



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB MOVEMENT

# GREAT FUTURES 2025

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### A Call to Action on Behalf of America's Youth

Great Futures 2025 is the strategic plan for the Boys & Girls Club Movement that will guide our actions through 2025. It provides a strategic direction that serves to align our priorities as a Movement around a shared purpose and goal, while enabling Club organizations to directly meet the needs of the youth they serve within the model best suited for their communities.

Developed in partnership with Clubs through the National Planning Commission, the plan was shaped by critical input and feedback from Clubs during town halls at Area Council meetings, and dialogue during conferences, focus groups and other feedback sessions. The plan builds upon the Great Futures Impact Plan, and the data analysis that confirmed what we knew to be true from practical experience: a positive Club Experience leads to life-changing outcomes for youth.

Great Futures 2025 is focused on increasing delivery of a high-quality Club Experience to drive greater outcomes for youth in our country. It is achieved through a collective, collaborative call to action to focus on quality, advocacy, and, ultimately, growth, and continuing to customize services to meet the needs of the diverse communities served. It also requires that the national organization focus on providing the right tools, training, measurement, resources and coordination to enable national impact.

Throughout our history, it has been our shared belief that every young person deserves an equal chance to pursue the American Dream. As the landscape of this country and the profession of youth development have progressed, Boys & Girls Clubs have evolved to meet the ever-changing needs of youth and communities. But our commitment to our mission and the young people of America has never wavered.

As we look to the future, it is our duty and responsibility to ensure that we continue to be relevant in the national out-of-school-time space. We must do everything possible to ensure America's youth have opportunities outside of school and home that promote their healthy development and enable them to succeed as adults.

Great Futures 2025 will enable Clubs to meet the challenges facing our nation's youth today, and evolve to overcome obstacles impeding young people's success tomorrow. Through our collective experience and expertise, we have shaped a strategic direction for our Movement that will enable our success through 2025 and beyond to make great futures possible for our nation's youth.



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### Purpose:

***Inspire and empower Club youth to achieve success, and champion opportunities for all young people in America.***

The single most important issue in our country is ensuring that today's generation of young people has the opportunity to achieve the American Dream. We believe that every young person deserves the chance to realize his or her full potential, and achieve a great future. This belief, and the belief in the ability of Clubs to effect life-changing impact for kids, fuel Great Futures 2025, and its stated purpose.

Our purpose directs how we organize and focus our collective work into the next decade. The entirety of Great Futures 2025 is centered on fulfilling the purpose statement, which should be viewed as a continuum. At one end is achieving our vision for the young people currently served by Clubs, through our focus on the improving and increasing programming and opportunities provided through the Club Experience. At the other end of the continuum is our mission, representing our aspiration to serve *all* youth in America, especially those who need us most. As Clubs increase their capacity to inspire and empower young people, we will expand efforts to champion opportunities for all youth in America.

### Strategic Priorities

Great Futures 2025 will be implemented through four strategic priority areas, which provide direction to our actions and ensure our efforts serve to fulfill our stated purpose.

While the four priorities work in concert together, there is a natural staging of the efforts for greatest effectiveness, aligning with the continuum outlined in our stated purpose. The first two priorities focus on achieving our vision *for the young people currently served* via Club membership and community outreach, through an emphasis on quality programming and stronger Club organizations. The last two priorities focus on growth and advocacy, positioning us to expand our impact to achieve our vision *for all youth in America*, especially those who need us most.

By focusing first on program quality and the strength of Clubs, we will enable accelerated growth in later years. This growth will be a natural outcome of our collective efforts to improve program quality, build Club organizational capacity and sustainability, and become more effective as youth development advocates. The staging of these priorities is not time-bound or formally sequential but rather a guide for building upon progress, based on where we are as a Movement and within individual organizations.



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Each priority includes objectives and measurements; see the Great Futures 2025 Operational Framework for more information.

### 1) Increase Program Quality

To achieve greater outcomes for youth and to live our mission, it is critical to achieve a high level of program quality, ensuring every Club consistently provides relevant, engaging experiences and opportunities for kids and teens. This is a mission-critical priority, as one of the greatest challenges to our success is the variability in organizational capacity and program quality.

The focus is two-fold: 1) *Provide Club members with a high-quality Club Experience* that is safe and fun, leads to a sense of belonging, and develops the skills needed to achieve success in the 21st century; and 2) *Continue to learn and develop* through evidence-informed program models, staff practices, and organization systems and practices that lead to impact.

Initiatives to achieve this include:

- Define quality standards based on the principles of youth development, child safety, and our Club Experience research and data analysis
- Build evidence-informed program models
- Implement a program quality assessment process with rigor and accountability

- Provide state-of-the-art training for all Club professionals and volunteers – rated a no. 1 priority by Club leaders during town hall discussions
- Implement strategies to keep Club members engaged through high school

### 2) Strengthen Organizations

Increasing impact and quality requires strong leadership, capacity and capability at every Club and at the national organization.

Initiatives to achieve this include:

- Align strategic and operating plans with the purpose, priorities and goal of Great Futures 2025
- Cultivate world-class professional and board leadership
- Grow resource development capacity locally and Movement-wide
- Build organizational models that optimize program quality and impact
- Increase efficiency and capability through mergers, management agreements, resource sharing and consolidated back-office functions or other innovative models, as determined between organizations through the leadership of local Club volunteers and professionals



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### 3) Advocate for Youth Development

To tackle the challenges facing youth in our nation, we must position Boys & Girls Clubs as America's premier youth development advocate. Once we've increased program quality and strengthened organizations, we can increase our position as youth development experts locally and nationally. This includes serving as a voice for youth and enabling youth to have a voice in communities and on a national stage. We will advocate for every community to provide access to high-quality, out-of-school-time programs and experiences that equip young people with the tools to succeed.

Initiatives to achieve this include:

- Implement a national and local campaign to build awareness
- Engage local and national stakeholders to advocate for quality programs that meet the needs of youth
- Build local and national partnerships to increase collective impact
- Increase government funding

### 4) Reach More Youth

During our focus on the first three priorities, we will aim to achieve incremental growth. Once we have achieved success in the first three priorities, we will be positioned for accelerated growth, in pursuit of the vision that every child growing up in America has access to a life-changing Club

Experience. This includes establishing dynamic partnerships with public and private institutions locally and nationally. We recognize that no single organization can provide everything needed to enable youth to succeed, so Boys & Girls Clubs must step up as convener and facilitator to maximize communities' collective resources and impact. At this time, we will be poised for the next era of significant growth, with an aspirational goal of reaching 1 million youth daily by 2025.

Initiatives to achieve this include:

- Grow teen membership and open Clubs that serve middle school and high school youth
- Build strong partnerships with schools
- Reach youth through innovative online initiatives and partnerships

### Goal:

***Increase the collective percentage of Club members reporting an optimal Club experience to 75% by 2025***

BGCA's research and analysis of NYOI data indicates that a high-quality Club Experience helps drive more positive outcomes for youth, and may increase their attendance, participation and retention. Great Futures 2025 is focused on delivering increased outcomes for America's youth, so



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the main metric of success focuses on improving members' perception of the Club Experience.

As a Movement, we aspire to create a high-quality Club Experience for *every young person* who enters our Club doors. Practically, however, we have identified 75% as a collective goal for the plan. While achievable, this goal is aggressive and bold, representing a significant increase from where Clubs are presently. As a measure of quality from a Club member perspective, the Club Experience indicator is a tool that enables Clubs to gauge the types of experiences that members are receiving, to celebrate bright spots, and to identify growth opportunities. It enables Clubs to adopt a continuous quality improvement mindset and system. More information on Club Experience can be found in the Great Futures 2025 Reference Guide.

### Guiding Principles for Implementation

Achieving Great Futures 2025 will require different activities and tactics based on the local circumstances of each Club organization and the community it serves, and strong support from the national office in providing resources, tools and consultation for shared success. The Great Futures 2025 Operational Framework provides more details for implementation, and will be reviewed and updated annually based on progress and feedback.

While implementation may vary, four principles will remain constant to guide implementation of the plan:

1. Provide Club members with a high-quality Club Experience that is safe and fun, leads to a sense of belonging, and develops the skills needed to achieve success in the 21st century.
2. Continue to learn and develop practices and program models with demonstrated impact. Success will require the continued development of evidence-informed program models, staff practices, and organization systems and practices that lead to impact.
3. Advocate that every community provide access to high-quality, out-of-school-time programs and experiences that equip young people with the tools to succeed. BGCA will build expertise on relevant issues to prepare and support Club leaders in this work.
4. Establish dynamic partnerships with public and private institutions locally and nationally. Recognizing that no single organization can provide everything needed to enable youth to succeed, Boys & Girls Clubs must step up as a convener and facilitator to maximize their communities' collective resources and impact.

Additionally, BGCA will work in partnership with local Clubs to support their work, share promising practices and find the best approaches to achieve success across the wide range of communities they serve.