

A toolkit for action

A photograph of a man with a beard and a young child looking up at the sky. The child is sitting on the man's shoulders, with their hand resting on his shoulder. They are both smiling and looking upwards. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with trees and sunlight.

Building Communities of Hope

through Effective Faith-Based Organizations

Acknowledgments

This toolkit would not exist without the contributions of many faith leaders and our community partners, especially Inner-City Muslim Action Network in Chicago; Jewish Child and Family Services of Chicago; Macedonia Family and Community Enrichment in Pittsburgh; Trinity Family Life Center in Richmond, Virginia; and Urban Muslim Minority Alliance in Waukegan, Illinois.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

The authors were invited to bring together their experience, talents and depth of knowledge to develop this toolkit.

The **Rev. Alexandra James** served for eight years as the executive director of the Trinity Family Life Center, a faith-based organization located in Richmond, Virginia. Prior to joining the Center, she worked for 10 years at Fairfax County Government's Department of Community and Neighborhood Services, where she served in various positions, including assistant community center director, community center director and regional coordinator (Regions 1 and 2). Rev. James is an ordained Baptist minister, spoken word artist and mother of twins.

Ms. Peggy Outon is the founding executive director of the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management at the Robert Morris University in Pittsburgh where she has served for 18 years. As a practitioner-scholar and thought leader in nonprofit management, Ms. Outon was a founder of the National Alliance for Nonprofit Management and has served as a training fellow of the Peter Drucker Institute. Under her leadership, the Center offers consulting services in many areas, including board development, business planning, collaboration and alliances, financial management, fund development, organizational effectiveness and technology planning. She is a leader in a Presbyterian congregation, a fund development specialist, wife, and mother of two adult children.

Ms. Linetta J. Gilbert has served in the field of philanthropy for over 25 years at the local, state, regional, national and global levels with foundations and private donors. During her tenure as senior program officer at the Ford Foundation, her grantmaking expertise won her the coveted Robert Scrivner Award for Creative Grantmaking from the Council on Foundations. She provided leadership in philanthropy related to faith-based grantmaking and developing new roles for community philanthropy as a strategy for broadening and diversifying leadership in communities. Ms. Gilbert now is the managing partner for a consulting firm, Gilbert & Associates. She is a woman of faith in the Baptist tradition, a wife, mother of two young women, and a grandmother.

Welcome

The initial and primary question of Maasai warriors returning to their villages in Tanzania and Kenya is, “How are the children?” The foundational principle of this inquiry is, if the children are not well, then neither the community nor the nation are well. There is no victory when the children remain victimized.

The sacred writings of every major faith, while sometimes distorted, still speak to the protection, value, care and nurture of children and the importance of family. Every sacred hero or shero has invited the children to come and be blessed.

The voice of faith leaders is critical and essential as we commit to the flourishing of our children and the health of our families. The home is holy ground and our children are sacred presences. As we develop strategies and implement practices that engender a just and sustainable future for our children and our families, we establish the ground for the future of our world.

The authentic and prophetic voice of faith leaders and the liberative appropriation of diverse resources in the faith communities are necessary for the birthing and thriving of whole children and families.

Dr. John W. Kinney
*Pastor, Ebenezer Baptist Church
Beaverdam, Virginia
Former senior vice president and dean of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of
Theology at Virginia Union University (STVU)*



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	7
Why this toolkit was created	8
How to use this toolkit	9
Five principles for effective practice	11
Principle 1. Envision a new environment through faith in action	13
Principle 2. Integrate faith into practice.....	27
Principle 3. Faith informs successful collaboration and partnership	39
Principle 4. Engage youth authentically	49
Principle 5. Consider faith leaders' voices and roles in the community.....	55
Culture is context: Family culture in the United States	61
Additional tools for the organizational development of strong FBOs.....	71
Board development tools and exercises.....	75
PACE Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool	133
Building a logic model.....	158
Develop a strategic plan.....	160



A close-up photograph of a woman wearing a light-colored hijab and a dark red sweater, and a young boy in a plaid shirt, both smiling as they work together on a project at a table. The project involves a blue base with various components, including a prominent orange circular piece. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a library or classroom setting with bookshelves.

Introduction

Why this toolkit was created

This resource is designed to assist faith-based nonprofits, also called faith-based organizations (FBOs), congregational ministries and religious communities that are creating or intend to create environments that enhance and sustain a high quality of life for children and families in the United States. These environments include private homes, religious buildings and neighborhood and community centers in the cities, towns or counties where our families grow, love and protect their children and others. Since our country's founding, faith-based congregations and organizations have been engaged in enhancing the lives of children and families.

Over time, most FBOs have understood their mission is to demonstrate the beliefs of their faith while remaining attuned to the different cultural traditions of the people they serve. Over the past 40 years, investments in various strategies have deepened the efforts of faith-based groups to accomplish this vision.

The focus of those investments has included institutional capacity building for community economic development (housing and small business development), educational enrichment programs, youth-led services, public policy and advocacy tools, and leadership development. As a result, academic and social development training has become more sensitive to the critical importance of high-functioning, healthy families in day-to-day community life. In turn, we have seen the subsequent growth of FBOs and religious communities as service providers, social activists, policy advocates and caregivers.

Over the past two generations, these investments have expanded the numbers of prominent theologians voicing ethical and community expectations for the health and well-being of families and children. However, public awareness of “the family” as an essential unit of society has not increased. The family is understood less as a primary social institution and more as a vehicle that may or may not be essential to the success or full development of the individual. The key functions for which families are primarily responsible — such as social development, early literacy instruction, the promotion of values, and character development — increasingly have been supported and even supplanted by educational institutions and social service delivery organizations.

This toolkit is intended for a diverse range of FBOs and communities spanning many types of effective faith-based child welfare efforts. We use the term child welfare to capture the conditions, systems, policies and practices affecting the life options for children from the prenatal period through adulthood. If mothers are unable to access and benefit from care during their pregnancies, that can hinder the long-term growth and development of their children as well as their own health. Both of those outcomes can complicate their education and employment options, which in turn limits their ability to get and keep affordable, safe housing, which then contributes to unstable family life. FBOs and congregational ministries see these and other types of interconnected challenges among the families in their communities.

Our intention in sharing this toolkit is to offer guidance to leaders committed to helping preserve families and protect the well-being of children. Such leaders include executive directors (current or emerging) of FBOs and leaders of religious communities — pastors, imams, rabbis, priests, as well as Native/Indigenous spiritual, Eastern and traditional African religious leaders. We've examined several faith-based organizations and communities spanning many types of programs to ensure that examples and tools in this document represent the scope of effective faith-based child welfare and family strengthening strategies. We've also included concepts regarding the best practices of the social/child welfare field. The goal of this toolkit is to offer content in service of ensuring more effective work in the child welfare and family strengthening field. FBOs are uniquely positioned to connect with families and children through their understanding of faith and community culture and can also achieve deep impact through sound organizational practices.

How to use this toolkit

This toolkit was designed as a resource for the faithful leader who is seeking to build a strong culture in which to do their work for the children and families they look to serve. You will find guiding principles, along with tools, worksheets and prompts for reflection in each section. We include case examples of organizations we believe exemplify best practices of FBOs, congregations and ministries. The first of the five principles is foundational, and thus the content in this section is more encompassing.

Out of all this exploration emerged three pillars that need to be carefully examined in this field of work: faith, culture and operations. These three pillars form the spine of the toolkit you are reading, informing every aspect of it. Take the time to engage with the reflections we suggest. Soak in the lessons about leadership and culture informed by your faith traditions — and restore your soul.

The section **Additional tools for the organizational development of strong FBOs** should be used as you see fit. Regard it as you would a cookbook, applying the lessons where needed. Some of you who are starting out may wish to read it right through. You are seeking to build a strong organization, informed by faith and enriched by a positive culture, but characterized by an efficient and effective operation. You'll want to read about board governance, fundraising and efficiencies that will help further your impact on the lives of children and families. But sometimes, you may just want to read and apply one of the strategies therein, or use one at a board meeting when your board is wrestling with its role or responsibilities or how best to define its job in fundraising or personnel.

This book is intended to be aspirational, and also helpful, challenging, possibly uplifting, and practical. We believe these are words you live every day. We salute your courage and bravery, your generosity of time and talent, and your dreams and actions for a better world. The authors hold you in high esteem and hope you find something in these pages that helps you more fully realize your job of envisioning and building a more just, decent and humane world for all children and their families.





Five principles for effective practice

“

We must learn that to expect God to do everything while we do nothing is not faith but superstition.

—DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Faith is the foundation of every religion. It is an inner understanding that there is a higher divinity larger than us — no matter what name we use to describe it. This belief in the divine, beyond what can be seen with our physical eyes and beyond our practices, precepts and cultural norms, is what unifies our faith traditions. We see faith as the thread that weaves religious traditions together in a network based upon appreciation and respect for all faith systems. Faith sees promise and possibilities in the midst of tragedy. It sees love and hope in the midst of hate. It sees equality and equity in the midst of inequality, injustice and the effects of poverty.

People who live their faith understand that they are called to higher action, called to contribute to their community, called to a compassion and empathy that leads to helping someone other than themselves. If we are living our faith by example, we are then helping to manifest what Dr. King called the “beloved community”:

But the end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends. The type of love that I stress here is not eros, a sort of esthetic or romantic love; not philia, a sort of reciprocal love between personal friends; but it is agape which is understanding goodwill is for all men. It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. It is the love of God working in the lives of men. This is the love that may well be the salvation of our civilization.

In this section, we will explore five principles for effective practice:



Envision a new environment through faith in action



Integrate faith into practice



Faith informs successful collaboration and partnership



Engage youth authentically



Consider faith leaders' voices and roles in community



PRINCIPLE 1.

Envision a new environment through faith in action

The practice of faith in community means we love without condition, we give expecting nothing in return, and we serve regardless of recognition or accolades. This is the kind of faith practice that leads faith communities to **envision a new environment** and reach out beyond the walls of the temple, mosque, church or spiritual center to work to manifest that vision.

Visionary leaders are able to look at a community whose residents live in trying conditions and imagine an improved, renewed community, with those same residents living in safe, healthy, caring homes. Can you imagine five years from now witnessing men and women leave prison and re-enter the community to live productive lives and serve as community leaders?

Faith-based leaders who are committed to serving and supporting children and families hold such a vision of hope while maintaining a realistic view of the current state of families in their community. They ask the hard questions, research root causes and look at the array of solutions and strategies offered by scholars, families, other faith communities and community-based organizations. Gaining an understanding of the challenges children and families face, they draw from the tenets of their faith to believe in the possibility of a new environment at a macro level while simultaneously creating a plan of action at a micro level.

Consider the following as you begin to work toward achieving a vision:

- 1. Successful faith leaders take the necessary steps to get buy-in** from the members of their faith community, their board of directors and staff, and the larger community. This step is crucial to success as it lays the foundation for successful implementation and builds trust among stakeholders. Creating buy-in requires that faith leaders demonstrate their faith through patience, understanding and compassion. They must stand firmly on their faith while effectively communicating the why and how their faith community or FBO will manifest a bright future for children and families. It can also be one of the hardest and longest steps in achieving a new environment.
- 2. Effective faith leaders equip themselves as well as other faith leaders working with them with the necessary tools.** They have good grounding in the theology and scriptures of their faith, which helps to assure that their work is not only based on their spiritual beliefs but also on programs representative of their faith at work in society.

3. Understanding humanity's reluctance to change is another challenge that effective faith leaders face. They may use science and their religion to work with those who may see the work as too hard, too complicated or a waste of time. Honing skills in change management and implementation science may be necessary to do this effectively. Leaders from the FBOs and ministries that we researched for this toolkit possess these skills. They shared with us that their work required patience and foresight to adjust to an instinctive resistance to change. They sometimes met with members in the faith community who said, "Let's do it this way because it is easy," or, "Let's just get more families to join our faith community or attend our services, and that will be enough." **Effective faith leaders understand and communicate that faith in action doesn't submit to "easy" nor does it use communal worship as the one cure-all.** They understand that communal worship is a time of individual and community learning, reflection, praise and renewal. Faith leaders teach by example and illustrate to their members that true faith requires action.

There are examples of active faith in every religious scripture and set of spiritual tenets. In Christian scripture, faith in action is communicated in James 2:14–17: "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

In Islam, Muslims believe that true faith consists of belief in the heart (*i'tiqad*), affirmation by the tongue (*qawl*) and works (*amal*). "God has promised those who believed and did good works that for them is a tremendous reward (in Paradise)" (Quran 5:9).

In Judaism the concept is known as *tikkun olam* — "repairing the world" or "perfecting the world." Faith in action permeates not just the Abrahamic religions but also Hinduism, Yoga and Buddhism. **In all faith communities the concept of selfless service is key to building character, humility and compassion.** This understanding must be effectively communicated by faith leaders to the members of their faith communities or FBOs so they are spiritually and mentally prepared to do what will be hard yet rewarding work.

Creating a detailed plan of action should occur after a majority of the members, staff and community have buy-in. (You can also assume there will be a group of people not ready or spiritually mature to understand the why or how of the work.) The plan of action should be formulated through a strategic planning process that involves key people in the faith community and/or FBO. Once the plan is finalized, presented and agreed upon it is imperative that concurrent with the community or organization's implementation of the plan, faith leaders are consistently making the connection between the vision of a community of hope and the faith community's call to action. A joint approach, in which the faith community works toward and anticipates outcomes in tandem with the families in the community, should become standard for the FBO or ministry.

Reflection activity

FBOs and ministries should be motivated by an image in their collective mind's eye of what can be different for the families they serve. It is important to talk directly with families about how you believe your ministry can fulfill its hopeful vision. When you speak with them, use terms like “family success” to describe thriving, healthy family units that consistently have the means and tools to provide for themselves. This will help families discuss their own goals, challenges and capacities. It is important that families can hear your perspective and expect your FBO or ministry to work with them toward gaining new opportunities.

- How can your faith community or FBO envision a new environment for vulnerable children and families?
- How is the vision of faith communities different from that of secular society?
- What will it take for your faith community or FBO to make that vision happen?
- What is your organizational/ministry's mental picture of families in your neighborhoods, city, county and state in the next 10 years?
- In the next 10 years, how do you envision families in your community earning a living or acquiring key assets (e.g., attaining a higher level of education, owning a home, owning a micro or small business)?
- How will your organization's efforts help to make that happen?
- Within your organization's leadership, what are the necessary areas of expertise, behaviors, attitudes and commitments that will help accomplish your mental picture of family success and strong families over the next 10 years?
- Do you have a coaching mindset? How does your work build trust with families? How do you become a “best neighbor” for children and families?
- What are some of the challenges leaders (pastor, imam, rabbi, priest or priestess, or nonprofit directors) may face within your faith community and/or nonprofit?
- Brainstorm faith-in-action solutions to remedy the above challenges.

NOTES:

Tools for action

Strong FBOs use models and practices learned from other organizations.

An FBO that is seeking to build a learning culture is always on the lookout for others who have solved a similar management or governance challenge. It is seldom necessary to start with a blank sheet of paper. Often a partner or colleague can share an approach that may need adjustment to fit your organization's particular situation.

Having the opportunity to learn from others is a byproduct of belonging to a network of colleagues for whom you have made time. Isolation is often the lot of the nonprofit executive director — too few hands to do the work, too few hours in the day. There must be a strong belief that having colleagues and friends returns real value for the time invested. The opportunity to frame and solve problems with others facing similar situations offers real return on investment.

THE FOLLOWING ARE TOOLS TO ASSESS AND DEVELOP ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS AND CAPACITY.

Assess organizational capacity

The [Pittsburgh-based Program to Aid Citizen Enterprise \(PACE\)](#) works intensively with selected grant-seeking organizations in a highly competitive process, encouraging prospective grantees to engage in self-reflection from the start by completing a comprehensive organizational assessment tool. The assessment seeks responses from individuals on the leadership team, both staff and board. Those responses are then aggregated and assigned a numerical score, which helps to set a plan for improvement. This plan evolves into a scope of work for a consulting engagement. After the engagement ends, a follow-up assessment is done to measure progress and identify the next set of challenges to be addressed.

Explore PACE's comprehensive **organizational capacity assessment tool on pp. 133-157** to measure your organization's capacity and practice across many organizational dimensions. You may want to take this test now, work on areas of improvement identified by the results, then take the test again in six months or a year to see how your organization, project or ministry is improving.

Review your organization's history

The greatest gifts that FBO leaders can offer the communities they serve is to tenaciously insist on a vision of a just and decent world. By refusing to accept injustice, poverty and limited life options for anyone who lives in their community, they create space for optimism and hope. These qualities are essential to a sustainable organization, but can be elusive in the face of stark conditions today.

Conducting a review of your organization's history before creating a vision statement is a good way to assure that essential vision is more concrete and shared. All too often, nonprofits fail to celebrate, or perhaps even remember, their accomplishments. In the press of the challenges of the present, the past is too often forgotten. FBO leaders can renew their courage and commitment by periodically reviewing their history, which the exercise below helps facilitate.

Participants are encouraged to remember how community conditions shaped the work of their organization since its founding, and what the organization's evolving response was to those conditions. They are then asked to honor the work of those who went before them. By naming the challenge, the response and the people who stepped up, the leaders can gain insight and energy to meet the challenges they face. Hopefully, the result is a new sense of pride and dedication to organizational roots, which can provide traction to new solutions for the present. It is key that those solutions include the voices of families and children whose lives are to be improved by those plans.

- Stretch a long piece of roll paper across a wall. You may well need 8 feet or more. This can also be done on long, contiguous whiteboards. At one end, write the year the organization was founded. At the other, write the current year.
- Divide the long expanse of paper into thirds by drawing lines along the length of the paper. The top section is reserved for the largest geographical focus. Most organizations should use a "USA" heading here to signify a timeline of events on the national stage. For example, when a housing association founded in the late 1980s recently did this exercise, they put the Welfare to Work legislation passed in the Clinton administration in this space.
- The middle section is labeled with your city or region's name and speaks to the local or regional scene. To continue with the Welfare to Work example, participants remembered that legislation had caused many changes to eligibility for housing subsidies for local families, and so noted those changes on the timeline.
- The bottom section is labeled with your organization's name. In this space are listed the names of specific programs created to address the community's needs, along with the names of people — board, staff, community, political allies, top donors and funders — who were instrumental in the work at that time. Here the housing nonprofit cited programs developed to assist families in keeping or finding housing under the new regulations. They also noted the times they stepped up their efforts as a watchdog over banks' adherence to the Community Reinvestment Act.
- After this initial task, the facilitator then asks the group to identify several pivotal moments when things changed over the life of the organization. The intention is not to capture every single program or event, but to look carefully at moments when things changed. Reflecting again on the national and local timeline, this exercise emphasizes the importance of the external environment on our organizational priorities, reinforces the centrality of the organization's mission to its response, and reminds all of the participants that nonprofits are not bureaucracies created for self-preservation; rather they, if they want to be strong and effective, exist to intelligently serve their community through the lens of their mission.

Another beneficial byproduct of this exercise is that it educates the leaders. It can allow for discussion of previous failures or frightening periods. Often, those newer to the organization have an inkling that there have been bad times in the past, but sometimes people are reluctant to discuss them. When, however, discussed in the context of the organization's whole history, these times can emerge as moments when the leadership was fierce, strong and determined, as well as possibly misguided. The participants' final takeaway can be, "Here we stand. We remain relevant and useful despite our previous challenges ... now, what's next?"

Knowing your organizational history is a pivotal responsibility of leadership. Standing on the shoulders of those who showed courage and generosity, while believing that you work in service to the future leaders who will have reason to respect your work, is key to building an organization that lasts. This exercise is an efficient way to instill an appropriate sense of pride and context for an organization.

Develop a vision statement

How does a vision statement differ from a mission statement? Your organization is on a mission. A speaker at a national conference once said, "Your mission statement should be like the hounds of heaven baying in your ears. Get up, get up, get to it!" Your mission is your core purpose. Your vision is more aspirational and should express the yearning in the heart of your organizational mission. It is a picture of a desired future.

Many FBO leaders are visionaries. It is that vision that energizes and motivates them year after year against all odds. But for vision to be central to your organizational success, it must be shared. So it is important to periodically hold a structured discussion of that shared vision, informed by the mission statement and tied to major organizational goals and strategic direction. The vision statement that results from this discussion can be used in tandem with the mission statement and organizational goals.

Getting to a shared vision can be challenging. Vision is, after all, a form of dreaming, and dreaming can seem luxurious when there are urgent human needs all around you. But a compelling, succinct vision is the FBO's fuel. Often, we need to start with that mind picture before we can elicit some concrete dreams.

Some questions that can be posed to get a visioning session started include:

- **What images come to mind of a time when our organization has been wildly successful?**

Answers can include: lines for tickets out the doors for a theater company, older adults sitting peacefully in a garden; having lunch while listening to a school choir; a new affordable housing project's ribbon cutting.

- **What would be the video that goes viral of your organization's work?**

Answers could include: neighbors in a community garden eating a meal together prepared from their crops; refugees performing dances from their home country to wild acclaim from their audience; a panel discussion of the real issues in racial disparities that elicits great questions and lively engagement from the audience.

- **What would be said by one of your program participants if you heard them talking to their own family honestly about their experience in your program and with your staff?**

Answers could be: "They answered my questions and helped me get my son into the school I think will be best for him"; "I got a good job!"; "Mother is going to be able to get good exercise every week because they found a place she can go without having to change buses."

- **How have we identified and engaged the assets of our neighbors and families?**

Answers could be: "We see many of our neighbors participating in our town hall meetings, asking important questions that receive thoughtful answers"; "Our board composition includes respected and vocal neighborhood representation"; "Our board-approved decision-making tree includes input from our families as part of every consequential decision made."



Driving values

Another key aspect of vision to be explored is contained in the question, *What are the driving values of the organization?* Incorporating powerful values into vision can lend distinctiveness to the language of the vision statement. Questions like, *What do we believe?* and, *What do we assume?* can help a group uncover the core values at the heart of their work, inspiring value statements like, “Children and families matter,” as one large child welfare agency in Mississippi asserts on their walls and business cards. Another is, “All people deserve to make their own choices about their work and recreation,” which informs every aspect of the work of a human service agency working with developmentally disabled adults. These statements of fundamental core values are key connectors between mission, vision and goals.

The **key visioning question** to ask after priming the pump with images and dreams is, ***What is the desired future because of our work?*** The images of great success coupled with the bedrock values enable an organization to assert a vision that is motivating and one they can claim as truly theirs.

Imagine a scenario: A faith-based group is providing STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) education in a neighborhood where children receive only nine weeks of science education in a school year. Their school building has no science classroom. They dream of the day when one of those students wins the Nobel Prize in Medicine for curing diabetes and has their picture on the front page of the New York Times.

This dream is buttressed by the value statement that all children must be allowed to use their God-given abilities to discover, explore and belong. The vision is a world in which science is used in service to the human needs of their neighbors. That is the desired future because of their work. It incorporates their dreams for their children, their belief in their potential to solve big problems and their desire to see the lives of people in their neighborhood improve. A compelling, concrete vision indeed ... all resting in the arms of the creator.

Create a logic model or theory of change

Program evaluation is a particular discipline. Sophisticated evaluation requires working with a trained professional to design an evaluation process, before a program is implemented. The principles of evaluation need to be hard-wired into the culture of an agency because effective evaluation often touches every aspect of the organization. Evaluation looks at client impact but also looks internally to assess use of human and financial resources, adherence to mission, and full alignment with all of the other program goals.

Often, evaluation starts by building a logic model or defining “the theory of the business.” After defining the problem that this program seeks to address, the model asks for clear definition of the inputs needed (staff, money, facilities, etc.), the outputs required (activities undertaken, whom the program reaches) and the desired outcomes (both short-term and long-term). **See pp. 158-159 for a logic model example and exercise.**

E-scan or asset mapping

Today’s best leaders are deeply curious about “what’s next.” They intentionally monitor trends and patterns in the world around them that give them cues for emerging community needs and evolving organizational opportunities and challenges. They use this strategic thinking to guide their next steps. It may help answer a short-term problem or provide guidance to support a major change in organizational direction.

For leaders’ thinking to be focused and strategic, **environmental scanning** and **asset mapping** are two tools that can promote depth of thought with their staff and board.

Environmental scanning, or e-scanning, is a popular tool often employed in strategic planning. The practice can be lifted up and used to analyze a single program or to better understand a particular type of client as well. E-scans are organized around good questions. The areas of inquiry are deliberately broad at the outset and become narrow as information is gathered.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN: HOW IS OUR COMMUNITY CHANGING?

Questions of demographic changes are often very important to our understanding of the future. Programs that are responsive are looking at the world accurately. U.S. Census data and especially the American Community Survey (ACS), an ongoing project of the U.S. Census, have a wealth of information that can be used to inform your thinking. The ACS has gathered detailed national information on demographics, housing, education and employment since 1940. In some cases, current information can be analyzed down to the level of the census tract so the user can get a clear picture of the area they serve. The data is also presented over time, thus facilitating trend analysis. Many times, environmental scanning starts with this type of information.

Casey Family Programs’ Community Opportunity Map is another tool that organizations can use for an e-scan. The Community Opportunity Map, found at casey.org/community-opportunity-map, is an interactive tool that highlights the aspects of communities that are associated with safe children and strong families. This interactive, research-based framework is composed of select community indicators and is available for any community in the nation to use.

Other forms of scanning may include analysis of community issues and their effect on the organization’s work. For example, the national opioid crisis is producing large-scale death. Such an issue would typically appear as a research priority on a scan and would uncover several important questions, such as: What is the direct experience of our clients? What has been the community

response through public health, government, business and other nonprofit agencies? Does our agency need to expand or initiate a programmatic response? Can we collaborate or partner to better serve the needs of our community? All of these could be questions raised by documenting the facts.

A thorough scan includes discussion of social or cultural norms. Many older child welfare agencies began with a focus on adoption services. As the stigma of bearing a child while unmarried has lessened over time, many fewer babies are put up for adoption. But many children still need help with their living conditions. Kinship foster care, parenting support, and anti-bullying and truancy reduction programs, among others, all address children's need for stable family support. Child welfare agencies have adapted their program offerings over time in response to changing social or cultural norms. So regular examination of current changes in this area is a productive exercise.

How is funding changing? How can we best protect our agency's viability in the face of these changes? This part of the e-scan is often native to the thinking of a nonprofit leader. They go to bed with these questions and wake up still considering them. It can be illuminating to conduct a structured scanning report that captures trends in government funding for child welfare agencies, growth in budget sizes for competitor agencies, and private foundation funding for child welfare causes. If coupled with a financial analysis that shows the allocation of different revenue sources over time, the scan may give strong direction to the three-year revenue plan.

Another e-scan topic that is often top of mind for leaders is the changing face of regulation and legislation as it affects revenues, staffing and programs. In Illinois, the legislature failed to pass a budget for three years. This inaction has created many challenges, and not only financial ones. Setting a stable course in such an unstable world requires ample data and prescient analysis.

UMMA: Scanning their environment and responding to change

Urban Muslim Minority Alliance (UMMA) in Waukegan, Illinois, a northern suburb of Chicago, has experience collecting and analyzing data about its community and region. Waukegan is a small town on the shore of Lake Michigan. In the 1990s, the city faced a significant loss of industry and local business and, subsequently, of jobs as well. In 2004, at the time of UMMA's launch, the young staff and board collected quantitative as well as qualitative data that pointed to the community's ethnic, age and religious diversity. Data also confirmed that too many Waukegan families were homeless with no job opportunities or food. Homelessness and lack of hope were contributors to crime, domestic abuse and poor physical and mental health among community families. Findings from the data helped shape UMMA's decisions concerning its program model and foci.

The organization continues to use data to inform its operations, services and donor development. Its staff leadership has developed a partnership with a cutting-edge technology firm to strengthen UMMA's capacity to lead with a broad range of community voices. Families who had been homeless and jobless are providing for their families. They are contributors to conversations with employers, government, schools and other entities in identifying the keys to a quality life in Waukegan. They are participating in and benefiting from the revitalization of Waukegan.

See pp. 64-65 for more about UMMA.

Many people in the nonprofit sector don't enjoy doing this kind of analysis because they decry the notion of competition. They see the enormity of human need and correctly believe that each of us is called to do what we can to alleviate it. However, agencies do, in fact, compete for funding, board members, volunteers, air time and community attention. This part of the e-scan is helpful as a way of setting context, posing vital questions such as: How are we regarded in the larger community? Are we a likely target for merger? Where do we fit in the continuum of care?

The e-scan is a powerful board education tool. Board members should be asked to set the research agenda, participate in information-gathering through web research and phone and personal interviews, and then review the results and use them to help define goals and objectives. The introduction of data and evidence deeply enriches discussions that may otherwise be overly dependent on opinion and anecdotes.

HOW TO DO AN E-SCAN

At a board meeting or launch retreat of a planning process, someone facilitates a conversation by inviting board and staff to identify questions they have in the various areas of the e-scan.

Around the room, flip chart pages are posted, each page devoted to one topic (e.g., demographics, current community issues, changing social conditions, funding, legislation/regulation and competition). After the facilitator clarifies the goals of the session by determining what questions need to be answered in the e-scan, all participants are given markers and invited to register any questions they have in those categories.

Once the questions are captured on the flip chart pages, a group discussion ensues that addresses priorities and assures clarity. Often, aligned questions appear on several sheets. These clusters demand attention.

After the discussion, the person responsible for moving the planning agenda forward organizes the key questions, assigns responsibility to the appropriate researcher and sets the timeline for completion. A succinct report on the e-scanning information is written. The results are presented to the planning team or full board for their review. Then, goals can be set, with the assurance that the organization is thinking comprehensively about its future, ready to serve the community's future needs and to take the opportunities on offer.

ASSET MAPPING

Another important way for leaders to think outside their walls is to prepare an asset map. The approach was developed by sociologist John McKnight, who recognized the value of seeing communities as collections of real and important assets rather than focusing solely on community needs and deficits.

In an asset mapping exercise, participants are asked to consider six categories of community assets: physical, economic, stories, local residents, local associations and local institutions. By listing the resources in a community, the organization gains insight and inspiration for planning for a bright future.

Types of assets

- **Physical assets** are land, buildings, transportation and other tangible and visible tools for community building.
- **Economic assets** include local businesses, large and small, bartering and trading relationships — what people in the community produce and consume.
- **Stories** represent a powerful way for communities to restore their souls. Learning and telling the stories of what has gone before is often at the heart of community resilience.
- **Local residents** are the beating heart of the community. Their skills and talents, their generosity, their experiences, the things that get them up in the morning to achieve their ambitions are all an essential part of the assets of a community.
- **Local associations** have demonstrated their importance since the times of Alexis de Tocqueville, who recognized Americans' desire to associate as a key strength of American democracy. We have known that our neighborhood associations, our sports clubs, our Scouting organizations and community gardens were integral to our future.
- **Local institutions** like parks, libraries, schools and churches anchor and support health in a community.

When an FBO is seeking to serve children and their families, all of these assets represent many opportunities and should be considered in setting future direction. An organized list that captures the highlights of the discussions around community assets is an important tool in envisioning the best possible future for the community served.

Using a facilitator

If an organization is in need of a facilitator for these or other planning activities, another community asset is a nonprofit center or management support organization (MSO). These agencies are organized to support nonprofits as they seek to improve their management and governance.

If no MSO is available, ask another organization to identify who helped with their planning efforts. Sometimes, they may have a staff or board member with skill in planning and facilitation, which is advantageous because it is always a good idea to have a neutral person guiding the conversations. To that end, perhaps you could trade expertise: their person facilitates your group meetings, and yours does theirs. That way, both organizations gain the benefit of a facilitator with no personal agenda other than to assure a fair and comprehensive discussion. Also, the facilitator is freed to be a full participant in their own group's deliberations. Win-win-win.

To be an effective leader, you must be curious. You have to watch the world outside your walls and seek to address the emerging challenges. These tools are ways to organize your thinking and allow others to play along. Critical thinking about issues is essential. Framing your analysis from a place of respect and optimism, seeing your community for its assets and possibilities are motivating and energizing. Eyes on the prize always, but keep moving your eyes around to see comprehensively and as a whole.

Develop a strategic plan

Strong FBOs determine their strategic directions, goals and objectives and capture them in a clear, succinct roadmap.

An effective strategic plan requires thinking like those you serve and using specific research to test your assumptions about what is valued and needed by your families, congregants and communities.

This research may take the form of individual interviews with key stakeholders or an e-survey of members or parents. It could include benchmarking against other similar organizations as a point of comparison — or to discover other promising approaches, such as an excellent idea for a program or fundraiser you adapt for your organization. Or it could be a focus group that challenges your assumptions about how well the people you are seeking to serve understand your program offerings. You may see how a planning process gives you the opportunity to take another look at an existing client satisfaction survey, to analyze the trends over time and see anew what your community is asking for. Listening with an open ear and a receptive heart is the leader's first job.

To build a plan both shrewd and visionary, the organization needs to always have tomorrow in mind: What difference do we intend to make in people's lives? What results do we seek from our efforts? Are we measuring what matters to those who receive our services? How do we know? The proof lies in us asking good questions and listening to the answers, and modifying our approach as needed. Until the group has thoroughly explored these questions of mission, vision, community need and desired impact, no plan can be written that will deliver all that is necessary.

Goal setting should be carefully controlled to no more than five broad, well-conceived goals. Goal areas often include programs and services (with a focus on which to maintain, grow, add or eliminate; which quality measures to implement); financial sustainability (diversified revenues, projections over time, clarity of source of funds); visibility and marketing (target audiences and comprehensive methods of communication identified); partnerships and collaborations (extending the continuum of care through others' work or increasing clout or scope); and other (specific to the individual organization). There should be no more than three objectives in support of each goal.

These objectives lend specificity and weight to the goal. For instance, a goal might read: "The organization will increase its financial independence by reducing overreliance on government contracts." An objective in support of that goal might read: "The percentage of the budget derived

Are your goals SMART?

- S**pecific
- M**easurable
- A**greed Upon
- R**ealistic
- T**ime based

A faith-based organization in Chicago, the Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN), uses SMART goals to assess its effectiveness as well as to measure accountability to its community and board. Staff members measure whether IMAN is remaining accountable to the organization's mission by setting SMART goals within each department, by position and organization-wide. The goals are reviewed quarterly. Community accountability is measured through surveys and focus groups throughout the year.

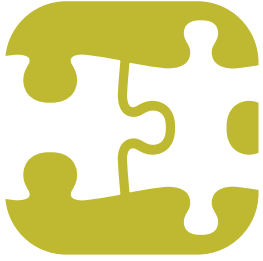
Learn more about IMAN on pp. 50-52.

from foundation support will grow from the current 5% to 10% over the next three years." Another objective might speak to building a fee for service into the mix. Yet another might address an opportunity to garner corporate support. But please notice that for the goal to be measured, specific metrics must be given. A metric such as "5% to 10% in three years" provides detail and reality to the goal statement.

Another important planning principle is brevity — "the soul of wit." In this highly technological age, attention spans get ever shorter. It's a noisy world out there, and you had better be able to say what is important (that is, your mission and vision) briefly. Then you need to say succinctly how you will accomplish it (a few — no more than five — broad goals with no more than three objectives each).

Your operating plan will have greater detail, with action steps, timelines and budget information attached to it, but your strategic framework should fit on an 11" X 17" sheet. The strategic plan details the work of board and staff, while the operating plan details only staff work. This clarity of the division of labor and power between governance and management is vitally important to a healthy organization.

See pp. 160-163 for a sample strategic plan and exercise.



PRINCIPLE 2.

Integrate faith into practice

Effective FBOs integrate their faith into their ministries, outreach or programs in ways that are inclusive and strategic. They demonstrate a welcoming spirit, made evident through their service to both the internal and external community. This can happen through small gestures, such as how visitors are welcomed to worship service, especially those who may not be deemed appropriately dressed for the occasion. The members of the faith community know that everyone is a “work in progress” and that expressing faith with love is more powerful than being judgmental. This same attitude of love and compassion is expressed in their community outreach and the services they provide to children and families.

Faith communities integrate their faith by providing services in their ministries and outreach programs regardless of whether the children or families join their church, temple or mosque. They operate with the understanding that their work, love and compassion are impactful because they are living out the tenets of their faith. The members of the faith community know that service is enough and helping to bring positivity and resources is more about following their own spiritual journey than it is about the spiritual journey of the person they are helping. If their service leads to a child or parent joining their church, mosque or temple and its respective faith community, that is to be celebrated, but if it does not, that is no reason to discontinue the outreach and services.

Paul DiLorenzo, former senior director of Strategic Consulting at Casey Family Programs, refers to the integration of faith in practice in his summary of Casey’s **Communities of Hope** framework, in which he distinguishes the relational model of service from the transactional one:

Transactional models are essentially one dimensional and simply address the immediate issue or client request in the moment. This model is not necessarily based on a specific set of values, nor does it look behind the door of the client’s presentation, or beyond and ahead to the next interaction with them. On the other hand, relational models respect and engage families in a more holistic way, and are designed to understand the full breadth of challenges and opportunities facing parents and their children. In addition, the interactions with families in this model are future oriented in that they are based on a belief that the nonthreatening relationship building with a family is incremental and when done successfully, will encourage family members to seek out support at an earlier stage of difficulty, thus avoiding a crisis that is too difficult to manage.

The relational model of customer service is embedded in effective FBOs. FBOs intuitively create a space where children and families are served in ways that create ongoing relationships based on meeting people where they are and helping them reach their highest potential. Creating and sustaining ongoing relationships with families means not looking for quick fixes but providing a support system, resources and individual problem-solving skills to help them, whether they are in a full-blown crisis or seeking a little help to stabilize their family.

For a grant-seeking 501(c)(3) organization, proselytizing is inappropriate. It can limit funding as well as create barriers for those needing service. Effective FBOs understand this and let their work in the community communicate their faith values. Operating with this understanding has many advantages, such as being able to partner and contract with local and state social services departments as well as federal agencies. This doesn't mean hiding one's faith or being inauthentic to one's religion. It means integrating that faith into the organizational culture in a way that welcomes all people from various walks of life.

A strong example of incorporating faith values into faith-based nonprofit work is Jewish Child and Family Services of Chicago (JCFS). They have more than 450 employees and only 40% of their staff are Jewish, yet their core values reflect the Jewish faith and culture, which all staff convey in their service delivery. Their core values are:

- Providing services infused with Jewish values.
- *Tikkun olam* — “repairing the world” or “perfecting the world.” Creating a model society among Jews but also being responsible for the welfare of the society at large. Contributing to social justice, being the champion of the underdog. Helping, healing and caring.
- Ensuring that the Jewish community's mental health and social service needs are met.
- Seeking the absolute best care for clients, whatever it takes.
- Striving for excellence in all tasks and assignments.
- Supporting, nurturing and protecting families.
- Understanding that the community is essential to living.
- Ensuring staff receive high-quality training, knowledge and resources to succeed.

These core values are a part of their organizational culture, yet the leadership ensures that all of their staff and clients' personal religious practices are respected and honored.

Jewish Child and Family Services of Chicago

“Build it to last!”

HOWARD SITRON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

[Jewish Child and Family Services of Chicago](#) (JCFS) is a national organization with offices across the country. The Chicago-based organization was founded in 1859 as a soup kitchen for Jewish families. It was started as a response to community need to address the discrimination Jewish people faced in Chicago. This birthing process as well as the values of the Jewish faith undergird the philosophical and programmatic approach that has turned JCFS into a \$40 million organization. One of the dominant Jewish values embedded in the mission and values of the organization is *tikkun olam*, which means “repairing the world” or “perfecting the world.” This is why the organization now serves all children and families in the Chicago metro area while maintaining programs that specifically address the needs of the Jewish community. The leadership and the staff, whether they are Jewish or not, believe that it is their responsibility to help heal and repair their community. The value of contribution to the larger community is evident in services and programs they provide that help strengthen families and help children and youth in foster care have a sense of permanency and/or family. Only 40% of the staff is Jewish and the leadership has done an excellent job of modeling and integrating Jewish values without proselytizing.

JCFS has several large contracts with its state and local social service departments and is considered a best practice model. The social services it offers are diverse and comprehensive, which speaks to its strategic growth and longevity. JCFS is very intentional with why and how it adds new programs and services. There is also great intentionality about how it practices staff development and job promotion. JCFS partners with local universities to bring on intern graduate students and offer training to staff through their Center for Practice Excellence. The Center components include a practice incubator, a training institute for clinical training, and management and leadership development and evaluation. The center also tests promising practices and disseminates its research in publications, consulting and presenting at conferences. Utilizing lessons learned from direct service, promising practices and sound evaluation is what contributes to the organization's longevity and has transformed it into not only one of the top human services agencies in Chicago but also into a community institution. When an organization becomes an institution recognized for its research and best practices by academic institutions, government institutions and other community-based organizations, it ensures the kind of longevity that is beyond large annual budgets and direct service. JCFS illustrates how growth, organizational development, strategic planning, thoughtful staff development, and measured and constant evaluation are the cornerstone of ensuring organizational

longevity. The willingness of the leadership — from the board directors to the staff — to be a learning organization that consistently restructures the organization based on what works while discarding practices and programs that don't serve their values, vision and mission is why JCFS has been serving the Chicago metro area for 150 years.

Another contributing factor to its success is its partnerships and its support from the Jewish community. In the 2016 annual report, Board Chair Daniel Wander and Executive Director Howard Sitron stated, “None of our work is possible without the dedicated backing of a strong community. It does indeed take a village and ours is comprised of gracious and committed funders from the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago to the hundreds of foundations and individuals; our public partners, including DCFS, DHS and others; our tireless board of directors, advisory board members and volunteers; and our talented and dedicated staff.”

JCFS programs and services include:

- Care for abused and neglected youth
- Foster care and family support (i.e., emergency foster care, family stabilization)
- Therapy for children and adults
- Support for people with disabilities and their families
- Respite care
- Special education
- Inclusive summer camps for children with disabilities
- Grief counseling for adults
- Support for families adopting children
- Jewish community programs (i.e., addiction and substance abuse, abuse prevention)
- Professional and community training

JCFS partners include:

- Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
- Illinois Department of Human Services

Reflection activity

- Write out your ministry or nonprofit's core values in a way that expresses your faith and ensures inclusivity.
- How can your faith community or FBO integrate your faith values into your work and organizational culture?
- Identify specific examples for how you can ensure your outreach or ministry is relational instead of transactional.

NOTES:

Tools for action

These practical action ideas in the areas of programming, ministry and outreach will give you a jump start or enhance the work you are already doing. The ideas presented here are based on models from our case examples, input from the FBOs and faith communities we consulted, and interviews with child welfare experts and social workers. This is not an exhaustive list. Our intention is simply to spark your creativity and thinking about ministries, outreach initiatives and programs and services to support children and families, integrating faith into practice.

The main difference between faith communities and FBOs is that with the proper tax-exempt status, FBOs are eligible to receive grant funding and win local and/or state contracts to provide programs and services. To ensure that the programmatic ideas presented here are relevant to your work, they are divided into one part for faith communities (i.e., churches, mosques, temples and ministries) and another for FBOs. Despite the differences between the two entities, there are also points of overlap in the work that they do; therefore, it is feasible for nonprofits to duplicate many of the ideas we've provided in the faith communities' section, and we suggest nonprofits take the time to review the ideas and excellent resources listed in both sections.



Faith communities: Ministries and outreach ideas

Because of the trust that houses of faith enjoy with many families in their communities, they can offer resources and support in a way that is affirming and authentic. The following are types of programs and services that can enhance your work with children and families and provide support to local child welfare departments:

Foster care ministry

This provides resources for foster care and biological parents, youth in foster care and foster care alumni. Resources provided by this ministry include:

- Clothes
- Toiletries
- School supplies
- Bus or train passes
- A community resource handbook with a full listing of other faith communities and community-based organizations that support children and families
- Emergency or temporary housing (This is especially important for foster care alumni who are often forced to go homeless for a few days as they wait for housing placement from social services or another community-based organization.)
- Support for foster youth and alumni who are parents (e.g., diapers, baby food, formula)

Kinship and foster care parent respite days

Ministries hold these periodic one-day events for children and youth whose caregivers are their relatives. This day provides kinship caregivers and foster parents the time they need to regroup, take a break or simply run errands. The activities planned for youth might include arts and crafts, fitness classes, cooperative games and sport activities, drama and poetry workshops, etiquette classes, financial literacy workshops or other enrichment activities. The local social services department can help with recruitment and advertising.

Sibling retreats

Unfortunately, many children are separated from their siblings when they enter foster care. One sibling can be placed in a foster care home while the other is placed with another family or in a group home. Although social workers work hard to keep siblings together, sometimes it isn't possible. Faith communities can provide a safe and fun space for siblings to see each other. This can be done for a half or whole day on a Saturday. The activities provided can be the same as those organized for the kinship respite day. However, there should be special activities centered on one-on-one time between siblings. In one of our case examples, Trinity Family Life Center partnered with the Richmond City Department of Social Services to provide a sibling retreat, held near Christmas. Staff created a gift shop with inexpensive gifts and gave each sibling play money to shop and wrap gifts for their sibling. The Center also hired a photographer to take pictures of each sibling group, which were then printed and framed and given to each participant at the end of the event. Helping siblings create and remember special moments together is key to family relationship-building in the immediate and the long term.

Foster care parent and adoption recruitment

There is often a shortage of available foster parents and adoptive parents, especially African American families and other families of color. The present opioid and heroin crises have flooded the foster care system across the country with children and youth. There is also a shortage of adoptive parents willing to adopt older teenagers. Bringing awareness is essential to reducing the shortage, and faith communities can help by partnering with social services or social workers in their faith community to host recruitment workshops. For additional ideas read [What are some effective strategies for older youth adoption?](#)

Holiday activities for older youth and foster care alumni

Providing holiday community meals with caring adults to serve and interact with foster care youth and alumni in college or vocational training programs is a great form of engagement. Many times youth don't have any caring adults to share the holidays with. Providing a safe and welcoming space not only helps youth emotionally but offers them opportunities to connect with a caring adult that could lead to a lasting relationship.

The end goal of many activities and programs is to give children in foster care and alumni a sense of permanency. The gold standard for permanency would be for children, youth and alumni to be connected to relatives, reunified with their biological parents, or to secure a permanent placement where the relationship continues into adulthood. When this option is not available, being connected to and in a mentoring relationship with a caring adult can still be as effective because it creates a sense of relational permanency.

Systems navigation ministry or program

Your ministry can assist families in your faith community and in the broader community by helping them navigate child-related systems such as the child welfare, educational and juvenile justice systems. In a beta-test session we convened, the Rev. Starsky Wilson, former president and CEO of the Deaconess Foundation, former pastor of the St. Johns Church (The Beloved Community) in St. Louis and now president and CEO of Children’s Defense Fund, suggested this kind of ministry. Rev. Wilson’s recommendation came from personal experience: he had helped his mother, who is a kinship caregiver, navigate the child welfare system. “People need more knowledge about accessing resources. Often members of the faith community such as lawyers, child advocates and social workers have these skills,” he said. Dr. Elaine Mosley, an educator from the Chicago area, added that “members of these types of ministries could also be advocates or provide a supportive presence for parents at child welfare hearings.”

Prevention and family strengthening activities

Expand your ministries to include parenting education and parent mentoring, family financial literacy and family counseling. These are all ways to help families stay together and prevent children and youth from entering the foster care system. For additional knowledge and ideas visit the following sites:

- The Center for Study of Social Policy
www.cssp.org/young-children-their-families/strengtheningfamilies/about
- Introduction to Family Strengthening: Annie E. Casey Foundation
www.aecf.org/resources/introduction-to-family-strengthening
- How does one Family Resource Center keep families “Safe & Sound”?
<https://www.casey.org/safe-sound-frc>

Faith-based nonprofits: Programs and services

The final section of the toolkit, ***Additional tools for the organizational development of strong FBOs***, offers best practices that can help your FBO become prepared to receive grant funding and government contracts. Joan Ohl, former U.S. Commissioner of the Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) and current senior director of Strategic Consulting at Casey Family Programs, notes, “It is important that FBOs be prepared to contract with state and local government by ensuring that their fiscal operations, program evaluations and outcomes are based on best practices.”

If you are an FBO seeking grant funding or wish to partner or contract with local and state social services departments, begin by developing relationships with leaders in the field and social workers. These partners can offer insights on how your FBO can support social service systems and the youth and families they serve. Doing research to identify resource or program gaps, and intentionally focusing on programs that help fill those gaps, ensures that the programs and services you will offer are not duplicating other efforts. This process takes time and patience, like any relationship-building endeavor. Many leaders of social service agencies and social workers are overworked and juggle multiple priorities. So be persistent in your efforts. Don't wait to start your program when you apply for a grant or contract; begin the work long before so you can show your program works and meets or exceeds its stated outcomes.

The following are programs and services offering prevention or intervention models for supporting children and families.



- Explore these resources for effective parent education curriculums and parent education in general:
 - National Partnership for Community Leadership – <https://www.npcfathersandfamilies.org/resources>
 - University of Wisconsin Extension: What Works – https://fyi.uwex.edu/whatworkswisconsin/files/2014/04/whatworks_08.pdf
 - Child Welfare Information Gateway, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services – www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/parented.pdf
 - Parent Cafes for parents, foster parents and child welfare-involved parents, Be Strong Families – <https://www.beststrongfamilies.org/parent-cafes>
 - # WOW Talk Cafes for youth in foster care (also offered by Be Strong Families) – <https://www.beststrongfamilies.org/cafe-trainings>
 - Visit Casey.org's *Questions from the field* resources on parenting – https://www.casey.org/search/?fwp_search=parenting&fwp_resource_type=field-questions
- Create a resource center for foster care youth and alumni (for an example, see Trinity Family Life Center's Positive Paths Center – <https://www.tflconline.org/positive-paths>)
- Implement a community-based alternative program for youth involved in the juvenile justice system
 - Juvenile Justice Information Exchange – <http://jjie.org/hub/community-based-alternatives>
- Found an adoption agency
- Offer family health programs such as nutrition workshops, family meal planning and family fitness classes
- Offer supportive services and programs for children with incarcerated parents
 - When parents are incarcerated, what are some ways we can support children and families? – <https://www.casey.org/parental-incarceration>
 - Annie E Casey Foundation – www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-childrenwithincarceratedparentsresource-2008.pdf
 - National Mentoring Resource Center – <https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/index.php/what-works-in-mentoring/key-topics.html?layout=edit&id=149>

- Develop and/or implement youth development programs that are trauma-informed and based on youth protective factors and developmental assets
 - Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (IWGYP) – <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/effectiveness-positive-youth-development-programs>
 - Child Welfare Information Gateway, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services – www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/youth/development/programs
 - Search Institute – www.search-institute.org/our-research/development-assets/developmental-assets-framework
 - Annie E. Casey Foundation – www.aecf.org/m/blogdoc/understanding-riskandprotectivefactors-2013.pdf
- Offer healthy relationship and marriage workshops and training programs





PRINCIPLE 3.

Faith informs successful collaboration and partnership

The social and economic challenges families face are complex and vast. We know that one church, temple, mosque, ministry or nonprofit cannot tackle these complexities alone. Therefore, collaboration and partnership are key tools for developing successful, holistic and efficient outreach and ministry. Moreover, they give each organization involved a competitive edge to tackle the challenges in their community by helping to foster the creation of innovative programs and services for children and families.

Scripture from every religion provides parables, accounts or stories revealing how unity helped people face challenges or pass spiritual tests. It is unity of heart and mind within one's self in service to the Creator, no matter what name we use, that is the hallmark of spiritual growth. This same unity we strive for in our faith walk is just as powerful as a guiding principle in FBOs' partnership and collaboration.

It is easy to see how the character values found in faith traditions such as respect, integrity and unwavering commitment can translate into a successful partnership for children and families. Mutual respect between FBOs creates a sense of harmony that leads to efficient services and programs for families. Integrity ensures that each partner or collaborator is doing their part, which helps maintain a high level of positive energy and excitement about the work. Unwavering commitment to mutual goals creates synergy when challenges arise and keeps each organization focused on solutions.

Macedonia Family and Community Enrichment (MFACE): The social service outreach of Macedonia Church

Effective collaboration and partnership are hallmarks of MFACE's community work. A shared vision of better practice and increased opportunity for those they serve has brought MFACE into the African American Strategic Partnership, a group of 13 agencies dedicated to helping each other chart their course through challenging times.

As a result of Pennsylvania politics, in two of the previous five years the state budget was not passed on time, thus delaying timely payment on invoices for services rendered. This group discusses specific ways in which agencies can protect themselves from these types of situations that produce irreparable financial harm. Talk is candid and direct, not cloaked in jargon or turf concerns. There is a recognition that the agencies are stronger together and that all have a reason to care if one is threatened. Successful partnership depends on carrying out the three C's — cooperation, coordination and collaboration.

See pp. 73-74 for more about MFACE.

3Cs

COOPERATION

- Primarily focused on sharing information and increasing awareness
- Often a one-time event or low, long-term commitment
- Authority is retained by individual organizations

EXAMPLE

A group of training providers share information about dates and subject matter of training. They may co-sponsor or divide tasks.

COORDINATION

- Requires some planning and division of roles
- Focused around specific effort or program
- Involves a single level of organization

EXAMPLE

After-school program uses efforts from a literacy organization, a sports recreation group and computer training programs to provide a holistic approach at the community center.

COLLABORATION

- Partners pool or jointly secure resources and share the results and rewards
- Affects multiple levels of the organization (i.e., program staff, administration and boards)
- Changes the standard operating procedures
- Usually takes 3–5 years to see demonstrable results in outcomes

EXAMPLE

Organizations providing homeless services work together to create a new system for providing sustained assistance to homeless persons, from outreach all the way to permanent housing. May involve such strategies as new systemwide intake processes, data collection forms, realignment of services offered, and communitywide goals and outcomes.

Reflection activity

- Brainstorm with the leaders of your nonprofit or faith community on how you can collaborate and/or partner with other organizations in your community.
- Prioritize your ideas according to which partnership or collaboration could most easily be implemented first.

NOTES:

Tools for action

Strong FBOs successfully partner and collaborate.

It is a truism of nonprofit life that all nonprofits should be open to partnering or working in close collaboration with other groups. There are clear reasons why this should be true. The nonprofit sector has exploded since the 1970s. Seventy-five percent of nonprofits have annual operating budgets under \$1 million and paid staff of 10 or fewer. Their missions are bold and ambitious. To achieve them suggests that effective partnerships, collaboration and even mergers are a responsible approach.

Many FBOs have grown from partnership with a congregation or other religious body. This is a place where FBOs may be able to teach other nonprofits good practice.

In our research for this toolkit we found many examples of powerful partnerships that expanded the reach of organizations or made more or deeper services available. The more successful organizations are intentional in establishing and sustaining partnerships or collaborations. JCFS of Chicago partners with colleges and universities for professional development and certification of their social workers. Trinity Family Life Center in Richmond, Virginia, collaborates with the local schools, sheriff's departments and other nonprofits in their parenting and family support programs. Union Seminary in New York City is initiating a Center on Inter-Religious Studies and Social Impact to bring practitioners and seminarians together to build partnerships for tackling policies that adversely affect children and families. IMAN, MFACE and UMMA continue to engage with other nonprofits and community to ensure accountability as well as in their advocacy efforts.

However, many people experience difficulty and disappointment in seeking to build partnerships that warrant the return on investment of time, influence and, sometimes, money. It is essential that groups find the right partner and are completely clear about their expectations.

One challenge is language. It is important that potential partners are clear with each other about the depth and breadth of what is on offer. Too often, disappointment arises because of a lack of clarity in the language of agreements. Simply groups doing something together does not a collaboration make. Defining terms can help.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

These definitions were put forth in a 1994 publication by the Wilder Foundation *Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining and Enjoying the Journey*, by Michael Winer and Karen Ray. Working together can take the form of **cooperation**, **coordination** or **collaboration**. Each step has characteristic behaviors and tasks. They also grow in intensity of risk, time, resources needed, opportunity to make a positive impact and the strength of commitment required.

Working in cooperation is usually a shorter-term, informal agreement to work together on a single project. Agency identity is preserved. It is not expensive in either time or money. There is virtually no risk involved in this type of relationship. An example is a zoo that promotes visits to a children's museum and vice versa.

Working in coordination occurs in a more formal relationship that is dependent on understanding each other's missions. There is still focus on a single project, but this type of work requires some planning, division of roles between partners and clear communication channels. Each organization retains independent authority, but because of increased investment, everyone's risks increase. Some resources are shared and rewards are distributed.

An example of coordination could be a shared ticket between a zoo and a children's museum. Each would receive a smaller fee in order to make the ticket attractive to the public, but each could see increased volume of attendees, thereby allowing each to further its educational mission.

Working in collaboration is intentional and often generates profound organizational change. True collaboration means a new structure is created. The mission is now a shared one. There is collaborative governance. Each partner contributes financial and human resources. If necessary, the collaborative raises funds together. Each group has made a major investment of resources and reputation and shares equally in the results and rewards.



An example of a collaboration could be an exhibition of children's art about zoo animals. The exhibition would be mounted at the children's museum. Their art teachers would lead field trips to the zoo where zoo educators would provide the children with special observation opportunities. There would be a joint proposal to a local bank for the costs of the exhibition. There would be extensive outreach to the media. Both board chairs would welcome the guests at the opening.

If you accept these definitions, you see that few of the partnerships we call collaborations actually are. Most groups could not sustain that level of intensity with more than one partner or project at a time. A true collaborative partner needs to be very carefully chosen and cultivated because this is serious work. It may be the case that there are frequent periods when an agency is not involved in any true collaboration.

Most groups coordinate on a regular basis. They are part of a neighborhood, a denomination or a cause that brings them into association with like-minded others. They spread the word about other groups' events. They join e-mail-writing campaigns to influence public policy makers about issues of shared concern.

As these organizational relationships mature, some begin to more formally coordinate their efforts. Staff or volunteers begin to rely on each other for specific types of help. There is increased recognition of reputational risk, so more conversation about the details of the work often ensues.

EXERCISE: Inventory your relationships

Using the definitions listed above, make a list of all your organizational relationships. Place them in one of three categories: cooperation, coordination or collaboration. How many relationships do you have in each bucket? Consider if they are in the right one. If not, what would it take to move them to another? Are there any relationships you should end or limit because they are not returning enough on your investment of time and reputation?

Do you currently have a true collaboration? Is there a relationship in another category that holds promise of true collaboration? Would it be worth the risk to seek to deepen a relationship because it would deepen your impact or broaden your scope of reach for those you serve?

Funders often see points of connection and encourage collaborative work. It's a healthy impulse and one to which leaders should be attentive. But too much time has been wasted in unproductive partnerships. Employing this lens of cooperation/coordination/collaboration can be a starting point for improving how your organization uses partnerships.

Strong FBOS understand that when everyone is a volunteer, planning and communication are essential tools.

Many programs, projects and ideas start without any paid staff to support the administrative or programmatic needs. Some remain all-volunteer permanently, but many grow to the point where some paid staff time is essential. But what are key principles of effectiveness when everyone's a volunteer? And what if some of the volunteers have worked together before? That can mean strength and shared enthusiasm for both the project and the people, but not always. For this new project to be successful and motivating, perhaps it's time for a more intentional way of working.

- Envisioning a new future is critical. Before goals and specifics of the project are set, it is important to be sure that everyone is working on a shared purpose and a vision that answers the all-important question, *Why do this?* And so, at that first meeting to start the new mentoring program or expand the parent education program or whatever new venture, let's go back to stating the clear purpose of this activity.
- Once the shared vision is determined and clearly stated, it is prudent to ask, "What are the top three projects or goals in support of this vision that our group will choose to work on this year?" Be as specific as possible as the answers to this question provide further clarification of a shared purpose.
- List at least three **doable** steps to implement the goal. Each must be possible given the capacity of the group to execute it — and again, this can provide excellent teachable moments because many people are used to working in better-resourced environments where people are paid to do tasks and equipment is already in the workplace. Here, all assumptions are challenged: no goal is approved if these action steps (and people who have agreed to do them) are not present.

The entrepreneur David Packard illustrates this principle perfectly in his book *The HP Way: How Bill Hewlett and I Built Our Company*. In it he recounts the sage advice he once heard from a colleague: "He said that more businesses die from indigestion than starvation. I have observed the truth of that advice many times since then." Most groups do not lack for good ideas, but they often lack precision in execution. This is frustrating for all groups, but can be fatal for groups of volunteers who become dispirited when those heady, compassionate good ideas die aborning.

So, returning to the planning exercise:

- After action steps are identified and agreed upon, write them on a big flip chart page and ask people to put their name next to the steps they will personally do. If the list is lopsided or seems to reinforce the position of insiders, leaving out new or less popular members of the group, the facilitator should step in to negotiate. It is also necessary to build the timeline and sequence so that the process moves forward in an orderly fashion.

- Again, these steps make the whole planning process more real and provide opportunities for people to clarify expectations and their own commitment to the overarching purpose, as well as clarify the elements that will assure its success.
- After the purpose, task list and assignments have been recorded, the work plan should be typed and shared by all who attended the meeting. Making an explicit request for the group to sign off on the plan or communicate any concerns raised now that it is built is one further step in this clarity/commitment process.

Again, **when everyone is a volunteer, planning and communication are essential.**

Another part of effective volunteer management is celebration. Once this work plan is completed, praise and joy in the accomplishment are deserved — and helpful to recruitment for the next project!

Volunteer managers speak of the three Rs — recruitment, retention and recognition. The process discussed above assumes recruitment has already happened, so let's spend a little time on the other two Rs.

One of the most important aspects of recruitment is that it opens your organization to new people and new ideas. Fresh eyes and a willingness to ask “Why do we do it that way?” can promote health throughout the culture of the organization. After all, almost all organizations can use more hands to do the work.

How do you find the right volunteers who will work collaboratively and determinedly to achieve a shared goal? Cast a broad net. Post an invitation to attend the organizing meeting in as many places as practical. Does your church have a newsletter, in hard copy or online formats? Can you list the meeting in the church bulletin? Does anyone make announcements during the service? Or in the Sunday School hour? Or the coffee hour after church? Do you have partnerships with schools or other nonprofits who might have people who would like to help? How do they communicate with their folks?

If you need a particular skill set, ask people who they know and reach out directly to them. Create a “Lending a Hand” column that is a regular feature in your newsletter where you and others can advertise volunteer opportunities.

Once the work plan is set, you may want to post it electronically on volunteer recruitment websites, but be aware that those boards do not have the ability to select candidates who are a good fit, but are more of a “Y'all come” kind of approach. That type of recruitment is helpful when you need masses of volunteers who need little training or supervision, such as volunteers for a large community event. They are less helpful for more specialized or controlled projects.

Once you've found a good volunteer, you'll hope to retain them. Retention is often the function of having a good experience. But the “pay” for a volunteer is sometimes recognition, sometimes the opportunity to learn something new, sometimes a chance to repay or help a cause that is personally meaningful. But in any case, celebration and gratitude are part of most religious traditions and are beautiful to behold.

So list those names who helped everywhere you recruited volunteers. Take some pictures of people enjoying the project's work, especially children. Announce the success of the project and thank aloud those who made it successful during worship or the coffee hour. Put a short article in the newsletter or on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall. Thank, acknowledge and praise ... and ask for help with the next phase or a new project.

A few things to avoid:

- Don't ask for help before you need it. People go skittish if the time between recruitment and execution is too long. They decide you don't want them or you don't know what you're doing or have some other less-than-positive thought.
- Don't be afraid to fire a volunteer if they are destructive of the group, if they are deceitful, if they waste other people's time. Perhaps you can redirect their energies to a project better suited to them, but don't foist off a problem onto another group. Have courage — and kindness — and leadership, all of which protect purpose.
- Start small and build out. Don't recruit more people than you need. Standing around doing nothing is injurious to a volunteer's spirit. It is a sin to waste another person's time.

Service, love and volunteerism all have the same parent. But for those who are attempting to lead and accepting people's precious gifts of time and hope, we owe it to them to make those gifts lead to something real and tangible.

Planning, communication, expectation, clarity — those are the watchwords that make volunteering satisfying and productive.





PRINCIPLE 4.

Engage youth authentically

All religious doctrines honor the voice of children and youth and teach them characteristics and morals of faith. Doing so ensures continuity of thought, culture and religious tradition through successive generations. In the community work of FBOs and ministries, engaging and incorporating the voice of youth is not only a best practice but very rewarding, offering multiple advantages to both groups. FBOs benefit from the creativity and innovation that the youth voice brings to program planning and community development, while youth receive an opportunity to gain leadership and employment skills as well as an understanding of civic responsibility. Youth engagement in FBOs creates a powerful space for intergenerational learning and sharing. It also can be an organic form of succession planning and organizational sustainability.

The resource *Engaging Youth in Community Decision Making*, developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Center for the Study of Social Policy, describes youth engagement as follows:

Youth engagement empowers young people to have a voice in decisions that affect them. Getting youth to participate in activities and decisions that adults ultimately control is not true engagement. Authentic youth engagement requires that young people have actual authority and responsibility, as well as opportunities to develop the skills needed to make sound decisions. For programs, community organizations and policymakers, it means working as partners with youth, instead of making decisions for them or only providing services to them. Young people become agents of change instead of targets to be changed. Youth engagement is both a road to better community results and a positive result in itself. Youth learn about their communities and how to create better places for themselves and others to live. They develop research, leadership, community organizing and decision-making skills. As young people develop their full civic potential, their lives and the well-being of their communities improve.

The *Engaging Youth* resource identifies five forms of youth engagement: youth development, community service, youth leadership development, civic activism and full community decision making.

An excellent example of an FBO utilizing the five forms of youth engagement is Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN), based in Chicago. They cover the first form, youth development, through programs that include the youth voice through youth-led arts programs as well as mental and behavioral health programs for children and youth. Learn more about youth engagement in IMAN's story below.

Inner-City Muslim Action Network

“Community is my neighbors, it means my neighbors next door, it means people in Marquette Park, people where I am. Most of them are not Muslim. I need to help people. God’s going to judge me on that.”

RAMI NASHASHIBI, FOUNDER/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, IMAN

[Inner-City Muslim Action Network](#) (IMAN) is a unique independent community-based organization that operates within the Muslim faith tradition in the Chicago Lawn neighborhood (also known as Marquette Park) of South Side Chicago. Its founder and executive director, Rami Nashashibi, began IMAN in 1992 having been raised in the neighborhood by Palestinian immigrant parents who came to the Chicago area in the 1940s after the Palestinian–Israeli Conflict. Rami’s family lived among working class families, who were mostly Polish. The neighborhood was known for its housing discrimination and clear racist attitudes against integration. It was the place where Martin Luther King Jr. organized a fair housing rally in 1966, was met by 700 white demonstrators, and was hit in the head by a rock thrown during a riot that ensued.

Today, that same neighborhood is home to a diverse group of families of African, Latin, Asian and European descent. IMAN’s work is to organize and nurture residents and businesses to create neighborhoods of re-investment and hope for current and future families.

When IMAN began in the 1990s, its founder understood and appreciated the importance of aligning with families currently living in the area, most of whom were African American. Families identified social and economic challenges they faced and began working with IMAN to develop and implement organizing strategies that addressed their concerns. Residents identified results of disinvestment: unemployment, poor housing, crime and other threats to family strengthening. Today, they view child welfare services as neighborhood services that allow families to remain together.

Key to building relationships and a vision for a “community of hope” was establishing an organization that could help to achieve the vision. Intentionally, IMAN began as a Muslim-based organization, not affiliated with any mosque but connected to Islamic values. One supporter states it this way on the organization’s Facebook page: [IMAN is] “A place where generosity is truly exercised. You can’t leave the place without feeling loved!”

Remaining aligned with the neighborhood residents today, IMAN's programs are extensive and available to anyone regardless of race, ethnicity or religious beliefs. A community health center offers a full range of primary health care to those with or without health insurance. Behavioral health counseling services include:

- brief family therapy
- drug and alcohol counseling
- parent education and training
- crisis intervention counseling
- adolescent therapy and counseling
- brief relationship/couples counseling
- care management
- conflict resolution

IMAN also serves children and adolescents with a wide range of behavioral health programming.

Youth from the community are also engaged on a Youth Council that recommends programming, policies and campaign issues to staff and board. Issues include food access, juvenile justice and youth employment. (Youth is defined as young people from middle-school age to 24.)

One special campaign in which the youth are very engaged is the corner store initiative. The goal is to change the environment that many corner grocers have established for neighborhood residents. IMAN, its staff and volunteers lead a campaign to influence corner store owners, many of whom are immigrants, to become more welcoming of residents, to improve the quality of groceries sold and to become better neighbors themselves. Residents and shopkeepers engage in ongoing dialogue, test out new behaviors as well as negotiate and advocate together for policies that support small, neighborhood businesses.

The corner store initiative sets space literally and figuratively for residents and store owners to navigate daily tensions. IMAN facilitates monthly dialogues concerning community relationships, quality and type of items sold, financial and other supports needed to support neighborhood micro/small business. Through these conversations, IMAN's commitment to re-imagining a neighborhood that supports a high quality of life becomes affirmed.

Another key initiative led by IMAN is the Green ReEntry Program, which focuses on helping formerly incarcerated people successfully transition from prison to community life. The organization provides transitional housing, life skills training and workforce development in the field of green construction for formerly incarcerated men. Working with returning citizens also informs IMAN's policy and organizing agenda.

Core support for these family strengthening programs is provided by a staff of 48 full and part time. IMAN sets a high bar for its staff as organizational representatives:

- They must see themselves as part of the community.
- They must be grounded in community engagement.
- They must connect with community institutions committed to IMAN's vision.

Remaining accountable to the organization's mission is measured by staff through setting SMART goals within each department, by position as well as organization-wide. The goals are reviewed quarterly. Community accountability is measured through surveys and focus groups throughout the year.

In support of sustaining staff competencies, professional development courses are available at area universities such as the Civic Leadership Academy of the University of Chicago as well as on-site engagement with local scholars related to IMAN's programs.

Partnerships with other faith-led as well as nonfaith-led organizations help a great deal to ensure IMAN's effectiveness and to highlight the community's civic pride. Partners with which they coordinate or collaborate include The Black Synagogue; St. Rita's Church; Sisters of St. Casimir United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations (UCCRO), focusing on youth employment, juvenile justice and restorative justice; Women's Interfaith Ministry, focusing on theological principles of community work; Jewish Community Service of Chicago; Greater Southwest Development Corporation; the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago; Southside Health Care Collaborative; Chicago Public Art Group; Old Town School of Folk Music; and The University of Chicago.

Funding for the 2017 budget of \$4.2 million is composed of private grants, individual donors and government grants.

Reflection activity

- Reflect on the definitions of the five forms of youth engagement: youth development, community service, youth leadership development, civic activism and full community decision making.
- Write down the five forms of youth engagement, and under each heading list the programs, services, ministries and outreach activities your organization is currently implementing.
- Review the list with key leaders and youth, and brainstorm new ways to engage youth and new activities, programs and services corresponding to the five forms of youth engagement.

NOTES:

Tools for action

Explore the resources on [positive youth development](#) at [youth.gov](#), which was created by the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (IWGYP). The group is composed of representatives from 21 federal agencies that support programs and services focusing on youth. The IWGYP promotes the goal of positive, healthy outcomes for youth.

Youth.gov offers a downloadable [Youth Involvement and Engagement Assessment Tool](#) to help organizations and community partnerships in determining how they involve youth in programs, whether youth are becoming more engaged in the community, and if certain strategies are helping to retain youth. (The tool is available at https://youth.gov/docs/pyd_AssessmentTool.pdf)



If “We the People” are to help heal our ailing democracy — and if we do not, who will? — we need to develop five crucial habits of the heart.

— PARKER J. PALMER,
FOUNDER AND SENIOR PARTNER EMERITUS
OF THE CENTER FOR COURAGE & RENEWAL



PRINCIPLE 5.

Consider faith leaders' voices and roles in the community

Faith leaders have one of the most unique positions in society because of the inherent trust they hold with those among their congregational community, ministry or nonprofit, as well as with the larger community. Their voices carry moral authority, express compassionate love, and are beacons of hope in despair, of light in the darkness. Faith leaders walk a path that can be providential as well as political. Their unique voice can be used inside and outside of the walls of their faith community as a powerful impetus for positive change.

Let us consider for a moment some of the seemingly obvious and not so obvious ways faith leaders can use their voice for change. One of the easiest and most practical ways is to teach, preach or use their prophetic voice to highlight their responsibility — and even the opportunity — to be agents of change. Faith leaders can also bring awareness and clarity to the challenges faced by children and families in the community by sharing information in the form of quantitative data on trends affecting families and qualitative data (stories) about families in their community. Inspiring and thoughtful messages from faith leaders can lead to corporate inspiration and innovation to form new ministries or outreach initiatives. Faith leaders can also help change messaging about how family is defined by highlighting and creating ministries that engage and support blended families or kinship families (families where grandparents, other relatives or trusted adults take care of children whose parents are unable to care for them).

The Rev. Wilson, formerly of the Deaconess Foundation, shares the following about the voice of the faith leader:

An informed voice of faith can also support or ignite the energies of families and other stakeholders to work for change. This then can result in advocating for improved quality of life for families by improving private as well as public policies and practices. When faith leaders use their voices to speak with and for the voiceless, they demonstrate to youth ways in which faith can be a disruptor of injustice. Consistently serving as a voice for families builds trust and support within the community and within the FBO or ministry.

Families in the community see and experience that they are valued, understood and central to the work of the faith community. Creating space for youth and families by facilitating community conversations to share their challenges provides very powerful sharing and learning experiences that can be therapeutic and motivating. This is especially true for child welfare-involved youth and families. Studies show youth in foster care count their faith and their faith

A faith leader's voice

Rami Nashashibi, founder and executive director of IMAN and a 2017 MacArthur Genius Award winner, grasps the significance of promoting an organizational vision in a way that connects meaningfully with the people IMAN serves. "Community is my neighbors, it means my neighbors next door," he said in a MacArthur Foundation profile. "It means people in Marquette Park, people where I am. Most of them are not Muslim. I need to help people. God's going to judge me on that."

community as an important part of the support system that builds resilience and perseverance. This is also true for foster parents and biological parents involved with the child welfare system. Sometimes just being heard by someone or a group of people who are compassionate and empathetic makes a world of difference.

Throughout American history, faith leaders have been at the forefront of social justice and social change movements. The current state of children and families offers an opportunity for faith leaders to continue this legacy. Building on this legacy also includes very practical forms of keeping families together with counseling ministries, relationship workshops, parenting classes and financial literacy classes. Faith leaders can also provide educational opportunities for their members and their community to learn from child welfare practitioners, community and youth development practitioners and other experts.

Faith leaders highlighting social and economic issues that families face within their faith communities are contributing to the national dialogue around increased awareness and solutions for families. Families are the foundation of our society. Healthy, stable families create vibrant and productive communities.

Reflection activity

It is crucial that an FBO or ministry follows a statement of faith or belief, in particular one that identifies how its outreach, service and advocacy serve children and families. The statement should be designed to build bridges for inclusion, not barriers for exclusion. To that end, it should be strategically disseminated and posted so families can easily read it.

- An organization that has closely considered how it presents its message to children and families is West Angeles Church of God in Christ (westa.org). That awareness is illustrated in its mission statement: *The mission of West Angeles Community Development Corporation is to increase social and economic justice, demonstrate compassion and alleviate poverty as tangible expressions of the Kingdom of God through the vehicle of community development.*

NOTES:

Tools for action

In the effort to create **Communities of Hope**, FBOs and ministries can use their collective voice in tandem with families to reveal the urgency of issues and lift up the critical opportunities that can enhance family functioning. Effective advocacy identifies issues that need to be addressed while focusing public attention on solutions that will rectify the conditions resulting from the issues. Effective advocacy also targets laws that affect the conditions families face, as well as the policies, practices and funding mechanisms of government and other institutions that control and manage resources.

An excellent organization offering guidance to all nonprofits concerning advocacy is the **Alliance for Justice** (afj.org). The Alliance provides a separate website, **Bolder Advocacy** (bolderadvocacy.org), which features resources such as fact sheets, guides, sample agreements and toolkits.

We recommend that FBOs and ministries consider using advocacy strategies that are natural to their missions. By this we mean engaging the faith leadership and families in deciding how, when and what type of strategies will have the best long-term impact in fulfilling the FBO's vision. In our research for this toolkit, we observed several general strategies that bolster strong advocacy, including communication; training and professional capacity-building related to the specific issues identified by families; and working with or developing FBO organizers. Specific advocacy activities that we saw flow from sound strategy development include:

- Researching community conditions, reviewing data describing the long-term impact of various policies and practices that stymie opportunity for families
- Publishing information critical to strengthening family functioning
- Participating in community organizing and training families and faith ministries in that activity
- Hosting public forums and family meetings and using television, radio and social media as empowering platforms for families to tell their stories and offer solutions for systems change
- Hosting, participating in or designing political forums, town hall meetings or private meetings with elected and appointed officials
- Recommending specific language amending ordinances, laws or other policies that facilitate more effective programs in support of families
- Supporting members from the area or from within an FBO or ministry to seek public office (e.g., school board, city/county council, mayor) or corporate leadership positions

- Encouraging congregational members and area residents to participate in workforce preparation and skill building, business development opportunities and advanced career development.
- Establishing a 501(c)(4) organization or joining with another group that has an existing 501(c)(4) to facilitate fundraising for candidates seeking public office

PLEASE NOTE: FBOs and ministries should become familiar with [Internal Revenue Service requirements](#) governing organizations operating in the nonprofit domain. While nonprofits are allowed to engage in advocacy as tax-exempt organizations, there are clear [distinctions between advocacy and lobbying](#).







Culture is context: Family culture in the United States

“

Service to others is the
rent you pay for your
room here on Earth.

— MUHAMMAD ALI

Our culture is represented in the ways that we live and interact and how we think about the world. It encompasses our food, art, music, language, social behaviors and our intellectual as well as our spiritual or religious beliefs. Culture is the fundamental building block of identity. As our culture shifts to include more young people of different backgrounds, children and families are sending messages to neighbors, schools, congregations, government — essentially everyone — about the criticality of creating connections with and establishing respect for each other.

One of the messages that we are hearing simply indicates that the term *family* can have multiple definitions. Families can be made up of one or multiple generations. Families can have one or two adult parents, or one or more children under the age of 18 years old who may be responsible for managing adult duties. Families may be female- or male-headed, or led by same-gender parents. Families today may be led by a grandparent, or by a teen who has grown up living in foster care or who was adopted. Or, families may be a group of children and adults who recently arrived from another country. Families may consist of a group of teenagers who live in the same household and share work, bill-paying and housekeeping responsibilities. There are many more ways that family is defined.

Any discussion about American culture today needs to recognize how it can be shaped by family poverty. A significant number of our families are looking for ways to support some of their most essential needs — food, shelter, security and health. These types of care and protection are considered essentials, yet, over 40% of American families lack sufficient income or access to the living wages to help their families meet basic needs, according to a [2021 Brookings Institution report](#).

The socioeconomic conditions of American families are also challenging the sincerity of our speech as well as our actions when we say that “families are the bedrock of our nation,” and then we enact policies and reforms that make it difficult for families to stay together or reunite after they’ve been separated. The critical question becomes, does our nation offer the civic support and the public will to enable caring families to thrive socially and economically?

Social policy and research focusing on serving and supporting families has been ongoing for the past 50 years. Dr. Micheline Malson, an experienced, respected professional in the fields of family support and policy, helped to create and operate the Jubilee Ministry, a project of the North Carolina Council of Churches, Families First, and Voices of Experience. She currently serves as a coach with Living the Word Ministry for the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. She shared the following observation with us:

In the early ‘90s I set up a Division of Family Development for the Department of Human Resources (now Health and Human Services) for the state of North Carolina, which developed about 50 family resource centers, family support programs and family preservation programs across the state. We now know more (or acknowledge more) about the effects of adverse social conditions on families than we did when I began my career. Families and children experiencing conditions such as poverty, job loss, family violence, family separation and foster care, homelessness, and who are justice system-involved are not unscathed by these conditions but often are physically, psychologically and spiritually depleted by these experiences.

Two of the most promising [recent] paradigm shifts in the family support field are based on acknowledging these conditions as traumatizing, having deleterious effects on child development and family functioning. For instance, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), the effects of adversarial experiences early in the life cycle, are now known to be associated with subsequent health outcomes and social consequences. New proposals for trauma-informed programming include helping families heal from trauma, with emphasis on empowerment and strategies that help them identify and develop agency. This is a role for people of faith who are taught to respect human dignity and recognize that every person has strengths, gifts and a purpose. It is the role of faith-based programs to encourage and stand beside traumatized families as they access and build on their strengths.

So how are FBOs and ministries addressing the intergenerational impacts of extreme poverty on families? Several of the groups we researched have designed an organizational environment emphasizing the love and acceptance of families and their members. They listen to and talk with families and institutional leaders, enrolling them in a new vision for themselves and their families.

One such group is IMAN, a Chicago faith-based community development organization. (See p. 50 for additional detail.) IMAN is committed to developing systems that reclaim, heal, forgive and transform people as well as the neighborhood. IMAN is creating a community culture where individuals are respected and engaged as thinkers, builders, social supports, advocates, artists and culture bearers of the neighborhood. Through this vision, families are not just consumers but designers and producers, creating and sustaining a community culture of wholeness, inclusion and safety.

Another group that is highly engaged with families is a ministry known as the [Platform of Hope](#) in Washington, D.C.:

The Platform of Hope has formed from a web of ministries that all grew from Church of the Saviour in D.C., rooted in the Adams Morgan/Columbia Heights/Mt. Pleasant neighborhood, and growing from community desire to access supportive transformative resources and social networks. Platform of Hope includes deep community collaboration with “justice housing”; early childhood development and education; extensive cradle to college pipeline academic and programmatic support; financial asset building and financial management; entrepreneurial micro-lending; re-entry program; entry level employment support; and the arts. Each of these programs is in support of families’ self-determined goals ... for families moving to wholeness.

Both of these examples show how FBOs and ministries are moving away from reaching out to “distressed or troubled families.” Instead, these groups are considering supports, skills, attitudes and behaviors that can sustain any family.

Urban Muslim Minority Alliance

“Our organization follows the universal principles of Islam; the community that we serve is all people striving for a higher purpose, looking for services to improve and empower their lives uniting to eradicate poverty.”

If you make a visit to Waukegan, Illinois, you will find a small community regenerating itself since it became a Rust Belt city in the 1990s. The town is ethnically and religiously diverse as well as being the home of residents of all ages. Located in downtown Waukegan is a small organization known as the Urban Muslim Minority Alliance (UMMA) Center dedicated to making the town a place of opportunity and productivity for all families and children living there.

As the UMMA Center mission states, its purpose is *“to empower the lives of underprivileged individuals in Lake County by providing educational support and community resources. The UMMA Center believes that Lake County will be strengthened by the growth that education, hope and purpose bring to those seeking to enrich their lives with opportunities. UMMA seeks to train and cultivate dynamic and talented individuals who are committed to social change and service in the underserved areas of Lake County, primarily the cities of Waukegan and North Chicago.”*

The Center name is an abbreviation for the Urban Muslim Minority Alliance. UMMA is also the Arabic word for “community.” With a staff of nine the UMMA Center understands its community to be people in the area striving for a higher purpose, of all faiths as well as nonbelievers looking for services to improve and empower their lives, uniting to eradicate poverty in their region. It was founded in 2004 by Ashfaq Mohiuddin, an American Muslim with a commitment to establishing livable wages through improving educational outcomes among adults in the Lake County area.

Mohiuddin founded UMMA Center after working at IMAN in the Marquette Park/Chicagoland neighborhood. Beginning with community leaders from among the Islamic Foundation North, African American and Indian American Muslims living in Lake County, Asfaq asked the question, “How do we bridge social and economic gaps visible in our community?” Through conversations with other faith leaders and a growing group of local volunteers, UMMA was born. A five-point program referred to as the 5Es form the core of UMMA’s program strategy:

- Encourage
- Empower
- Employ
- Educate
- Equip

These are action concepts that Lake County families believe are key to getting and staying out of poverty. The guiding question for the UMMA Center model is, “How fast can we get you out of poverty?” For some years, Lake County residents have experienced declining job opportunities and long-term unemployment. The UMMA Center works in partnership with organizations and businesses willing to support individuals with job training and work placements. UMMA believes that education is key to ending poverty, but basic needs must be addressed before a person is capable of learning. So the program begins with *encouragement* — providing food for families at the Center to strengthen their physical and mental ability to learn. Parenting programs including online courses in family strengthening techniques, nutrition and initial workforce development techniques are available to enable single parents to participate. The *educate* concept engages clients with a community-based grassroots approach to completing a GED program in 12 weeks in small size classes. The *empower* phase of the program focuses on providing family counseling and support to stabilize client families. Preparing clients for work means equipping them with pre-employment/soft skills for entering the workforce through conducting boot camps in preparation for employment in mid-size companies. Through the final phase of the UMMA Center program, *employ*, trainees and potential employers receive guidance from UMMA trainers during the job search and hiring processes. The program builds in an evaluation component that tracks success rates of the program.

With a budget of \$500,000 and nine staff, year-round volunteers are critical to the consistent high-quality functioning of the program. Local congregations of all faiths provide adult and youth volunteers. Newcomers to the Lake County area often include immigrant and refugees from many countries. Volunteers often provide community outreach services, baskets of food and toiletries, and computer assistance with ESL training. Community partnerships augment the capacity of UMMA’s efforts. Some of their partners include: YMCA, Youth Corps, YouthBuild, area community colleges, universities, workforce agencies and the local Chamber of Commerce. Volunteers have also been critical to successful fundraising.

Ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the UMMA Center remains a high priority. Mohiuddin is a software developer who brings the capacities of his work to UMMA’s operations. Staff development includes the most current training and design modules of SalesForce in crafting data management systems. Essentially, the UMMA team of Millennials and GenXers are enabling a community ethos that works with children and families of today and tomorrow.



Develop the cultural competencies of all staff and volunteers

There has been a great deal of discussion in almost every profession over the past 20 years about cultural competency. This can be defined as demonstrating the skills and will to understand and respect other people's traditions — ways of living, language, food, art and interactions regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity or geography. Another definition for cultural competence, according to the National Education Association, is the following:

Having an awareness of one's own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of students and their families. It is the ability to understand the within-group differences that make each student unique, while celebrating the between-group variations that make our country a tapestry. This understanding informs and expands teaching practices in the culturally competent educator's classroom.

Developing cultural competency is a lifelong learning experience. As our communities change, we must analyze and measure the impacts of those changes for families so that our service is useful. Our cultural competency — at the individual and organizational level — enables service and ministry that builds trust and expands equity, fairness, social justice and respect for diversity.

Strong FBOs are culturally competent.

An organization that has a learning culture is humble and curious. A healthy organization is one that is welcoming of difference and embracing of diversity. Another mark of health is respectful treatment of all people. A culturally competent agency is one that always includes a full spectrum of community members in its planning and service delivery. The community defines itself based on its demographics. Its leadership and decision makers are representative of the community it serves. This type of organization is deeply curious about and responsive to the evolution of the community it serves.

Example: Trinity Family Life Center (TFLC) located in Richmond, Virginia, designed its programs to build upon the assets of the community while addressing the needs of the area as voiced by its families. TFLC serves over 10,000 youth and families annually through its programs and services. In response to the family and cultural shifts in the surrounding neighborhoods, TFLC offers key programs and services available to families and children through the Center, which include

- A nine-week Boys to Manhood Rites of Passage Program in schools throughout the region to train middle school boys who lack adult male role models for the next stage of life and beyond.
- Positive Paths, a program at a drop-in center with a computer lab offering services for youth who are aging out of foster care and foster care alumni, ages 13–25. Participants receive life skills training, information on available area resources, continuing education opportunities, and job search skills, career development and employment opportunities. Positive Paths has served over 120 youth and young adults.

- Trinity Village Child Development Center, offering academic-centered childcare programs. Graduates of the program score well above average on the Virginia state readiness skills assessment and leave the center reading one to two grade levels above the kindergarten level. An after-school component includes tutoring, character development and STEAM activities.
- Responsible Motherhood and Fatherhood Education, a program for single and incarcerated mothers and fathers as well those struggling with addiction. Also, Parent Cafes and #WOW Talk Youth Cafes are offered regularly to encourage peer sharing among biological parents, foster parents and youth in foster care.
- Art of Life, a trauma-informed art therapy program that builds resilience skills for foster care youth through hip-hop, spoken word and poetry, and dance.
- A Community Garden program to address the food desert in the surrounding neighborhoods, complete with “hoop houses” and hydroponics to extend the growing season.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association offers a highly useful tool for measuring cultural competence, available online at <https://www.asha.org/uploadedFiles/Cultural-Competence-Checklist-Service-Delivery.pdf>.

EXERCISE: How culturally competent is my organization?

Using the sample checklist as a reference, answer the following questions:


- What do we need to assess in our treatment of all people?
- Where should we be more attentive to learning cultural norms that affect our clients or participants?
- How can we be attentive to our own blindness?
- Do we have a culture that allows for others to speak honestly to us about differences, or their hurt feelings and the ways in which we do not create welcoming and accepting places where people feel safe and have the opportunity to be authentic?
- How can we embed cultural competence and love of all persons in our organization and in every staff person in it?

Reflection activity

- What do you and your staff know about the traditions, language, family structure and values of the families in your community?
- How did you acquire this knowledge?
- How often do you update what you know?
- Does staff development include skill building for cultural, ethnic and gender competency?
- What is your organization's model for inclusion of families in the planning and enhancement of your services? Are these cultural competencies intentionally evident among your staff or the membership of your congregation/ministry?

NOTES:





Additional tools for the organizational development of strong FBOs

“

The meaning of life is to find
your gift. The purpose of life
is to give it away.

—SOURCE UNKNOWN

A leader in an FBO is guided by their faith, builds an organizational culture in response to what their faithful heart commands, and leads with confidence, integrity and skill. This section of the toolkit explores key skills, tasks and behaviors of effective leaders. We'll also explore how the ability to anticipate other people's reactions and trends in the funding environment, along with other strategies, is key to leadership. We will investigate techniques, exercises and practices in management and governance that have helped other organizations to thrive. And we will focus on the primacy of healthy relationships for any organization.

"Healthy beats smart for organizations that excel," says John Damon, CEO of Canopy Children's Solutions in Jackson, Mississippi. Respected scholars of leadership are increasingly clear that a key leadership advantage rests on strong communication skills and an ability to listen, mediate and build trust from those who must be engaged for the enterprise to succeed. But above all what must be present is a humble heart, one that is willing to learn, change and grow. Technical expertise, though important, can often be hired or acquired, but the great relationships that define great organizations must be developed from within. Great leaders possess vision, optimism, generosity of spirit, a little wonkiness and a passion for their piece of the social solution. They also have the ability to make a friend, seeing them as an ally and not a competitor.

So in this section on organizational development, we will explore some necessary technical skills and unpack key interpersonal leadership and conceptual skills. Leadership is multifaceted, often situational, and requires that each person is fully present. One of the greatest gifts a leader can give their team is to be authentic, which by definition means to be flawed. Romans 3:23 in the Christian Bible says that all of us sin and fall short of the glory of God. The grace to get back up, to be filled with the spirit of the change you're seeking in the world and the faith to keep trying, knowing that what you do has real consequence — that is what marks the true leader.



USING COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCES FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Macedonia Family and Community Enrichment

For the last five years, Macedonia Family and Community Enrichment (MFACE) has been working with the Program to Aid Citizen Enterprise (PACE). (See also pp. 133-157 for PACE's tool to assess organizational readiness.) PACE's mission is *to strengthen the community-based nonprofit organizations that potentially or demonstrably can assist African American and economically disadvantaged communities to identify their needs and take effective action*. PACE's holistic approach to capacity building is a multi-year, comprehensive program of support including access to strategic planning, governance, marketing, technology and other types of expertise. Agencies admitted to its rigorous programs are encouraged to develop their own work plans and choose their own consultants to build ownership of the work from its onset. But they are also urged to take a comprehensive view of what an effective organization looks like. It's never just about raising more money, although that is certainly important. An organization that can rise to the needs of its community must be strong in multiple ways — in its administrative capacity; in its ability to attract and retain talented and committed staff; in its ability to tell its story to different audiences, using different tools; and in its board-staff partnerships. PACE recognizes that this is a tall order, especially for smaller nonprofits. Therefore, it walks beside the organizations it assists for as many as five years, helping them to secure good advice and wise counsel to meet their many organizational needs.

MFACE is one group that has benefited from the PACE model of intentional and long-term capacity building. Founded in 1994 by Pastor Jason Barr of Macedonia Church, Pittsburgh, MFACE decided to focus on the Hill District, a section of Pittsburgh made famous by playwright August Wilson. Leaders recognized that damaging public policies and racism had too often prevailed. There were many troubling economic, educational and health disparities for African American families. Urban redevelopment had gutted the Hill many years earlier, displacing what had once been a vibrant cultural hub. Poverty levels grossly exceeded those of the surrounding county and state. Economic and educational disparities were acute across the Hill. All five Hill District neighborhoods had double or triple the rates of female-headed households. HIV/AIDS was hitting his people hard, with 75% of people living with HIV/AIDS African American. African Americans made up only 13% of the total population, yet represented 70% of new cases being diagnosed. Access to care for both physical and mental health was limited by lack of health insurance for many families.

MFACE grew directly from Pastor Barr's love for the children and families in his congregation. When Pastor Barr experienced health challenges starting in the early 2000s, Macedonia Church was fortunate to find an equally passionate leader in his successor, Pastor Brian Edmonds.

MFACE offers a comprehensive set of services for children and families, funded largely by the Allegheny County's Department of Human Services, Children, Youth and Families Division. By fiscal 2019, its annual operating budget was nearly \$2 million, a dramatic increase from its annual budget of \$500,000 in 2010, the year the current executive director began her work at MFACE.

In response to the community needs it has documented, MFACE offers an array of programs to assist families in making the best possible futures for their children, while addressing the racial disparities that limit the children from reaching their full potential. The programs include family enrichment services (family and community teaming, or FACT), the community truancy intervention project (CTIP), lifeline support services, and prevention and case management services (HIV/AIDS prevention and testing, education, case management, bullying prevention, teen dating violence prevention and the Girls' Circle). The organization's definition of family is broad and inclusive, seeking to involve all who are concerned for a child's well-being. A key goal of its programs is to prevent involvement or limit the long-term involvement of a child in the child welfare system.

Trish Gadson, executive director of MFACE, came to the organization when it was near to closing its doors. The mission was relevant and the community needs were urgent, but the administration had left the organization with multiple funding and administrative challenges. It had a faithful and determined board as a primary asset. Below Gadson speaks to the need for using expertise and advice from many different sources to build a strong and effective organization.

Who else has helped MFACE grow?

Both Gadson and her board have repeatedly sought out advice and support to build their organizational capacity. One of her mantras is "Seek support. Look for technical assistance at every turn; be vulnerable, learn as much as you can, every time you can."

MFACE has used many types of technical assistance. They have a longstanding relationship with a technology company. They have worked with web developers, fundraising counsel, and human resource and marketing consultants. Another key consulting relationship has been with the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management at Robert Morris University. The Bayer Center was engaged through the PACE program in 2011 as Gadson and her board began their first strategic plan. That initial planning process included an overall organizational assessment; a fund development audit to assess opportunity for increased support, thereby lessening their dependence on government contracts and diversifying their revenues; and a board retreat to discuss mission and vision as well as set the research agenda. Research included an environmental scan to better understand the challenges outside the MFACE walls for the people they serve and the nonprofit climate in which they work. Personal interviews were conducted with board, church and community leaders, as well as funders and partners. As a result, MFACE gained insight into what these key stakeholders wanted from them and how much the organization's history still casts a shadow on their opportunities today.

Board development tools and exercises

Strong FBOs have boards that know their job and do it.

To serve on a nonprofit board is an honor. It is recognition that a person has a desire to serve their community, to hold their community in trust and to make good decisions based on data and evidence whenever possible, but always guided by adherence to the mission and the responsibility to the larger community to use its precious resources of time, talent and treasure well.

No one goes to school to learn how to serve on a nonprofit board. The fortunate have early experiences with an effective board chair who can run a meeting and follow his or her example. These meetings are substantive discussion of issues that are of consequence to the community they serve and always encourage attention to the mission. The chair allows for difference of opinion but skillfully leads the group to constructive decisions, which are faithfully recorded in the minutes. These minutes are used in subsequent meetings to remind the board of the decisions it already made and to discourage revisiting those decisions, and to provide a foundation for decisions on the current challenges.

This is the ideal state. All too often, few of these factors are present. All too often, meetings are either trivial or repetitive because someone missed the last meeting and now requires the whole group to revisit the previous discussion in its entirety. Committee recommendations are second-guessed and rejected. And we wonder why people are reluctant to serve on committees! The chair defers and fails to lead because they don't want to alienate anyone.

Many of these problems can be addressed with an annual board discussion of their roles and responsibilities. At this same meeting, committee charges and annual work plans can be reviewed and aligned across the board. All of this assumes there is shared knowledge of governance, and for boards who employ paid staff, there is clarity on the division of labor and power between board and staff. It also assumes a chair owns the responsibility to lead.

For many boards, these conversations have not yet occurred. All too many good people, both volunteers and paid, suffer from confusion about whose job is it and how they can best use the time, talent and influence of our human capital. The work of the committees is obscure to those on the board. The way that committees ought to interact with one another is never examined.

The place to start is with a discussion of roles and responsibilities. This conversation can help to lay groundwork for strategic planning and other important work of the board. Through clarity about roles, the work of each committee can become more clear.

So what is the work of the board?

The primary role of the board of directors is to govern the nonprofit organization.

In governance, there are two essential functions:

1. To protect the public interest

Responsibilities include: Oversight of the organization's finances and operation; evaluation of the organization's progress; ensuring that the public (clients, funders, other stakeholders) is well-informed

2. To ensure the organization fulfills its mission and achieves its purpose

Responsibilities include: CEO/hire, evaluate, fire, if necessary; delegate management to CEO; ensure institutional memory; participate in strategic planning; approve contracts and other major organizational commitments; practice good internal leadership development; be an ambassador for the organization; assist with fundraising and make a personal contribution; help to improve/maintain good community relations

Specifically:

Legal

- Minutes are not optional; neither is compliance with bylaws
- Board members have the legal responsibility for the corporation in the eyes of the law
- Be alert for issues of **mismanagement**, **non-management** and **self-dealing** or conflicts of interest
- Understand the principle of the **reasonably prudent person**
- At all times, practice the **principle of good faith**
- Understand the necessity of dealing with **deadwood** members
- Directors and officers insurance is important

Fiduciary

- Always see that **payroll taxes are paid!**
- Read and approve the organization's budget – ask questions, ask questions

- **Regularly review the financial statements**
- Work with the auditor to ensure **adequate internal controls**
- **Recognize how much the budget controls the organization**, no matter the priorities that have been established by the strategic plan or by the board
- Provide some basic cushion – it never all comes in and on time
- **Build a cash reserve**
- Practice common sense – **Don't park your brain at the door!**



My concern for the world is not that there are so many poorly equipped people in it but that the well-equipped people do so poorly. Something needs to be added to the current matrix of moral fiber. I see no alternative but to lay the burden on those who are already carrying more than their share. Those who think of themselves as good must become better; they must become strong.

— ROBERT GREENLEAF,
ON BECOMING A SERVANT LEADER



Issues of one voice

- **Know when to set a policy**
- The executive director only has **one boss** – the full board, not the individual members!
- Practice **confidentiality** – arguments and problems stay in the boardroom
- Be sure that **the private meeting in the parking lot** is not the best thinking practiced in your organization – bring your best ideas to the boardroom and to the attention of the full board
- **Advocate unabashedly** – genuine enthusiasm is hard to resist
- Unleash **the power of the passionate ambassador**

Leadership development – the most important activity of the board

- Agree on **board job descriptions** – use them in recruiting
- Set standards – create a culture of respect and responsibility
- Enthusiastically **embrace the challenge of diversity** – recognize its importance and power
- Leadership development is not a once-a-year activity – it's **year-round**, if it's effective
- Be sure there is a **clear career ladder** in your organization
- Make sure that **hard work is rewarded** – and that fairness informs the access to power
- Practice **intentional and active mentoring** – be on the lookout for the people to replace you – groom them and grow them – show them the way
- Always have an **updated strategic plan** – leave a clear record for future decisions – provide **an institutional memory**

How can we set the lesson and gain a shared understanding of the board's work? Using the *Whose Job Is It?* worksheet, ask each board member and staff person to assess whose responsibility is primary to complete a task. Then, compare the basic roles and responsibilities list with this task list for guidance. It is simplistic to assume that the board sets policy in a vacuum or approves a budget without staff input, so some of these tasks are ultimately board responsibilities but also depend on a strong staff partner. Many of the tasks are situational and depend on a variety of factors. For example, there may be a board member with particular expertise who can help with the budget making, or there may be a staff person with expertise in media relations.

Board and staff responsibility clarification exercise: Whose job is it?

Please mark the appropriate box, assigning each item to the individual (group) having primary responsibility. You may check more than one box if you feel the responsibility is shared, but please attempt to assign primary responsibility.

	Board	Executive Director/Staff
1. Determine the organization's goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Fundraising for the organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Hire the executive director	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Evaluate the board's performance annually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Keep board members informed of operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Policy formulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Administer all phases of operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Hire and supervise professional staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Plan methods of program delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Implement programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Responsible for meeting all legal requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Recruit new board members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Orient, train and develop board members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Draft the annual operating budget	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Establish salary administration plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Implement salary administration plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Implement policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Prepare information on strategic choices for the board	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Recommend board members for various committees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Provide community relations contacts with community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Evaluate executive director annually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Evaluate organization's results	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Assess organization's problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Approve annual budget	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Another factor that affects board performance is the location of an organization and its board in its life cycle of development. Holding a board discussion on this topic can be another way to examine roles and responsibilities. It also can enable board members to reflect on where they want to go as a board. These reflections may productively inform the thinking of the nominating committee.

Leading through the predictable crises of the nonprofit life cycle: Boards and their stages of development¹

For several years, nonprofit researchers have been studying boards of directors and linking their behaviors to the issues of the cycles of organizational development. The Stevens Group in Minneapolis and Karl Mathiasen III are well known for their work on this subject. The theories link age and size of organizations and their boards to certain common characteristics, regardless of mission. Just as in human development, it is often comforting for nonprofit leaders to realize that problems are frequently caused by where your organization is in the life cycle rather than just the particularly difficult group of people you have on your board!

All of these theories recognize the difference between a start-up and fully mature organization. Board development issues often mirror fund development needs. New theories in the field of social architecture have been highly influential in convincing leaders how best to create a strong decision-making body for their organization. (For example, John McKnight's asset-based development theory is a powerful driver for board composition.) So let's think together about what is common and different about the needs of the nonprofit organization from the perspective of key volunteer leadership at different times in its development. Your own board may well combine characteristics listed for each.

THE FOUNDING BOARD – OR THE ORGANIZING BOARD (0–3 YEARS)

Adjectives:

- Passionate, committed, overwhelmed

Governance characteristics:

- Tightly held by a small group of no more than 7–10 members
- Driven by cause
- Loyal to the vision and person of the executive director
- Risk-takers – sometimes naive

¹ Edited and revised by Peggy Morrison Outon, Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management at Robert Morris University.

- Program volunteers, not chosen for access to wealth or power
- Unclear roles – little investment in hierarchy
- Similar to advisory board – lots of advice, less governance
- Acts as committee of the whole for most decisions
- Few policies – developing procedures

Needs of the organization from the board:

- Strong belief in mission and necessity of the organization
- Optimism
- Hard work – sometimes sacrificial
- Effective partnership with staff
- Creativity
- Strong connection to community
- Instinctive marketing skills
- Patience with lack of structure

Dangers for this type of board and the organization they serve:

- Inability to value staff's contribution when everyone else is a volunteer
- Financial assumptions unrealistic – either too high or too low
- Fragile and overly personal

THE WORKING BOARD – OR THE GOVERNING BOARD (4–10 OR MORE YEARS)

Adjectives:

- Faithful, determined, inclusive

Governance characteristics:

- Board building as key strategy – board of 17–19 members
- Attracted to cause, but less of a purity test for board membership
- Effective partnership between executive director and board chair
- Calculated risk-takers
- Attentive to the bottom line
- Better role clarity between staff and board
- Finance, fund development, board development committees functioning well
- Appropriate policies (especially personnel) developed and implemented

Needs of the organization from the board:

- Demand for effective articulation of results and impact of public investment
- Appreciation for and implementation of the power of the board member in fund development
- Respect for the mission and the work of the staff
- Knowledge of community, connection to leaders
- Knowledge of relevant business practices, use of expertise
- A long and hopeful view
- Willingness to do intensive planning
- Regular and useful evaluation of executive director/CEO
- Regular and useful evaluation of board itself

Dangers for this type of board and the organization they serve:

- Inability or unwillingness to convert from the excitement and drama of the founding board phase
- Unwillingness to own fiscal responsibilities (getting it and spending it)
- Lack of culture of constructive dissent – too many parking lot meetings
- Weak or ineffectual board leadership – spending too little or unwilling to deal with conflict

**THE FUNDRAISING BOARD – OR THE INSTITUTIONAL BOARD
(10-PLUS YEARS)**

Adjectives:

- Powerful, diverse, connected

Governance characteristics:

- Board truly representative of the community it serves – board of 17–25 members
- Organization's reputation makes it an attractive board on which to serve
- Community involvement structure includes well-utilized council of advisors (unlimited number of members)
- Board members own responsibility for leading individual donor fundraising activities
- Annual evaluation of the diversity of the funding base that produces strong financial position
- Clear distinction between board and staff responsibilities
- Interest in building the organization's capacity and bottom line
- Committee charges clearly defined and doing real work, routinely include non-board members
- Excellent use of policies and procedures as needed to protect board and staff

Needs of the organization from the board:

- Continued attention to case for support – results, impact, clear succinct messages of its distinctive value
- A shared culture of action and responsibility
- Attentiveness to mission creep – not falling into the “following the money” syndrome
- Careful attention to legal and fiduciary responsibilities – clear and continually enforced policies
- Careful attention to board composition – continued aggressive recruitment of talent
- Determination to remain current in practices and programs
- Continued time spent on planning
- Attention to issues of succession – both staff and board leaders

Dangers for this type of board and the organization they serve:

- Clique makes all important decisions – true diversity is lost as many members feel disenfranchised
- Every board meeting is all about money – attention to mission is diffused
- Hubris affects innovative practice by staff and board

A board that knows its job and does it is a critical success factor for any FBO.

Strong FBOs think carefully about who should serve on their board, what they expect of each other and how they evaluate the board’s performance.

To maintain a strong board, there are additional things to consider once the board is clear on its job. Good boards are diverse boards, diverse across many dimensions of diversity. To ensure that a board is composed of the right mix of skills, talents and networks is an art. Considerations of diversity regarding race, gender, age and geography also are important. It all takes real thought and a broad network of potential members.

In some FBOs, everyone on the board is a member of the congregation. Even so, the principles of effective diversity should be observed. Annually, as the nominating process occurs, the board should revisit issues of composition and needed talent. Ideally, the board’s composition mirrors the goals and strategic directions set in the current plan.

Say, for example, your organization is beginning to work with more homeless children. Do you have a board member who is knowledgeable about services for homeless families? Or, the organization is seeing more kids on the autism spectrum. Do you have a child psychologist or special education teacher in your ranks? Or, you have set a goal to attract more private foundation funding. Do you have a member or two who understands that world and how best to be successful? There are many dimensions to consider when composing a board, but the place to start is with the people currently serving.

On the following page is a generic list of skills and experience that are likely to be valuable on a board. If your organization is going to assess itself, it's worth reviewing this form, deleting those that do not apply and adding those that are specific to your needs. This may initiate your thinking on recruitment priorities. Once all current members have completed the form, the aggregate should be tallied.



When choosing a leader, we always kept in mind that humility provides clarity where arrogance makes a cloud.

—ANONYMOUS NATIVE AMERICAN LEADER



Matrix for analysis of board composition

Please circle items that describe you and your experience. Please list years of experience. This form will give us a sketch of the current board's skills and experience as you contemplate how best to build the _____ board of the future.

Name: _____

EXPERIENCE	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
Academic	
Advocacy	
Arts patron/donor/funder	
Financial management	
Use of technology	
Consulting	
Corporate	
Diversity and inclusion	
Global perspective	
Governance	
Human resources	
Investments	
Legal	
Management	
Marketing	
Media	
Membership development	
Meetings and conferences	
Partnership and alliance building	

EXPERIENCE	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
Politics	
PR/advertising	
Small business	
Training/professional development	
Education	
Program	

FUNDING ACCESS/SKILL/KNOWLEDGE

Circle if you have access, skill or knowledge in these areas.

Corporate wealth	Access	Skill	Knowledge
Foundation funding	Access	Skill	Knowledge
Individual wealth	Access	Skill	Knowledge
Government funding	Access	Skill	Knowledge
Local business	Access	Skill	Knowledge
Annual giving campaigns	Access	Skill	Knowledge
Capital/endowment	Access	Skill	Knowledge
Special events	Access	Skill	Knowledge

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Age: 20–35 36–50 51–65 66 +

Preferred pronoun:

He/him/his She/her/hers They/them/their

Race: African-American Asian-American Caucasian Hispanic

Native American Other

Please list the three areas of your expertise and influence where you can make the greatest difference to the success of _____.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Most boards have obvious areas of strength. They may have several teachers or lawyers or experts from the fields of service in which the FBO works. Most often have clear areas of weakness. There may be only one person with experience in IT or with media relations. These insights help inform recruitment of your next class of board members. But this is not a menu model of recruitment. You cannot take one from column A and one from columns B and C and end up with the perfect board. The first prerequisite of board service is to “burn for the mission.” The second is to be a good fit with the other members. That is not to say the new person must agree with all that has gone before, but they should enter the boardroom with respect and a willingness to learn as well as contribute.

A few words about board recruitment: it needs to begin with this composition exercise. There needs to be a consistency of expectations for how all board members will participate. These expectations need to be written down and shared with the candidate at the time of the recruitment interview, during which the organization should gauge the potential board member’s availability, and both parties should check for mutual interest and cultural fit.

What should this statement of expectations, aka board job description, say?

The following is a sample that is straightforward yet sufficient.

Statement of expectations for a board member in good standing²

I, _____ understand that as a member of the Board of Directors of _____, I have a legal and moral responsibility to ensure that the organization does the best work possible in pursuit of its goals. I believe in the purpose and the mission of the organization, and I will act responsibly and prudently as its steward.

As part of my responsibilities as a board member:

1. I will interpret the organization's work and values to the community, represent the organization and act as a spokesperson.
2. I will attend at least 75% of board meetings, committee meetings and special events.
3. I will make a personal financial contribution at a level that is meaningful to me.
4. I will actively participate in one or more fundraising activities.
5. I will act in the best interests of the organization, and excuse myself from discussions and votes where I have a conflict of interest.
6. I will stay informed about what's going on in the organization. I will ask questions and request information. I will participate in and take responsibility for making decisions on issues, policies and other board matters.
7. I will work in good faith with staff and other board members as partners toward achievement of our goals.
8. If I don't fulfill these commitments to the organization, I will expect the board president to call me and discuss my responsibilities with me.

In turn, the organization will be responsible to me in several ways:

1. I will be sent, without request, quarterly financial reports and an update of organizational activities that allow me to meet the "prudent person" section of the law.
2. Opportunities will be offered to me to discuss with the executive director and the board president the organization's programs, goals, activities and status; additionally, I can request such opportunities.
3. The organization will help me perform my duties by keeping me informed about issues in the industry and field in which we are working, and by offering me opportunities for professional development as a board member.
4. Board members and staff will respond in a straightforward fashion to questions I feel are necessary to carry out my fiscal, legal and moral responsibilities to this organization. Board members and staff will work in good faith with me toward achievement of our goals.
5. If the organization does not fulfill its commitments to me, I can call on the board president and executive director to discuss these responsibilities.

Signed: _____
BOARD MEMBER

Date: _____

Signed: _____
BOARD CHAIR

Date: _____

² Template provided by Jan Masaoka and the Board Café.

Next steps for a board evaluation

After nominations and recruitment have been carefully done, the board is ready to have annual evaluation as part of its practice. Once there is clarity about expectations, then it is fair and productive to ask, How did we do?

A board that is intent on improvement, that is ambitious for the organization it serves, knows it must ask questions about its own performance just as it is responsible for annually evaluating the performance of its executive and the organization as a whole.

Below is a sample board evaluation that both measures elements of the effectiveness of the meetings and board culture as well as checks back in on board members' knowledge of roles and responsibilities. It includes sample language describing the process by which the survey was distributed and analyzed.



Are we doing a good job?

By Jan Masaoka, CompassPoint Nonprofit Services

This survey was distributed by the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management at Robert Morris University on [DATE, 20XX to 20XX] to the Board of Directors by email. The return of survey responses were via email or faxed to the Bayer Center. The number of Board members who responded to specific questions on the survey is indicated by the bold number in the parenthesis that is located by each question.

This evaluation will solicit opinions on the functioning of the board on a more interactive, perceptive level.

Overall, how would you rate the following:

	No opinion	Terrible	Not very good	Good	Great
The quality of the agenda (topics, supporting materials, focus)					
The quality of the meeting (time well spent, appropriate interaction, meaningful dialogue)					
The feeling that your individual opinions are understood					
The feeling that your individual opinions are valued					
The trust level among board members					
The ability to stay focused on the agenda					
The level of respect board members have for each other					
The quality of information we have to support decision making					
The quality of our decisions					

How satisfied are you that the board:

	Very Unsatisfied		Satisfied		
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Understands and can convey the organization's mission and purpose?					
2. Is confident that the organization is in compliance with federal, state and local regulations?					
3. Has procedures that report that government contract obligations are fulfilled?					
4. Has a strategic vision for the organization?					
5. Knows enough about the organization's programs and services?					
6. Provides financial oversight for the organization, including approving a realistic budget?					
7. Monitors financial performance and projections on a regular basis?					

	Very Unsatisfied		Satisfied		
	1	2	3	4	5
8. Has adopted a fundraising strategy and reflects on its successes?					
9. Has a clear policy on the responsibilities of board members in fundraising?					
10. Acts as ambassadors to the community on behalf of the organization and its clients/patrons?					
11. Understands the role that volunteers play in the organization and the organization's philosophy of volunteer management?					
12. Appreciates the respective roles of the board and staff?					
13. Effectively involves board members in board activities and responsibilities?					
14. Periodically assesses our own performance as a board?					

What are the three biggest issues facing us as a board?

1. **Example:** Burnout, small membership size, unknown in the community
2. **Example:** Not enough volunteers to do any projects. Usually only a portion of the board does what projects have been decided on by the full board.

What issues must or must not be discussed during the upcoming board retreat?

1. **Example:** Must – Building the membership
2. **Example:** Must – Board member's roles and responsibilities



Strong FBOs effectively use their board committees and have meetings that accomplish real results.

A strong board uses committees and task forces well. There is a short list of standing board committees. These are stipulated in the bylaws. A board that understands fiduciary responsibility will have a high-functioning **finance committee**. This committee is responsible for working with staff on the annual operating budget and presenting it to the full board, and providing regular updates on its budgetary progress.

Another fiduciary responsibility for organizations that are seeking private foundation funding is that they have an independent audit. Some state and government agencies also require an independent audit if the organization is spending significant sums derived from government sources. Audits are expensive, so if your organization is not required to have one, you may wish not to do so. But as you grow, you will probably need one. When you do, you need a board **audit committee**. The audit committee is separate from the finance committee. While the finance committee members often become intimate with the organizational finances and business, the sole purpose of the audit committee is to provide independent oversight of those finances.

The most important committee of the board is the **governance committee**. This committee is charged with assuring a high-functioning board and implementing best practices in governance. Its first responsibilities are to the nominating function. As previously discussed, during the nomination process the current board's skills and diversity are assessed, and members are asked to identify potential candidates who possess desired new skills. The committee also assures that the statement of expectations is current and provided to those being recruited. Further, they are responsible for holding a proper orientation meeting, before which is provided a board manual of all important documents (current budget, bylaws, board and staff list, minutes of a few previous meetings, website information, etc.).

In addition, the governance committee is responsible for ongoing board education throughout the year, often helps to plan the annual retreat and handles the annual board evaluation. It helps to get the right people on the board ... and to keep them there!

OTHER POSSIBLE COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

Many boards have a **program committee** or a **fund development committee** or **marketing committee**. Although these committees may be very important, they can also become stale and ultimately diminish board engagement. Therefore, they should carefully be considered and dissolved if no longer relevant to the work of the board. Having a task force mentality may help to lend urgency to their work. Identify the specific task at hand, then assign responsibilities and a timeline for completing that task. If such an approach isn't taken, these board committees risk becoming albatrosses for an organization.

MAINTAINING THE RIGHT NUMBER OF COMMITTEES

Working on committees can be an excellent way to get to know potential board members, because it is a good idea to work with people before you have to depend on their leadership. Committee work is an excellent way to do a deep dive on an issue or sort through a variety of options so that the board can stay at a higher level of discourse. But beware the proliferation of committees. They can eat your organization alive. Every committee or task force needs to be supported. Minutes need to be taken. Meeting notices need to go out. Time needs to be spent crafting a useful agenda. And most importantly, decisions need to be implemented in a timely and effective fashion. So limit the number of committees to those that can be properly supported. That support should come primarily from volunteer leaders and secondarily from staff, when they are available.

EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

There is strong consensus among those who write about meetings that having specific goals for a meeting and having those goals expressed in a written agenda is the key to being effective. Most boards use agendas, but many boards do not see them as a tool designed for effective decision-making. If your agendas tend to be very similar, in similar order month after month, you are missing an opportunity.

Setting the agenda is an act of power. Where an issue falls on the agenda may be a signal of its importance. Is an important issue buried at the end? Often, by the end of the agenda, people's minds have moved on to what's next in their day. Countless organizations save the fundraising report to the end of the meeting. That often means that it is rushed through or even tabled to the next meeting in the interest of time. Possibly the most important item missing from many agendas is time for real conversation about an issue that matters. Your board may need to discuss a pending financial challenge before it becomes a problem. You may need to think together about community changes that are all around you. It may be time to change programs or services to better serve those who depend on you. A major company may be coming to your community for the first time, offering all kinds of new possibilities for corporate support.

The board was chosen for their expertise and networks. Too many times, we fail to use them for our advantage because we are proceeding through our formulaic meetings on autopilot. One solution is to use a consent agenda, which groups routine reports into one motion. If discussion is needed, the item can be pulled from the package of the consent agenda. But if the members have read their board packet before the meeting, as is their duty (this should be clearly articulated in the board statement of expectations), then there is no danger of a key item being buried in the consent agenda. This practice frees time for discussion of bigger issues within the time frame of the meeting. Some call this format the "creativity agenda." It can re-energize a board and make individual members feel more engaged and useful.

EXERCISE: Examining your agenda

Look at your last three board agendas and meeting minutes. Were some important issues crowded out by routine matters? Did some issues suffer from the order in which they fell in the meeting?

Rework your agendas by assigning priority to the issues at hand. What important questions went unasked for lack of time? Were your discussions focused on the past? Was your conversation too retrospective? Does your mission and purpose have a big enough place at the table? Are you asking your board members to use their brains and their hearts as they debate organizational choices? Is there sufficient time to anticipate those debates?

It is a shame to waste people's time in meetings. The board chair and the executive should discuss the next meeting's agenda a week in advance before sending it to the board. Their discussion should be focused on results, essential decisions and future priorities. Committee chairs should be invited to submit written reports that, unless they are flagged, will be included among the bundled items of the consent agenda. If a committee needs the board's full involvement on an issue, the committee chair should request a place on the agenda for that meeting. Move away from the routine. Move toward the urgent and the interesting. Value people's time and you may well see improved attendance!

Strong FBOs have effective working relationships between the board and the executive and her staff.

The most important relationship in any nonprofit is that between the executive leader and the board chair. This relationship must be characterized by honesty, a shared focus on mission and the ability to be direct about challenges and success. This is all too often not the case. Studies show that the primary reason that executives leave their nonprofit jobs is because they cannot get along with their board. Studies further show that most executives spend less than two hours a week on their board relationships.

Matthew 6:21 says, "Where your treasure is, there shall your heart be also." For most of us, our primary treasure is our time and our attention. Both the executive and her chair must realize that the health of their organization is tied to this equation. In FBOs, we might also include the pastor of the supporting congregation as someone whose role is key to a sustainable future. Time must be invested in conversation, in discussions of vision and community needs, and in regular dialogue about immediate challenges and opportunities. This kind of time is so difficult for most people to find when their days are crowded with urgent tasks.

Some skilled executives and board chairs have a regular weekly meeting, in person or on the phone. Others can only find time once a month, but this meeting is in person and scheduled for an hour at minimum. Each individual in the meeting gives priority to the other when one's attention is requested. Both recognize the health of their communication is integral to the organization.

It takes time for most board chairs to truly learn the business of the FBO. While mission is key, the economics of many nonprofits are obscure. Understanding the financial drivers and key community relationships in order to give wise counsel to the executive can take some time. On the other hand, it can also be a challenge for the executive to fully appreciate what her chair has to offer from their experience. So time spent building mutual trust is time well-spent.

That mutual-benefit dimension of the relationship spreads to other board-staff relationships and creates a strong base for one-on-one relations. At MFACE, for example, the executive has a prayer partner in the associate minister. In other groups, the executive will find the minister of music a natural ally to her school programs or the youth minister a ready source for youthful volunteers. But often all of this starts with the executive leadership observing trusting, transparent relationships.

Another aspect of this challenge is that board chairs change. Board rotation is healthy. Building time in the early days of the board chair's tenure to establish trust and rapport is good sense and good business.

Board evaluation of executive performance

One of the board's core responsibilities is to evaluate the performance of their executive on an annual basis. While evaluation is a year-round process, the annual evaluation can be a moment of reflection and reaffirmation. Unfortunately, many nonprofits today don't carry out this process. [Compass Point](#), a management support organization in California, periodically does a study of executive directors called *Daring to Lead*. In their most recent study, of the more than 3,000 directors who participated, only 55% received an annual evaluation. Of that segment, less than 20% felt it provided useful feedback.

For the evaluation to be useful, it needs to ask the right questions. In many cases, those questions should grow from the strategic plan. Framing questions around the organizational goals is a good start. Using the goals to drill down into performance should be an expected strategy and one that the executive also supports. All the measures that will be used in evaluation should be made clear at the beginning of the year so there are no surprises at the time of the formal evaluation.

One challenge for this evaluation is that it assesses both the individual and the organization. The executive leads and is responsible for the work of the organization. Of course, evaluation is particularly challenging when the individual's work is substandard. Excellent work by others may mask the weakness of the executive. So there must be some clearly stated goals that pertain to the performance of the executive. These may take the form of participation in advocacy or fundraising or some specific topic of professional development that arose in the previous evaluation.

The executive should be asked to do a self-evaluation based on the same tool. Some executives ask fellow staff to provide insight on their performance and the team's. The self-evaluation can represent the first time in the past year the executive has thought about their performance, because it is easy for a busy person to lose sight of the whole. The self-evaluation is an opportunity for the executive to reflect on the volume of work completed and the success it achieved. They should also be asked to set goals for the coming year as they think about the one that just passed.

The full board should have the opportunity to express its opinion of the executive's performance. This is often done by asking board members to share their thinking by completing an evaluation form and sharing it electronically. Those comments are then compiled and discussed at a meeting prior to scheduling the feedback conversation with the executive. Usually that conversation takes place not with the full board but privately with the board chair or the executive committee.

While there is often much to praise and celebrate, it is difficult when the evaluation surfaces significantly different opinions. If there is not immediate consensus between the board and executive on performance, the conversation continues. Some executives receiving a negative evaluation prefer it in the form of a written rebuttal. Others prefer to continue talking to the executive committee face to face. An HR professional skilled in mediation can be helpful at this point. An improvement plan, monitored by the executive committee, is written with timelines and accountability mechanisms.

Raises and incentive pay are usually addressed at this time, although the timing of evaluation needs to sync with the fiscal year for this to be true. Some organizations deliberately separate evaluation and compensation conversations.



Reflection activity

- What is the most helpful evaluation I have received in my work life?
- Did it speak to both what I do well and where I can improve?
- Was it delivered by someone I trusted?
- Did I change any behaviors because of it? Which ones?
- Does my organization have clarity of its goals and measures that will aid in useful evaluation? Does my organization have a culture of fairness and objectivity about our work?
- Do we encourage differing opinions?
- What are strategies for encouraging the highest quality work?
- Are people rewarded for excellence?
- Are people allowed to slide by?
- What can be done to build a culture of high expectations?
- Are our leaders modeling excellence?

NOTES:

Strong FBOs plan for succession.

A few things to consider about this topic.

1. There were 250,000 nonprofits registered with the IRS in the 1970s when the Baby Boomers entered the workforce. There are now 1.5 million registered.
2. 75% of nonprofits have annual operating budgets under \$1 million. Most of these have staffs of fewer than 10.
3. Human resource management is largely an unfunded mandate, and therefore it is largely ignored in nonprofits. Professional development is often the first thing cut from budgets when cuts must be made.
4. Studies show that many younger people are not eager to assume the chief executive role in a nonprofit.
5. The age cohort following the Baby Boomers has half the numbers of the Boomers or the Millennials but does have greater experience and institutional memory than younger workers.

These facts are some of the key reasons why strong FBOs need to plan for succession. The ultimate reason is to preserve the work, relationships and impact created in a strong, effectively led FBO. This is a challenge made more daunting by the lack of investment in human resources in most nonprofits. The changing nature of leadership and the emerging competencies needed to lead in an ever increasingly complex world make the careful consideration of how we plan for our future staffing needs all the more important.

When we speak of succession planning, we touch on all the facts listed above. We have a responsibility to honor and facilitate the exit of an older leader. We have a responsibility to cultivate younger talent and prepare them for leadership opportunities they find personally satisfying. We have very little time and human or financial resources to do this work. The challenge is imminent and of vital importance.

One caveat regarding the succession plan tool below: it is only focused on the senior executive role, but it should be noted that today many people working in the field are also of retirement age. In fact, a skilled and seasoned finance manager's retirement could easily cause more turmoil for the agency than the departure of a weary, ineffective executive director. So when seeking to ensure longevity in mission and impact, it behooves the board and staff to take the full measure of the impact of personnel loss across agency leadership.

Although age and considerations that come in later life are going to be the driving factors behind many of these transitions, as the war for talent heats up, the desirability of younger people may become another potential source of turnover. Sought after by other organizations for what they have learned in your organization, talented professionals may well be enticed by many new opportunities elsewhere. This fact argues for taking a comprehensive look at your business and how it gets done, and for anticipating how to preserve the culture you so carefully built and the results you have achieved.

Another important thing to consider about an agency's executive transition is that it is a time when the board must go to work. The board needs to deeply understand what business they are in, what the programmatic and financial drivers are, and what the key relationships are in the community with partners, funders and government officials. In short, a board can successfully lead an executive transition if it has been guided by clear individual expectations of participation, has evaluated its own performance, has expected individuals to live up to promises made, and has been in an active conversation with staff leadership about strategy and impact.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN CONSIDERING EXECUTIVE TRANSITION

1. Do we have a current strategic plan that speaks to the current and anticipated opportunities and challenges?
2. When did we last evaluate the performance of the executive director? Against which metrics did we measure their and the agency's performance? Does our current job description for executive director accurately portray the role?
3. What do we believe we need in our next leader? What of the skills and talents of the last leader should we seek to preserve? What new skills or talents would we like to find?
4. Do we have an emergency succession plan that addresses assignment of key responsibilities to other staff?
5. Should we consider an interim director? Internally selected? Externally?
6. What will an interim cost? How can we afford it? What is the anticipated time period for effective transition?
7. Do we have an internal successor? How do we best work with remaining staff with or without an internal successor?
8. Should we hire a search firm or executive transition consultant? Who? How much?
9. Who will serve as the agency's spokesperson/face during this time of transition?
10. Which of our key stakeholders (funders, partners, community leaders) need to be personally informed of the situation and of our plans? Who will make those calls? Staff leader? Board chair?

What is our plan?

- How long will the transition last?
- Have we named a transition team of board members and possibly key staff to manage all aspects of the transition? Is their charge clear?
- What expenses do we need to incorporate into our budget? Do we expect any reduction in funding because of this leadership change? If so, how much? For how long?
- Is there any new funding we could receive to better weather the transition period and allow us to proceed carefully?
- How are we working effectively with existing staff?
- Do we have a communications plan for all key stakeholders?
- Do we have a strategy that encourages breadth of response from candidates?
- Have we established criteria against which the transition team can independently evaluate candidate eligibility? Will this aggregate score be used to identify top candidates for further investigation?
- Have we planned for an interview process that includes assessment of technical, social judgment and conceptual skills? Are we asking direct questions about philosophy, culture, supervision, time management and governance?
- Who will make the final decision? One candidate put forward to the full board by the transition team or multiple candidates advanced to the full board?
- What is our plan for comprehensive introductions to key stakeholders of our new leader? Other ways to facilitate their adjustment to their new role?
- Will we require a 30/60/90-day goal-setting process and report from our new executive before beginning work on updating the agency strategy?

Each one of these questions is important to a successful transition, especially one involving the exit of a long-tenured executive. Clearly there is a lot of work associated with a successful transition, but it is extremely consequential, often “make or break” work for ensuring a bright future.

One further word about transition: often boards cannot imagine life without their trusted, long-tenured partner, so they ask him or her to stay on as a consultant or board member. Experience suggests that for the sake of all concerned, a cleaner break is preferable. Ideally, there will be

some modest overlap between the outgoing and the incoming leaders. During that time, some introductions can be made. Some thank-yous can be extended. Some institutional memories can be transferred. But if the practices outlined above are done, much of that work has been completed already.

The new person deserves a chance to lead without constant observation and without being the object of implicit criticism or competition. The staff needs to have a clear line of sight on their leader. The board needs to bond with and cheer on the new person. And the retiring exec needs to get on with their new life, finding new purpose and ways to contribute.

This last point may be particularly challenging in a faith-based environment where the exiting leader may be active in the sponsoring congregation. But the principle of a clean break, of a hard, bright line should still be observed. Find new ways to serve. Make a clear space for new leadership, new ideas. Trust in the Creator, who makes all things new.

Strong FBO boards need an effective treasurer working in partnership with staff to assure the organization is fiscally sound.

There are two main areas of responsibility in governance. All nonprofit boards are responsible both legally and as fiduciaries. Legal responsibilities are captured in the duties of “care, loyalty and obedience.” Care is expressed by the “reasonably prudent person” rule. Loyalty is shown by honoring the confidentiality of board discussions and decisions. Obedience is shown in following the mission of the organization, which guides all important decisions.

Fiduciary responsibility is also a big tent. The fiduciary role is that of a loyal agent. In this case, the agent is in service to the organization’s mission and those it serves. A proper fiduciary assures appropriate use of all the organization’s assets, both human and financial. Current personnel policies and policies governing the treatment of volunteers are part of living fully into the fiduciary role. But there are clear and important financial expectations implicit in the role. Many times when the word is evoked, the speaker is speaking exclusively of fiscal oversight.

While every board member has fiduciary responsibility that cannot be abrogated, the board treasurer is first among equals. Therefore, it is important to choose a treasurer with financial management skills and experience. If the board does not already have such a person, filling this role with a knowledgeable person should be a key recruitment priority.

What is the role of the board treasurer? The treasurer, who is also often the chair of the finance committee, is charged with oversight of the development of the annual operating budget and the ongoing budget review. Depending on the staff size and experience, the treasurer may be only reviewing the financial reports done by professional staff members, or may be sitting in the office literally preparing the full budget with the executive director’s input. But understanding what business you are in, the impact of certain financial decisions on the organization’s viability, and having a long view of the evolving financial business model are critical to the role of the board treasurer.

Here is a generic job description for the board treasurer:

Treasurer of the board of directors job description and expectations

Purpose: Oversee the operational administration of (*organization name*) as well as advise, govern, oversee policy and direction, and assist with the leadership and promotion of (*organization name*) so as to support the organization's mission and needs.

Mission: (current mission to serve as focus for key decisions)

Major responsibilities:

- Work with the finance committee, board and staff to develop the annual budget; provide annual budget to the board for members' approval.
- Work with the finance committee and the executive director to develop fiscal policies for recommendation to the board to ensure the financial integrity and sustainability of the organization.
- Work with the chief executive and the chief financial officer to ensure that appropriate financial reports are made available to the board on a timely basis.
- Is a member of the executive committee and chair of finance committee.
- Review the annual audit and answer board members' questions about the audit.
- Prepare or assist with all annual filings of the organization (IRS Form 990, other taxes and state charitable registration filings).
- Work with the finance committee and the executive director to develop long-term financial strategies.
- Manage risk and lead in safeguarding your organization's assets, data and personal information (e.g., volunteer screening, vehicle use, special events).
- Stay informed of legal, regulatory and sector developments relating to the board's financial responsibilities.
- Support recruitment of board, committee members and succeeding treasurer.
- Train finance committee members and succeeding treasurer.
- Participate in annual fundraising planning and support the board in achieving its fundraising goals.
- Attend at least 75% of the regular meetings of the board.

- Committees of the board meet when necessary at the discretion of the committee chair, pending their respective work agenda. Time commitment varies depending on programming and events, approximately (so many hours or times) per month.

When the budget has been drafted and reviewed by the finance committee, the treasurer is responsible for presenting it to the full board for approval. It builds board confidence when the treasurer in partnership with the staff can respond to reasonable questions. This ownership of the budget is integral to improving the full board's understanding of their fiduciary responsibilities.

Here are some questions for the board members to ask when reviewing the budget.

- Are we on track with our budget? Ahead or behind expectations?
- Have we over- or underspent? In what categories? Why?
- Are we on track for the rest of the year?
- Does anything make me nervous? Something of significance that I don't understand?
- Which are our biggest sources of revenue? Are we becoming more or less dependent on our biggest sources of revenue?
- What is our fastest growing category of expense? Are we prepared to continue to cover these expenses?
- Does our budget align with our mission and vision? Are we using our financial resources in service to their best possible use?

The treasurer is an educator of the board but also must encourage other members to ask the questions they have. It's a balancing act. Board members should not question basic expenses like the mileage reimbursement rate (if they do, that's a sign of a much deeper problem!); likewise, the treasurer also has a responsibility to keep the conversation productive. This is a core governance responsibility, however, and the treasurer needs to work with the staff and the finance committee to find the right format in which to present the financials so that every member can understand and answer for themselves the questions listed above.



Where your treasure is, there shall your heart be also.

—MATTHEW 6:21

Reflection activity

- Does our board understand its financial and fiduciary responsibility? If not, how can we better equip them to master this part of their responsibilities?
- Some ideas:
 - Should we include annual instruction for the board in reading the financials?
 - Can our treasurer play that role? Should we ask an outside expert?
 - Do we have the auditor present the annual audit to the full board?
 - Do we track the number and quality of questions asked about our financial situation?
 - When recruiting new board members, do we ask their comfort level with financial information?
 - If they express concern, do we take extra time in orientation to acquaint them with the budget and the financial drivers of our organization?

NOTES:

Strong FBOs have a carefully considered funding plan based on multiple revenue sources.

For organizations seeking a high magnitude of change, it is vitally important they make a realistic assessment of their funding plan, and that includes paying careful attention to their sources of revenue. There should be particular concern when a high concentration of revenues comes from a single source or type of funding.

A lack of diverse sources of revenue is a vulnerability. It can rob a social justice organization of independence of thought because of the power that one funder yields, as well as the peril of alienating that funder. The fear of loss of funding can be paralyzing. Those agencies that are heavily dependent on government funding can lose significant portions of their revenue through changes in legislative priorities. Today, as states grapple with reduced revenues and major payments to employee retirement funds and other entitlements, human service agencies are being squeezed. Human service agency budgets grew exponentially from the dramatic influx of government funding following the Reagan era. Now, however, government support is eroding and will likely continue to erode.

As a result of their reliance on government contracts, many of these agencies have not developed much fundraising capacity. They do not have a base of individual donors or the database platform necessary to build one. They have shallow relationships with corporations and local business. They often have not begun to cultivate informed relationships with private foundations. To have greater stability and financial independence, all this must change.

To gain a better understanding of your revenue streams, assessment is necessary. You must draw a “You Are Here” map. Using a development audit tool that combines strategic questions with practical ones, like the one provided below, is a good place to start.

The audit, like all good planning tools, begins with your mission. Questions relating to mission, core values, history and competition help begin the thinking process. The development audit also contains a section on board commitment to fundraising and staff’s availability for pursuing a range of fundraising activities. There is also a section for assessing staff strengths and weaknesses as fundraisers. Most executives came for the cause. They are often highly educated, holding advanced degrees in social work, education or the arts. Some have neither the temperament nor the desire to be trained in fundraising. Board support, and if the budget allows, a good development director, can help these smart, passionate people learn to be effective at fundraising.

But a key section of the development audit is the analysis of current revenue streams, segmented by revenue source. The tool asks to designate the current revenues that come from government contracts and other fees for service. These are earned revenues. Most revenues that come strictly from pure fundraising fall in the “contributed revenue” bucket. These are two different operations that require different forms of expertise and ways of thinking and working.

Earned income is a valuable revenue source, and some agencies, such as Trinity Family Life Center, have developed other robust strategies for obtaining it. The majority of TFLC’s operating budget is earned and comes from membership fees, facility rental fees, and sales of goods and services. Some agencies have much greater opportunities to earn money than do those that focus solely on programs for under-resourced children and families. However, every agency considering revenue diversification should keep an open mind about potential sources of earned revenue.

The rest of the development audit’s analysis centers on contributed income, the types of fundraising you currently employ and the internal processes that support fundraising efforts.



Development audit for organizations with ambition and purpose

Agency description:

Agency mission:

Does this mission reflect who you currently want to be?

Agency history: Year founded: _____ Why founded?

Most significant change over the years?

Most significant challenges?

Services offered:

If everything else is changing, what are you not willing to change? What are your organization's core values?

Other agencies offering the same services in area?

How is this unique?

What are possible strategic alliances?

Number of participants/contracts served each year:

Growth of client base for last three years:

Board of directors:

Size of board:

Is this the right size to accomplish its work?

How are board members identified, recruited and oriented?

Are there board subcommittees? Are they functioning effectively?

For development/fundraising?

Is there an effective communication link between the development and finance committees?

What does the board understand its role to be? Does the board understand its role in fundraising?

How active have individual members been in fundraising?

Do most board members contribute financially at or near their capacity?

Does 100% of the board annually contribute?

Do you have board members:

From the corporate business sector?

With access to funding?

With special event expertise?

With knowledge of annual giving?

With experience with membership campaigns?

What other skills are needed to raise sufficient dollars to advance the organizational strategic directions?

Staff:

How large is the staff?

Is there a director of development?

Development staff? If not, which staff members are responsible for fundraising?

How long have key staff leaders been in place?

Strengths/weaknesses of the development experience of the executive director? Of the development director?

Do you offer competitive salary and benefit packages to attract the necessary talent to your organization? Turnover rate?

What does the organization see as critical staffing issues over the next three years? How will those costs be addressed?

Does your organization have a succession plan developed for key staff changes?

Does the organization have adequate space in which to do its work?

Where do volunteers fit in the organization's utilization of human resources?

Annual budget:

What is the annual operating budget?

Do staff and board leaders have access to timely and accurate financial statements?

Are the statements in a format that is meaningful and provides information to drive organization decisions?

What percentage of the annual budget comes from a fee for service?

What services are provided for a fee?

What percentage of the annual budget comes from contributed income?

What percentage of the contributed income comes from (give the percent & dollar amount):

Government grants?**Foundations?**

How many foundations?

What is the gift range?

Corporations?

How many corporations?

What is the gift range?

Individuals?

How many individuals?

What is the gift range?

What constitutes a major gift?

What is the procedure for securing a major gift?

Does the agency expect a dramatic loss in any of the donor categories (loss of government grant, foundation or corporate grant)?

Does the organization generally have enough cash on hand to meet operating needs?

Does the organization have a relationship with a bank or other outside source of cash to allow necessary borrowing?

What is the average age of payables? Receivables?

How would you rate the financial sophistication of the staff and board?

Access to donors (written documentation)

Is there an agency long-range plan?

Did both board and staff participate in the development of the plan?

Does the plan reflect an external focus, research-based decisions and emphasis on customer?

Is there a 3–5 year fundraising plan?

Are there fundraising guidelines?

Is there an annual fundraising calendar?

Is there a written menu of benefits tied to gift size (for consistency of response)?

Reaching donors: Individuals

How does your organization manage the following database/list management tasks? Common software packages include Donor Perfect, ResultsPlus, MSAccess and others.

List management tasks

TOOLS

	n/a	Manually	Spreadsheet	Database software (specify)	Other (specify)	# of individuals annually
Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Special events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Is there an **annual campaign**?

If so when does it take place?

Are there **special events**?

When do they occur?

Is there a **direct mail campaign**?

If so, when?

Is there an **agency newsletter**?

If so, what is the frequency?

Is there a **membership campaign**?

What is the **retention rate**?

Are there **outreach strategies**?

Is there an **auxiliary/volunteer group**?

What is their role in fundraising?

Is there agency in a **capital campaign**?

Is one being planned?

How is technology being used to reach donors?

Which **social media tools** are employed?

What are specific goals for each tool?

How are we thinking about competition for discretionary donor dollars from political campaigns, crowd-funding for for-profit businesses?

How are donors thanked?

What is the motivation for giving:

Individuals – social contacts?

Emotional cause?

Volunteer opportunities?

Partner to important community efforts in economic development, education?

Replacing government services?

Other?

How specifically does the board assist in these efforts?

Are there specific programs or projects that appeal to certain donors?

Who determines fundraising goals?

Who determines fundraising activities?

Who determines fundraising prospects?

Who is responsible for implementing?

Special events?

Direct mail?

Proposal writing?

Major gift solicitation?

How does the board receive progress reports on fundraising goals?

How does evaluation of development efforts occur?

After completing the audit, the agency is asked to set goals for the next three years. An agency with limited resources for addressing fundraising needs to be very careful about how many categories of effort it chooses. The financial goals need to be ambitious but achievable. Especially at the beginning of increased fundraising efforts, it is vitally important to set goals that can be achieved. Such an approach is motivating and often inspires people to keep striving. Fundraising is a long and cumulative game, needing sustained and steady effort. For example, TFLC took up a collection every Sunday for six years to gather the necessary capital to get a bank loan to build their building. If goals are unrealistically large or fast, it can defeat your warriors and sink your ship. Goal setting is an art, not a science.

Goal setting as a tool to build a diversified funding base

As the operating budget is prepared every year, an organization should consider whether or not a goal should be set in each of the categories listed below. Few small organizations have opportunities to raise funds from every category. Care must be exercised to select the fundraising techniques that will yield the greatest return on the money spent to raise the funds, not to exhaust small staffs and devoted volunteers with activities that don't raise much money.

When setting goals, always take into consideration what has occurred with that type of activity over the previous year (or go back as many as three years). Learn all that you can about other organizations' experience. But communities change and opportunities may occur. Also, it's important to consider whether or not it's time to stop doing some event or other form of fundraising. Make carefully considered strategic choices that balance opportunity with the realities of time and talent available to your organization.

In each category, list prospects, each broken down by estimated amount of individual gift.

CONTRIBUTED INCOME

INDIVIDUAL GIVING	Last year's actual	This year's goal	Next year's goal	Third year's goal	Key dates (pledges and donations made)
Membership/Friends of... (number & gift size)					
Annual campaign					
Special appeals					
Churches					
Memorials					
Major gift campaign					

A focus on individual giving

Although e-giving or online giving still represents less than 10% of total giving, it is projected to continue to grow rapidly as a means to facilitate impulse giving. Most gifts are \$25–\$50, so all online strategies must speak to volume of gifts sought. Every nonprofit should have a Donate Now! button on the home page of their website.

BUSINESS/ CORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS	Last year's actual	This year's goal	Next year's goal	Third year's goal	Time of execution
Support for core operations					
Project support/ cause-related marketing					
Matching employee contributions					
In-kind donations (goods & services)					
FOUNDATION SUPPORT	Last year's actual	This year's goal	Next year's goal	Third year's goal	Time of execution
Support for core operations					
Project support					
Major gifts					
Special appeals					

GOVERNMENT GRANT SUPPORT	Last year's actual	This year's goal	Next year's goal	Third year's goal	Time of execution
City					
County					
State					
Federal					
In-kind donations					

EARNED REVENUES	Last year's actual	This year's goal	Next year's goal	Third year's goal	Time of execution
Special events					
Sales of goods					
Sale of expertise					

Please consider the following as you plan:

- Are these goals challenging, yet realistic for this time and this place? *(The best words in a fundraiser's vocabulary are, "We exceeded our goal!" – motivation for the future starts there.)*
- What are other successful events in your community? When do they occur? Will your participants likely be planning to attend them?
- Source of in-kind donations for events? *(Spend as little out-of-pocket as possible!)*
- Volunteer leaders with proven success in fundraising? Already on board? Recruitment plan?
- Possible partnerships to strengthen your case to funders?
- Have you put all activities on a calendar?

Don't over-schedule – remember all activities have a beginning, middle and thank-you clean-up time! Be realistic about time availability of small, stretched staff and busy committee volunteers.

The audit and goal setting exercise above lays the groundwork for a comprehensive fundraising plan. This plan should serve as a companion piece to the organizational goals in the strategy plan. Diversification of revenues is a core principle to guide your thinking.

Strong FBOs have boards that fundraise effectively and help develop diverse revenue sources.

One of a board member's responsibilities is to make their own gift to the organization. This generosity is the bedrock of a fundraising culture. The principle's rationale is that if the family won't give, why should anyone else?

How should a board member think about their personal financial responsibility to an organization? The principle of generosity suggests a gift that must be carefully considered — not an easy gift to make, but one of consequence to the giver. The actual amount may be large or small.

As a board member considers their personal gift, it is only fair that they understand their giving in the context of how the organization as a whole does its fundraising. A board and staff who have clarity about roles and responsibilities know that one key shared expectation is that everyone in the organization will assist in raising the necessary financial resources. Having an annual calendar of fundraising events and campaigns is useful, but even with that in place, many board members are saddled by the belief that they can't be helpful. They don't know rich people!

First, a few key facts. According to *Giving USA*, an annual study of the generosity of Americans conducted by Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, \$471 billion was given to charity in 2020. Of those billions given, 23% went to health and human services, 28% went to churches and religious organizations, and 10% went to public-society benefit organizations. Other categories included education, the arts, the environment and international causes. Once again, this marvelous generosity was driven by individual giving, with 69% of the tens of billions coming, often in gifts under \$100, from all of us. Nearly 9% of the total was given through wills and bequests — legacy giving from people living out their values after death. These numbers are consistent with results of past studies. How fortunate that this type of giving is the most fruitful place for board members to start.

It is important when beginning a conversation with a board to engage their minds, encourage their spirits and acknowledge their reluctance. Never talk about fundraising in a vacuum. Mission can be evoked by stories or testimonials from those whose lives have changed for the better because of the work of the organization. Accounts of previously successful efforts are a welcome addition to the fundraising planning conversation. Using the *Giving USA* information as proof that a lot of money is changing hands, and we should get our share, is another tack to take. But it is also important to acknowledge that many board members actively dread asking for money.

In FBOs, there is another layer of challenge. If a nonprofit is strongly affiliated with a congregation, many of the individuals on people's lists will be church members. These people may find it difficult to separate their giving for both their church and its nonprofit ministry, or afford to financially support both entities. In some cases, the congregation makes a generous annual gift to the FBO; in others, the FBO looks for funding outside the congregation. Some churches allow for sponsored collections

periodically during the year in support of the FBO. Often on those Sundays, people served by the FBO give testimonials. Sometimes, those served are congregational members themselves. But maintaining excellent communication between the leaders of both the congregation and the FBO is paramount. If one of the partners becomes concerned that the other is acting solely in its own interest, the fallout can be devastating.

In the MFACE case study cited earlier, you read about the vision, the programs and services, and success they now enjoy. But their story also includes a time of great trial. When Trish Gadson came to work there in 2010, MFACE was near closing. There had been many financial crises. The funding challenges stemmed from a need for better internal financial management systems and a lack of paid staff to effectively manage the programs. Really, the center was still open only because the board, who were faithful to their pastor's dream, refused to close the doors. In fact, MFACE was in danger of losing its last county contract. "It's prayer that matters most," recalls Gadson. She tells a story about her first board meeting at MFACE. "My board circled me and we prayed. That prayer sealed my conviction that I was called to this work and in partnership with these people. From that time forward I have let the executive committee know the highs and lows of our work." This sense of conviction, together with the type of communication that seals a partnership, is key to a board's effectiveness at fundraising.

But most boards need additional forms of help to gain confidence in their fundraising ability. This exercise may help bolster members' confidence as well as allow for some of their reluctance to be voiced — and ideally, abated.



EXERCISE: The donation lists

Coordinate the following activity with board members:

- Please make a list of **10 people** who, if asked, would give you **\$10** for a cause that is personally important to you. Now, a list of **three people** who, if asked, would give you **\$100** for a cause that is personally important to you. Now, **one person** who, if asked, would give you **\$1,000** for a cause that is personally important to you.

Give the board members ample time to think about each question and to compose the list that goes with it. Please note these are carefully worded requests that center on personal responsibility. “If asked” has obvious implications, because few give without being asked. The repetition of “give you” and the phrase “a cause that is personally important to you” capture the centrality of the solicitor’s relationship to both the donor and the cause. Then, as the amount goes up, so may the tension and reluctance. However, some people may grow increasingly interested as the stakes increase. They like the stakes higher.

After the lists are made, have a discussion of what people were thinking as they composed their lists. For the request at the **\$10 level**, most people readily list friends, family, co-workers. This country is made up of people who buy Girl Scout cookies, wrapping paper at the holidays so the kids can have a special field trip, or sandwiches for the school band’s new instruments. This is common practice. The donor requires little information beyond the literal use of the money and the fact that it is their friend asking. The person asking knows they will likely be asked when this person’s child is raising money. That’s okay with them. We all exchange this type of favor regularly.

At the **\$100 level**, it’s different. Now people begin to consider whether the proposed donor can afford to make such a gift. They also may think about whether the person they are asking is interested in the cause. And they consider how close their relationship is and whether they want to feel any obligation to give that person \$100 if asked for their favorite cause. Reciprocity can become more of a factor in the board member’s willingness to call this size of a favor. These thoughts, feelings and assessment can make people uncomfortable.

It’s altogether different at the **\$1,000 or major gift level**. People understand that making the case becomes very important. When it’s a large sum of money being requested, the conversation shifts to donor interest and the validity of the organization’s programs and services. While personal relationships matter in every part of the fundraising equation, when asking for a big gift, the case for support is focused on results. One of those results may include recognition for the donor in some way. The donor may be credited on the organization’s website or at the event. They may have special attention paid to them in a variety of ways — but remember, they have many places to make a nice gift. A successful request speaks to both the heart and mind of the donor.

This exercise can help to surface an individual’s network and help them to see that they do know people to ask. It can build confidence that they are capable of building a case for support. But most of all, it can help a group better understand why what can seem a simple request to sell tickets to the annual fundraising dinner is actually complex.

But let's return to the annual calendar as a tool for both effective fundraising and effective board work. Many nonprofits that are successful at fundraising understand that they must pay attention to fundraising year-round. Their fundraising plan for the year may include an annual campaign for support, a special event to encourage corporate sponsorships and generate ticket sales, and a special appeal for a particular project, as well as a membership campaign or other strategies. They may also commit to raising capital funds, or the wealthy among them may be pressed to give at every meeting.

Organizations with ambitious fundraising plans do well to alert their board members well in advance of these plans. One idea is to devote time at a meeting to review the annual plan and then ask board members to commit to raising an annual sum they set. To reach that target, they establish goals and commit to a variety of activities in the plan. This method allows individuals to think about both their willingness and their availability at various times of the year. For example, it is a mistake to ask a tax accountant to chair an event in early April. Their work is intense at that time and their volunteer work must often take second place.

Below is a sample of a simple board fundraising contract. The contract should have as much detail (days, times, costs, etc.) on it as is known so board members can be as specific as possible in their commitment. Encourage them to use their own calendar as they consider their responses.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Individual fund development plan 20xx

Please complete this as your 20xx fundraising plan, by confirming your personal gift, choosing the donor development activities you will participate in and setting goals in those areas. It is important that each board member commits to at least one donor development activity. Please make sure your plan is completed before the first of the year.

- **Make a personal donation.** Board members are each expected to make an annual gift in an amount that is personally significant to them. To make this gift, consider pledging an amount early in the year and making pledge payments to achieve this amount.

My personal donation for 20xx: _____

Donor development activities

- **Provide a list of prospects for donor cultivation and solicitation.** The executive director and fundraising committee will work one-on-one with you to develop an effective strategy for inviting your family, friends or colleagues to support our work.

My goal to raise through donor cultivation: \$ _____

- **Participate in major donor fundraising by serving as a contact, participating in a meeting, and/or making an ask.** Raising unrestricted funds is an important component of our fundraising plan and solicitation from major donors is an important strategy.

My goal to raise through goal to raise through major donor solicitation:
\$ _____

- **Make a corporate presentation through the United Way or an association that I am a member of.** Many corporations and associations have giving programs for their employees and/or members. These presentations can raise awareness so that their employees or members can select our organization as their charity of choice.

My goal to raise through corporate presentations: \$ _____

- **Host a house party or invite a friend to host a house party.** House parties are used to educate our friends and donors about our services, and are an opportunity to raise money. By hosting a party, you underwrite the cost of food and drink and open up your home to friends and family.

Months that are best: _____

I have a friend who is available to host. _____

My goal to raise through the house party: \$ _____

- **Solicit a sponsor for an event.** We will periodically hold fundraising or awareness-raising events. This can be a good opportunity to solicit corporate sponsorship or to invite other potential donors. We will let the board know in advance about the scheduled events so you have enough time to solicit sponsors.

My goal to raise through an event: \$ _____

- **Arrange a donor meeting with an individual, corporation, foundation or government agency (that can provide funding to the organization).** Solicitation of prospective funding is more effective when personal contact is made. If you know anyone in a corporation, foundation or government agency that you can introduce personally to staff and participate in a meeting, you can play a key role in our fundraising success. Additionally, you may know of trustees who can make discretionary grants or can be especially helpful in advocating on key proposals.

I am interested in facilitating a donor meeting or specific communication with foundation trustees.

For discretionary trustee grants or corporate gifts, I will solicit for \$ _____

- **Make thank-you calls to donors and supporters.** This activity involves calling donors just to say “thanks.” It’s not a pitch for money, but just an opportunity to thank the donors for their support, answer any questions that they may have and learn more about the donor. You will be given information and assistance to make these thank-you calls.
- **Other ways to support fundraising.** Please include ways you can volunteer your services or other ways you hope to raise funds for the organization.

My overall fundraising goal is: \$ _____

I agree to fulfill the above-stated fundraising goals to the best of my ability.

BOARD MEMBER

DATE

After the board contracts are individually completed, a master plan should be built following a month-by-month format. This plan can shape board planning and be revisited periodically throughout the year. Those who adhere to their plan should be publicly and frequently praised by the board chair. Effective fundraising by board members requires personal commitment, excellent time management and the courage to ask, to ask, and to ask again. It is never simple. It is always a hallmark of not only success but also sustainability over time. And people gain courage from each other, and the circle goes round and round.

As with most successful activities, successful fundraising by the board requires inspiration, careful planning, dogged determination over time and celebration of success. A good board chair and a cheerful, diligent fundraising committee can and will get it done. These dollars buy independence and innovation for your nonprofit.

Strong FBOs strategically use technology to further their mission and improve their services.

Tennis great Arthur Ashe famously said, “To achieve greatness ... start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.” In seeking to use technology well at your FBO, you should start by making a comprehensive list of all your equipment. That list should include everything with an on-off switch, according to a blog post on TechImpact titled “[3 Steps to Conduct Your Nonprofit’s Tech Assessment](#).”

This list should include specifics like age, device name, manufacturer, serial number and a general condition assessment. Once the list is complete, review your current strategy and use your knowledge of the organization’s business to make both a short- and a long-term list of goals. Review these lists with others on staff for their input. Now consider how much money is currently in the budget and how much needs to be allocated in the future.

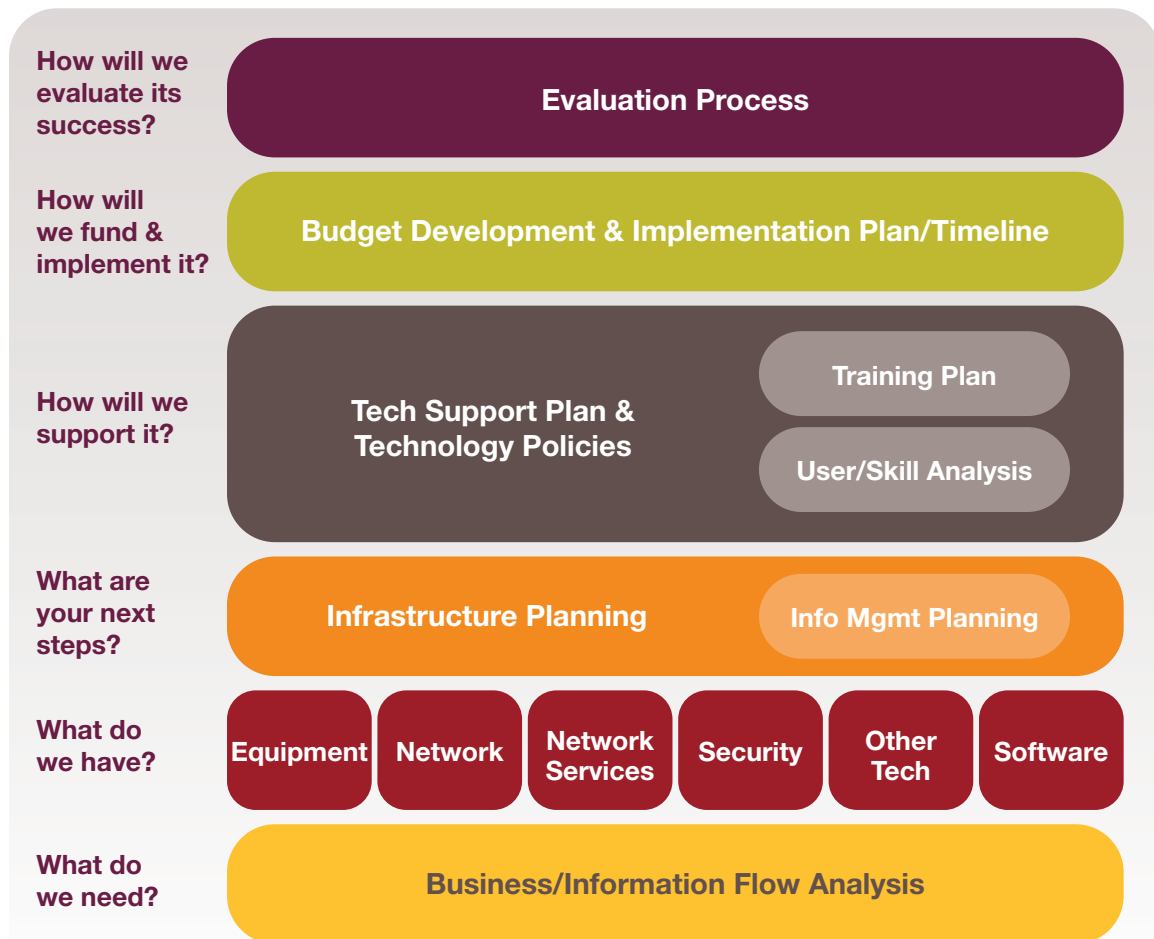
One realization from this assessment may be that you need technical support on an ongoing basis. You also may find your organization is paying support fees that are not justified by use. Many successful organizations have an ongoing contract with an IT support company. MFACE has worked with an external consultant for years who keeps their inventory, advises on purchases, and provides rapid-response troubleshooting when needed. This expense has proven its value time and again, according to Executive Director Gadson.

Cindy Leonard at the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management has some key practices she always recommends to her clients. Through research, the Bayer Center found that boards that have a technology committee or task force use technology better throughout the agency. Tech skills are listed in all job descriptions, even for non-technical staff. All staff are expected to use technology in their daily work. The operating budget has line items allocated to tech. So she recommends if you’re serious about using tech better, name that priority at the board level.

Organizations need a board policy on acceptable use of technology. As social media and other forms of online communication and activities become more ubiquitous, this policy needs to be in the personnel policies and included in every staff orientation. Board members who promote their involvement with the agency on social media or who utilize the organization’s technology (for example, email accounts or a board portal) also need to have this policy reviewed during their orientation.

Board and staff often struggle with finding the money for technology expenses. A useful tool for benchmarking this type of expense is the [Nonprofit Technology Network’s \(NTEN\) annual *Nonprofit Technology Staffing and Investments Report*](#). As your agency considers staffing needs, NTEN recommends one full-time staff person for every 35–50 computers. Another critical success factor and expense is staff training once new machines or software have been purchased. Too often the grant only bought the stuff — it didn’t include the costs of getting people to use the stuff — and so, they don’t! Below is Leonard’s model for building a written technology plan.

COMPONENTS FOR BUILDING A WRITTEN TECHNOLOGY PLAN



Reflection activity

- As a leader, am I part of the problem or part of the solution?
- Have we built a technology-friendly culture in our agency?
- Do I listen carefully to staff needs for tech improvements?
- Have we wrestled with our budget to find money to keep our technology up to date? Have I fundraised for tech as I routinely do for programs?
- Am I a “digital native” who grew up with technology or a “digital immigrant” who only learned it in adulthood?
- If a digital immigrant, have I made it my business to enthusiastically learn and enjoy digital culture?
- Are we working to achieve greatness — and competitive advantage — in our collective use of technology to further our mission?

NOTES:

Strong FBOs realize that to be effective, their leaders must take care of themselves and their organizations as well as those they serve.

People who work in FBOs often have a strong sense of calling. Society is blessed and fortunate to have such generous and caring people who seek to live out their values. In these pages, we have discussed the essential importance of vision, compassion and love for our community and vulnerable people. What is now under discussion may be most challenging for many people.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

A critical success factor for visionary, effective leaders is the ability to recognize that by taking care of themselves, they are taking care of their organization, and thereby giving permission to others to be self-aware and practice self-care. Effective self-care practices preserve an individual's ability to work and serve over the long term. The challenges faced by children and families require leaders with resilience and wisdom, those who are well-balanced and able to wholeheartedly commit to their chosen work and service.

But how can anyone who is serious about meeting mission, delivering the highest quality of work and service with notoriously slender resources, also find bandwidth to even consider their own needs? In such an environment, what can it mean to take care of ourselves?

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

After years of work with admirable people and reading the thinking of a number of smart people, some themes emerge.

- 1. Dedicate some time for consideration of your personal energy.** What saps your energy? What builds it? How can you better plan to address the necessary but draining tasks of your work? How can you honor what you love, the reasons you came to this work at the beginning? Experts on personal energy recommend keeping a log of your activities for one week and charting those that build energy and those that drain it. Until we're specific and clear, change is elusive. But when the picture is before you, it is possible to mitigate the sources of energy drain by delegating to others, rescheduling or simply accepting one's limitations. All too often, such a chart reveals far too little time spent on the things we love, the things that recharge our engines.

Loving our work

As we continue to consider these issues, it is important to say that *the answer for taking care of yourself does not always fall outside your daily work*. Many of us gain energy from our work, especially from seeing the recipients. As an example, here is a personal story from the Bayer Center's Peggy Outon:

In my first job, I worked at a museum. I raised money, ran the museum store, rented the building for outside events and was the one paid staff person responsible for the 1,000-person volunteer program. When I needed to center and renew myself, I spent a

little time in the galleries. For me, it was best when I shared the galleries with children. I had begun my work at the museum as a volunteer docent and my deep joy came from discovering contemporary art with children who were unencumbered by resentment at their lack of knowledge of art. Adults were sometimes contentious around contemporary art but children were honest and often delighted. I loved being there with them even when it was no longer my job. I regained strength and purpose as the children and I looked at the art, wondered about the artist's choices and moved on to the next piece.

- 2. Don't forget the necessity of friendship and companions along the way.** Some of our friends who are also ministers have talked about the value of their friendships with their colleagues who are also ministers. They speak of the healing time they spend together as people who share common experience and shoulder the weight of other people's needs and expectations.

Here is another anecdote from Outon, this one regarding friendships:

When I began to raise money as my full-time job, I met once a month for lunch with a group of development people from other arts organizations. We called ourselves not 'Les Mis' like the musical but rather 'Miz Miz' because we women got together to commiserate! Fundraising in lean times takes all the resilience you can muster. My gracious friends who listened and helped were serious stress busters.

We love the word *colleague*, "one who walks beside and with." We need time for colleagues. Sometimes, it is to share dilemmas and seek counsel. Sometimes, it is to laugh.

- 3. To laugh, to enjoy, to prize and to say no.** Experts on "happiness" all speak to the importance of boundaries. Many faith-based leaders struggle mightily to establish and maintain fair boundaries for their time, their responsibilities. A critical aspect of the always lurking specter of burnout is tied to the lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities. In many organizations, everything is your job as well as everyone else's on staff. One healthy way to avoid this scenario is to review job descriptions annually, then update and calibrate and discuss as a team. Saying no is much easier if there is role clarity and people feel clear about what is and is not their responsibility. Appropriate boundaries are the fences of self-care.

The Stop Doing list, a concept from noted business thinker Jim Collins, is another way to test boundary setting. All too often, organizations and leaders only add to their To Do list, never eliminating one single thing until exhaustion claims them or the quality of their work is ruined. So Collins encourages examination of our task list with an eye toward elimination as a way to make space for the new and for greater-quality efforts. Vu Le of the blog "Nonprofit AF" also advocates for a Not to Do list, and to say, "I choose not to attend another training ... fundraiser ... committee meeting." Stop doing or choose not to do — the important thing is intentional choice about the use of your precious time.

4. **Reject unnecessary sacrifice.** Every five years [Compass Point](#), a leading nonprofit management support organization in Northern California, has conducted a survey of 3,000 executives across the nation. One of its consistent, significant findings is that younger professionals do not want the top job. They have seen too much unnecessary sacrifice by people who failed to set effective boundaries. Work-life balance is often important to people who may have been latchkey children. Surely, there is a way to be in service without losing sufficient time for health and loving relationships. So when you take a vacation and unplug or you take a walk in the middle of the day, you show others how better to live, and you renew your abilities to be creative, resourceful and innovative. Reject unnecessary sacrifice.



Self-care is not a simple feel-good activity. It's a much deeper and, ultimately, more meaningful, tool: self-care is a discipline that is sacred, including the hard work that provides meaning in our lives.³

—ASPEN BAKER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
EXHALE

³ Quoted in Beth Kanter, "Don't Abuse Self-Care at Your Nonprofit," *Beth's Blog*, January 12, 2016. Beth Kanter is also the co-author of *The Happy Healthy Nonprofit*, an excellent resource for leaders seeking to build greater health into their work cultures. We also recommend Kirk Byron Jones, *Rest in the Storm: Self-Care Strategies for Clergy and Other Caregivers* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2001), a guide that has received many accolades from pastors and health and mental health providers.

Reflection activity

- What gives you joy? How do you assure sufficient time to enjoy your joy?
- What drains your energy? Can you stop doing it — or find a way to do it that is less draining?
- Is there anything I or my organization can stop doing? Are there things we can choose not to do?
- How do I best incorporate my spiritual practices in my work life to better assure that balance, kindness and wisdom are the main characteristics of my life?

NOTES:



PACE Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool

Respondent's Name: _____ Date Completed: _____

Organization: _____

Program to Aid Citizen Enterprise's (PACE) Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (POCAT) was inspired and adapted from tools created at the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, McKinsey & Company, creator of the McKinsey Capacity Assessment Grid, Social Venture Partners (SVP) Seattle and The Steven's Group at LarsonAllen. The McKinsey Capacity Assessment Grid grew out of research commissioned in 2001 by Venture Philanthropy Partners to identify successful nonprofit capacity-building experiences.

PACE adapted this tool for the specific use of small to mid-sized community-based nonprofit organizations. The assessment tool organizes the core components of organizational development into eight broad capacity areas and provides key indicators:

1. Planning
2. Fundraising
3. Board Development and Governance
4. Human Resources
5. Financial Management
6. Program Design/Development
7. Evaluation
8. Communication and Technology

Completion of this tool will help an organization assess its capacity compared to generally accepted nonprofit best practices for small to mid-sized groups. The intent is to help each organization identify areas of work where additional assistance could be helpful in continuing to strengthen the organization, where each organization can establish capacity building goals. This will create the starting point for PACE's Capacity Building Program supported by the United Way of Allegheny County and Bank of New York Mellon. At the end of the program, organizations will again complete the tool to measure post-program outcomes.

The organizational capacity assessment tool is intended to be self-administered and should be individually completed by the Executive Director and each member of the organization’s Leadership Team. Please put the number, level 1 through 4 in the last column that best corresponds to your perception of your organization’s status or performance for each capacity element. (Please whole numbers only. A “2.5” is not a proper answer. If you feel organization falls between levels 2 and 3, select “2” because you have not reached level 3 yet.) Also, at the end of each section there is an opportunity for additional narrative comments. The time to complete this tool is approximately 1 hour. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the assessment please contact Peg Fiedler at (412) 562-0290 Ext.218 or at pfiedler@pacepgh.org.

1. PLANNING				
Mission	No written mission or limited expression of the organization’s reason for existence; lacks clarity or specificity; either held by very few in the organization or rarely referred to	Some expression of organization’s reason for existence that reflects its values and purpose, but may lack clarity; held by only a few; lacks broad agreement or rarely referred to	Clear expression of organization’s reason for existence, which reflects its values and purpose; held by many within organization and often referred to	Clear expression of organization’s reason for existence, which describes an enduring reality that reflects its values and purpose; broadly held within organization and frequently referred to
Comments:				
Clarity of Vision	Little shared understanding of what organization aspires to become or achieve beyond the stated mission	Somewhat clear or specific understanding of what organization aspires to become or achieve; held by only a few; or “on the wall,” but rarely used to direct actions or set priorities	Clear and specific understanding of what organization aspires to become or achieve; held by many within the organization and often used to direct actions and set priorities	Clear, specific, and complete understanding of what organization aspires to become or achieve; broadly held within organization and consistently used to direct actions and set priorities
Comments:				

1. PLANNING

<p>Operational Planning (1 Year)</p>	<p>Organization runs operations purely on day-to-day basis with no short or long-term planning activities; no experience in operational planning. Needs planning to support annual budget</p>	<p>Some ability and tendency to develop high-level operational plan either internally or via external assistance; operational plan loosely or not linked to strategic planning activities and annual budget and used roughly to guide operations</p>	<p>Ability and tendency to develop and refine concrete, realistic operational plan; some internal expertise in operational planning or access to relevant external assistance; operational planning carried out on a near regular basis; operational plan linked to strategic planning activities and budget and used to guide operations</p>	<p>Organization develops and refines concrete, realistic, and detailed operational plan; has critical mass of internal expertise in operational planning, or efficiently uses external, sustainable, highly qualified resources; operational planning exercise carried out regularly; operational plan tightly linked to strategic planning activities and budget and systematically used to direct operations</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				

1. PLANNING

Ability to Motivate & Mobilize Constituents	Those with potential to be most affected by organization's work have limited knowledge of organization; organization meetings are sporadic and poorly attended; organization has difficulty motivating members into action	Those with potential to be most affected by organization's work have some knowledge of organization, meetings held regularly, but attendance varies widely; organization has ability to motivate a small core group of community members into action	Those with potential to be most affected by organization's work are knowledgeable and likely to be engaged with organization; meetings held regularly and are generally well-attended; organization has ability to motivate a segment of community members into action	Those with potential to be most affected by organization's work see organization as inspiring and motivating; they are excited to be involved; meetings held regularly and are routinely well-attended; organization has ability to motivate a broad range of community members into action
--	--	--	--	---

Comments:

Strategic Planning	Limited ability and tendency to develop strategic plan, either internally or via external assistance; if strategic plan exists, it is not used	Some ability and tendency to develop high level strategic plan either internally or via external assistance; strategic plan roughly directs management decisions	Ability and tendency to develop and refine concrete, realistic strategic plan; some internal expertise in strategic planning or access to relevant external assistance; strategic planning carried out on a near regular basis by board of directors; current strategic plan used to guide management decisions	Ability to develop and refine concrete, realistic and detailed strategic plan; critical mass of internal expertise in strategic planning on board and staff, or efficient use of external, sustainable, highly qualified resources; strategic plan used extensively to guide management decisions. Organization has a <u>current</u> 3–5 year strategic plan
---------------------------	--	--	---	--

Comments:

1. PLANNING

Monitoring of Landscape	Minimal knowledge and understanding of other players and alternative models in program area	Basic knowledge of players and alternative models in program area but limited ability to adapt behavior based on acquired understanding	Solid knowledge of players and alternative models in program area; good ability to adapt behavior based on acquired understanding, but only occasionally carried out	Extensive knowledge of players and alternative models in program area; refined ability and systematic tendency to adapt behavior based on understanding
--------------------------------	---	---	--	---

Comments:

Goals/ Performance Targets	Targets are non-existent or few; targets are vague, or confusing, or either too easy or impossible to achieve; not clearly linked to aspirations and strategy, and may change from year to year; targets largely unknown or ignored by staff or board	Realistic targets exist in some key areas, and are mostly aligned with aspirations and strategy; may lack aggressiveness, or be short-term, lack milestones, or mostly focused on “inputs” (things to do right), or often renegotiated; staff and board may or may not know and adopt targets	Quantified, aggressive targets in most areas; linked to aspirations and strategy; mainly focused on “outputs/ outcomes” (results of doing things right) with some “inputs”; typically multiyear targets, though may lack milestones; targets are known and adopted by most staff and board who usually use them to broadly guide work	Limited set of quantified, genuinely demanding performance targets in all areas; targets are tightly linked to aspirations and strategy, output/ outcome-focused (i.e., results of doing things right, as opposed to inputs, things to do right), have annual milestones, and are long-term nature; staff consistently adopts targets and works diligently to achieve them
-----------------------------------	---	---	---	--

Comments:

2. FUNDRAISING

Fund Raising	Generally weak fund-raising skills and lack of expertise (either internal or access to external expertise)	Main fundraising needs covered by some combination of internal skills and expertise, and access to some external fundraising expertise	Regular fundraising needs adequately covered by well developed internal fundraising skills, occasional access to some external fund-raising expertise	Highly developed internal fundraising skills and expertise in all funding source types to cover all regular needs; access to external expertise for additional extraordinary needs
Comments:				
Board Involvement and Participation in Fund Raising	Most members do not recognize fundraising as one of the board's roles and responsibilities; no goals or plans for board-driven fundraising activities exist; board members donate minimally to the organization	Members accept that the board has some fundraising responsibilities, but concerns exist regarding ability of board to be successful in this area; one or two members have made significant financial gifts to the organization; board fundraising activities not yet underway	Many members embrace fundraising as one of the boards core roles and responsibilities; core group of board members consistently participate; realistic and appropriate fundraising goals and plans exist; fundraising activities	Majority of members embrace fundraising as a core board role and responsibility, each board member has donated to the organization financially; realistic and appropriate fundraising goals and plans are in place; board is actively fundraising and has achieved measurable progress towards goals
Comments:				

2. FUNDRAISING

<p>Funding Model</p>	<p>Organization highly dependent on a few funders, largely of the same type</p>	<p>Organization has access to multiple types of funding (e.g., government, foundations, corporations, private individuals) with only a few funders in each type, or has many funders within only one or two types of funders</p>	<p>Solid basis of funders in most types of funding source (e.g., government, foundations, corporations, private individuals.) Some activities to hedge against market instabilities (e.g., building an endowment); organization has developed some sustainable revenue-generating activity</p>	<p>Highly diverse funding across multiple source types; organization insulated from potential market instabilities (e.g., fully developed endowment) and/or has developed sustainable revenue-generating activities; other nonprofits try to imitate organization's fundraising activities and strategies</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				
<p>Fund Development Planning</p>	<p>No systems in place for long-term planning, diversifying revenue streams or outlining and managing to target goals; fundraising reactive; fund development strategy not well articulated and focuses on one type of activity such as grants</p>	<p>Recognize need to develop systems for long-term planning, revenue diversification and outlining and managing to target goals; fund development includes several activities, but is not connected to organization's long-term strategic plan and budget projections</p>	<p>Some systems in place for long-term planning, revenue diversification and outlining and managing to target goals; fund development strategy includes multiple activities and is loosely connected to organization's long-term strategic plan and budget projections</p>	<p>Well-developed systems for long-term planning, revenue diversification and outlining and managing to target goals; multi-pronged fund development strategy is proactive and integrated into the organization's long-term strategic plan and budget projections</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				

2. FUNDRAISING

<p>Databases/ Management Reporting Systems</p>	<p>No systems for tracking clients, donors, donations, volunteers, acknowledgements, program outcomes and financial information</p>	<p>Electronic databases and management reporting systems exist in only few areas; systems perform only basic features, are awkward to use, or are used only occasionally by staff</p>	<p>Electronic database and management reporting systems exist in most areas for tracking clients, donors, donations, events, staff, volunteers, program outcomes, and financial information; commonly used and help increase information sharing and efficiency</p>	<p>Sophisticated, comprehensive electronic database and management reporting systems exist for tracking clients, donors, donations, events, staff, volunteers, program outcomes, and financial information; widely used and essential in increasing information sharing and efficiency</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				

3. BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

<p>Board Governance</p>	<p>Roles of legal board, advisory board, and management are unclear; board rarely scrutinizes budgets, holds CEO/ED accountable, or operates according to formal procedures. Current by-laws are not in place</p>	<p>Roles of legal board, advisory board, and management are clear ; board functions according to by-laws, reviews budgets, and occasionally sets organizational direction and targets, but does not regularly review CEO/ED performance, monitor potential conflicts or interest, scrutinize audits, or review IRS and state filings</p>	<p>Roles of legal board, advisory board, and management are clear and function well, functional by-laws are in place and are observed; board reviews budgets, audits, IRS and state filings; size of board set for maximum effectiveness with formal nomination process; board co-defines performance targets and actively encourages CEO/ED to meet targets; annual review of CEO/ED's performance, but board not prepared to hire or fire CEO/ED</p>	<p>Legal board, advisory board, and management work well together from clear roles; recognize the importance of by-laws and review them periodically to ensure they reflect the organization's decision-making process; board fully understands and fulfills fiduciary duties; size of board set for maximum effectiveness with rigorous nomination process; board actively defines performance targets and holds CEO/ED fully accountable; board empowered and prepared to hire or fire CEO/ED; board periodically evaluated</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				

3. BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

<p>Board Composition & Commitment</p>	<p>Members almost always have a personal connection to the mission or founder. Membership with limited diversity in fields of practice and expertise; drawn from a narrow spectrum of constituencies relevant to the organization; little or no relevant experience; commitment to organization's success, vision, and mission is unclear; meetings are sporadic and/or attendance is sometimes poor</p>	<p>Board moves beyond "friends and family" with personal affiliations and recruits outside professionals who bring increased expectations for performance. Some diversity in fields of practice and expertise; membership represents a few different constituencies relevant to organization; some evidence of commitment to organization's success, vision and mission; regular meetings are well-planned and attendance is adequate; occasional subcommittee meetings</p>	<p>Good diversity in fields of practice and expertise; membership represents most constituencies relevant to the organization; solid evidence of commitment to organization's success, vision, and mission; regular purposeful meetings are well-planned and attendance is consistently good; regular subcommittee meetings</p>	<p>Membership with broad variety in fields of practice and expertise, and drawn from the full spectrum of constituencies relevant to the organization; includes functional and issue area expertise; proven track record of learning about the organization and addressing its issues; consistently demonstrated commitment to the organization's success, mission and vision; regular purposeful meetings are well planned and attendance is consistently strong; regular meetings of focused subcommittees</p>
--	--	---	---	--

Comments:

3. BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

<p>Board Involvement & Support</p>	<p>Provide little direction, support, and accountability to leadership; board not fully informed about 'material' and other major organizational matters; largely "feel- good" support. Most members do not recognize fundraising as one of the board's roles and responsibilities</p>	<p>Provide occasional direction, support and accountability to leadership; informed about all 'material' matters in a timely manner and responses/ decisions actively solicited. Members accept that the board has some fundraising responsibilities</p>	<p>Provide direction, support and accountability to programmatic leadership; fully informed of all major matters, input and responses actively sought and valued; full participant in major decisions. Many members embrace fundraising as one of the board's core roles and responsibilities</p>	<p>Provide strong direction, support and accountability to programmatic leadership and engage as a strategic resource; communication between board and leadership reflects mutual respect, appreciation for roles and responsibilities, shared commitment and valuing of collective wisdom. Majority of members embrace fundraising as a core board role and responsibility</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				

4. HUMAN RESOURCES

<p>Paid Staff & Volunteer Staff</p>	<p>Staff drawn from a narrow range of backgrounds and experiences; interest and abilities limited to present job; little ability to solve problems as they arise</p>	<p>Some variety of staff backgrounds and experiences; good capabilities, including some ability to solve problems they arise; many interested in work beyond their current jobs and in the success of the organization's mission</p>	<p>Staff drawn from diverse backgrounds and experiences, and bring a broad range of skills; most are highly capable, well versed and committed to mission and strategy; eager to learn and develop, and assume increased responsibility</p>	<p>Staff drawn from extraordinarily diverse backgrounds and experiences, and bring a broad range of skills; most staff are highly capable in multiple roles, well versed and committed both to mission and strategy and continuous learning; most are eager and able to take on special projects and collaborate across divisional lines; staff are frequent source of ideas and momentum for improvement and innovation</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				

4. HUMAN RESOURCES

Recruitment, Development, & Retention of General Staff	Standard career paths in place without considering staff development, limited training, coaching and feedback; no regular performance appraisals; no systems/processes to identify new talent	No active development tools/programs; feedback and coaching occur sporadically; performance evaluated occasionally; limited willingness to ensure high quality job occupancy; sporadic initiatives to identify new talent	Limited use of active development tools/programs; frequent formal and informal coaching and feedback; performance regularly evaluated and discussed; genuine concern for high quality job occupancy; regular concerted initiatives to identify new talent	Management actively interested in general staff development; well-thought-out and targeted development plans for key employees/positions; frequent, relevant training, job rotation, coaching/feedback, and consistent performance appraisal institutionalized; proven willingness to ensure high-quality job occupancy; continuous, proactive initiatives to identify new talent
Comments:				
Staffing Levels	Some positions within and peripheral to organization (e.g., staff, volunteers, board, senior management) are unfilled, inadequately filled, or experience high turnover and/or poor attendance	Critical positions within and peripheral to organization are staffed, though some inappropriately; attendance problems are limited; high turnover is sometimes a challenge	Critical positions within and peripheral to organization are adequately and appropriately staffed; attendance problems are rare; turnover is limited	All positions within and peripheral to organization are adequately and appropriately staffed; attendance problems are extremely rare; turnover is limited; vacancies filled immediately
Comments:				

4. HUMAN RESOURCES

<p>Human Resources Planning</p>	<p>Organization uncovers and/or addresses HR needs only when too large to ignore; lack of HR planning activities and expertise (either internally or accessible externally); job descriptions and personnel policy descriptions do not exist</p>	<p>Some ability and tendency to develop high-level HR plan either internally or via external assistance; HR plan loosely or not linked to strategic planning activities and roughly guides HR activities; job descriptions and personnel policy tend to be static</p>	<p>Ability and tendency to develop and refine concrete, realistic HR plan; some internal expertise in HR planning or access to relevant external assistance; HR planning carried out on near-regular basis; HR plan linked to strategic planning activities and used to guide HR activities; job descriptions and personnel policy periodically reviewed and updated/revised in response to changing organizational needs; job descriptions also revised to support the growth and development of the staff</p>	<p>Ability to develop and refine concrete, realistic, and detailed HR plan; critical mass of internal expertise in HR planning, or efficient use of external, highly qualified resources; HR planning exercises carried out regularly; HR plan tightly linked to strategic planning activities and systematically used to direct HR activities; Job descriptions and personnel policy regularly updated and revised in response to changing organizational needs; job descriptions also revised in response to changing organizational needs and to support the growth and development of staff</p>
--	--	---	---	---

Comments:

4. HUMAN RESOURCES

Performance as Shared Value	Employees are hired, rewarded and promoted for executing a set of tasks/duties or for no clear reason, rather than for their impact; decisions are mostly made on “gut feeling”	Performance contribution is occasionally used and may be one of many criteria for hiring, rewarding and promoting employees; performance data is used to make decisions	Employee contribution to social, financial and organizational impact is typically considered as a preeminent criterion in making hiring, rewards and promotion decisions; important decisions about the organization are embedded in comprehensive performance thinking	All employees are systematically hired rewarded and promoted for their collective contribution to social, financial and organizational impact; day-to-day processes and decision making are embedded in comprehensive performance thinking; performance is constantly referred to
Comments:				

4. HUMAN RESOURCES

<p>Volunteers</p>	<p>Limited abilities; may be unreliable or have low commitment; few systems in place to recruit, train, support and manage volunteers; extremely high turnover</p>	<p>Good abilities; mostly reliable, loyal, and committed to organization's success; volunteers managed but without standards and little accountability; basic training to volunteers provided, generally on an ad hoc basis; some active recruitment of volunteers; high turnover</p>	<p>Very capable set of individuals, bring required skills to organization; reliable, loyal and highly committed to organization's success and to "making things happen." work easily with most staff, but do not generally play core roles without substantial staff supervision; volunteer trainings take place periodically; volunteers are managed and contribute to the overall success of the organization; moderate turnover</p>	<p>Extremely capable set of individuals, bring complementary skills to organization; reliable, loyal, highly committed to organization's success and to "making things happen." often go beyond call of duty; able to work easily with a wide range of staff and play core roles without special supervision; trainings take place on a regular basis; volunteers managed well and significantly contribute to overall success of the organization; low turnover</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				

4. HUMAN RESOURCES

<p>ED/CEO Experience & sharing and Personal & Interpersonal Effectiveness</p>	<p>Limited experience in nonprofit management and few relevant capabilities from other field(s); little evidence of social entrepreneur-like qualities; limited recognition in non-profit community</p>	<p>Some relevant experience in nonprofit management; some relevant capabilities from other field(s); emerging social entrepreneur-like qualities; some local recognition in the non-profit community</p>	<p>Significant experience in nonprofit management; many relevant capabilities from other field(s); significant evidence of social entrepreneur-like qualities; some national recognition as a leader/shaper in particular sector</p>	<p>Highly experienced in nonprofit management; many distinctive capabilities from other fields(s) (e.g., for-profit, academia); exceptional evidence of social entrepreneur-like qualities; possesses a comprehensive and deep understanding of the sector; recognized nationally as a leader/shaper in particular sector</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				
<p>ED/CEO Personal & Interpersonal Effectiveness</p>	<p>Has difficulty influencing without using power, limited charisma or influence; limited curiosity about new ideas and experiences</p>	<p>Earns respect of others, takes time to build relationships; accepts learning and personal development opportunities that arise</p>	<p>Is respected and sought out by others for advice and counsel; has strong presence and charisma; uses multiple approaches to get buy-in; seeks new learning and personal development opportunities</p>	<p>Is viewed as an outstanding “people person: uses diversity of communication styles, including exceptional charisma, to inspire others and achieve impact; continually self-aware, actively works to better oneself; outstanding track record of learning and personal development</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				

5. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

<p>Financial Planning/ Budgeting</p>	<p>No or very limited financial planning; general budget for entire central organization; performance against budget loosely or not monitored</p>	<p>Limited financial plans, ad hoc update; budget utilized as operational tool; used to guide/ access financial activities; some attempt to isolate divisional (program or geographical) budgets within central budget; performance-to-budget monitored periodically</p>	<p>Solid financial plans, regularly updated; budget integrated into operations; reflects organizational needs; solid efforts made to isolate divisional (program or geographical) budgets within central budget; performance-to-budget monitored periodically</p>	<p>Very solid financial plans, continuously updated; budget integrated into full operations; as strategic tool, it develops from process that incorporates and reflects organizational needs and objectives; well-understood divisional (program or geographic) budgets within overall central budget closely and regularly monitored</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				
<p>Financial Operations Management</p>	<p>Gifts and grants deposited and acknowledged, bills paid, supporting documentation collected/retained</p>	<p>Financial activities transparent, clearly and consistently recorded and documented, include appropriate checks and balances, and tracked to approve budget</p>	<p>Formal internal controls governing all financial operations; fully tracked, supported and reported, annually audited fund flows well managed; attention is paid to cash flow management</p>	<p>Robust systems and controls in place governing all financial operations and their integration with budgeting, decision making, and organizational objectives/ strategic goals; cash flow actively managed</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				

5. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Business Plan Development	No systems or expertise in place to develop a business plan for the entire agency and as a part of planning a new program or expanding an old program	Recognize need to develop systems and gain expertise in developing a business plan for the entire agency and as a part of planning a new program or expanding an old program	Some systems in place, either internally or via external assistance, to develop a business plan for the entire agency and as a part of planning a new program or expanding an old program	Well developed systems, either internally or via external assistance, to develop a business plan for the entire agency and as a part of planning a new program or expanding an old program
----------------------------------	---	--	---	--

Comments:

6. PROGRAM DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT

Program Relevance & Integration	Core programs and services vaguely defined and lack clear alignment with mission and overarching goals; programs seem scattered and largely unrelated to each other	Most core programs and services well-defined and solidly linked with mission and overarching goals; program offerings may be somewhat scattered and not fully integrated into clear strategy	Core programs and services well-defined and aligned with mission and overarching goals; program offerings fit together well as part of clear strategy	All programs and services well-defined and fully aligned with mission, overarching goals, and constituency; program offerings are clearly linked to one another and to overall strategy; synergies across programs are captured
--	---	--	---	---

Comments:

6. PROGRAM DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT

Program Growth & Replication	No assessment of possibility of scaling up existing programs; no ability to scale up or replicate existing programs	Limited assessment of possibility of scaling up existing programs and, when judged appropriate, action occasionally taken; able to scale up or replicate existing programs	Occasional assessment of possibility of scaling up existing programs and, when judged appropriate, action occasionally taken; able to scale up or replicate existing programs	Frequent assessment of possibility of scaling up existing programs, and when judged appropriate, action consistently taken; efficiently and effectively able to grow existing programs to meet needs in local area or other geographies
---	---	--	---	---

Comments:

New Program Development	No assessment of gaps in ability of current programs to meet recipient needs; limited ability to create new programs; new programs created only/largely in response to funding availability; no ability to plan and implement a full series of programs over a one-year planning horizon	Limited assessment of gaps in ability of existing programs to meet recipient needs, with little or limited action taken; some ability to modify existing programs and create new programs; limited ability to plan and implement a full series of programs over a one-year planning horizon	Occasional assessment of gaps in ability of existing programs to meet recipient needs, with some adjustments made; demonstrated ability to modify and fine-tune existing programs and create new programs; occasional planning and implementation of a full series of programs over a one-year planning horizon	Continual assessment of gaps in ability of existing programs to meet recipient needs, with adjustments regularly made; ability and tendency to efficiently and effectively create new, innovative programs to meet needs in local area or other geographies; continuous pipeline of new ideas; continual planning and implementation of a full series of programs over a one-year planning horizon
--------------------------------	--	---	---	--

Comments:

7. EVALUATION

<p>Evaluation Performance Measurement</p>	<p>Very limited measurement and tracking of performance and progress; all or most evaluation based on anecdotal evidence; no external performance comparisons made; organization collects some data on program activities and outputs (e.g., number of children served), but has no measurement of outcomes (e.g., the extent to which the drop-out rate has been lowered)</p>	<p>Performance partially measured and progress partially tracked; some external performance comparisons made; organization regularly collects solid data on program activities and outputs, and has begun to measure outcomes</p>	<p>Performance measured and progress tracked in multiple ways on a regular basis; effective internal and external benchmarking occurs but may be confined to select areas; multiple indicators used in evaluation, with primary focus on outcomes; some attention paid to cultural appropriateness of evaluation process/methods; social impact measured, but longitudinal (long-term) or independent nature of evaluation is missing</p>	<p>Comprehensive, integrated systems used for measuring organization's performance and progress on continual basis; internal and external benchmarking part of the organizational culture and used by staff in target-setting and daily operations; clear and meaningful outcomes-based performance indicators exist in all areas; careful attention paid to cultural appropriateness of evaluation process/methods; measurement of social impact based on longitudinal studies with independent evaluation</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				

7. EVALUATION

<p>Evaluation & organizational learning</p>	<p>Performance data rarely used to improve program and organization; little experience with evaluation beyond capturing information to report to funders; information systems not in place</p>	<p>Performance data occasionally used by staff and board to improve organization; some staff time devoted to evaluation efforts, as required by funders, however staff and board do not typically see evaluation as integral to organization's work; information systems not in place</p>	<p>Learnings from performance data distributed throughout organization, and often used by staff and board to make adjustments and improvements; some staff time devoted to documenting organization's work; some information systems in place to support on-going evaluation</p>	<p>Systematic staff and board practices of making adjustments and improvements on basis of performance data; resources are devoted to thoroughly documenting organization's work and capturing the complete story of its impact; evaluation processes fully integrated into information systems</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				

8. COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

<p>Communi- cations & Outreach Effectiveness</p>	<p>Organization does not have marketing materials; or materials that it has are outdated; organization is strictly internally-focused and does little to no outreach to stakeholders; any materials that exist are unprofessional in their presentation</p>	<p>Organization has a loose collection of materials it uses for marketing; documents are generic and not updated to reflect new programs and organizational results; materials have a minimal degree of professionalism or consistent look and feel</p>	<p>Organization has a packet of marketing materials that it uses on a consistent basis; information contained in the materials is up to date and reflects new programs, activities and outcomes; materials are reasonable professional in presentation and aligned with established standards for font, color, logo placement, etc.</p>	<p>Organization has a packet of marketing materials that it uses consistently and is easy to update on a regular basis; materials are extremely professional in appearance and appeal to a variety of stakeholders; materials adhere to clear “branding” standards for font, color, logo placement, etc.</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				
<p>Presence & Involvement in Local Community</p>	<p>Organization's presence either not recognized or generally not regarded as positive; few members of local community (e.g., academics, other nonprofit leaders) constructively involved in the organization</p>	<p>Organization's presence somewhat recognized, and generally regarded as positive within the community; some members of larger community constructively engage with organization</p>	<p>Organization reasonably well-known within the community, and perceived as open and responsive to community needs; members of larger community (including a few prominent ones) constructively involved in organization</p>	<p>Organization widely known within larger community, and perceived as actively engaged with and extremely responsive to it; many members of the larger community (including many prominent members) actively and constructively involved in organization (e.g., board, fundraising)</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				

8. COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

<p>Telephone/ Fax & Computers</p>	<p>Lack of sophistication or limited number of telephone, fax and computer facilities are an impediment to day-to-day effectiveness and efficiency</p>	<p>Adequate basic telephone, fax and computer facilities accessible to most staff; may be moderately reliable or user-friendly, or may lack certain features that would increase effectiveness and efficiency (e.g., individual voice mail), or may not be easily accessible to some staff</p>	<p>Solid basic telephone, fax and computer facilities accessible to entire staff (in office and at front line); respond to day-to-day communication needs with essentially no problems; includes additional features contributing to increased effectiveness and efficiency (e.g., individual, remotely accessible voice-mail)</p>	<p>Sophisticated and reliable telephone, fax and computer facilities accessible by all staff (in office and at frontline), includes around-the-clock individual voice mail; supplemented by additional facilities (e.g., pagers, cell phones) for selected staff; effective and essential in increasing staff effectiveness and efficiency</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				
<p>Computers, Applications, Network & Email</p>	<p>Limited/no use of computers and other technology in day-to-day activity; and/or little or no usage by staff of existing IT infrastructure</p>	<p>Well-equipped at central level; incomplete-limited infrastructure at locations aside from central offices; equipment sharing may be common; satisfactory use of IT infrastructure by staff</p>	<p>Solid hardware and software infrastructure and accessible by central and local staff; no or limited sharing is necessary; limited accessibility for frontline program deliverers; high usage level of IT infrastructure by staff; contributes to increased efficiency</p>	<p>State-of-the-art, fully networked computing hardware with comprehensive range of up-to-date software applications; all staff has individual computer access and e-mail; accessible by frontline program deliverers as well as entire staff; used regularly by staff; effective and essential in increasing staff efficiency</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				

8. COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Web Site	Organization has no individual web site	Basic Web site containing general information, but little information on current developments; site maintenance is a burden and performed occasionally	Comprehensive Web site containing basic information on organization as well as up-to-date latest developments; most information is organization-specific; easy to maintain and regularly maintained	Sophisticated, comprehensive and interactive Web site, regularly maintained and kept up-to-date on latest area and organization developments; praised for its user-friendliness and depth of information; includes links to related organizations and useful organizations and useful resources on topic addressed by organization
Comments:				

Building a logic model

This one-page model seeks to bring clarity to a group's thinking and forecast the results in order to assure impact.



Source: University of Wisconsin Extension, Program Development and Evaluation

EXERCISE: Building our logic model

Ask yourself the following questions as you conceptualize your logic model:

- Do I understand the differences between inputs, outputs and outcomes? Practice writing a set of each.
- How can I apply my analysis of my situation (e.g., congregation, organization, community, neighborhood) to drafting the frame of the logic model?
- Have I defined the critical priorities for my organization?
- How have I considered my unspoken assumptions about our work?
- What impact do external factors have on all aspects of our work? What factors am I considering? Which are out of my control? Which might be used to our advantage? Which represent threats that are beyond our control but must be embedded in our theory of the business?
- How does using a logic model sharpen my thinking and encourage strategy, not opinion?

Develop a strategic plan

Below is a sample plan in a placemat format. Once approved by the board, this plan can be laminated and brought to every board meeting as a means to focus the board's attention on high-level goals and objectives grounded in mission and lit by the light of the vision of a better world because of your organization's hard and thoughtful work.

This placemat was the result of a strategic planning process with the American Pyrotechnics Association. It serves as an example of how to format a plan with clear goals, objectives, action steps and language. After you take a look at it from that perspective, you will be asked to make it your own in an exercise that explores how to use this model.

GOAL ONE: MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

APA board, staff and tenured members will maintain and deepen member engagement by welcoming new members, increasing dialogue among all members and providing additional member incentives.

- Ascertain member interest in potential member discounts. Offer as many discounts as the staff can effectively maintain.
- Actively encourage the young professionals committee.

GOAL TWO: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

APA will make maximum use of effective technology to assure high quality member relations as well as productively leverage staff and leadership time and talent.

- Establish a board committee for technology to effectively provide sufficient resources in the budget to achieve tech goals.
- Create a procedure for data backup.
- Establish a policy and provide sufficient funds in the annual budget to replace equipment before it impedes organizational progress.
- Work with membership to assess their needs and interests in the content of the website and the use of social media.

GOAL THREE: GOVERNANCE

APA will have a 21st century board that continues to lead the organization with skill and success by adhering to governance best practices.

- Assess the current skills, outreach and demographics of the board on a yearly basis. This can be used to inform the discussion of the governance committee and fill vacant board positions.
- Institute a chair-elect, chair, immediate past chair structure.
- Employ the board job description in recruitment, orientation and evaluation processes each year.
- Make agenda setting for each board meeting an opportunity to assess strategic directions and to assure productive meetings.
- Continue to make effective and judicious use of the executive committee, always seeking to assure the highest quality governance and use of the full board.
- Review current committee structure for relevance and adjust accordingly.
- Include a board orientation and planning session at one of the annual meetings each year.

GOAL FOUR: MARKETING AND BRANDING

Loudly and proudly assert the quality, ethics and savvy of the APA brand.

- Build the APA brand as the place in the industry to attract and serve ethical, quality and savvy businesses.
- More intentionally use the conference to enhance the brand.
- Use technology to leverage staff and volunteer time in attracting and retaining members. Use technology to do valuable community and member education.

GOAL FIVE: STAFFING

To effectively implement these recommended changes and additions to the organizational work plan, APA must add a full-time staff person as the current staff is stretched to the max and cannot be expected to assume additional responsibilities. This staff person could assume some of the responsibilities of the current administrative staff, freeing them to address new tasks.

- Add a fourth full-time staff person after the plan is approved and the job description can be made clear.

EXERCISE: Roadmap – Understanding the differences between goals, objectives and action steps

First, think broadly about goal areas. Identify one. Write a goal to address the greatest need or challenge for that area of your work.

GOAL:

Next, think of no more than three supporting objectives.

OBJECTIVES:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What specific actions will be needed to achieve the objectives and advance the goal? (Actions are part of the operating plan.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How will you measure success? Use specific yet sufficiently broad metrics that clearly articulate intentional actions, addressing the major goals that substantially advance mission.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

