Worker Self Directed Nonprofit FAQ

As of May 31st 2023 the Board of Directors voted to incorporate PLAN as a Worker Self Directed Non-Profit (WSDNP). Over the years, PLAN has become increasingly intentional about its organizational structure and how we can model values such as transparency and collaborative decision-making both internally and externally. This transition is an exciting step in PLAN’s growth and development!

Q: What is a Worker Self Directed Non-Profit?
   The Sustainable Economies Law Center defines a worker self-directed nonprofit as “an organization in which all workers have the power to influence the realms and programs in which they work, the conditions of their workplace, their career paths, and the direction of the organization as a whole.”

Q: Has PLAN been in conversation with other organizations who have made this shift in org structure? What other resources exist for support and information as PLAN navigates this transition?
   In addition to months of research and discussion, PLAN has taken inspiration from the Sustainable Economies Law Center (SELC), The New Economy Coalition, and Resist.org. Though we have thought through how this transition will shift our day to day operations, we recognize that it is impossible to know everything so we will maintain our commitment to continued discussion and shared learning. We are grateful for the resources, community and legal support that SELC offers and intend to continue to learn from other organizations in the Non-Profit Democracy Network.

Q: What is the role of the Board of Directors?
   The Board of Directors supports the four groups that oversee the governance and day-to-day running of the organization, see the following page for more details on this structure. The Board will continue to meet regularly and will continue to serve as trusted advisors and advocates, reviewing and approving major decisions as outlined in the bylaws and acting in the best interests of the organization.

Q: Who is in charge in a WSDNP?
   The WSDNP model does not replace Co-Executive Directors, nor does it abolish our Board of Directors. Rather, it formalizes the ways we’ve already democratized our organizational processes and more clearly outlines areas of collaboration and institutes a “circles” structure. See the following page for more details on this structure. Responsibilities formerly held by Co-EDs are distributed to the seats of the Admin Circle and to additional structures outside that circle such as committees and the new Development Director and the Staff Support Specialist.

Q: How are decisions made within this structure and how are conflicts resolved?
   PLAN maintains multiple systems for consensus-based decision-making. Such as, proposals, voting and a decision matrix that outlines each aspect of the decision making process and who is involved. We do not attempt to avoid conflict as a team. Instead, we acknowledge that it is inevitable. We have developed tools and systems for team accountability and resilience that cover: setting shared expectations, navigating regular conflict and addressing escalated conflict. These systems are independent of the WSDNP model and have been in practice for the team for several years. All full time staff members are onboarded to these processes when they begin at PLAN and participate throughout their time.
Staff Circles Structure

The circles structure for staffing is common for worker self directed non-profits. PLAN has developed the following staffing structure to maintain clear communication structures amongst the staff:

- The Administrative Circle is composed of three seats, each seat is voted in by the General Circle. This circle is the primary body responsible for upholding the legal and executive responsibilities of the organization.
- The General Circle is composed of all Directors and Managers, including the Admin Circle members, and is the primary body responsible for the execution of the organization's mission and vision.
- The Campus Engagement Circle is composed of Directors and Managers whose work most directly engages with students on a regular basis.
- The Network Building Circle is composed of Directors and Managers whose work focuses on building and maintaining tools, systems, and events that build our connection with the students and partners we work with.