

SAMPLE REPORT

Core Constraint Report

Identify the one thing holding your organization back — and what to do about it.

PREPARED FOR

Maria Gonzalez, Executive Director

ORGANIZATION

Valley Youth Services

STAFF / BUDGET

22 FTE | \$2.4M

DATE

February 14, 2026

● Strategic Clarity ● Resource Alignment ● Leadership Impact ● Operational Capacity ● Organizational Resilience

Our Approach

Theory of Constraints meets nonprofit leadership

Most organizational assessments measure health — how well things are going across multiple dimensions. The Core Constraint Report does something different: it identifies the **one thing** that, if addressed, would unlock the most progress across your entire organization.

This approach is rooted in Eliyahu Goldratt's Theory of Constraints — the idea that every system has a single bottleneck that limits overall throughput. Fix the bottleneck, and the whole system improves. Ignore it, and every other improvement you make will be limited by that one unresolved constraint. We've adapted this framework specifically for nonprofit organizations, mapping five critical domains and analyzing how they interact to reveal your true constraint — not just your lowest score.

The Five Domains

Strategic Clarity

Are we aligned on where we're going?

Measures whether your organization has a clear, shared set of priorities that guide daily decisions — and whether you stop things that no longer align.

Resource Alignment

Do we have what we need — and is it going to the right places?

Measures whether financial stability, revenue predictability, and capacity match your ambitions — and whether bottlenecks are slowing you down.

Leadership Impact

Are leaders making the right difference?

Measures decision speed, accountability, communication clarity, and board-staff dynamics — the human infrastructure of your organization.

Operational Capacity

Can we execute effectively?

Measures whether supervisors coach, systems support, programs are evaluated, and whether you're planning or just reacting.

Organizational Resilience

Can we survive what's coming?

Measures mission relevance, funding diversification, psychological safety, and adaptive capacity — the immune system of your organization.

How We Identify Your Constraint

Your constraint isn't always your lowest score — it's what's **limiting your system**. We use upstream analysis to determine causality: if your Operational Capacity is low but your Leadership Impact is also weak, leadership is likely the true constraint — because no one is building the systems. We analyze domain interactions, weighted question responses, and your open-ended answers to identify the one thing that, if resolved, would create the most movement across all five domains.

UPSTREAM: Strategic Clarity → Resource Alignment → Operational Capacity

GOVERNANCE: Board Governance → Leadership Impact → Organizational Resilience

Your Constraint Analysis

Prepared for Maria Gonzalez

YOUR CORE CONSTRAINT

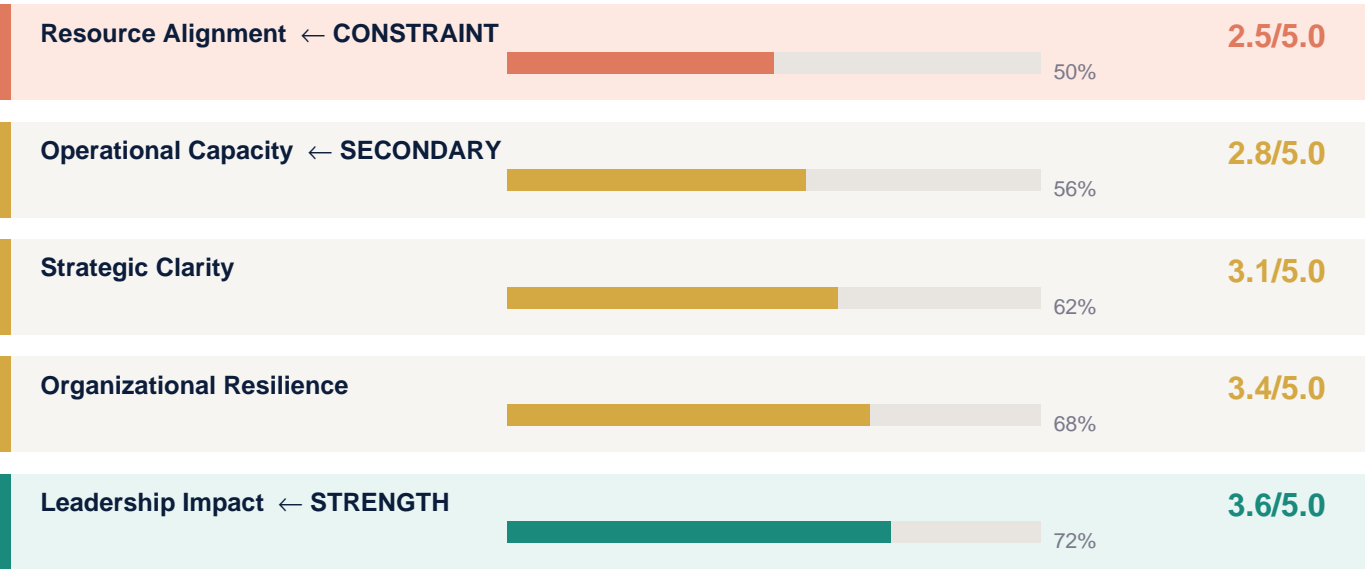
Resource Alignment

Score: 2.5/5.0 | Secondary: Operational Capacity (2.8/5.0)

RESOURCE ALIGNMENT → OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

Pattern: "Carrying the Weight"

Domain Scores



What This Means

Maria Gonzalez, your scores reveal a pattern we call **"Carrying the Weight"**. Your Resource Alignment (2.5/5.0) is your primary constraint, with Operational Capacity (2.8/5.0) as a secondary pressure point. Meanwhile, your Leadership Impact (3.6/5.0) is a genuine strength.

Why this is your constraint — not just your lowest score: Your Operational Capacity is also low (2.8), but using upstream analysis, we can see that operations are struggling *because* of your resource gap — staff don't have the tools they need, and the organization is reactive because there aren't enough people or dollars going to the right places. Fix the resource alignment, and operations will improve downstream. Your own words confirmed this: *"We keep saying yes to new grants even when we don't have the staff to execute well."*

Pattern: "Carrying the Weight"

RESOURCE ALIGNMENT → OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

The Dynamic

When resources are misaligned — too little money, too few people, too many commitments — operations start to crack. But capable leaders mask this by working harder, solving problems personally, and keeping things running through sheer effort. The organization appears functional, but it's functioning on the backs of a few people rather than on sustainable systems.

Your open-ended responses confirm this: *"We keep saying yes to new grants even when we don't have the staff to execute well"* and *"I spend most of my time fundraising and putting out fires."* These aren't separate problems — they're both symptoms of the same resource constraint.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

- Saying yes to grants that don't fully cover costs
- Staff wearing 3-4 hats with no clear boundaries
- ED spending 60%+ of time on fundraising
- Programs running on momentum, not evaluation
- Deferred infrastructure (IT, HR, facilities)

WHAT IT COSTS

- Staff burnout and quiet disengagement
- Mission drift from chasing unrestricted dollars
- Inability to grow even when demand increases
- Institutional knowledge trapped in few people
- Leader isolation — carrying weight nobody sees

THE TRAP

Organizations with this pattern often try to solve it by fundraising harder — pursuing more grants, launching more campaigns. But more revenue without resource alignment just means more activity at the same unsustainable pace. The trap is believing the problem is a lack of money when the real problem is a lack of strategic resource alignment.

Diagnostic Flags Triggered

Burnout Risk High leadership + low resources = people compensating for systems.

Succession Vulnerability Knowledge concentrated in too few people.

Strategic Overextension More commitments than capacity to deliver on them.

Domain Interactions

How your constraint affects everything else

Your constraint doesn't exist in isolation. Here's how your Resource Alignment gap is creating downstream pressure on your other domains — and why fixing this one thing will create movement across your entire organization.

Resource Alignment → Operational Capacity

Without adequate resources, operations run on adrenaline instead of systems. Your Operational Capacity score (56%) is being dragged down by your resource gap — staff don't have the tools they need (scored 2/5), and the organization is reactive rather than planful (scored 4/5 on "We spend more time reacting than planning," a reverse-scored item). Fix the resource alignment, and operations improve almost automatically.

Resource Alignment → Strategic Clarity

When resources are tight, strategy becomes aspirational rather than operational. Your team scored low on "We stop or pause initiatives that no longer align" (2/5) — a classic sign that resource scarcity is preventing strategic discipline. You can't say no when every dollar matters.

Resource Alignment → Organizational Resilience

Your team scored 2/5 on "We could survive the loss of our largest funding source." This is a direct consequence of resource misalignment — concentration risk. Your Resilience score (68%) is being artificially held up by strong mission alignment and psychological safety, but the financial foundation underneath is fragile.

Leadership Impact → Compensating for Everything

Your Leadership Impact (72%) is your highest domain — and that's both good news and a warning. Strong leadership is masking the resource and operational gaps. Your board "approves what you bring" (your words) rather than providing strategic pushback, which means you're navigating alone. This is sustainable for now, but not forever.

Your One Thing

The single highest-leverage action you can take

THE RADICAL MOVE

Conduct a Resource Alignment Audit

Before pursuing any new funding, map every dollar and every staff hour against your top 3 strategic priorities. If more than 30% of your resources are going to things that aren't in your top 3, you have a resource alignment problem — not a resource scarcity problem.

30-60-90 Day Action Plan

30 DAYS See the Gap

- You said you "keep saying yes to new grants" — list every current grant and mark which ones fully cover their program costs. Circle the ones that don't.
- Track your time for 2 weeks. You said you spend most of your time "fundraising and putting out fires" — quantify exactly how much.
- Ask each direct report: "What takes up most of your time that shouldn't?"

Milestone: A clear map of where resources go vs. where they should go.

60 DAYS Make Hard Choices

- From your grant audit: identify one grant or program to sunset, transfer, or renegotiate for full cost coverage.
- You noted your board "approves what I bring" — present the resource gap to them and ask: "Should we keep doing all of this?"
- Reallocate at least one staff position or time block to an under-resourced priority.

Milestone: At least one "no" that creates space for a better "yes."

90 DAYS Build the System

- Create a decision filter for new grants: Does it align? Does it cover full costs? Do we have capacity? What stops if we say yes?
- You worried about what happens "if I left" — establish a quarterly resource review that doesn't depend on you running it.
- Set a capacity threshold — the point at which you stop taking on new work without adding resources.





Milestone: The next opportunity that doesn't align, you say no — and it feels right.

Your Responses





Full transparency — here's exactly what we measured

We believe in showing our work. Below are your actual responses to each question, organized by domain. The ★ symbol indicates high-weight questions — these carry 1.2x scoring influence because they are the strongest indicators of constraint presence.





Strategic Clarity — 3.1/5.0 (62%)

- ★ Our organization has a clear set of priorities that guide daily decisions. 
- Staff understand how their work connects to long-term goals. 
- ★ We stop or pause initiatives that no longer align with our strategic direction. 
- ★ When new opportunities arise, we evaluate them through a consistent strategic lens. 





Resource Alignment — 2.5/5.0 (50%)

- We have the financial stability to focus on long-term priorities, not just short-term survival. 
- Our revenue streams feel predictable enough to plan ahead. 
- ★ We have more ideas than we have capacity to execute. 
- ★ Operational bottlenecks regularly slow us down. 





Leadership Impact — 3.6/5.0 (72%)

- ★ Decisions take longer than they should. 
- ★ Accountability is clear — people follow through consistently. 
- Leadership communicates priorities clearly and consistently. 
- The board provides strategic guidance without micromanaging operations. 

Operational Capacity — 2.8/5.0 (56%)

- ★ Supervisors provide consistent direction, coaching, and feedback. 
- ★ We spend more time reacting to issues than planning ahead. 
- Staff have the tools and systems they need to do their jobs well. 
- We regularly evaluate whether our programs are achieving intended outcomes. 

Organizational Resilience — 3.4/5.0 (68%)

- Our mission still accurately reflects the community needs we serve. 
- ★ We could survive the loss of our largest funding source. 
- Staff feel safe raising concerns without fear of retaliation. 
- ★ We adapt to changing conditions rather than just enduring them. 

What's Next

Turn insight into action

Your Core Constraint Report has identified what's holding your organization back — and what to do about it. Here's how to turn these insights into real progress.

1

Discuss Your Results with Ask the Professor

Use the AI coaching tool inside The Nonprofit Edge to explore your constraint in depth. Try asking: "My resource alignment score is 2.5/5 and I keep saying yes to grants that don't align. How do I break this pattern?"

2

Share with Your Leadership Team

This report isn't just for you. Share the Domain Scores and Pattern Analysis with your leadership team or board. Ask them: "Does this ring true?" Their perspective will either validate the constraint or reveal blind spots in the data.

3

Use the PIVOT Scenario Planner

Map out what happens if you address the resource alignment gap vs. what happens if you don't. The PIVOT tool helps you model both scenarios with real data and build the case for change.

4

Reassess in 90 Days

After working your 30-60-90 plan, retake the assessment. Track your progress, see which domains improved, and identify your next constraint. Growth is iterative — and now you have the tool to measure it.

About This Assessment

The Core Constraint Report™ is built on Eliyahu Goldratt's Theory of Constraints, adapted for nonprofit organizations by Dr. Lyn Corbett. The assessment uses 20 Likert-scale questions (8 high-weight) and 4 open-ended prompts across 5 domains, with upstream analysis to identify causal constraints rather than simply reporting lowest scores. The methodology draws on 25+ years of nonprofit consulting and a PhD in Organizational Leadership from the University of San Diego.



This is a sample report. Your actual report will reflect your unique responses.