

# Cost-Effective Strategies for Employee Learning & Development

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Featuring guest speaker Ressie Chambers

Handout for Important Insights for Community Organizations Webinar Series  
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# Thanks for attending the workshop!

*Today we discussed three steps for building a learning & development strategy in a resource-constrained environment:*

1

Connect learning  
strategies to  
business goals

2

Build a  
sustainable  
learning culture

3

Access free or  
low-cost learning  
resources

# Align Learning & Development with Organizational Goals: *Getting Started*

**EXAMPLE:** Community Food Pantry

**MISSION:** Alleviate hunger

**GOAL:** Enhance volunteer engagement

**ALIGNMENT STRATEGY:** Training sessions focused on communication skills and team-building



# Align Learning & Development with Organizational Goals

Example Goals	Skills Needed
Increase volunteer engagement by creating meaningful opportunities for volunteers to contribute their time and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community outreach</li><li>• Relationship building</li><li>• Communication</li><li>• Storytelling</li></ul>
Improve fundraising efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grant writing</li><li>• Proposal development</li><li>• Financial management</li><li>• Event planning</li></ul>

# How to Build a Sustainable Learning Culture

## Break learning into chunks and leverage learning expertise

- Microlearning (short trainings, videos, etc)
- Peer learning (leverage in-house experts or volunteers, lunch and learns, peer mentoring)
- On-the-job learning (shadowing, cross-training, stretch assignments)

## Place a high value on learning and promote self-guided development

- Set the culture (lead by example)
- Embed learning into daily work (ask “What did you learn this week?” in meetings)
- Recognize and celebrate learning efforts
- Model learning from leadership (leaders are learners too)
- Connect impact of development to professional and personal life

## Consider trying these simple actions

- Create a “learning spotlight” in meetings
- Establish a simple feedback loop for staff skill needs and interests
- Recognize learning as part of volunteer or staff appreciation
- Create peer to peer learning opportunities (both internal or external)
- Leverage a Learning Champion to make it fun

# Free and Low-Cost Learning Resources

## LEARNING CREATION AND TRACKING

What is it?	How can it help?	Where can I find it?
<b>Canva</b>	Create professional-quality graphics, presentations, training deliverables, social media posts, reports, and more without specialized design skills	<a href="https://Canva.com/canva-for-nonprofits/">Canva.com/canva-for-nonprofits/</a>
<b>ChatGPT</b>	Use the power of AI to easily customize standard training, polish language for grant proposals, and countless other editing needs.	<a href="https://Chat.openai.com">Chat.openai.com</a>
<b>Google for Nonprofits (G Suite)</b>	Leverages Google's tools for marketing, communication, collaboration, and data analysis. Provides essential digital literacy and marketing skills at no cost, helping nonprofits amplify their mission and reach.	<a href="https://Google.com/nonprofits/">Google.com/nonprofits/</a>
<b>Moodle</b>	Learning Management System (LMS), free for nonprofits, you can use to quickly create training courses, assign to employees and volunteers, and track training completions.	<a href="https://Moodle.org">Moodle.org</a>

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# Free and Low-Cost Learning Resources

## READY-TO-USE TRAINING CONTENT

What is it?	How can it help?	Where can I find it?
<b>Allstate Foundation Nonprofit Leadership Center</b>	The Allstate Foundation offers free online training programs for nonprofit professionals through Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management.	Allstatefoundation.org
<b>Candid</b>	Candid Learning provides live and on-demand training to improve your fundraising and nonprofit management skills. Nearly all training is offered for free.	Candid.org
<b>Coursera</b>	Coursera offers over 1,700 free online courses in topics spanning from technical skills to soft skills. These offerings can be used to fill gaps in operational knowledge or to fit specific needs. Tip: Be sure to select “Audit” course at sign up to review the free version.	Coursera.org
<b>LinkedIn Learning</b>	Professional development across a vast array of topics, including business, technology, and creative skills (E.g. Microsoft 365, data analysis, grant writing, AI literacy).	Nonprofit.linkedin.com
<b>Nonprofit Learning Lab</b>	Many free training resources, including no-cost live webinars for those who want to be able to ask questions and learn from experts and peers.	Nonprofitlearninglab.org
<b>Nonprofitready.org</b>	NonprofitReady offers over 500 free learning solutions designed for the needs of nonprofit organizations: free online courses, certificate programs, videos, and how-to guides.	Nonprofitready.org

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# Free and Low-Cost Learning Resources

## TECHNOLOGY & PRO BONO SERVICES

What is it?	How can it help?	Where can I find it?
<b>Catchafire</b>	Offers efficient and structured access to skilled volunteers for specific, defined tasks. The pre-scoped projects make it easier for nonprofits to articulate their needs and for volunteers to jump in and contribute effectively.	Catchafire.org
<b>SCORE</b>	SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) is a national nonprofit organization that provides free and confidential mentoring, resources, and education to small business owners and entrepreneurs.	Score.org
<b>Taproot Foundation</b>	A nonprofit organization that connects other nonprofits with skilled volunteers (pro bono consultants) for high-impact projects. They facilitate "skills-based volunteering" where professionals donate their expertise in areas like marketing, HR, IT, strategy, and finance.	Taprootfoundation.org
<b>TechSoup</b>	Provides access to deeply discounted or donated software, hardware, and cloud services. They also offer "TechSoup Courses" which are affordable training programs on various tech and nonprofit management topics.	Techsoup.org

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