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Governance Consulting Proposal

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Understanding Your Moment

Community Development Alliance (CDA) is at a meaningful inflection point. Becoming a standalone nonprofit in 2025 is not just a legal or structural change — it is an invitation to be intentional about how governance will work going forward. When organizational governance has evolved informally, as it often does in mission-driven environments, the work of formalizing it is delicate: you want to create clarity and structure without losing the collaborative, trust-based culture that got you here.

What you are describing — a board ready to step more fully into its governance role, a collective impact model that shapes how decisions should be made, and a desire to phase this work thoughtfully rather than all at once — is exactly the kind of governance engagement I find most meaningful and most effective.

I also want to name something that I believe matters here: I am not coming to this work as an outside observer. I have a prior working relationship with CDA — I know your work, your people, and the organizational context in which this governance transition is happening. That familiarity is not incidental. It means we can move into the assessment phase with a foundation of trust already in place, and it means my recommendations will be informed by genuine understanding of what CDA is building — not just what the documents say. I would be honored to continue that relationship in this new capacity, and to play a role in building the governance foundation that will sustain CDA's relevance and impact for years to come.

This proposal outlines how I would approach that work with you.

About Chaska Consulting

Chaska Consulting is a Milwaukee-based strategic HR and organizational effectiveness consultancy founded in 2018. I partner with nonprofit organizations, community-anchored institutions, and mission-driven leaders on governance, organizational development, leadership effectiveness, and strategic people practices.

My governance consulting work is grounded in direct experience: I currently serve on four nonprofit boards — as Governance Vice-Chair at Alverno College, Executive Board Member and IDEA Committee Chair at VisitMilwaukee, Board Vice Chair at The Opportunity Center, and Board Member at the Marcus Performing Arts Center. I understand governance from both sides of the table, which shapes how I work with organizations to build practices that boards can actually own and sustain.

I bring particular experience working with organizations navigating governance transitions — where structure needs to be built or rebuilt without disrupting the relationships and collaborative culture that define how the organization operates.

Proposed Approach

I propose a phased governance assessment and framework design engagement, structured to be completed in 2026 with outputs that carry CDA into the next fiscal year with clarity, confidence, and shared ownership.

Phase 1 — Governance Assessment & Listening (Weeks 1–4)

Before making recommendations, I will develop a clear picture of where CDA is today — what is working, what is unclear, and where stronger structure is needed. This phase includes:

- Document review: Current bylaws, committee charters, board meeting materials, any existing role descriptions or expectations documents
- Stakeholder interviews: Individual conversations with board members, the Executive Director, and key staff to understand how governance currently functions, where there is alignment, and where there is ambiguity or tension
- Board-staff relationship mapping: Specific attention to how decisions are currently made, where roles overlap or blur, and how the board's relationship to staff-led work has evolved

Deliverable: A concise Governance Assessment Summary documenting current-state findings, key themes, and priority areas for attention — shared with board and staff leadership before moving to recommendations.

Phase 2 — Framework Design & ED Evaluation Approach (Weeks 5–9)

Drawing on the assessment findings, this phase focuses on designing the governance structures and practices CDA needs going forward:

- **Board roles and structure:** Clarify board member expectations, committee design and charters, and the board's role relative to staff — with particular attention to what governance looks and feels like in a collective impact model
- **Core governance processes:** Recommend a small, practical set of governance processes — meeting rhythms, decision frameworks, conflict of interest practices, onboarding for new board members — that will help CDA operate with greater consistency and confidence
- **ED evaluation design:** Co-design an Executive Director evaluation approach that reflects CDA's collaborative model, incorporates appropriate stakeholder input, and is fair, transparent, and sustainable for ongoing use

Deliverable: A Governance Framework document and ED Evaluation Process Design, presented to the board for review and discussion.

Phase 3 — Implementation Planning & Board Session (Weeks 10–12)

The best governance frameworks are only as good as the organization's ability to implement and own them. This phase ensures the work lands with practical clarity:

- A phased implementation roadmap: prioritized next steps, ownership assignments, and a realistic timeline for rolling out new governance practices
- A facilitated board session to review the framework, discuss any refinements, and build shared understanding and commitment to the governance model going forward
- A brief Governance Transition Summary — a practical reference document the board can use as a starting point for ongoing governance conversations

Engagement Terms

This engagement is proposed on a time-and-materials basis at my standard consulting rate.

Hourly Rate:	$200 per hour
Estimated Hours:	40–55 hours across all three phases
Estimated Investment:	$8,000 – $11,000
Billing:	Monthly, based on hours worked
Timeline:	Phases 1–3 completed within Q1–Q3 2026

A detailed hour estimate by phase is available upon request. I am also open to discussing a fixed-fee structure for the full engagement if CDA prefers budget certainty.

What Is Included

- All stakeholder interview notes and document review
- Governance Assessment Summary
- Governance Framework document and ED Evaluation Process Design
- Implementation roadmap and phased next steps
- One facilitated board session
- Governance Transition Summary reference document
- Up to two rounds of revision on all written deliverables

Why Chaska Consulting

Governance work succeeds when the consultant brings both structural expertise and organizational attunement — the ability to build the right framework for this organization, not a generic one. What I bring to this engagement:

- **Prior relationship with CDA:** I come to this work with existing familiarity with CDA's mission, model, and organizational culture — which means less ramp-up time, stronger stakeholder trust from day one, and recommendations grounded in genuine organizational understanding rather than surface-level assessment alone
- **Board-side credibility:** Active governance leadership on four Milwaukee nonprofit boards, including a Governance Vice-Chair role, gives me a practitioner's understanding of what governance structures actually enable board members to do their best work
- **Collective impact experience:** Familiarity with the collaborative, multi-stakeholder decision-making models that collective impact organizations require — and how governance needs to be designed to support rather than constrain that model
- **Organizational development depth:** 15+ years of organizational effectiveness consulting means I approach governance not as an isolated compliance exercise but as part of the broader organizational health and leadership ecosystem
- **Milwaukee roots:** Deep ties to Milwaukee's nonprofit and civic community — I understand the relational context in which CDA operates and bring that awareness to every stakeholder conversation
- **Right-sized partnership:** As a boutique consultancy, CDA gets senior-level expertise on every deliverable — no junior staff, no handoffs, no overhead

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Next Steps

I would welcome a conversation with CDA's board or leadership team to discuss this proposal, answer any questions, and ensure the scope and approach are the right fit for your needs.

Thank you for this opportunity. Building governance structures that are sustainable, right-sized, and genuinely reflective of who CDA is — that is work I care about and am well positioned to support. I look forward to continuing our partnership.

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