

Strategic Planning

What

- ✚ Simply put, strategic planning determines where the focus of a particular group is going to lie in the next year or more (depending on the scope of the plan). The strategic planning process incorporates and sets direction for all operations of the organization.
- ✚ Clearly defined outcomes and outputs provide feedback that permits program performance to influence future planning, resource allocation and operational decisions.
- ✚ The strategic plan is a formal document that communicates an organization's goals, directions and outcomes to various audiences.
- ✚ The strategic plan serves as the basis for the organization's budget structure which will help to guide decisions about how fiscal resources will be allocated.

Why

- ✚ A CJAB is a partnership. A partnership is defined as a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship between two or more organizations to achieve a common goal. (Amhearst Wilder Foundation.)
- ✚ Funders are seeking partnerships that:
 - ✓ Have clarity of mission, purpose and values.
 - ✓ Are organized and ready for action.
 - ✓ Are strongly connected to the community.
 - ✓ Have the ability to get clearly defined outcomes from the projects they implement.
- ✚ Creating and utilizing a strategic plan will steer the CJAB away from reactive decision-making and more towards proactive assessment of the needs of the criminal justice system in our County.
- ✚ Should grant money be used by the CJAB for a project, funders wish to see how sustainability for the program will take place when the grant money has been spent. This requires planning and cooperation that can be guided by a strategic plan.

How Often and When

- ✚ Strategic planning should be done when the organization is just getting started.
- ✚ Strategic planning should be done in preparation for a new venture.
- ✚ Basic strategic planning should be conducted at least once a year in order to be ready for the coming fiscal year; however, the full strategic planning process should be conducted once every three years – unless the organization is experiencing tremendous change, in which case it should be completed more often.

✚ Each year, an action plan should be updated.

- The previous section was adapted from *Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation* (McNamara) via The Free Management Library – <http://www.managementhelp.org/>)

Miscellaneous Items Involved with Strategic Planning

✚ **Environmental Scanning** is the gathering, analysis and use of information about events, trends and relationships in an organization's surroundings – the knowledge of which is used in planning the organization's future. An Environmental Scan:

- ✓ Identifies strengths, weaknesses, trends and conditions within an organization.
- ✓ Gleans a common perception of the organization in question from its workers.
- ✓ Can be completed using surveys, questionnaires, focus groups or open forums.

✚ The ultimate purpose of the environmental scan is to target the organization's strengths and weaknesses and *also* individual member strengths and weaknesses. Thus, tasks can be properly assigned and the most effective use of a strategic plan can be made.

✚ **S.W.O.T. (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis** provides a good framework for reviewing strategy, position and direction of a company or business proposition, or any idea.

- ✓ Strength = What works *now*.
- ✓ Weakness = What doesn't work *now*.
- ✓ Opportunity = What will (plausibly) work in the *future*.
- ✓ Threat = What can inhibit the changes that are needed to achieve what will work in the *future*.