



al services • sector skills
road • career pathways
employment • benefits
vocacy • workers' rights
workforce development
jects • industry research
community organizing
ways • health and safety

2020-2023

STRATEGIC

PLAN



Center for Frontline Retail’s Mission

The Center for Frontline Retail (CFR) promotes awareness, leadership, and action to achieve quality employment in the retail sector through advocating for civic engagement and organizing, providing essential services for retail workers, and conducting industry research.

Center for Frontline Retail’s Vision

We seek a world where retail workers are respected and valued as an essential contributor to society while earning a living wage that can sustain a family, and receive adequate benefits including health insurance, 401(k), and paid leave.

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Introduction and Background

The Center for Frontline Retail (CFR) has been actively changing the lives of retail workers for over five years. Throughout these years, CFR has been the nonprofit at the forefront of providing essential services, building community and leadership, and leading advocacy for the retail workforce. We have helped workers find new employment and get access to health insurance, created spaces where retail workers feel valued, and worked with community leaders to advance policies.

CFR's mission is upheld by our three pillars of work: Community Organizing and Engagement, Essential Services, and Industry Research. Each of these pillars of work is essential in helping retail workers thrive in environments where their contributions to society are not valued.

CFR's founders — thought leaders and change agents in the labor, education, and workforce development communities — realized that around 95% of retail workers were not officially union organized and did not have the means to organize due to many barriers, such as company culture, lack of time to assemble, and misunderstanding of the union. In 2014, our founders decided to launch a nonprofit organization serving non-unionized workers by providing them with the training they need to succeed and get promoted in the retail environment and supporting them in developing the tools for advocating for changes in the retail sector. Over time, the organization has also built out its research to provide elected officials with solutions to make retail work more equitable, considering the trillions of dollars the industry generates for the economy.

As we grow and build on our past successes, CFR envisions being the one-stop source for all retail workers to get information, learn new skills, and build their power.

CFR's history includes these milestones:

2014

- CFR joined partners at the New York Union Child Care Coalition, the Consortium for Worker Education, and A Better Balance to establish a childcare subsidy facilitated enrollment pilot program for working parents in Herald Square, providing childcare subsidies and quality care in New York City for children up to 13 years of age.
- NYS Governor and New York State Department of Labor proposed rules to regulate payroll cards, prohibiting employers from forcing workers to accept their wages on payroll cards.

2015

- CFR and coalition partners in the NYC Coalition to Stop Credit Checks in Employment saw Mayor de Blasio sign legislation banning employers from checking job applicants' credit histories when making a hiring decision, the "Stop Credit Discrimination in Employment Act."
- In response to our advocacy, the office of New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman investigated whether on-call shifts violated the labor law.

2016

- CFR served 4,104 clients, with 3,555 completed enrollments through the healthcare exchange.
- CFR and partners educated retail workers about the importance of health care through social media and strategic direct outreach in stores from Fifth Avenue to Fordham Road in the Bronx to downtown Brooklyn.

2017

- CFR launched the *Pathways to Success* report with the Urban Justice Center that identified the need for training and advancement opportunities for workers to achieve economic sustainability in the retail sector.

2018

- CFR hired a new executive director.
- CFR was awarded a \$100,000 contract from the Regional Economic Development Corporation and NYS Department of Labor to provide training.

2019

- CFR officially received its 501c3 designation from the IRS.
- CFR provided services throughout NYC including Long Island and Staten Island.
- CFR launched a new training, Retail Practical Lab, designed to give hands-on experience through role play exercises.

Clearly, CFR has been busy these past years, and there will be no slowing down in the years to come.

Over the course of 2019, CFR executive director Brian Fuss led staff members Esmeralda, Nina, Beena, Lizbeth, and Debbra through a series of strategic visioning sessions. These sessions reaffirmed our vision for retail workers and our commitment to our mission, and evolved into the creation of a three-year plan for the organization's growth. CFR is proud to present our 2020–2023 Strategic Plan.

SWOT Analysis

Early on in the process of examining the organization, the staff did an informal SWOT analysis of the organization's strengths and weaknesses, along with opportunities for growth and threats to the organization's sustainability.

Strengths

- Committed and knowledgeable staff members
- Excellent partnerships built with community organizations, such as Workforce1

Weaknesses

- Limited potential for growth due to low capacity
- Lack of clear ownership of some intellectual property with groups

Opportunities

- Ability to work with employers
- New York City lawmakers and agencies have committed to uplifting the retail sector, especially non-unionized workers
- Retail is one of the top economic drivers in New York City
- Ability to grow conducting research

Threats

- Limited funding
- Lacking individual donor base
- Need to distinguish CFR from other nonprofits
- Limited name recognition
- Changing retail sector

This strategic plan seeks to help with mitigating the threats, lessening the weaknesses, strengthening the opportunities, and creating more strengths.

Executive Summary

As the Executive Director of this dynamic organization, I am proud to present CFR's 2020–2023 strategic plan. Over the course of the next three years, CFR will work on 10 goals related to our three pillars of work and general operations:

Community Organizing and Engagement

1. Members take on well-defined leadership roles that contribute to the success of the organization.
2. Monitor and act on any local and state legislation that will affect retail workers or the retail industry.

Essential Services

3. Become the one-stop resource for retail workers seeking essential workforce development and services that help workers thrive.
4. Remain active in the workforce development community, including strengthening relationships with retail employers.

Research

5. Conduct at least two research projects related to retail workers.
6. Use data to improve the organization's programming.

Organization

7. Develop internal and external communication that is effective, transparent, consistent, open, and honest for all stakeholders.
8. Require CFR to benefit from a diverse staff, Board of Directors, contractors, and volunteers who are dedicated to upholding the values of equity and inclusiveness.
9. Increase resources by 2% each year via diverse funding streams.
10. Become an independent organization.

Below is information on how the strategic plan was developed along with the activities that will be completed in 2020.

Sincerely,



Brian Fuss, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Strategic Plan Development

This plan is structured around the long-range three-year goals created by CFR's staff and board, which are all tied to CFR's three pillars of work and progress as an organization. In addition, each of these goals corresponds to an area of nonprofit excellence. Under these long-range goals are activities that will help CFR meet these goals. These activities will be done yearly, so only 2020 activities are shown with clear dates. We encourage all of our stakeholders to review the plan and follow up with us.

Throughout 2019, CFR employees met monthly and sometimes bi-weekly to define the vision and goals for the organization. During these visioning sessions, CFR staff examined the organization's role in the workforce development community, the financial portfolio, past and current impact in and outside of the retail sector, and aspirations for the next few years. In these structured meetings, staff members completed and shared worksheets related to all aspects of planning. These visioning sessions reviewed and codified CFR's mission, past goal attainment, where the organization needed to improve, and what the future holds for the organization. This examination led to concrete long-range goals and smaller activities.

Throughout the process, CFR's Board of Directors additionally discussed the plan and the next chapter of CFR at their regular meetings.

In November and December 2019, the staff met to refine the larger three-year goals and the 2020 activities. One major concern of the employees was not developing concrete and quantifiable goals since they had gone through this strategic planning process before. This process helped the staff to voice thoughts on the various goals and activities in relation to them being attainable. All of the staff members agreed the goals and activities were attainable.

In developing this strategic plan, CFR relied on the Nonprofit Coordinating Committee's Key Areas of Nonprofit Excellence.¹

¹ Found at <https://www.nonprofitnewyork.org/nonprofit-excellence-awards/key-areas-of-nonprofit-excellence/>

Strategic Plan Goals

Pillar One: Community Organizing and Engagement

Goal 1: Members take on well-defined leadership roles that contribute to the success of the organization.

2020 Activities

- Start the Shoppers' Alliance with defined roles and guidelines (by 07/2020)
- Have two current or former retail workers actively contribute to the organization through volunteering on the Shoppers' Alliance (by 08/2020)

Goal 2: Monitor and act on any local and state legislation that will affect retail workers or the retail industry.

2020 Activities

- Monitor legislation affecting retail workers. (ongoing, beginning 01/2020)
- Actively participate in state coalitions to bring the retail workers' voices into improving the retail industry (ongoing, beginning 01/2020)
- Staff are actively involved in PPT and unemployment coalitions in NYC by scheduling and attending meetings and rallies (ongoing, beginning 01/2020)

Pillar Two: Essential Services

Goal 3: Become the one-stop resource for retail workers seeking essential workforce development and services that help workers thrive.

2020 Activities:

- Create and implement a process to follow-up on any member concerns (ongoing, beginning 01/2020)
- Ensure that a minimum of 1,700 participants are served among all of CFR's training programs (01/2020-12/2020)
- Utilize a standardized form for each professional service (resume writing, taking assessments, and interview prep) (by 03/2020)
- Create a plan for strengthening communications, media, and outreach (by 12/2020)
- Redevelop one training to be interactive (by 06/2020)
- Convert one training into Spanish (by 12/2020)

Goal 4: Remain active in the workforce development community, including strengthening relationships with retail employers.

2020 Activities

- Explore prospect employer partnerships, build relationships, and ensure that employers understand the benefits of CFR's employment training program (ongoing, beginning 01/2020)
- Participate in a minimum of two information sessions and two partner meetings per year with organizations (ongoing, beginning 01/2020).
- Ensure that graduates of our programs and candidates for positions will meet a list of standards before being referred (ongoing, beginning 01/2020)

Pillar Three: Research

Goal 5: Conduct at least two research projects related to retail workers.

2020 Activities

- Develop two research projects using rigorous scientific methods, incorporating a theory of change and ensuring the articulation of retail workers' voices in all research funding proposals (by 12/2020)
- Ensure members are actively guiding, participating in, and monitoring the research projects' progress (ongoing, beginning 07/2020)
- Disseminate updates at regular intervals to engage all workers and stakeholders (ongoing 04/2020)

Goal 6: Use data to improve the organization's programming.

2020 Activities

- Develop a standardized metric to evaluate all programs and services including guidebooks on how to develop a plan for building out programs and creating new services (by 05/2020)
- At the end of the calendar year, evaluate all programs and services and communicate lessons learned to all stakeholders (annually, beginning 12/2020)
- Designate one staff member as the cybersecurity ombudsperson working with the technology team to ensure all data is collected and stored properly (by 05/2020)

Organizational Growth

Goal 7: Develop internal and external communications that are effective, transparent, consistent, open, and honest for all stakeholders.

2020 Activities

- Develop and revise a communication strategy maximizing CFR's brand identity (by 05/2020)
- Efficiently communicate with the broader community using a variety of media, such as social media, newsletters, and articles (ongoing, beginning 06/2020)
- Disseminate an Annual Report on the organization's success, programs and services, and finances (by April 1, annually)
- Establish partnerships to help convert information into various languages

Goal 8: Require CFR to benefit from a diverse staff, Board of Directors, contractors, and volunteers who are dedicated to upholding the values of equity and inclusiveness.

2020 Activities

- Review and revise policies articulating CFR's commitment and definitions of diversity, inclusion, and equity (by 07/2020)
- Annually review job descriptions to ensure they uphold all CFR's values and those responsibilities can be met efficiently and effectively (Annually, beginning 03/2020)
- Ensure all staff members receive a minimum of \$55,000 per year with annual market increases to reach a maximum of \$70,000 (ongoing, beginning 01/2020)

Goal 9: Increase resources by 2% each year via diverse funding streams.

2020 Activities

- Receive funding for:
 - Shoppers' Alliance
 - Converting training
 - One research project (by 12/2020)
- Develop and codify fee-for-service structure (beginning, 03/2020)

Goal 10: Become an independent organization.

2020 Activities

- Recruit at least three new board members and on-board with term limits who bring workforce development, research, retail experience, and nonprofit skills (annually, 2020)
- Ensure two seats on the board is for a current retail worker (by 12/2020)
- Develop financial and personnel policies for the organization (by 12/2020)
- Obtain essential insurance, human resources, and financial services (by 12/2021)