

Arbor Brothers Development Rubric for Second-Stage Organizations (2018)

OUTCOMES-FOCUSED CULTURE: To what degree has leadership internalized the mindset, developed the systems and built the team necessary to efficiently generate outcomes?

		1 - Getting Started	2 - Making Progress	3 - Meeting Basic Standards	4 - Optimizing Outcomes	Tools and Systems	
OUTCOMES-FOCUSED CULTURE (Multi-year horizon)	Program Alignment	Target population	No standards for participant eligibility or selection; haphazard dosage and quality of engagement; no key outcome(s) by which to judge success or outcomes identified but not meaningful; no useful Theory of Change (ToC), short slide deck, 1-pager or master grant application	Developing standards around participant eligibility but little deliberateness in selection; general goals for duration of engagement, though still considerable variation; some questions about impact plausibility; key outcome(s) identified and meaningful, but not carefully defined; ToC, 1-pager, short slide deck and/or master grant application articulating program and goals are extant but dated or inconsistently shared	Fairly clear standards for participant eligibility with few exceptions; most participants selected with deliberateness; thoughtful guidelines for engagement duration with little variation; periodic spot-checking of program fidelity; likely that this dosage and activity set will lead to target outcomes; key outcome(s) identified, meaningful and carefully defined - though not internalized by most staff; program structure and goals can be (but aren't consistently) effectively communicated by ToC, 1-pager, short slide deck, and/or master grant application	Crystal clear standards for participant eligibility with very few exceptions; all participants selected with deliberateness; codified curriculum/guidelines for program; little variation in execution; frequent spot-checking of program fidelity; very likely that this dosage and activity set will lead to target outcomes; key outcome(s) identified, meaningful and carefully defined - and internalized by most staff and board chair; continuous analysis of program with outcomes in mind ("to what end?"); program structure and goals are consistently communicated via the ToC, 1-pager, short slide deck and/or master grant application	Theory of change (ToC); 1-pager; short slide deck; master grant application
		Activities and dosage	Leadership often struggles to make difficult choices in a timely fashion; "fire drill" / crisis atmosphere common; leadership frequently distracted by off-mission opportunities; no formal planning or budget approval process; resources allocated without regard to Theory of Change (ToC); no attempt to estimate or track unit costs (i.e. expenses per participant, output or outcome)	Leadership sometimes struggles to make difficult choices in a timely fashion; occasional "fire drill" / crisis atmosphere; leadership has a hard time distinguishing between potentially valuable and merely distracting opportunities; some big picture expense forecasting, but budget is very fluid or quickly-ignored; most resource allocation is aligned with ToC, but significant spending is less targeted to outcomes; superficial attempts to estimate or track unit costs (i.e. ignoring overhead or multi-year nature of program)	Leadership mostly maintains focus (in the face of challenges) on key organizational priorities; difficult choices only occasionally cause indecision; leadership largely ignores off-mission opportunities; basic assumptions-driven expense forecasting; budget is lightly-vetted by the board and periodically referred back to; large majority of expenditures aligned with ToC; periodic analysis of resource allocation; thoughtful attempts to define and track costs per participant by program	Leadership unafraid to make difficult choices; judgment proving to be sound; ability to recover/pivot when something goes awry; leadership carefully analyzes opportunities in light of ToC; ignores distractions but pursues innovation with discipline; budgeting is assumptions-driven and appropriately detailed; board interrogates projections thoroughly; almost all expenditures aligned with ToC; consistent, disciplined analysis of resource allocation to better deliver outcomes; working towards a cost per outcome calculation (adequately reflecting overhead, years of dosage, success rates, etc.)	
		Key outcomes					
		Codification					
	Resource Allocation	Decisiveness					
	Data	Learning agenda	Little or no awareness of programmatic weak points to be investigated; little or no consistent data collected on participants; little evidence of impact; mostly anecdotes and surveys; time is not carved out to reflect on programmatic data and outcomes; results are not conveyed logically, concisely, or with quantitative support	Emerging awareness of programmatic weak points; some hypotheses around potential program improvements; mostly tracking inputs and outputs; excitement around prospect of tracking outcomes; actively building reasonable data management system; collects and reports data, but mostly on participant demographics and program outputs; potential for impact becoming clearer; interested in developing a data-reflective culture; beginning to marshal quantitative evidence to buttress claims of impact	Areas of program weakness are identified and informally targeted for improvement; data capture process is mostly systematic; dashboard features key data and leading indicators (though may lack definitions, targets or brevity); data suggests program effectiveness; some reporting and analysis of relevant metrics, though not consistent and often with a lag; periodic course corrections; quantitative evidence is often used to underscore program impact	Program weaknesses / potential improvements consistently targeted through clear learning agenda; staff trained to capture data consistently and accurately; dashboard features clearly defined leading indicators, historical data and target outcomes; data provides very strong evidence for program impact, possibly including an external evaluation; org pushes back on funders demanding irrelevant data; stakeholders seek frequent data-informed course corrections to programming; quantitative evidence is consistently used to underscore impact; value proposition (possibly including ROI or avoided costs) is clear	Measureable outcomes and tracking systems; dashboard
		Tracking and targets					
		Corroborating results					
		Reflective practice					
		Compelling articulation					
	Leadership and Team	Roles and goals	Most job descriptions are absent, thin or outdated; staff and leadership lack clear goals; leadership does not motivate staff; leader has no clear or inspiring vision; rationale for org changes rarely explained; no cadence for checking in on goals or providing feedback to staff; only a few members of the team feel ownership of individual and org-wide goals and work hard to achieve them; ED checked-out or disconnected from staff; hiring processes are constantly rushed and unsystematic; no onboarding plan; multiple underperforming employees stick around for long periods of time	Perfunctory job descriptions; some targets for senior leadership are set; leadership intermittently rallies staff around particular initiatives; leader is sometimes inspiring but the vision changes or lacks clarity; working towards a performance management system; some members of the team feel ownership of individual and org-wide goals and work hard to achieve them; best job candidates hired even if they do not necessarily meet the standard; minimal onboarding; underperformers are put on notice, but not coached up or out with pace	Job descriptions are clear and up-to-date; targets for leadership and staff are set; emerging accountability culture; leadership makes consistent effort to motivate staff; leader's vision is clear; performance management systems are being tested or implemented; most members of the team feel ownership of individual and org-wide goals and work hard to achieve them; hiring process becoming increasingly rigorous and standardized; onboarding checklist; underperformers are informally coached up or out with appropriate speed	Compelling external job descriptions with detailed internal versions; clear targets for most/all members of team; leadership consistently succeeds in motivating staff; rationale for org changes consistently explained; org vision is clear, inspiring and almost universally shared; robust performance management system with opportunities for rich feedback; leadership consistently models and reinforces exemplary behavior for staff; near universally-shared culture of high expectations and accountability; thoughtful and rigorous hiring process yielding strong candidates; well-developed onboarding ramp; underperforming employees swiftly helped or removed	Job descriptions (external and internal); org chart; multi-step hiring process; onboarding plans; performance management system and calendar
		Vision and motivation					
Accountability and feedback							
Ownership							
Transitions							
Board	Composition	Little or no diversity of background or perspective on board; mostly friends & family "founding board"; informal or infrequent meetings; poor attendance; thin or absent agendas and materials; no board member job description; board acts as a rubber stamp; only passing familiarity with outcome targets and program challenges; board often confuses important topics from unimportant topics	Some diversity of background or perspective on board; mix of friends, family and outsiders; periodic meetings with somewhat mixed attendance; loose agenda and some materials; fully-formed board but either low-functioning or micromanaging; generic board member job description; board leading the organization, but directionally misaligned with leadership; board sometimes asks important questions and sometimes gets lost in minutiae or process; interest in learning more about program performance and outcomes	Meaningful but suboptimal diversity of background or perspective on board; needs and roles identified & actively being recruited to fill; few friends & family board members; regular meetings, mostly well-attended (65-80%); meetings focus on important topics; tailored board member job description; board broadly aligned with leadership's priorities; shared reflection on and some shared ownership for key org goals	Broad diversity of background and perspective on board; very few or no friends & family board members; multiple members have experience on other boards; regular meetings scheduled with strong (80-100%) attendance; materials and agendas are thoughtfully prepared and distributed well in advance; board member job descriptions complete and rigorous; board highly aligned with leadership's priorities; board holds leadership accountable for meeting dashboard targets and learning agenda; conversations consistently focused on important topics	Board job descriptions; give/get guidelines; meeting materials and agendas	
	Engagement						
	Alignment						
	Ownership						

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SUSTAINABILITY: To what degree is the organization able to meet its financial obligations, staff needs, and governance requirements today and in the future?

		1 - Getting Started	2 - Making Progress	3 - Meeting Basic Standards	4 - Sustainably Serving		
SUSTAINABILITY (Multi-year horizon)	Revenue Generation	<i>Prospect management</i>	No system in place for managing leads and asks; little proactive research or prioritization; very poor follow-up; 0-25% of revenue is highly predictable (defined as multi-year pledges, board giving or three years of repeat donations); 0-2 \$50k+ donations in previous fiscal year; very substantial single funder risk (>50% of revenue); no opportunity for or investigation of earned income streams; little or no visibility into prospect backlog	Informal system for managing leads and asks; some prospect research; inconsistent or delayed follow-up; 25-50% of revenue is highly predictable; 3+ \$50k+ donations previous fiscal year but 0 \$100k+ donations; sizeable single funder risk (33-50% of revenue); pilot earned-income strategies in development, where applicable; some visibility into backlog; prospects may support some growth	Functional system for managing leads and asks; prospect research helps inform priorities; follow-up mostly consistent though with occasional dropped-balls; 50-75% of revenue is highly predictable; 1-3 \$100k+ donations in previous fiscal year; modest single funder risk (15-33% of revenue); promising earned-income strategies in place, where applicable; good visibility into backlog; prospects likely to support reasonable growth	Highly-effective system for managing leads and asks; research always informs priorities; follow-up consistent and timely; >75% of revenue is highly predictable; >4 \$100k+ donations in previous fiscal year; little or no single funder risk (0-15% of revenue); earned-income strategies, where applicable, are being optimized; clear visibility into backlog; prospects poised to support substantial growth	Revenue tracking system; prospect management tool
		<i>Consistency</i>					
		<i>Balance</i>					
		<i>Earned income</i>					
		<i>Backlog</i>					
	Finances	<i>Expense tracking</i>	No comparison of budgeted to actual expenses; little or no ability to project near-term cash balances; living hand to mouth; missed payroll at least once in last 12 months	Minimal annual analysis comparing budgeted to actual expenses; some sense of how much cash there will be 3 months from now; minimum 1-2 months of cash to fund operations on hand	Intra-year comparison and simple analysis of budgeted to actual expenses; confident estimate of what cash balance will be 3 months from now; minimum 3-6 months of cash to fund operations on hand	Quarterly comparison of budgeted to actual expenses with thoughtful analysis of variance; confident estimate of what cash balance will be 6+ months from now; 7+ months of cash to fund operations on hand	Multi-year, assumptions-driven financial model
		<i>Cash flow visibility</i>					
		<i>Reserves</i>					
	Leadership and Team	<i>Talent bench</i>	ED alone in management; no pipeline of potential leadership team yet; very low salaries; catastrophic health-care coverage only; frequently fills in hiring gaps with part-time or short-term contractors; no opportunities for professional development; staff very stretched; substantial, largely unplanned turnover last 12 months	Potential leadership pipeline exists but no lieutenant is able to independently own large portions of work; under-market salaries; modest health care plan; sometimes fills in hiring gaps with part-time or short-term contractors instead of hiring full-time position; occasional one-off professional development opportunities; some risk of leadership or staff burnout; meaningful planned / unplanned turnover in last 12 months	Strong lieutenant in place and able to independently own large portions of work; reasonable salaries and health care options; informal leave policies in-place; basic employee handbook; regular opportunities for professional development; management beginning to invest in high-performers; staff working hard but little burn-out; some turnover, mostly planned, in last 12 months	Strong lieutenant owns large portions of work and could be potential successor; deep bench of junior staff with potential to step up; competitive salaries, health care options, and retirement plan; comprehensive employee handbook and leave policies in-place; funds budgeted for regular professional development opportunities; high-performers consistently stay and advance; no culture of burn-out; little turnover, almost all planned	Employee handbook; leave policies
		<i>Compensation</i>					
		<i>Professional development</i>					
		<i>Turnover</i>					
	Board	<i>Giving</i>	0% - 25% of members giving at significant or personal stretch levels; members make little or no effort to attract additional resources; board members do not connect with staff or each other outside meetings; little or no understanding of governance responsibilities; no leadership from the board; board chair may serve in name only	25-50% of members giving at significant or personal stretch levels; after prompting, members make some effort to attract additional resources; board members occasionally confer with management or each other between meetings; emerging understanding of governance responsibilities; 1-2 board members beginning to lean into responsibilities; strong candidate for board chair identified	50-75% of members giving at significant or personal stretch levels; members beginning to proactively attract additional resources; board members beginning to regularly engage with management and each other between meetings; basic understanding of governance responsibilities; multiple board members leaning into responsibilities; board chair beginning to engage actively with management	75-100% of members giving at significant or personal stretch levels; members consistently work to attract additional resources; beginning to help identify and recruit new board prospects; board members consistently engaging on governance topics, including setting executive compensation and reviewing expense reports; board-only executive sessions held at meetings; many members routinely stepping up to help; board chair consistently, proactively and helpfully works to guide and assist management; potential candidate(s) for chair successor	Board member report cards
		<i>Getting</i>					
		<i>Oversight</i>					
		<i>Leadership</i>					
	External Stakeholders	<i>Community leaders</i>	To the degree that these stakeholders are relevant: no relationships with community leaders; no relationships with government agencies or elected officials; no relationships with key counterparties (referral partners, schools, districts, hiring firms, etc.); absent / zero prestige advisory board; no volunteer base	To the degree that these stakeholders are relevant: nascent relationships with community leaders; nascent relationships with government agencies or elected officials; nascent relationships with key counterparties (referral partners, schools, districts, hiring firms, etc.); advisory board of modest prestige or serving in name only; developing volunteer base	To the degree that these stakeholders are relevant: solid relationships with individual community leaders (but not their broader organizations); solid relationships with government agencies or elected officials; solid relationships with key counterparties (referral partners, schools, districts, hiring firms, etc.); advisory board of considerable prestige; intermittently responsive advisory board; sufficient volunteer base	To the degree that these stakeholders are relevant: warm and tenured relationships with community leaders and their organizations; warm and tenured relationships with government agencies and elected officials; warm and tenured relationships with key counterparties (referral partners, schools, districts, hiring firms, etc.); advisory board of notable prestige; highly responsive advisory board; junior board in formation or in place; backlog of quality volunteers	Partnership agreements, contracts and/or MOUs
		<i>Government figures</i>					
		<i>Key counterparties</i>					
		<i>Auxiliary boards</i>					
<i>Volunteers</i>							