

The mission of **Dress for Success** is to empower women to achieve economic independence by providing a network of support, professional attire and the development tools to help women thrive in work and in life.

Dress for Success' regional office in Los Angeles was struggling to gain significant prominence and sustainable funding after four years of operations. The hard-working and talented staff saw their efforts plateauing and needed to figure out how to get to the next level of growth.

### **THE SOLUTION**

The West Coast office needed West Coast leadership! Because it operates under the umbrella of Dress for Success Worldwide in New York, Dress for Success Worldwide-West doesn't have a separate Board of Directors with fiduciary responsibilities. But it needed connectors, door openers, influencers, and friends on the ground in Los Angeles to help realize its strategic goals.

**Envision** Principal, Suzanne Elliott developed a charter for the West Coast Advisory Council that outlined the purpose, roles and responsibilities, and guidelines for membership. Then we recruited 15 senior executive women from a range of industries (entertainment, PR/marketing, law, finance, etc.) who were passionate about the Dress for Success mission and excited to be ambassadors for the organization in Los Angeles and beyond. Some of the new Advisory Council members were existing Dress for Success volunteers or donors, some were recommended by early Advisory Council members, and others were completely new to the organization. We also led on-boarding for new Advisory Council members and initial group meetings.

### **OUTCOMES**

Six months after the first Advisory Council meeting, the group has become a wealth of resources, connections and outreach. The early accomplishments of the Advisory Council include:

- Offered strategic insights on programs, real estate, marketing and PR
- Helped double attendance/revenue at organization's annual Empower Breakfast
- Provided graphic design services on a pro bono basis
- Connected Dress for Success to over 30 new corporate contacts
- Introduced junior colleagues to Dress for Success' young professionals group
- Represented Dress for Success as speakers at industry and community events
- Assumed leadership roles for upcoming fundraising events

***"The Advisory Council is the cornerstone for our continued growth and success in Los Angeles. Suzanne helped to bring together the right people and give them the structure, inspiration and encouragement to make things happen."***

~Joi Gordon, CEO of Dress for Success Worldwide