



INNOVATION WORKS® CASE STUDY

STRATEGY FOR ORGANIZATIONAL RESTRUCTURING



The Challenge

The Catherine McAuley Center has long served as a trusted resource for women experiencing homelessness, offering safety, skill-building, and emotional support. As immigration needs surged in the U.S., the organization was called upon and received funding to support immigrants in Cedar Rapids. However, when immigration-specific funding ended abruptly, the Center faced tough decisions, including staff reductions and the need to realign with its original mission.

The Innovation Works® Approach

To navigate this transition, the Catherine McAuley Center participated in a one-day Innovation Works® session designed to help the board and staff reconnect with their mission and clarify their future direction.

The day was structured in two parts:

- A joint board and staff session focused on big-picture strategic alignment
- Breakout group work where nearly 30 participants pitched ideas, collaborated in teams, and built consensus through a “walk the wall” process to refine priorities

Key goals included:

- Refocusing on the organization’s core mission
- Engaging the board more effectively
- Ensuring the community and partner agencies understand the organization’s focus and role

The Outcome

The session sparked a mission-driven breakthrough: a shared vision of all programming aligning to one overarching goal, guiding clients toward a self-sustaining lifestyle. The team left with new engagement and communication strategies for the board, agency partners, and communication outreach.

“Working with The Innovation Lab was a joy - they paced our session based on their audience and offered needed, crucial feedback as we navigated some difficult conversations and some inspiring ones! Their questioning approach to our strategic planning was needed and allowed us to feel we had created a framework that would work for us.”

Anne Dugger Executive Director