

FISCAL YEARS 2016-2020



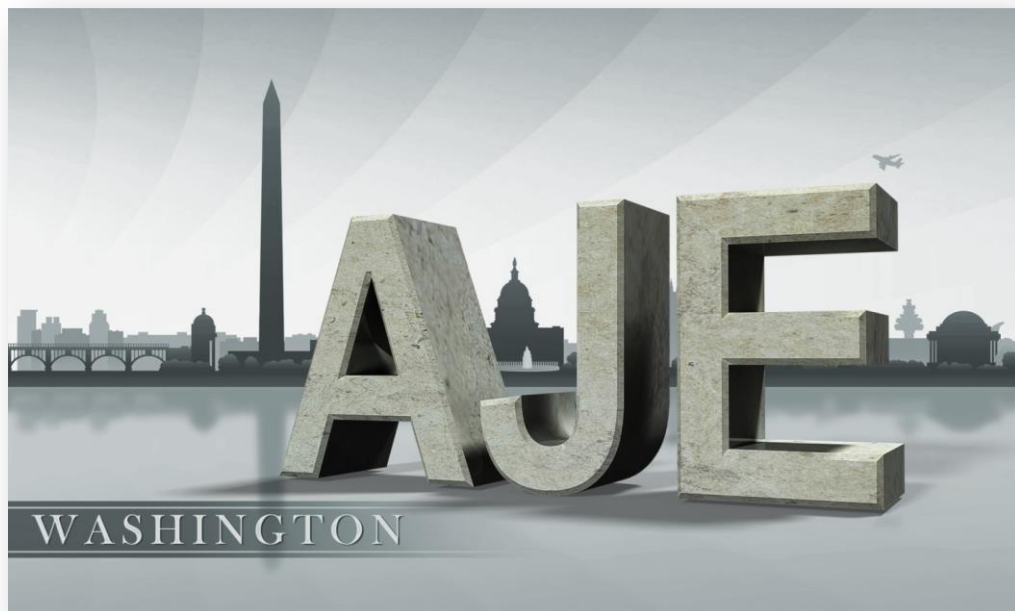
INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1996, Advocates for Justice and Education (AJE) has been a champion in Washington, DC, addressing service delivery inequities related to the special education needs of children with disabilities. AJE has been a leader in educating the community about the consequences of institutional negligence and the inappropriate classification of students with special needs. AJE has successfully empowered parents and caregivers to advocate for the health and educational needs of their children, and the organization has empowered youth to self-advocate.

Now, as it nears its 20th year, AJE's Board and staff have recognized the significant opportunity to engage in thinking about the future. To that end, AJE embarked on a strategic planning process, supported by Executive Advantage, LLC, to revisit its foundation and to create a 5-year plan to set a strategic direction to carry out its mission for helping families. An overview of that effort is provided within and covers the following years:

- Fiscal Year 2016 (*October 2015 - September 2016*)
- Fiscal Year 2017 (*October 2016 - September 2017*)
- Fiscal Year 2018 (*October 2017 - September 2018*)
- Fiscal Year 2019 (*October 2018 - September 2019*)
- Fiscal Year 2020 (*October 2019 - September 2020*)

September 2015





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(FISCAL YEARS 2016-2020)



OUR FOUNDATION

OUR MISSION

Advocates for Justice and Education seeks to empower families, youth, and the community to be effective advocates to ensure that children and youth, particularly those who have special needs¹, receive access to appropriate education and health services.

OUR VISION

Successful Children:

- We see children who receive the quality education and full range of health, social, and ancillary supports to which they are entitled.

Healthy and Informed Families:

- We envision a community with families that are able to be self-sufficient.
- We support families to become confident, informed, and empowered to be proactive in their approaches on behalf of their children.

Supportive Communities:

- We desire a community of providers and stakeholders who are equipped with tools and resources to provide comprehensive services to children.

A Strong Organization:

- We seek to offer a family-focused, “one-stop” organization that provides one-on-one support to families.
- We believe in maintaining an organization where individuals are supported and receive opportunities for leadership development.
- We strive to serve as a leading voice on children’s issues.

OUR VALUES

AJE’s primary values are:

- **Accountability:** We promote school and agency accountability to ensure that children, youth, and families receive proper services and supports.
- **Accessibility:** We ensure accessibility to all families and the community at large.
- **Commitment to Children and Families:** We are committed to the success of all children, youth, and families.

¹ AJE defines *special needs* as children with developmental, cognitive, physical, social, and psychological disabilities as well as children who have yet to be identified as having such disabilities.

OUR TARGET POPULATION

AJE is a key source of information, legal support, and resources in Washington, DC regarding access to education and health services for children and youth, particularly for those with special needs. Our efforts target three primary age ranges:



OUR CORE PROGRAMS

Community Education

We provide community education through workshops and seminars, which are free to families. AJE also provides training and education to community-based organizations serving children, youth, and families to equip them to better understand their obligations to serve all families, particularly the families of children with special needs.

Health Information and Advocacy

AJE supports families of children and youth with special health care needs by providing advocacy support, resources, information, and training. We also offer family navigation and care coordination services to assist families with navigating through the maze of health care services and programs for children with special health care needs.

Direct Services/Individual Advocacy

AJE provides free direct services to parents in the form of free individual advocacy and representation in situations in which the intervention of a third party is necessary to ensure that appropriate services are made available to a family in need.

Parent-to-Parent

Our Parent-to-Parent program provides parents with leadership training and a supportive network of peers.

Resource and Information Center

AJE maintains a comprehensive resource library for families. Families are able to access computers and a wealth of information about best practices in education, health and community resources, specific disabilities, the latest research on treatment and interventions, and adaptive technology.

Transition Advocacy Project (TAP)

The Transition Advocacy Project provides youth and young adults (ages 13 - 26) with support, individual advocacy, information, and training in order to improve their involvement in their educational planning and to assist them to achieve their education/training, independent living, and employment goals.



OUR DIRECTION

1. FAMILY EMPOWERMENT

Objectives

- Support families to access appropriate education, health, and supplemental services for children and youth.
- Expand the knowledge base and advocacy skills of parents, caregivers, and youth.



Empowerment is at the heart of AJE. Whether providing education, assisting parents or youth through legal advice and representation, or supporting the enhancement of self-advocacy and the development of peer networks, building the knowledge and skills of families is central. In setting a direction for the future, our goal is to offer programming that is both relevant and of high quality to reach and impact families in need.

Short Term (FY 2016 Measures)



Service Impact

Impact 3,000 families through core programs and services related to education and health matters.



Parent and Youth Advocacy

Increase parent and youth involvement in systemic advocacy efforts by 25% over the FY2015 level.



Program Enhancement

Institute a process of ongoing program enhancement to ensure the provision of quality and relevant services.

Mid Term (FY 2017 – 2018 Measures)



Service Impact

- Increase by 5% annually the number of families impacted through our core programs related to education and health matters.

Parent and Youth Advocacy

- Increase parent and youth involvement in systemic advocacy efforts by 25% annually.
- Expand AJE's Youth Peer-to-Peer support model to include a mentorship program.
- Expand AJE's parent leadership model to include a parent leader in every community/ward.

Program Enhancement

- Increase by at least 25% annually the use of technology in communication and training efforts with families and youth, such as through the use of social media and webinars.

Long Term (FY 2019 - 2020 Measures)



Service Impact

- Increase by 5% annually the number of families impacted through our core programs related to education and health matters.

Parent and Youth Advocacy

- Increase parent and youth involvement in systemic advocacy efforts by 25% annually.
- Continue expansion of AJE's Youth Peer-to-Peer support model with 50 youth remaining involved with the mentor program.
- Continue growth of AJE's community- and ward-specific efforts related to parent leadership with ongoing involvement by at least 85% of parent leaders.

Program Enhancement

- Increase by at least 25% annually the use of technology in communication and training efforts with families and youth, such as through the use of social media and webinars.

2. OUTREACH & COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS



Objectives

- Develop and leverage strategic partnerships with other community organizations in order to serve children, youth, and families effectively.
- Expand the visibility of AJE in the community so that increasing numbers of families and providers are aware of, and able to access, AJE's services.

Community partnerships play a crucial part in AJE's service provision model, enabling us to respond with speed and confidence when service requests are beyond our scope of work. Each organization provides unique expertise in order to deliver a set of robust services to families. As a result of our work in establishing

partnerships, we are able to refer families to established organizations to receive additional services and supports when needed.

Outreach also relates to the efforts to increase AJE visibility within the community. Our goal is to ensure that the community will be aware of AJE as a resource that is available to assist them in efforts to access appropriate education and health services for children and youth.

Short Term (FY 2016 Measures)



AJE Visibility

Participate in at least 15 community outreach events to increase knowledge about AJE and its service offerings.



Community Partnerships

Determine a strategic approach for leveraging existing partnerships.

Enter into at least two (2) new partnerships to increase community relationships and support services to impact families.

Mid Term (FY 2017 - 2018 Measures)

AJE Visibility

- Participate in at least 20 community outreach events annually to increase knowledge about AJE and its support services.
- Develop a cadre of 25 parent and youth volunteers to participate in community outreach and engagement efforts.



Community Partnerships

- Adopt a sustainable ward-based approach for the dissemination of AJE services and information.
- Enter into at least two (2) new partnerships annually to increase community relationships and support services to impact families.
- Add 25 individuals to AJE's professional volunteer base annually, through law firm and corporate collaboration, in order to increase resources and access to support services for families.

Long Term (FY 2019 - 2020 Measures)

AJE Visibility

- Participate in at least 25 community outreach events annually to increase knowledge about AJE and its service offerings.
- Develop a cadre of 40 parent and youth volunteers to participate in community outreach and engagement efforts.



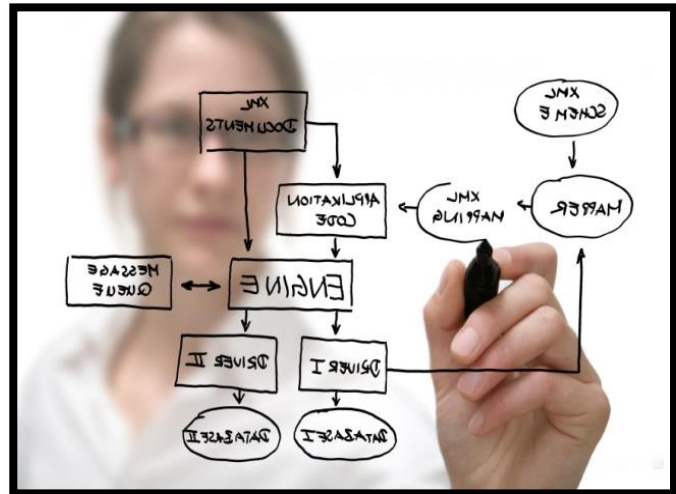
Community Partnerships

- Enter into at least two (2) new partnerships annually to increase community relationships and support services to impact families.
- Add 30 individuals to AJE's professional volunteer base annually, through law firm and corporate collaboration, in order to increase resources and access to support services for families.

3. INFRASTRUCTURE ADVANCEMENT

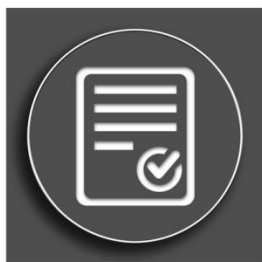
Objectives

- Solidify AJE's infrastructure to ensure that we operate in a manner that demonstrates both high quality and efficiency.
- Clarify AJE's brand to align with its mission, and consistently communicate to the general public.



AJE is invested in ensuring that our infrastructure is properly positioned to carry out the work that lies ahead. It is our goal to do so in a manner that is effective, efficient, accurate, and consistent.

Short Term (FY 2016 Measures)



Processes and Evaluation

Expand the process of securing client feedback across programs to measure program effectiveness.

Institute a procedure for the review, evaluation, and revision of internal AJE processes.

Institute a process for strategic plan status updates and monitoring.



Branding and Messaging

Clarify the AJE brand, and consistently incorporate the updated branding into every aspect of the operation.

Mid Term (FY 2017 - 2018 Measures)

Processes and Evaluation

- Continue use of the client feedback process, and utilize feedback for ongoing program and service enhancement.
- Launch annual organizational evaluation by an external entity to determine organizational effectiveness.
- Prepare a biennial AJE progress report.

Branding and Messaging

- Incorporate AJE's brand in a consistent manner into every aspect of our operation.



Long Term (FY 2019 - 2020 Measures)

Processes and Evaluation

- Continue use of the client feedback process, and utilize feedback for ongoing program and service enhancement.
- Continue annual external organizational evaluations, and maintain effectiveness rating.
- Prepare a biennial AJE progress report.

Branding and Messaging

- Continue AJE brand consistency and integration.



4. HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

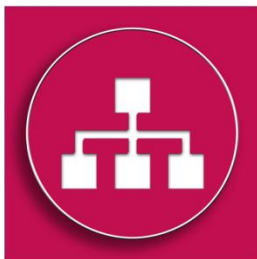


Objectives

- **Examine organization needs and human resources to ensure the right staffing composition for delivering high-quality services to families.**
- **Provide a welcoming workplace environment that promotes staff leadership and development, professional growth, and engagement.**

At AJE, we value the fostering of a work environment that supports the success of our staff. We recognize that a part of creating such an atmosphere requires us to develop a staffing structure that allows AJE to achieve its mission effectively. Building such an environment also involves the active partnership with each staff member to ensure that he or she is confident about current performance, able to plan for the future, and has assistance in seeking out growth opportunities to support his or her career planning.

Short Term (FY 2016 Measures)



Staffing Structure

Examine the organization needs and human resources, and develop a staffing structure to achieve AJE's mission.



Staff Development

Conduct staff performance reviews and professional development planning annually.



Workplace Culture

Foster a positive workplace culture by offering opportunities for staff engagement.

Mid Term (FY 2017 - 2018 Measures)



Staff Development

- Continue annual staff performance review and professional development planning.

Workplace Culture

- Adopt and foster an intentional climate where people are valued.
- Continue to enhance workplace culture by offering quarterly staff engagement opportunities to increase team building and collaboration.

Long Term (FY 2019 - 2020 Measures)



Staff Development

- Continue annual staff performance review and professional development planning.

Workplace Culture

- Maintain an intentional climate where people are valued.
- Continue to enhance workplace culture by offering quarterly staff engagement opportunities to increase team building and collaboration.

5. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Objective

- Increase and diversify AJE funding to advance programming, operations, and community impact.

We are grateful to the many foundations, corporations, government agencies, and individuals who provide financial support to AJE. We also are mindful of the need to diversify our funding streams and to increase our funding levels continually so that AJE can be positioned to meet the rising need of the communities we serve as well as to continue the important work of building the advocacy and leadership skills of parents and youth.



Short Term (FY 2016 Measures)



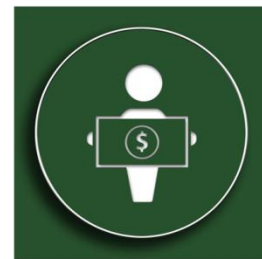
Funding Strategy

Create and begin implementation of a development strategy for the next 3 - 5 years.



Organizational Donors

Increase funding, through foundations and other organizations, by \$150,000 over the FY 2015 level.



Individual Donors

Increase revenue from individual donors by 5% over the FY 2015 level.

Mid-Term (FY 2017 - 2018 Measures)

Funding Strategy

- Cultivate relationships with at least two (2) new foundations annually to diversify and increase AJE's revenue stream.
 - Increase connections to individual donors through Board relationships and other networking/outreach opportunities.
 - Increase funding from federal agencies to carry out programs impacting children, youth, and families.
-

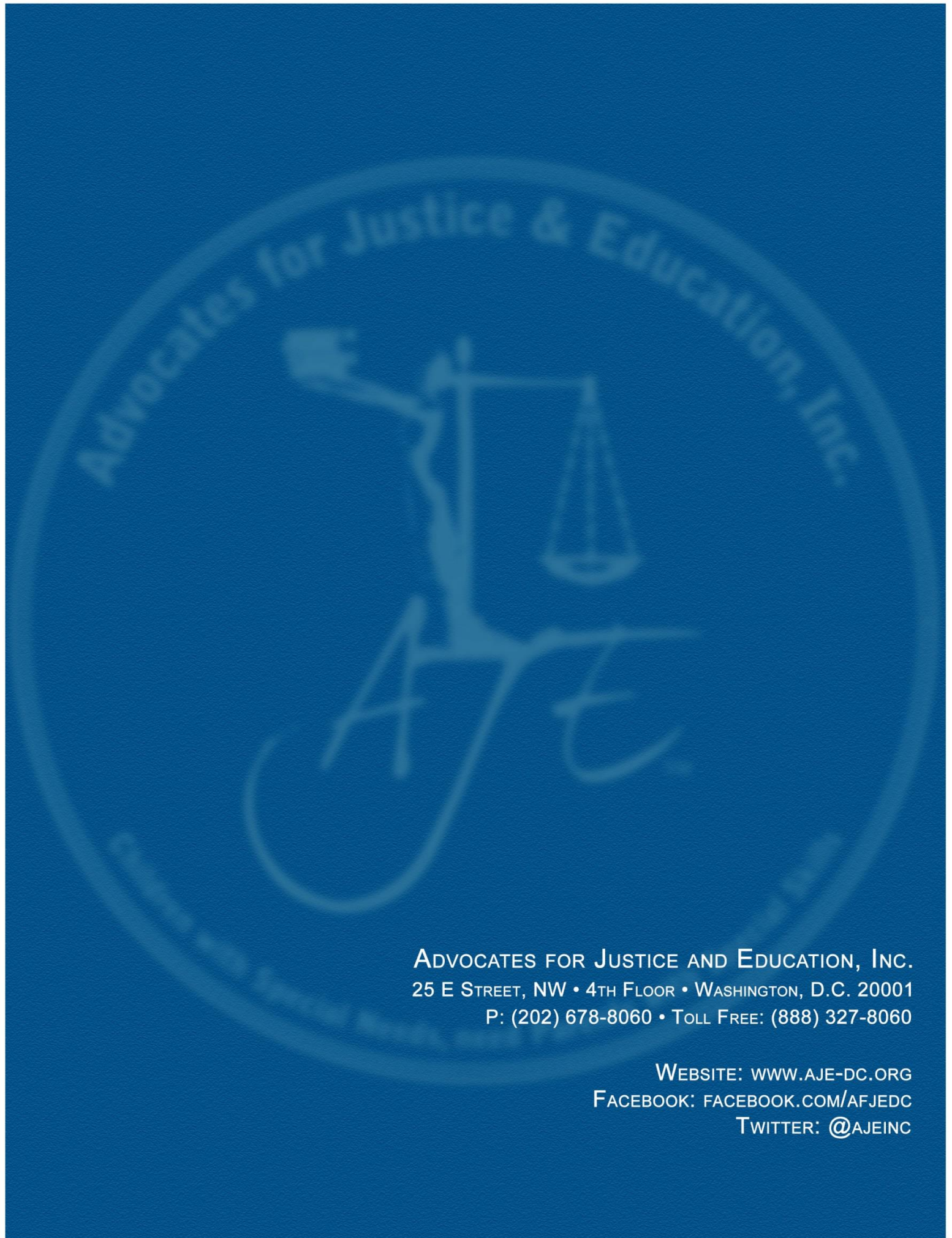


Long Term (FY 2019 - 2020 Measures)

Funding Strategy

- Cultivate relationships with at least two (2) new foundations annually to diversify and increase AJE's revenue stream.
- Increase connections to individual donors through Board relationships and other networking/outreach opportunities.
- Continue to increase funding from federal agencies to carry out programs impacting children, youth and families.





ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE AND EDUCATION, INC.
25 E STREET, NW • 4TH FLOOR • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001
P: (202) 678-8060 • TOLL FREE: (888) 327-8060

WEBSITE: WWW.AJE-DC.ORG
FACEBOOK: FACEBOOK.COM/AFJEDC
TWITTER: [@AJEINC](https://TWITTER.COM/@AJEINC)