

# Morgan Stanley



## 2024 Strategy Challenge

Program Information  
October 2023

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## KEY DATES

### Application and Selection Timeline

DATE	MILESTONE
December 4, 2023, 5:00 p.m. ET	Application deadline
December 5, 2023 – February 29, 2024	Application review Interviews with shortlisted applicants Ongoing decision notification
March 1, 2024	All nonprofits notified by this date

### Program Milestones

DATE	MILESTONE
March 13, 2024	Nonprofit Client Training Strategy Challenge Kickoff Event <i>Location: Morgan Stanley Headquarters, New York, NY</i>
Week of April 8, 2024	Midpoint client presentation by Morgan Stanley team: Discuss emerging recommendations <i>Location: To be determined with team</i>
Week of April 29, 2024	Final client presentation by Morgan Stanley team: Present final recommendations <i>Location: To be determined with team</i>
May 16, 2024	Strategy Challenge Final Event <i>Location: Morgan Stanley Headquarters, New York, NY</i>

## PROGRAM INFORMATION

### About the Strategy Challenge

Now in its fifteenth year, the Strategy Challenge is Morgan Stanley's annual signature pro bono initiative. Selected nonprofits based in the New York Metro area are matched with a team of select Morgan Stanley employees to address an important strategic question over the course of the ten-week program.

Morgan Stanley teams are comprised of Associates and Vice Presidents from divisions across the firm, and supported by a senior leader at the firm, as well as a nonprofit consulting coach.

By participating in the Strategy Challenge, nonprofits have the opportunity to receive pro bono strategic advice, gain exposure to other nonprofits, and build their relationship with Morgan Stanley and its employees. Nonprofits will benefit from a high level of engagement and analytical rigor from their teams and should expect to devote a minimum of 10 to 15 hours per week to engage with and support the team.

Read more on the [STRATEGY CHALLENGE WEBSITE](#). If you have any questions, please contact us at [STRATEGY.CHALLENGE@MORGANSTANLEY.COM](mailto:STRATEGY.CHALLENGE@MORGANSTANLEY.COM).

### Program Milestones

The 2024 Strategy Challenge will take place over ten weeks, with key milestones identified below. Please ensure that your organization is able to commit to participate in the following milestones in addition to the ongoing weekly engagement.

DATE	MILESTONE
<b>March 13, 2024</b>	Nonprofit Client Training Strategy Challenge Kickoff Event <i>Location: Morgan Stanley Headquarters, New York, NY</i>
<b>Week of April 8, 2024</b>	Midpoint client presentation by Morgan Stanley team: Discuss emerging recommendations <i>Location: To be determined with team</i>
<b>Week of April 29, 2024</b>	Final client presentation by Morgan Stanley team: Present final recommendations <i>Location: To be determined with team</i>
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## Eligibility Criteria

- Registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization or have a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor
- Nonprofit is located – and offers services – in the New York Metro area
- Nonprofits best suited for the Strategy Challenge have **5+ full-time employees** and a minimum **\$1million annual budget**
- Selected nonprofits must have an active nondiscrimination policy. Morgan Stanley will not work with organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, age, sex, sex stereotype, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, disability, marital status, pregnancy (including unlawful discrimination on the basis of a legally protected pregnancy/maternity leave), veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law. Additionally, we will not work with organizations that restrict client service on the basis of religious beliefs or those that proselytize to clients.

## Selection Criteria

### Proposed project focuses on a key strategic issue or decision to be made:

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- Project will play a vital role in achieving the nonprofit's mission and increasing impact
- Strategic question is clearly articulated and compelling

### Nonprofit has conducted preliminary research on the strategic issue:

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- Can provide preliminary data to inform the team's work
- Is willing to share information and business plans to facilitate the team's analysis
- Has an understanding of what analysis remains for the Morgan Stanley team to complete

### Project is well-suited for the Strategy Challenge:

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- Focuses on quantitative analysis (see page 6 for project examples)
- Morgan Stanley team has the appropriate skill set to make meaningful contributions

### Nonprofit demonstrates:

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- Senior-level commitment to the project
- Capacity to provide a staff member (project manager) who will work day-to-day with Morgan Stanley
- Intention to implement the recommendation they receive from their Morgan Stanley team
- The impact of resulting recommendations can be measured using clearly defined metrics
- Willingness for the resulting recommendations and supporting analysis to be presented during the final events, open to Morgan Stanley employees, participating nonprofits and media

### Important notes:

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- Morgan Stanley employees cannot develop fundraising strategies or investment products and will not advise on a nonprofit's investment portfolio
- Nonprofit selection is based solely on the merits of the application and fit for the program. Recommendations and endorsements from Morgan Stanley employees or clients will not be considered and will not influence the selection process

## Nonprofit Time Commitment and Expectations

By participating in the Strategy Challenge, your organization commits to dedicate time as follows:

ROLE	PROFILE	PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS
<b>Project Manager</b>	A leader in your organization with direct insight into and responsibility for the area of work covered by your strategic question (e.g., for a project focused on growing an employment program, the project manager might be the Senior Director of Programs).	Participation in required milestone events (table above) and 10-15 hours per week for ten weeks interacting with the team, collecting data, connecting the team to individuals in the organization, etc.
<b>Senior-level Support</b>	A senior leader in your organization able to commit your organization to action regarding your project question. Typically, this is the CEO/Executive Director or one of his/her/their direct reports for especially large organizations.	Participation in required milestone events (table above) and as-needed support of the team throughout the ten-week program (e.g., providing feedback on draft recommendations, participating in periodic update calls).
<b>CEO/ Executive Director</b>	CEO/Executive Director of your nonprofit organization.	In cases where ongoing senior-level support is not provided by the CEO/Executive Director, we ask that he/she/they plan to participate in the milestone events.

## Strategic Question Categories

**Program Alignment:** Identify and prioritize changes to programs based on alignment with organization’s strategy and operational factors

**Effective Business Models:** Evaluate the effectiveness and viability of an existing or new business model or venture

**Growth Strategy:** Plan for organizational, financial and measurement changes required to successfully expand on success

## Sample Projects *Well-Suited* for the Strategy Challenge

Please use the examples of past projects below to help you determine what would be a strong fit for a Morgan Stanley team's skill set.

- *Nonprofit X* is exploring growth through national expansion and prioritizing its city options – between three select cities, which is the best option?
- What part of *Nonprofit X*'s Sample Program can be scaled, and what is required for expansion?
- Should *Nonprofit X* proceed with any one of three potential merger opportunities?
- *Nonprofit X*, which employs formerly homeless individuals in a food services business as a path to employment, is considering expanding to one of three potential new industries. Which, if any, should they expand to?

- *Nonprofit X*, a microlender, is considering providing borrowers with additional services Y and Z. Should they do so? If so, should these services be offered directly or through a third party?
- Should *Nonprofit X* add additional programming to a specific new demographic? If so, how?
- What business model should *Nonprofit X* pursue in order to grow its school programming? Which schools should they target?
- Should *Nonprofit X* launch fee-for-service education classes? If so, what does a feasible model look like?
- What industry mix and partnership strategy should *Nonprofit X* pursue to improve placement and retention rates for youth participating in their vocational training programs?
- What service mix and pricing strategy should *Nonprofit X* pursue in their Home Care Services area?
- Of *Nonprofit X*'s current offerings, can any operate as fee-for-service? What would it take to launch this new fee-for-service model?

## Projects **NOT Well-Suited** for the Strategy Challenge

These proposed questions are *not* a good fit for the program because they are either too broad to complete in the allotted time frame, too operational in nature, or they focus on impact measurement rather than strategic direction.

- Determining a long-term strategic plan
- Developing fundraising strategies for donors
- Analyzing a nonprofit's investment portfolio
- Developing financial or investment products
- Determining budgets
- Researching corporate partners
- Organizing fundraising events
- Determining a marketing approach for a new program
- Measuring impact of programming
- Measuring effectiveness of current staff
- Organizing a database of donors
- Facilitating web development