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OUR MISSION

The INS Group helps nonprofits, government agencies, and faith-based institutions **create innovative solutions** to build their capacity and sustain their programs and services.

We accomplish this by assessing, designing, and implementing organizational development strategies that focus on improving effectiveness and enhancing the organization's sustainability. The INS Group was established in 1999 and provides organizational development and capacity building services nationally.

Message from the President



It's an exciting time for everyone here at The INS Group. We are thrilled to announce the launch of our [new website](#), which offers a fresh redesign and showcases our expanded consulting work and partnerships with nonprofits, faith-based institutions, and government agencies nationwide.

In recent months, our work supporting nonprofit agencies has taken The INS Group to Virginia, Georgia, and Washington, D.C. We've conducted strategic planning and other consulting work for an incredible range of organizations and coalitions that support filmmakers, prevent gang violence, and enhance childcare-serving organizations' capacity to collaboratively address the needs of children.

In addition, in the last year, The INS Group has secured continued contracts with the U.S. Department of Labor –Office of Apprenticeship and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for projects with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Office of Grants Management Systems (OGMS).

Our team is energized by the opportunity to help grow the capacity of organizations and agencies conducting life-changing work throughout this country. We look forward to hearing from you regarding your organizational needs in 2018!

Warmest regards,

Ruth A. Peebles, President
The INS Group

Introducing...the New INS Group Website!

The INS Group is thrilled to announce the launch of its redesigned website for clients! Now it's easier than ever to learn about our services for nonprofits, faith-based institutions, and government agencies.

Here are a few things you'll learn about The INS Group as you explore our site:

- **Who is The INS Group?** Read [our team's bios](#).
- **Who are our clients?** The INS Group is proud to support a variety of organizations and agencies nationwide. [View our Client List](#).
- **What training opportunities does The INS Group offer?** We provide affordable virtual and in-person [learning opportunities](#) year-round.
- **What Government Contracting services are available?** Read The INS Group's [Capability Statement and core competencies](#).



Don't Miss the Next INS Group Webinar

Sustainable Fundraising

Thursday, September 20

2:00-3:00pm EST

[REGISTER](#)

Program Evaluation: Possible, Practical, and Painless

Thursday, November 8

2:00-3:00pm EST

[LEARN MORE](#)

How to Hire a Great Development Director

It's a question most nonprofit leaders face during their tenure: How do I hire a great Development Director to help my organization thrive and achieve its mission?

Whether you're ready to hire a seasoned veteran or a rising star, there are a number of considerations to keep in mind as you make this important decision. In this article, three nonprofit executives share their top strategies for hiring the ideal Development Director for any organization.

1. Determine the skill set you need—and don't compromise.

When [Haven House Services](#), a nonprofit agency providing community-based services to at-risk youth and families in Raleigh, North Carolina, began searching for a Development Director two years ago, the organization made sure to explicitly describe their ideal candidate and desired professional experiences in the job description. "This was a new position for us," says Michelle Zechmann, Chief Executive Officer of Haven House. "So we were really clear that while we had put much of the infrastructure in place, this was going to be a startup position."



In particular, Haven House was looking for someone who “was able to hit the ground running and had experience with events, donor relations, and communications,” says Zechmann. “We also needed someone who was able to assess our internal processes and procedures to make sure we were being as effectively as possible.” To help identify the right candidate, Haven House’s interview questions addressed existing needs around major gifts, communications, and development strategy. In addition, the interview team posed a number of “scenario” and “competency” questions for candidates—such as how they would help a Board member successfully engage a potential large-gift donor, or how they would navigate soliciting grant information from colleagues under tight deadlines.

2. Engage staff and Board members in the hiring process.

“An effective interview process includes comprehensive questions and participation from staff, Board members, and stakeholders,” advises Ruth Peebles, President of The INS Group and former Executive Director of the Raleigh/Wake Partnership to End and Prevent Homelessness. Boards of Directors can form a Resource Development Committee responsible for writing interview questions or conducting interviews with Development candidates, Peebles suggests.

Haven House conducted two rounds of interviews with Development Director candidates: the first with the organization’s CEO, Human Resources Director, and Chief Financial Officer, and the second with Haven House’s Board Chair, CEO, and four other Board members.

In addition to including Board members and staff in the interviewing process, Peebles advises organizations to include a larger swath of stakeholders—including partners, donors, and volunteers. Bringing in stakeholders from outside the organization can help nonprofits assess candidates’ ability to work collaboratively while emphasizing the importance of stakeholders’ contributions to the organization.

3. Ask candidates to identify specific fundraising successes or outcomes.

Haven House’s interview questions addressed candidates’ development and donor stewardship philosophies while also asking about specific “wins” around fundraising. Sample questions included:

- Tell us about a favorite donor from a previous organization—what makes them your favorite donor experience?
- What is the most challenging gift or major gift you have ever personally solicited? What made it tough? Were you proud of the outcome? If you could do it again, what would you do differently and why?

In addition to having candidates share their experiences, organizations should reach out to three references and ask them to describe specific successes that candidates have achieved.

4. Hire a candidate who is passionate about your organization’s mission and vision.

Development work is difficult, often requiring employees to work long hours during the evenings and weekends. “Candidates must be truly passionate about the mission and vision of the organization—or similar work,” says Peebles.

Treat Harvey, Senior Donor Engagement Officer at the [Triangle Community Foundation](#), echoes this sentiment. A longtime supporter of the arts, Harvey channeled this passion during her tenure as Development Director for the [Carolina Theatre of Durham](#), where she focused on growing the organization’s donor base from 300 to 800 individuals over a span of four years.

Those efforts paid off in 2015 when the Theatre announced a \$1.6 million deficit—a true financial crisis. Over the next year and a half, Harvey was able to leverage the relationships she had cultivated with donors—as well as a matching \$600,000 grant from the City of Durham—to help the Theatre reach its fundraising goal seven months early. Today, the Theatre enjoys a robust following and sustained development efforts.

5. Ensure the Executive Director and Development Director are on the same page about fundraising and development strategy.

“The best Development Directors I’ve seen have a great relationship and shared vision with their CEO or Executive Director,” says Harvey. She warns nonprofits not to hire a Development Director and expect them to solve all the organization’s fundraising and financial woes singlehandedly.

“Development is about the cultivation of relationships. It’s a process. It’s not about one miracle person asking for money in a vacuum,” explains Harvey. “It’s an integrated system and strategy.” She recommends that organizational leaders ask themselves two important questions before starting the interviewing and hiring process:

- Does the CEO understand realistically what fundraising is?
- Does the Board of Directors support that vision and strategy?

In the first sentence of its job description, Haven House emphasized the collaborative relationship between the CEO and the Development Director. During interviews, Haven House also shared their four-year Development plan with candidates and explained the different internal teams the Development Director would participate in and prepare reports for, including a Resource Development Committee and management team. These efforts helped clarify expectations and ensure that the organization’s new Development Director would be ready to work on Day One.

Click the links to access these great resources shared by Haven House Services:

[Development Director job description](#)

[Round 1 Interview Questions](#)

[Round 2 Interview Questions](#)



CLIENT SPOTLIGHT:

Danville River District Association

Since 1999, the [Danville River District Association \(RDA\)](#) of Danville, Virginia has dedicated itself to [revitalizing](#) the city's Downtown Historic District. During the 19th century, Danville flourished as an industrial town producing tobacco and textiles. In 1995, Danville was added to the National Register of Historic Places, a designation that the city has used to successfully cultivate cross-sector support for its revitalization efforts.

In 2017, RDA hired Executive Director Diana Schwartz to lead a new stage in the organization's growth. "When I started, the organization had established itself, hired staff, and put a framework in place. But people were asking, 'Now what?'" remembers Schwartz, who joined RDA in August 2017. "We were at that stage where we needed firmer direction."

The organization had already conducted a core capacity assessment that provided RDA with ideas and recommendations for future growth. In addition, Schwartz brought more than 20 years of executive leadership experience in community redevelopment efforts, including several years in Ocala, Florida as Director of Business Retention and the city's [Main Street](#) program.

In late 2017, RDA reached out to The INS Group to conduct a strategic planning retreat that would produce a well-defined transformation plan for the city's River District. Because Danville is a [Main Street America community](#), the city needed to incorporate a [four-point transformation strategy](#) that has been successfully implemented in nearly 1,600 locations nationwide over the last 30 years.

At the heart of RDA's strategic planning process were three foundational questions: Who was Danville? Who was RDA? And what was the RDA's revitalization strategy moving forward? "When I first contacted Ruth, what I explained was we really needed to step back and look at where RDA was in the community and what identified our overarching goals," says Schwartz. "It was quite a deep process."

Schwartz and RDA's Board of Directors worked with The INS Group to identify RDA's strengths and weakness and then create two strategic plans: one for governance and resource development and a second for community engagement and

programming. "The INS Group is amazing in all areas, but it has exceptional strength in governance and operations," observers Schwartz. "Sometimes you can't see the forest through the trees. The INS Group was able to, with laser focus, help us develop that plan. It was almost like building a new foundation, and they and our Board of Directors did a great job."

Since completing the strategic planning process, RDA has spearheaded its implementation plan by developing training for its Board of Directors, public events, and new volunteer engagement strategies. In addition, the organization has successfully increased its donor and funder bases, receiving more than \$765,000 in multi-year grant support since August 2017.

"RDA is charged with a very big job: the revitalization of our downtown," reflects Schwartz. "If you can increase the tax base, it's more money for everyone in the city and community. But we have to show value to the community. RDA doesn't exist just to exist. We exist to provide for the community."

Today, RDA has transitioned from Stage I of the planning process—which Schwartz cheerfully refers to as "Gathering Financial Capital"—and is now in Stage II, "Gathering Human Capital." The organization continues to recruit and train volunteers as well as develop training opportunities for Board members, including fundraising and long-term resource development planning.

"We are getting ready to hit the road and implement all the wonderful ideas for programs and services we came up with during the strategic planning process with The INS Group," says Schwartz. "We're really excited. Now that people understand more about where we're going and what we're doing, we have people who want to get involved and want to help. I'm so grateful to the RDA Board of Directors and The INS Group for going with me on the journey!"

Does your nonprofit need help with strategic planning or Board training? [Contact The INS Group](#) today!



4 Steps for Jump-Starting Young Nonprofits

Growing a budding nonprofit is an exciting and hectic time: developing a mission, cultivating a Board of Directors, filing legal paperwork, navigating fundraising, and much more. Yet a 2018 survey of more than 1,000 nonprofit leaders found that while 90% of organizations have a strategic plan, [fewer than half consulted it during the year](#). Furthermore, a 2016 report found that only 75% of nonprofits with budgets of \$2 million or less [have any fundraising plan whatsoever](#).

Here are four steps that new nonprofit organizations can take immediately to jump-start their growth and impact—and stay sustainable for the long haul.

1. Establish (or enhance) your strategic and fundraising plans.

Strategic plans are critical for ensuring that nonprofits achieve their mission through successful programming and fundraising. In addition to establishing short and long-term goals for an organization, strategic plans typically include foundational elements such as mission and vision statements, a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), general strategies, evaluation processes, and input from stakeholders (e.g. staff,

Board of Directors, clients, community members).

Fundraising can be addressed in a strategic plan, but ideally organizations will have separate, well-defined plans for each. Areas that nonprofits should consider as they develop a fundraising plan include community needs, organizational funding needs, fundraising methodology, donor and volunteer recognition processes, administrative systems and procedures, staffing, timelines, and more.

The National Center for Nonprofits offers a number of excellent free tools and resources for [strategic planning](#) and [fundraising](#).

2. Strengthen the Board of Directors.

In the early years of a nonprofit, the Board of Directors plays a particularly important role in bolstering the organization with members' time, talent, and treasure. (Organizations headed by a lone Executive Director or with limited staff particularly understand this.)

In addition to serving as advocates for a nonprofit's mission, Board members also have the critical responsibility of adopting sound governance policies related to the organization's strategic direction, fundraising, conflicts of interest, and executive compensation. Consider developing an orientation or training session to acquaint Board members with these duties, as well as an informal Board member contract that outlays expectations.

[Grantspace](#), [Nonprofitready.org](#), and [BoardSource](#) all offer free training opportunities and resources for nonprofits around Board development.

3. Deepen partnerships. As your organization works to secure more resources and support, remember that partnerships with other nonprofits, community groups, businesses and

corporations, schools, and volunteers will always play a critical role in your nonprofit's success.

Growing relationships means spreading awareness—and in fundraising, relationships are everything. Work with staff and Board members to identify opportunities that the organization can use to strategically build alliances and goodwill within the community. For instance, consider partnering with another nonprofit to plan a small public event, and reach out to local businesses and groups to offer volunteer opportunities. Eventually, these relationships can lead to in-kind gifts, corporate sponsorships, and long-term funding relationships.

Read more about organizational partnerships and types at [Strengthening Nonprofits](#).

4. Assess your organization's impact.

No matter how your nonprofit chooses to measure success, it will need a concrete plan for collecting impact data. This information is critical for conducting storytelling about your organization with clients, donors, and the general public. It is also typically required for grant applications and reports.

Developing a theory of change for your nonprofit will help staff and Board members understand and articulate the organization's available resources, key activities, outputs, outcomes, and social impact. Keep in mind that some measures (e.g. increase in clients' self-esteem) are more difficult to assess than others—but that by no means diminishes their value.

[Donorbox](#) and the [Stanford Social Innovation Review](#) feature useful blog posts about evaluation and measuring social impact.

Thirty-nine states have a state association designed to assist nonprofits. Visit the [National Council of Nonprofits](#) to find yours!

CONTACT THE INS GROUP

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The INS Group can assist you with:

- Organizational Assessments
- Strategic Planning
- Strategic Fund Development Planning
- Board Development
- Grant Writing and Research
- Board Fundraising Training
- Executive Coaching
- Project Management
- Marketing Communication