

Roca STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2019

Updated: June 9, 2016

Our Vision	All young people lead safe and hopeful lives, while communities and systems work together to reduce incarceration, poverty, trauma and racism.
Our Mission	<p>Roca’s mission is to disrupt the cycle of incarceration and poverty by helping young people transform their lives. Roca helps young men leave streets and gangs and go to work. Roca helps young mothers get out of violence, go to work and care for their children.</p> <p>Roca seeks out the most difficult, challenging young people – the young people who deny services and are unwilling or unable to attend traditional programming, work or school. Roca developed and operates an intensive, individualized intervention model strategically designed to engage these tough-to-serve individuals, help them change their destructive behaviors and build their skills over time. All program components address issues of trauma, relapse and overcoming failures. Roca grounds its interventions in evidence and rigorously tracks its performance and outcomes.</p> <p>Roca seeks long-term change in its interaction with agencies and systems. Roca strategically works to facilitate alternative, meaningful communication between institutions, in an effort to wrap around high-risk young people and create a space where they can transform their lives and succeed.</p>
Who We Serve	<p>Roca serves very high-risk young people ages 16-24 who are not ready, willing, or able to change. They fall into two categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young men who are substantially involved in the criminal justice system and are at high-risk for future violence and incarceration. • Young mothers who have experienced immense violence and trauma that put themselves and their children at high-risk. <p>All Roca participants do not seek programs and services, have little education, and have little or no work history.</p>
Our Core Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relentless outreach and transformational, stage-based relationships with youth • Collaborative partners with key leaders and institutions • Performance-based management

<p>Our Programs and Services</p>	<p>Roca accomplishes its mission by providing the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention model for high-risk young men • Intervention model for high-risk young mothers <p>And key supportive activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Development and Employer Engagement • Policy Development and Support for High-Risk Young People
<p>Our Strategy</p>	<p>Increase scale and impact through replication.</p>
<p>Our Goals: 2016-2019</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate that our programming for very high-risk young men can scale to work as a national intervention model to avert future incarcerations. 2. Demonstrate the impact and scalability of our model for very high-risk young mothers to help them move out of poverty and improve parenting skills. 3. Strengthen the organization through the development of leadership and operational capacity. 4. Implement new economic model for growth and long-term sustainability.

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BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT:

Roca's mission is to disrupt the cycle of incarceration and poverty by helping young people transform their lives. Our evidence-based Intervention Model engages the highest-risk 17-24 year olds in a long term process of behavior change and skill building opportunities. By providing two years of intensive engagement and two years of less intensive follow-up, Roca's Intervention Model provides a robust combination of services, including relentless street outreach, data-driven case management, stage-based education and employment training.

We focus our efforts on two groups of young people – young men trapped in cycles of crime and incarceration, and young mothers with a multitude of risk factors. Ultimately, our goal is to help these young people get off the street, reduce their involvement in crime, stay out of jail and get jobs.

Roca's work is based upon the theory that young people, when re-engaged through positive and intensive relationships, can change their behaviors and develop life, education, and employment skills to disrupt the cycles of poverty and incarceration. Our Intervention Model is a cognitive-behavioral intervention based on the evidence-based practices of community corrections. It is the only community corrections model that is delivered on the street, for high-risk young people, by a non-mandated authority. It is this solution that Roca seeks to scale.

While conventional criminal justice and public policy has been designed to respond to violence and poverty in urban communities with a fairly limited set of institutional tools, the Intervention Model offers a progressive alternative that is both cost-efficient and highly effective, offering a comprehensive and holistic approach to criminal rehabilitation through expanded and integrated programming. By developing an evidence-based, multidimensional intervention program that continues to create positive outcomes for the highest-risk young people, **Roca has proven that the cycle of violence and incarceration that continues to plague our cities and our young people can indeed be interrupted.**

Roca's work is structured around the following core competencies and operating principles:

- **Relentless Outreach: We never give up on young people, no matter how hard it gets.** The highest-risk young people will not show up at Roca's doors, no matter how long we wait. So we go out and find them on the streets and where they hang out. It is the relentlessness of a youth worker who keeps showing up, day after day, no matter what, that slowly awakens hope in a young person, even when they have disengaged from programming or relapsed into destructive behaviors.
- **Transformational Relationships: We build relationships with high-risk young people for the purpose of change.** Young people change in the context of relationships. Roca's 27 years of experience and extensive program data show that intensive, long-term relationships with responsible adult Youth Workers and other staff members help even the highest-risk young people

change destructive behaviors and build employment, education, and life skills over four years. Roca utilizes Transformational Relationships as an intensive form of case management.

- **Stage-based/Skill Based Programming: We meet young people where they are, cognitively and behaviorally.** All of Roca's programming is designed to withstand the comings and goings of high-risk young people who have failed in traditional learning environments. Our life skills, educational, pre-vocational, and employment programming are offered in varying informal and formal structures (from repeat drop-in sessions to full certificate courses) to allow young people at varying stages of readiness to learn critical skills as they progress through the Intervention Model.
- **Engaged Institutions: We engage intentionally, respectfully, and effectively with the organizations and systems that touch the lives of high-risk young people.** Understanding that we cannot and should not do this work alone, Roca collaborates with an important array of leaders and institutions from the criminal justice field, government, business and social service sectors to create systemic improvements in the way our society responds to the crises of crime, poverty, and over-incarceration of young people.
- **Performance Based Management: We rigorously track data and continuously evaluate our strategies and outcomes.** Weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annually, Roca tracks and evaluates data regarding participant progress and staff performance, using this data to affect continuous improvement. At Roca, we know that good intentions don't always produce good results. If we are not helping young people stay out of jail and get jobs, then we might as well close our doors. So we've spent the better part of the last decade developing an Intervention Model that focuses on results first.

Underpinning all of Roca's work is a deep awareness of the following key challenges:

- **Violence level of Roca's young people:** Roca must to combat both the real and perceived danger of working with street/court/gang-involved young people. To address overt and perceived risk, Roca relies on two critical strategies: 1) Roca seeks to hire personnel who have experience working with this population and continuously develops organizational talent and trains them in the techniques critical to working with this group, such as motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioral therapy techniques (customized for criminally involved young people); and, 2) Roca works with strong advisory boards in each location, each of which works with Roca to relate to the public during times of crises and in addressing issues of perceived danger.
- **Limited available jobs and/or economic opportunity:** As Roca's participants have extremely limited work and educational experience, there are limited employment opportunities that offer a living wage or economic mobility. Many of our young men have felony charges in their backgrounds, while many of our young mothers are severely isolated from positive social support networks and mainstream training opportunities. To address this, Roca works with young people to build up educational and employment experience, offering pre-vocational training, educational supports and transitional employment. Where transitional employment contracts and other employment opportunities are in short supply, Roca continues to develop partnerships with local businesses around job creation and business development.

Our Goals: 2016-2019

Goal 1: Demonstrate impact and scale programming for very high-risk young men to avert future incarcerations.

As mass incarceration in the United States reaches internationally unprecedented rates, Roca takes pride in its ability to deliver an effective Intervention Model specially designed for the highest-risk young men with criminal justice involvement. While the majority of criminal justice reform efforts today focus on creating alternatives for low- and moderate-risk offenders, Roca's model intentionally targets young people at highest risk to reoffend and recidivate, helping to reduce re-incarceration by connecting them to social supports, employment training, and economic opportunities.

Our historical outcomes show a robust model that is improving: In 2012, 90% of participants in the follow up and retention phase of Roca's model had no new arrests, increasing to 92% in 2014; in 2012, 79% of participants retained employment, increasing to 89% in 2014. Roca's Intervention Model offers a profound solution to the destructive cycle of incarceration and poverty that can affect 17-24 year old young men for the rest of their lives. It is this solution that Roca seeks to scale.

STRATEGIES:

- A. Implement the Massachusetts Juvenile Justice Pay for Success Project and expand services in Massachusetts
- B. Demonstrate higher level of evidence for the intervention model
- C. Replicate in another state
- D. Develop long term plan for scale and impact

Goal 2: Demonstrate a national intervention model for very high risk young mothers, helping them move out of poverty.

Roca's work to disrupt the cycle of poverty doesn't begin or end with young men. Since 1988, Roca has remained committed to helping the most vulnerable young mothers in our society overcome destructive patterns of unemployment, isolation, domestic violence, homelessness and family instability. Today Roca has created an adapted dual-generation Intervention Model for our communities' highest risk young mothers. We have developed a comprehensive plan over the next five years to not only expand this model but also to codify it, evaluate it and demonstrate that it can serve as a critical solution for the highest-risk young mothers and children left out of traditional programming.

STRATEGIES:

- A. Expand programming in MA for the highest risk young mothers.
- B. Develop and implement an engaged institutions strategy for work with very high risk young mothers.
- C. Demonstrate effectiveness of the Intervention Model for high risk young mothers.

Goal 3: Strengthen the organization through the development of leadership and operational capacity.

Roca is at an inflection point. In the midst of increased national attention, Roca is in the process of demonstrating proof of concept for its unique Intervention Model through a randomized control trial evaluation. With the implementation of its first pay for success project, recent replication in Boston, expansion of work into new communities across Massachusetts, and simultaneous elevation of its model for young mothers, Roca will grow from a \$10 million organization to a \$19 million organization operating in multiple states over the next three years. Roca must continue to develop organizational talent and assess the strength of internal and Board capacity. Roca is committed to being a high-performing and adaptive organization that demonstrates impact and scales programming with excellence, and will expand organizational capacity in leadership, management, and operations, developing clear processes and structures for decision making and strategic planning.

STRATEGIES:

- A. Strengthen senior management capacity across organization.
- B. Strengthen capacity of Board of Directors and Advisory Committees to support growth.
- C. Improve organizational infrastructure to meet needs for growth and scaling.

Goal 4: Implement a new economic model for growth and long-term sustainability.

The current state of the economy places a significant challenge in raising sufficient private revenues to meet organizational needs for current operations and proposed expansions. To ensure the long-term scale and sustainability of Roca's Intervention Model, **Roca believes that over 50% of the program budget in any operational site should be funded by a predominant public funding source**, such as outcomes-based funding not unlike Pay for Success in Massachusetts. Roca continues to investigate and advocate for performance contracting arrangements in each potential new replication site. As traditional philanthropy also continues to play a key role, the organization must also continue to build and maintain the capacity to raise funds from diverse sources and adapt to the economy.

STRATEGIES:

- A. Increase budget from \$10 million in expenses in FY 16 to \$19M in FY 19.
- B. Successfully implement PFS in MA and hit benchmarks, allowing for project continuation.
- C. Identify and access alternative sources, resulting in sustainable public funding (i.e. outcomes-based contracting and funding for community-based preventative care, e.g. Medicaid)
- D. Expand Roca's business development and employer engagement model.