

Sustainability Action Plan

The following sample plan shows action steps you can take during the first year. We recommend you do at least a 12-months plan and preferable a 3-year plan.

Plan Component/Method	Action Steps	Timeline
Develop Vision, Mission, Case for Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create internal staff team to guide planning process • Discuss with staff and community members why this program is needed, who will benefit, why your organization is the best organization to undertake it. • Identify and talk with other community leaders who might share common or similar vision/mission. 	Months 1-3
Develop Goals and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a logic model to clarify sustainability goals, create specific program objectives, and identify measures to track progress and outcomes. 	Months 1-3
Research and identify potential stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify priorities such as community engagement, strategic communication, leadership development, governance and management. • Solicit ideas from other agencies, schools, and faith communities who might share interests with your program. • Talk to local businesses about how your program can benefit their interests. 	Months 1-3
Initiate relationship with potential stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule community/partner meetings. • Select team of helpful community members, agency representatives, and business people to act as advisory committee. Formulate meeting agenda. • Prepare invitations and ask folks who recommended individuals for your committee to invite them personally. • Prepare written materials for participants outlining the program's purpose and vision. Language should match community interests garnered from earlier research and interviews with community members. 	Month 4
Analyze Program Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify financing for services and outcomes. • Map current spending and analyze funding gaps. • With staff and advisory committee, develop financing strategies, evaluate options, and develop recommendations. 	Month 4
Continue to cultivate stakeholders and create buy in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold meetings. Include shared vision exercise to get input and expand vision to more stakeholders. • Invite press to cover a meeting, highlight participants and outcomes. 	Month 5

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always follow up and send thank you notes to participants. 	
Make the Ask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine best strategic partnerships and key community leaders to involve. Determine appropriate level of collaborative commitment to ask for. Determine who should ask for partnership involvement. Jointly develop strong “case” for potential partner’s involvement. Be specific about level of commitment requested. 	Months 5-7
Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalize relationship with MOUs, volunteer position description, and formalize advisory committee roles. 	Months 5-7
Be a Good Steward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer opportunities for continued involvement in shaping the program through regular meetings and dialogue. Share the credit and celebrate successes. Make sure the program is mutually beneficial to all partners. 	Months 8-ongoing
Create and execute fundraising plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify any products or services of your program that are valued in the community and could produce income to offset project expenses. Create a team and marketing plan to develop and market business. Identify budget items that could be provided in-kind by partners, other stakeholders. Select methods and teams for fundraising and resource gathering for the year. Use more than one fundraising method (grant writing, direct mail, special event, major donor clubs, in-kind resource gathering, phone-a-thon, personal solicitation). Select team members from your advisory committee, board, and other community leaders to act as fundraising committee. Formulate strategies for meeting with prospects individually. Prepare a fundraising plan with objectives and timelines. Launch and execute fundraising efforts. 	Months 8-ongoing (carry forward into Year 2)

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This sample action plan was developed using the following sources:

- *Sustainability Toolkit* developed by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Available at <http://www.SustainAbilityOnline.com>
- *Sustainability Planning Workbook* published by the Finance Project. Available at www.financeproject.org/engage/workbook.asp