneys offer quarterly open forums, in addition to providing court advocacy services.

For the past 200 years, the globalized industrial withdrawal of natural resources, the over-production, over-consumption, and products—as well as human beings—being seen as disposable have devastated the environment and taken a toll on the Earth’s life support system. Just Transition recognizes the urgency of reversing these destructive trends and immediately creating new systems that will serve as the seeds for a new economy based on local self-determination, resilience, and harmony with the Earth and transitions workers into new jobs accordingly.
ICC has added a new mental health program, with a strong emphasis on combatting domestic violence and supporting women and children, who are often the victims and survivors of it, with education, support groups, counseling and legal services. As a result of ICC’s community assessment, mental health services were expanded to adults and young people in areas such as behavioral health, PTSD, and anger management.

In addition to adding a teen center in East Ironbound, ICC expanded its Youth Development programming so that young people are able to remain in ICC programs from birth through graduation from high school. The afterschool program has been expanded, and the quality of staff training and the curriculum have been strengthened.

Under the direction of a Youth Development Program Director, and with input from a teen advisory group, state-of-the-art programs to deter gang involvement and drug usage and dealing have been developed and implemented for teenagers.

**Enhancing Community Engagement, Progressive Innovation & Public Policy Leadership**

The Urban Agriculture Program expanded with the addition of a greenhouse and a vehicle and, in conjunction with the fruit and vegetable co-op, is recognized as a model of innovation, community and school engagement, and environmental justice advocacy and education. Each year, more community gardens beautify the neighborhood, and affordable nutritious food becomes more available, as we build towards the Just Transition—from polluting to producing value for our community.

In the last three years, ICC has continued its local advocacy and public policy work that have not only delivered incredible dividends but also have implications for the City and State. ICC has played a prominent role with its partners in protecting EJ communities from further environmental harm by engaging with the State in developing new Envi-
Housing justice, development-without-displacement, and holistic community development advocacy have also delivered great dividends. The dignity of the residents of Ironbound’s public and subsidized housing sites, notably Terrell Homes, is intact and they enjoy living in a revitalized, energetic and safer community. Ironbound renters have been protected through a strong rent control education and enforcement campaign and numerous affordable units have been created through the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance that ICC led the passage of and has continued to monitor. Through dialogue with the City and developers, backed by a strong grassroots development-without-displacement constituency, ICC has ensured new developments contribute in various ways to the community’s well being, while minimiz-
ing any negative impact. This has also applied to development in the industrial and port areas surrounding the community, including warehouse development. Through its coalition partners, warehousing has been strictly regulated to ensure environmental sustainability, a new policy requiring retrofitted or post-2007 trucks has been adopted, and accessible living wage jobs have been created. To add to these successes and further set the model for holistic community development, ICC now operates a Community Land Trust with a dozen properties permanently secured for affordability and heightening the public’s consciousness of community control.

The Environmental Justice Program’s clean air ad-

vocacy work has resulted in increasing the tree canopy in the community, reducing truck traffic on local streets, and ensuring that the local incinerator minimizes emissions and violations, while never losing sight of the vision of terminating its operation. ICC’s advocacy has resulted in cleaner air and greater transparency regarding the chemicals and toxic materials stored at all plants. In addition, through education and organizing, code enforcement has been stepped up and residents are more actively engaged in working with the city on countering the effects of climate change, and improving and greening infrastructure to address flooding. The community is better prepared to respond to and recover from disasters. And we are working ceaselessly for a healthy Passaic River.

While there is still much work to be done, the ICC Board, staff and residents of the community stand together and, together, continue to plan for and work towards a strong ICC and a just, vibrant and sustainable community for all.
The Ironbound Community Corporation Strategic Plan 2018-2021 was formally adopted by the Board of Trustees at its April 2, 2018 meeting. It will be launched at an all-staff meeting in June 2018. A copy of the Plan Documents will be distributed to each staff member who wants a paper copy for reference.

PDFs of the Strategic Planning documents will be posted in a Google Drive accessible to all Board and Staff members. A live excel document of the Strategic Priorities and Goals and Objectives will also be placed there for access by Directors and Managers, who will update the plan document at least quarterly. Each objective shall be assigned to an individual “owner,” who may share responsibility with others, but is ultimately accountable for progress and updating of the document.

Following the launches, each program unit will meet to discuss their role in achieving the plan over the coming years, to assign ownership, and to create an annual plan of action to achieve the specific objectives they own or to which they will contribute.

Evaluations & Updating the Plan

Quarterly Reviews of Progress Towards Achievement of the Strategic Plan

Each program unit will provide a quarterly report to the ICC Leadership Team, who will conduct an organization-wide review of progress towards goals quarterly. This review will note goals/objectives achieved, those on track, and those that need attention to ensure successful achievement. The quarterly review process should include 1) an assessment of the major challenges encountered and what resources are needed to address them; 2) an evaluation of actual costs vs. budgeted costs; and 3) an appraisal of any obstacles that are blocking or limiting implementation of the plan.

Should additional goals and objectives be deemed necessary during the course of the plan, an addendum to the plan will be created by the leadership team for review and acceptance by the Board. If necessary, some lower priority goals and objectives may be put on hold or eliminated from the plan in order to create bandwidth for new objectives. These goals and objectives will not be removed from the plan document, but rather, marked: “on hold,” “deferred,” or “eliminated.”

To assist in the evaluation/feedback process, the Excel spreadsheet was designed to be a workable database to store the goals, objectives, resources required, priorities, years, dependencies, responsible parties and notes. This template was developed specifically to assist each function in measuring and recording the Plan’s progress in its respective areas. The file is available to Directors and Managers on the Google drive.
The Leadership Team will also take note of how well program units are working together on shared goals and objectives and address any problems that are evident.

The Leadership Team should consider at each quarterly review whether an all-staff meeting to review the results to date is warranted and desirable. If so, having several meetings each year on the topic of progress towards achieving the Strategic Plan will not only help to maintain focus on the Plan and awareness of what other program units are doing, but also, may help to uncover impediments to achieving the Plan. Celebrating achievements together will not only build ownership of the Plan and excitement around it, but will also provide information and stories about ICC’s successes for all staff to use in doing outreach for the organization.

Annual Review and Planning Process

By the end of August of each year, each program unit (except Environmental Justice-Community Development by the end of November) will create an annual plan for the coming year, incorporating the goals and objectives from the Strategic Plan for which they are responsible or share responsibility. In some cases, program units will have to work with other program units to agree on tactics and milestones and specific responsibilities. These annual program unit plans will become the basis for the work plans of individual staff members.

An annual review of progress towards achieving the Strategic Plan shall take place during December of each year, in preparation for a Report to the Board in January and the Community Accountability Session that will take place each February. At the annual review, the Leadership Team will consider the plan overall and determine whether significant changes are required.

If so, revisions to the plan should be drafted and presented to the Board during the annual Report to the Board.

A presentation regarding progress towards achieving the Strategic Plan will be made by the Leadership Team to the Community during the Community Accountability Session held each February.

The Next Plan

Six months before the end of the current Strategic Plan, the Leadership Team will make a recommendation to the Board of whether it is time to create a new Strategic Plan or whether the current plan should be updated and extended by some period of time—no more than one or two years—in order to be able to complete more of the goals and objectives not yet achieved.
IRONBOUND COMMUNITY CENTER

Adult Education • After School • Essex County College
Financial Opportunity Center • Summer Arts

432 Lafayette Street, Newark, NJ 07105
973-465-0947   FAX: 973-589-4668

IRONBOUND EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Early Head Start • Head Start, Preschool

1 New York Avenue, Newark, NJ 07105
973-589-6873   FAX: 973-589-2479

FAMILY SUCCESS CENTER – WEST

Family Success Center • Environmental Justice & Community Development

317 Elm Street, Newark, NJ 07105
973-465-0555  FAX: 973-465-9505

FAMILY SUCCESS CENTER – EAST

Family Success Center • Community Gardens
East Ironbound Neighborhood Initiative

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