

DPH Office of Planning, Development & Evaluation Key Steps to Conduct Strategic Planning

1. Getting Started: Clarify the Process, Timeline, Purpose and Contents of Plan

- a. What is the purpose of this new plan?
 - If your program is going to develop new focus areas and activities, then a strategic planning process would help you select those focus areas.
 - If you are looking to lay out the key steps over the next few years for your existing activities then a multi-year action plan, rather than a strategic plan, may be better, and the handout may not apply.
- b. Determine the plan's audience
 - For internal use? For internal and external use?
- c. Determine the plan's timeframe: three years? Five years?
- d. Decide on the plan's level of detail:
 - Goals and objectives only?
 - Also strategies?
 - Yearly action plans to lay out key steps to implement strategies and reach objectives?
 - What else will be included?
- e. Create a timeline for the planning process

2. Identify the stakeholders who will contribute to the plan or participate in the planning process:

- a. Set up a planning team of internal (and possibly external) stakeholders to design and guide the planning process
- b. Clarify who will make the final decisions about the goals and objectives that are ultimately put into the strategic plan.
- c. Decide who else will participate in the planning process and what their role will be?

Potential Internal Stakeholders:

- Senior managers
- All staff
- Other Internal stakeholders

Potential External stakeholders:

- Community organizations, academics, schools, city staff, etc.
- Facilitator – who will play this role, if needed

3. Create, Modify or Re-Affirm Your Vision and Mission Statements

- a. Develop or confirm vision and mission statements
 - Vision statement: The dream – what we hope our work accomplishes “big picture”
 - Mission statement: What and why we do the work we do
- b. Obtain consensus on vision and mission statements – either to keep as is or to modify.

4. Gather Information

- a. Decide the mechanisms for gathering information for the plan:
 - Focus groups with stakeholders?
 - Staff meetings?
 - A survey of all staff?
 - One-on-one interviews with key stakeholders?
- b. Gather the information, for example:
 - Interview key external stakeholders – either conduct a SWOT analysis or ask them other relevant questions, i.e. what does our organization currently do well? What could we improve upon? Etc.
 - Interview key internal stakeholders, including staff within the organization doing the planning.
- c. Conduct “SWOT” analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats)
- d. Conduct “gap” analysis (What are we currently not doing? What is our organization not able to do well?)

5. Identify and Prioritize Goals

- a. Evaluate the findings. Discuss the different ideas that have emerged through the analysis of information gathered and convert them to goals.
- b. Determine the major issues your organization wants to work on in the next three to five years (or duration of plan).

6. Develop Objectives, Strategies and Action Plans

- a. Draft SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound). (See handout, “Sample goals, objectives, and strategies”)
- b. Develop strategies that you will implement to reach each objective.
- c. Ensure alignment with other plans that guide your organization’s work.
- d. Develop yearly action plans if you wish to include more detail for how you will implement the strategies.

7. Distribute the Plan

- a. Make the plan available electronically and in print
- b. Conduct outreach
 - a. Encourage all employees to utilize the plan
 - b. Reach out to stakeholders

8. Implement, Monitor and Update the Plan

- a. Develop a monitoring plan for gauging progress achieved on an annual (or other) basis.
- b. Produce an annual monitoring plan and revise goals, objectives, and strategies, as needed, to keep the plan relevant!
- c. At the end of the plan’s time period, capture achievements made and not made on objectives and strategies – and determine the next steps for your program.