

2026-2029 DIAL/SELF Strategic Plan

The **Mission** of DIAL/SELF is to help young people increase their personal and community strengths and develop autonomy by connecting them with housing, income, education, and civic opportunities.

The **Philosophy** of DIAL/SELF embraces the principles inherent in the *Positive Youth Development* framework which believes that all youth possess unique strengths enhanced by community support and collaboration. All youth should have the right to exercise choice in their own lives.

The **Core Values** of DIAL/SELF include:

1. **Collaboration** — We work collaboratively with youth, with each other, and with our community to make the most of our combined resources.
2. **Accountability** — We hold ourselves accountable to high ethical, administrative, programmatic, and fiscal standards.
3. **Innovation** — We develop and implement creative solutions in response to community needs.
4. **Respect** — We demonstrate respect through active listening, responsiveness, and inclusion of diverse perspectives.
5. **Equity** — We acknowledge that our agency exists in a world with systemic racism and other forms of intersectional inequity and we make efforts to be aware of and address those inequities.

Vision

Youth in our communities will have what they need to experience well-being. Youth will be meaningfully engaged in and valued by their communities.

Three-year vision

Over the next three years, DIAL/SELF will prioritize organizational resilience and the preservation of our core services in an increasingly volatile federal landscape. As we face potential shifts in national priorities and threats to our organization's historic funding streams, our vision is to remain a reliable presence in the community for young people. We will work to ensure that essential supports for housing, income, and education remain accessible and true to our mission. We define success not through expansion, but through the strength of our foundation. We strive to maintain our ability to support young people through impactful programming while resisting external pressures that

may conflict with our deep commitments to racial justice, equity, and the centering of youth voices.

How We Make Decisions - Our Strategy Screens

We Stay Flexible

DIAL/SELF prioritizes staying flexible rather than following a rigid, multi-year plan. We remain ready to adjust our priorities to better meet the changing needs and goals of the young people we serve. This approach ensures that our services remain responsive and available whenever and wherever youth need us most. To make sure we are making the best choices for our community and using our funding wisely, our Board and staff use a set of strategy screens. Think of these as a checklist of core questions that we ask before we start a new project or respond to opportunities and challenges.

Staying True to Our Mission

Using these screens helps us avoid mission drift which is when an organization gets distracted by projects that don't fit its main goals. While we may occasionally try something outside of our stated strategic goals, these questions ensure that our efforts stay focused on our promise to the youth we serve.

Living Our Values: Equity and Inclusion at Every Level

At DIAL/SELF, we know that life isn't an even playing field. Many young people and many of our own neighbors start out with fewer resources because of how systems in our country were built. These hurdles are often made taller by personal bias and a history of unfair treatment toward people of color, LGBTQ+ youth, immigrants, and people with disabilities.

We believe that to truly help young people change their lives, our organization must reflect the justice we want to see in the world. This means our commitment to equity isn't just a goal for our programs; it is at the core of our internal culture. We work to build a workplace where everyone belongs and where power is shared fairly.

Our Equity Check for Decisions and Culture

Whether we are creating a new policy, hiring a team member, or starting a new program, our Board and staff use these questions to guide us:

- ✓ **Sharing Power:** Are the people who will be most affected by this decision leading the process? Are we centering the voices of those with lived experience?
- ✓ **Checking Our Starting Line:** Does this decision acknowledge that not everyone starts with the same resources? Are we providing what is specifically needed to bridge those gaps?
- ✓ **Challenging the Status Quo:** Are we following the way things have always been done in a way that favors one group over another? If so, how do we change that?

- ✓ **Growing Together:** Do we have the tools and training to see our own biases? How are we supporting each other to learn and unlearn so our culture stays healthy and inclusive?
- ✓ **Naming the History:** Are we remembering how the history of racism and exclusion shapes our local community today? Does this decision put in the extra effort to address those realities?

Growth and Accountability (Evaluation)

Because these questions are woven into the daily work of the organization, they are not measured by a single report or arbitrary ratio. Instead, DIAL/SELF treats equity and inclusion as a constant, lived practice. This requires an ongoing cycle of listening, learning, and making changes. The Strategic Planning Committee will meet quarterly during the plan period to review specific examples of the screen in use as referenced below.

Continuous Listening: DIAL/SELF is committed to gathering regular feedback from the youth and communities served. This input serves as the primary measure of whether the organization is living up to its values.

Radical Honesty: The Board and staff recognize that being an anti-racist organization is an ongoing journey that includes mistakes. The organization commits to admitting when efforts fall short rather than hiding challenges.

Corrective Action: When gaps or mistakes are identified, DIAL/SELF commits to taking visible, practical steps to learn from the experience and change future behaviors, policies, or structures.

Financial Strength & Flexibility

To provide the best support for young people, DIAL/SELF must stay financially strong and stable. Our goal is to fund our work in ways that give us the most flexibility. We aim to have more unrestricted funds—money that isn't locked into a specific government contract—so we can invest in our participants and our staff exactly when, where and how the need is greatest.

Our Financial Picture (2025-2026)

Currently, our annual budget is \$1,816,230. While we have a solid foundation, much of our funding comes from government sources.

- 76% of our annual budget is funded by government grants including 49% from federal sources and 27% from the state.
- Our largest single source of support is AmeriCorps (\$516,163).

- The rest of our funding comes from local partners (12%), rental income (8%), and community donations (4%).

Our Goals for Financial Health:

Build financial resilience through reserves: Build up our reserves so we have the freedom to act quickly in a crisis.

Invest in Our Team: Use our resources to improve pay and benefits for the people who do this work.

Increase Flexible Funding: Find more diverse ways to bring in money so we aren't dependent on any single government source.

Financial Strategy Screen

We use these questions to check if a new funding opportunity or financial decision is right for us:

- ✓ **Does this make us more flexible?** Will this money help build our reserves or allow us to give cash support on behalf of or directly to youth in need?
- ✓ **Does it cover the real costs?** Does the funding include enough to cover the hidden costs of running the office and paying our staff fairly? Will the funding grow as our costs such as rent and utilities go up?
- ✓ **Is it too much red tape?** Does this grant require complicated reports or extra paperwork that will take staff away from their real work with youth?
- ✓ **Is it sustainable?** Will this require us to find new money later just to keep it going? Do we have to match the funds with money we don't have yet?
- ✓ **Does it align with our values?** Is the source of this money consistent with our commitment to racial equity and justice? If there are strings attached, are the trade-offs worth it for the young people we serve?

Measuring Our Progress

At the end of this three-year plan, we will look back and measure how much we have strengthened our financial foundation. We will compare our current numbers to past years to see if we reached our goals of having more flexible funding and a more diverse range of supporters.

To see if we have been successful, we will check three main indicators:

- **Fair Pay:** Did we increase the average pay rates for our staff?

- **Organizational Wealth:** Did DIAL/SELF's overall net worth of our total savings and assets get stronger?
- **Flexible Funding:** Did we increase the percentage of our budget that is unrestricted money we can use freely where it is needed most?

By tracking these numbers, we can ensure that our financial choices are actually making the organization more resilient and better able to support the community.

Our Programs: Supporting the Whole Person

DIAL/SELF provides services that help young people lead stable, healthy lives. We focus on two main areas: physical needs including housing, food, and clothing and well-being such as feeling safe, building positive relationships, and feeling good about oneself. Where our staff and programs are not able to provide for a need, we use our connections with community partners to address the need.

Our goal for the next three years is not necessarily to grow bigger, but to get stronger. We want to make sure the services we have are exactly what youth and staff say are needed most, and that we continue to work closely with other local groups to create a strong safety net in our community.

Program Strategy Screen

We use these questions to decide if a new project or change to our services is the right move:

- ✓ **Does it meet a real need?** Did the young people we serve, our staff, or our neighbors ask for this?
- ✓ **Does it improve health and happiness?** Will this directly help a young person's physical health or their emotional well-being?
- ✓ **Can we do it well?** Does this project play to our strengths as an organization? Do we already have the staff and skills to do this or would we need to hire new experts?
- ✓ **Is it sustainable?** Do we have enough staff time and energy to keep this going long-term?
- ✓ **Can we show the impact?** Will this help us gather stories and information that show how our work is changing lives?
- ✓ **Does it fit our values?** Have we checked this against our Racial Equity and Inclusion Screen to make sure it is fair and inclusive?

Measuring Our Progress

At the end of this three-year period, we will look back to see how well we supported young people and our community. We will use the following information to judge our success:

Reviewing Our Services: We will look at which programs we kept, which we changed, and where we worked. We will compare what we recorded to what we stated we would do where there are pre-established programmatic and/or contract goals. We will use data to answer the following questions.

- How many new/returning youth did we serve?
- What kinds of help did they receive?
- Are we reaching a diverse group of youth? We will check this by looking at the race, gender, and age of the people we serve.
- Have we focused service hubs/service activities in places that will reach the diverse, unique and specific young people who need them?

Checking Our Partnerships: We will look at the work we did with other organizations and groups in the area. We will ask:

- Did our work make a real difference for the community?
- Did these partnerships help DIAL/SELF and our partners become stronger and more effective?

By looking at these two areas, we can see if we stayed true to our mission of providing high-quality support even during challenging times.

Our Organizational Strength

To provide the best support for young people, DIAL/SELF must take care of the people and the systems that make our work possible. We believe that a healthy organization is one where staff feel valued, leadership is shared, and our work is visible and respected by the community.

Our Goals for a Strong Organization:

Support Our Team: Find and keep talented staff who are passionate about our mission.

Grow Our Leaders: Build a leadership ladder that creates clear opportunities for program participants, AmeriCorps members, and staff at every level to learn new skills and take on leadership roles.

Share the Work: Build a stable organization where responsibilities are shared fairly, so the work doesn't depend on just one or two people.

Tell Our Story: Make sure our community and our supporters see the high quality of our work and the impact we have.

Organizational Strategy Screen

We use these questions to make sure our internal decisions keep DIAL/SELF strong and resilient:

- ✓ **Does this support our staff?** Will this increase pay or improve benefits? Does it offer a chance for someone to learn, grow, or lead?
- ✓ **Is the knowledge shared?** Does this help more people understand how our systems work? If a key staff member leaves, will we be able to keep this project going smoothly?
- ✓ **Does it help us grow resources?** Will this allow us to focus more on fundraising and building support for our mission?
- ✓ **Do we have the right help?** Will this require special legal advice or extra expertise we don't have yet?
- ✓ **Does it match our culture?** Have we checked this against our Racial Equity and Inclusion Screen to make sure our internal culture is fair and welcoming for everyone?

Measuring Our Progress

At the end of this three-year period, we will look at how we have grown as an organization. We want to know if DIAL/SELF is a healthy place to work and if our community sees the value in what we do. We will measure our success by looking at:

- **Our Team's Experience:** We will use an in-depth staff survey, an Organizational Check-up, to understand the mood and health of our workplace. This helps us to know if staff feel supported and included.
- **Keeping Our Talent:** We will look at our turnover rates. How many staff stay with us versus how many leave? A healthy organization is one where people want to build their careers.
- **Fairer Pay:** We will look at the median pay which is the middle point of all staff salaries to see if we have successfully increased wages across the whole organization.
- **Our Reputation:** We will review how often DIAL/SELF is featured in the news, on social media, or recognized by awards. This shows us if our story is reaching the people and the investors who can help us grow.