

LOW COST IDEAS THAT ENCOURAGE INNOVATIVE THINKING.... but mostly to get you started!!!

- **Have an innovation hackathon.** Will not take more than 3 hours maximum! Bring in outsiders, stakeholders you think are good at rapid idea generation...or can add to the mix- anyone in this group who you think can be participative. (if you are a nonprofit, bringing in outsider should be easier, none of you are in competition with one another, it is a HUGE advantage!!)
- **Create an internal email chain.** Give it a title like "NEW IDEAS" OR "INNOVATIVE THINKING", "ARTICLES OF INTEREST" and so on. Ask everyone to mark it important / high priority / pin it, so that it always sits on the immediate view screen of your inbox. Encourage everyone from time to time to add to it. OR
- **Create a shared drive** and everyone contributes ideas- encourage, insist everyone turn in something once a week at least...
- **Build a resources section:** If you do not have time / money to create your own, then create a page on your website with several links to sites you think are useful.
- **Encourage everyone to peek into it on a weekly basis.** When you do all-hands meetings, ask everyone what they read from the resources section... you can do it for one-on-one meetings also.
- **Have a white board or blackboard somewhere prominent** and ask questions on it, as a beginning, don't ask work-related stuff. Questions like 'what are some healthy snacks you can give kids', ' what is your favorite product in Costco?' or ' what are some cheap ideas to spend the weekend with kids?'.... Once everyone gets comfortable answering it, slip a work-related question or two... if nothing else, it adds to the morale, makes you a *funner* organization!!
- Each time we say 'virtual meetings are so cold, they do not allow for small talk and are impersonal', use this as a conversation starter - 'hey, what did you read on the resources section', or, ' did you add something to the shared ideas folder' and if the answer is NO, you discuss for a few minutes something you read or added. **It is important for everyone to know that it is OK to spend time on these things.**