

# STRATEGIC PLAN

Junior League of Annapolis, Inc.

2017/18 – 2021/22

## Executive Summary

Junior League of Annapolis, Inc. is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable. It reaches out to all women of any race, religion, or national origin who demonstrate an interest in and a commitment to voluntarism. Junior League of Annapolis, Inc. trains members to act effectively as community volunteers through an established leadership-training curriculum.

In 1901, Mary Harriman, a 19-year-old New York City debutante with a social conscience, founded the first Junior League. Moved by the suffering she saw around her, Harriman mobilized a group of 80 other young women, hence the name “Junior” League, to work to improve the squalid conditions in which immigrants were living on the Lower East Side in Manhattan. Since its inception, it has grown to 296 Junior Leagues in the United States, England, Canada and Mexico.

In 1948, eight Junior League members living in Anne Arundel County formed a group interested in implementing volunteer projects in the Annapolis area. Although they were members of the Junior League of Baltimore, their foremost interest was in their own community. As the group grew in number and expertise, it re-evaluated its structure and eventually became the Annapolis Committee of the Junior League of Baltimore, Inc. This branch voted in February 1981, to incorporate as the Junior Service League of Annapolis and to apply for membership in the Association of Junior Leagues. With a current membership of over 300 women who donate over 20,000 service hours annually, our work has won us dedicated community and corporate partners, loyal supporters and passionate members for more than 35 years in the community.

Our purpose, as articulated in our bylaws, is to make Anne Arundel County a place where all women and children are able to reach their full potential. We value the power of voluntarism, the diverse community in which we live, the talents, commitment, and contribution of our members, and our history of community impact and involvement.

In developing this strategic plan, our ultimate goal is to build on our rich history, to secure the future of women’s civic leadership for generations to come, and to ensure the continued effectiveness for our members.

## Overarching Goals

At our core, Junior League of Annapolis, Inc. has four major functions – community service, fiscal responsibility, communication, and membership – which support our mission. These functions are the basis that helps develop, enable and empower our membership to build a

better Anne Arundel County. We will accomplish this by creating the capacity in developing women as lifelong community and civic leaders who serve as catalysts of lasting community change.



## Developing a Strategic Road Map

The Board of Directors assigned a three member team of board members and one consultant to do a needs assessment, develop themes, and author the 2017/18 – 2021/22 Strategic Plan, which was finalized in April 2017. The Overarching Goals articulate the Board's view in the broadest sense. The additional objectives further define the Overarching Goals. The Board reviews the Goals yearly to ensure that council and committee goals are aligned with the themes of our plan: Engagement, Voluntarism, and Diversity.

Below is a depiction of the process that was taken throughout the course of 2016 – 2017.



The team assessed the league’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (SWOC) through a structured planning method that evaluates those four elements of a project or business venture. Next they conducted several focus group sessions with league members in the status active, consulting, and sustainer where they addressed seven strategic questions that impact every aspect of JLA:

1. What part of the JLA mission drives you?
2. Fill in the blank: If we only had \_\_\_\_\_, we could achieve our mission.
3. What keeps us from retaining members that have been with us over 5 years? Less than 3 years?
4. How we will need to change for the next generation?
5. What does your ideal vision of the League look like in 5 years?
6. What needs to change to get there?
7. How does our financial model need to change for this 5-year outlook?

The feedback from these focus groups and written feedback following a diversity and inclusion GMM panel were assessed and compiled to determine primary themes and common ideas and priorities. Members spoke consistently about the issues of member engagement, communication, and retention. They also raised concerns about the financial stability and branding of the league and seemed interested in reevaluating the league’s community impact initiatives and projects as well. When asked to reflect on diversity and inclusion in the league, they were interested in prioritizing training in the area and seemed interested in increasing the diversity of the membership to better reflect that of our surrounding community.

## Goals and Objectives

The Strategic Plan is organized by the four Goals summarized on page two of this document. Each of the following Goals addresses significant areas of work for the league.

Goal 1: Recruit and retain engaged and committed members who reflect the diversity of our community.

- Objective: Implement core values of diversity and inclusion.
- Objective: Update mission-based JLA marketing materials for the JLA website, recruiting, and social media that reflect the diversity of our membership.
- Objective: Improve the membership experience to increase retention of members during their active membership period by 20% by 2021/22 league year.
- Objective: Reinforce the JLA mission so that it is tied into every league event and activity.

Goal 2: Research and evaluate a signature issue that impacts our community's needs, and then develop and implement JLA programming to address the issue.

- Objective: Partner with government agencies, elected officials and/or nonprofits to determine potential issue areas.
- Objective: President will reinstate the Community Advisory Group to advise the league on the development, implementation, and measure(s) of community project success.
- Objective: Educate and train the membership on the focus and issue area of our selected issue area throughout the five years.
- Objective: Execute project selection process to address the developed signature issue by 2019/20 (depending on year cycle of selection process).

Goal 3: Implement a stable financial management process to reduce fundraising events, increase sustainability, and engage the community.

- Objective: Reduce the number of JLA fundraising events by the end of the 2021/22 league year to one signature event that includes 50% non-league participation.
- Objective: Increase annual campaign member participation by 10% each year for five years.
- Objective: Develop a five-year financial model that moves us to a forward based budget and provides a diversified fundraising strategy process by the end of 2021/22 league year.

Goal 4: Research, develop, and implement a strong training program focused on leadership development by the 2019/20 league year.

- Objective: Create, implement, and maintain consistent JLA training to build membership accountability and communication for all leadership levels (committee members, chairs, and board/management team members).

## Conclusion

Over the next five years we will continue to make progress on our initiatives first articulated in our prior strategic plans, as updated and revised in this plan. In doing so, we will move toward accomplishing the overarching goal of creating the capacity in JLA to promote voluntarism, develop the potential of women, and improve the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers.

The following pages review the SWOC Analysis that was conducted during this process.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Challenges (SWOC) Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-networked membership</li> <li>• Large number of resources that we can tap into</li> <li>• Anne Arundel County community is a diverse community</li> <li>• Variety of fundraisers</li> <li>• Creative membership</li> <li>• Passionate members who are invested in the long term goals of the JLA</li> <li>• Members express early interest in leadership</li> <li>• Sustainer Director provides voice on board</li> <li>• Flexible membership model</li> <li>• We recruit many interested women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of visibility in the community</li> <li>• Shorter term projects make it hard to get funding</li> <li>• We do not maintain the relationships that we build</li> <li>• Passionate members do not always agree with the vision</li> <li>• Insensitivity and careless language</li> <li>• Assumptions about homogeneity</li> <li>• Socioeconomic expectations or assumptions may keep some people from considering membership</li> <li>• The amount of money raised is not communicated well</li> <li>• We solicit the same organizations multiple times</li> <li>• Most of our profits come from our league members</li> <li>• Ineffective publicity for events</li> <li>• We schedule fundraising events on top of other league events</li> <li>• Our events currently don't always target community / interests</li> <li>• Perceived dissatisfaction with projects and programs</li> <li>• Committee sizes/resource allocation need to be reviewed</li> <li>• Lack of connection within the membership</li> <li>• Lack of follow up about why people are leaving</li> <li>• Sustainers do not re-engage after going sustainer so they are unaware of JLA structural/programming changes</li> <li>• We lose tradition as placement/status changes</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximize the impact of our projects</li> <li>• Build and maintain relationships with businesses, community leaders, and elected officials</li> <li>• Strengthen our brand message</li> <li>• Develop ongoing chair training</li> <li>• Build an atmosphere of awareness and sensitivity among the membership</li> <li>• Reassess the role/responsibilities of committee chairs</li> <li>• Engage active members, sustainers, and the community in publicity and planning of events</li> <li>• Develop projects that address major community needs</li> <li>• Have a membership that mirrors the Anne Arundel County community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most organizations have set schedules/venues for their community outreaches and we do not</li> <li>• We have many non-profits that compete for our membership's volunteer time</li> <li>• Historical reputation of the Junior League as being prejudiced</li> <li>• Numerous non-profits in our area</li> <li>• JLA is no longer well known in the community</li> <li>• We live in an active, diverse community so we often schedule on top of major community events and religious/cultural holidays</li> <li>• Member burn-out</li> <li>• Inconsistent expectations for membership</li> <li>• Sustainer events sometimes conflict with the active events</li> </ul>

Strategic plan

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diversify our recruiting pool</li><li>• Educate new members about member expectations</li><li>• Review committee placement</li><li>• Maintain an accessible and objective history of each year’s work</li><li>• Build more continuity on fundraising committees</li><li>• Develop a more strategic and centralized approach in soliciting donations</li><li>• Target publicity so that the community attends events</li><li>• Increase sustainer engagement</li><li>• Reinvigorate the community advisory board</li><li>• Take advantage of our many resources – AJLI, JLA</li><li>• Leverage members’ networks</li><li>• Increase manpower needed for committees who need more resources</li><li>• Better publicize events to the membership</li><li>• Collect follow up data when people leave</li><li>• Leverage members who are passionate to guide new members</li></ul>	
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