

## 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.

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

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

By Michelle Voll, CSCS

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](http://www.financeproject.org/engage/workbook.asp)