



TOOL KIT #6

STRATEGIC PLANNING

FAQ – WHY STRATEGIC PLANNING IS IMPORTANT

1. Why is the Board involved in Strategic Planning?

- Strategic Planning is a primary responsibility of the Board. It corresponds with the first primary responsibility of Boards: “Setting Direction” (the other two primary responsibilities are “Ensuring Resources” and “Providing Oversight”).
- It is an opportunity to reassess or reconfirm the mission of the organization, which may have “drifted” due to changes in funding or need.
- Whether you want to grow, or to stay the size you are and provide services that are as effective as possible, a Strategic Plan will help.
- It’s a framework for making decisions about programs, services, and resources.
- It allows us to think about how our world is changing, and how we can operate most effectively in that changing world. It enables the Board to take a big picture view of the organization and set a roadmap for the future.

2. What is a Strategic Plan?

- A Strategic Plan is like a map. It tells you where you are going (goals), how you will get there (activities), when you know you have accomplished goals (metrics), and who will lead the efforts (responsible parties).

3. What are the benefits of a Strategic Plan?

- A Strategic Plan helps you stay on course. It helps you keep your focus, and guides when you can – and should – say “no” to opportunities or activities that do not further your mission.
- A Strategic Plan is often requested by foundations and other funders.
- If the need you first served changes, then the Strategic Planning process enables you to reexamine your mission.
- A Strategic Plan helps you develop your annual operating plan and provides the basis of the evaluation of the Executive Director. It can be used for setting the organization’s goals, for reporting to the Board, and for developing the agendas for Board meetings.





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4. Do we really have the time, resources, and capacity to plan?

- Some people think that developing a plan is daunting, and may worry that it might take too long, use too many resources, or bog down the Board. This does not need to be the case. The other toolkits in this module: “How to Prepare a Strategic Plan” and “Implementing a Strategic Plan”, will help you approach strategic planning in a straightforward way that fits your organization’s needs and circumstances. The key to success is the involvement of the Board.

5. How does Strategic Planning relate to my Parent Center goals and objectives?

- Annual Parent Center grant deliverables are not your Strategic Plan, although these goals should be considered in your planning. A Strategic Plan usually has a 3 – 5-year horizon. Strategic Planning has the benefit of tying those shorter-term objectives to a longer-term vision of the work you plan and the resources, processes, and structure needed to get there.

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