Beyond the Basics: Conducting a Strategic Planning Training

Region VIII ROMA Trainers & Implementers
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Objectives

• Review key concepts and training objectives for the strategic planning process
• Solicit questions and ideas for additional training content
Big Picture Concepts

• Each agency should have an agency wide strategic plan
  – Standard 6.1 - The organization has an agency-wide strategic plan in place that has been approved by the governing board within the past 5 years.

• The strategic plan is comprehensive
  – Covers all programs and services and includes both internal (agency) and external (family-community) outcomes
Big Picture Concepts

• The strategic plan connects directly to the needs assessment
  – Both are stages in the overall ROMA cycle
  – The strategic plan represents the agency response to the CAN
  – It looks both at internal functioning of the agency and at the community’s needs.

• The Community Action Plan is the “operational” plan
Big Picture Concepts

• It helps the agency to think about which levels of needs to address
  – The CNA helps identify levels of needs and their connections, the strategic plan describes how to address them

• Ideally it includes an agency level theory of change
  – A ToC is why the agency thinks what it does will work, aiding in evaluation and helping integrate services
Two Views of Agency Outcomes

Program Outcomes Identified in Silos

- Head Start
  - Outcome
  - Indicators
- Community Services
  - Outcome
  - Indicators
- Housing
  - Outcome
  - Indicators
- Weatherization
  - Outcome
  - Indicators

Integrated View of Agency Outcomes

- Family Problems
  - Outcome
  - Indicators
  - Strategies
  - Program
- Community Problems
  - Outcome
  - Indicators
  - Strategies
  - Program
- Agency Problems
  - Outcome
  - Indicators
  - Strategies
  - Program

Agency Strategic Commitments

Jeannie Chaffin, LLC
Step One: Prepare to Plan

• Know the timing of the planning cycle
  – Begin preparing 6-12 months in advance; ideally start right after the CNA

• The initial focus is on readiness and preparation
  – Get board buy-in and build their capacity
  – Organize the planning committee and build their capacity
Step One: Prepare to Plan

• Know the roles of the stakeholders
  – The board provides strategic direction
  – The ED/CEO provides overall leadership
  – Staff do the legwork
  – Consultants manage the process – they do not provide the content

• Help your agency think through timing and readiness
  – Surface issues affecting readiness and choose the target date
Step One: Prepare to Plan

• Know the values of the planning process – they’re key to buy-in
  – Strategic planning should be inclusive, participatory, and collaborative
Step One Exercises

• Readiness checklist
  – Use the checklist in the training as an initial “screen” for issues, then conduct with the leadership team and board
Step Two: Gather Information

• Develop a “library” of existing information
  – Know what documents your agency has
  – Help think through how staff will use the information

• Know the basics of a SWOT analysis
  – The SWOT is a good method to get broad participation
  – Be familiar with different process options
  – The ultimate product is to synthesize individual data points into key themes
Step Two: Gather Information

- Conduct a vision, mission, and values review
  - Typically done with the board and leadership team
  - Discussion of the vision helps “set the stage” and articulate the agency’s purpose
  - Review ROMA materials on mission statements
  - Focus of the mission discussion is on addressing needs, identifying core business areas, and alignment of programs and services
  - Discussion of values helps identify staff needs, customer service issues, and organizational culture
Step Two Exercises

• Conduct a practice SWOT analysis
  – Use the exercise to help think through process options

• Review the vision, mission, and values statements
  – Does the exercise reveal any potential issues with mission focus and alignment of programs?
  – Identify ways that staff can discuss the three topics to strengthen agency identity
Step Three: Create the Plan

• Be familiar with process options
  – Remember the values of an inclusive, participatory, and collaborative process

• Know ROMA and strategic planning terminology
  – Goals: “Mini-vision statements” for core business areas
  – Outcomes: What the agency will achieve under the strategic priorities
  – Strategies: How the agency will achieve outcomes
  – Action plans: Typically developed after the
Step Three: Create the Plan

• Know the format of the strategic plan
  – Understand the “flow” of the plan
  – Programs and services map to outcomes
  – Strategies explain how the “pieces” of programs and services fit together
    • Strategies can be within a goal and also cut across multiple goals
  – Outcomes map to goals
  – Goals map to needs
Step Three: Create the Plan

- The transition to implementation is critical
  - Does the plan include enough information to assure that there is an agency structure in place to move the ideas in the plan into action.
  - Of course, anything new will have to be clearly identified and integrated – include the new structure (individual, working group) and process (action plan)
Step Three Exercises

• **Writing goals, outcomes, and strategies**
  – Review ROMA training materials
  – Make sure to have good examples

• **Writing action plans**
  – Make sure to discuss the structure used to implement the plan
Step Four: Share the Plan

• Identify the stakeholders with whom to share the plan
  – Key partners, community-based organizations, funders, and policy makers

• Use the plan to raise awareness of the agency
  – Develop different versions of the plan to share
  – Use social media and other communications methods to disseminate the plan
Step Five: Monitor the Plan

• Develop a reporting mechanism
  – Use a strategic plan scorecard
  – Report on outcomes identified in the plan
  – Include program and “process” outcomes

• Use a system of “dual accountability”
  – Staff report to the leadership team
  – Leadership team reports to the board
  – Reports happen quarterly or semi-annually
Step Five: Monitor the Plan

• Revisit the plan annually with the board
  – Build a review of the plan into a board retreat or similar event
Step Five Exercises

• Develop a strategic plan scorecard
  – Start with current reports to funders and the board
More Information

• Draft of Full PowerPoint: Beyond the Basics - Strategic Planning.

Strategic Planning Webinar Series
• Strategic Planning Overview & Preparation webinar recording
• Gathering Data for the Strategic Plan webinar recording
• Developing and Outcomes Focused Strategic Plan webinar recording
• Implementing the Strategic Plan webinar recording
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