

## EXAMPLE VISIONING ACTIVITIES FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

### PURPOSES & BENEFITS

Developing a strategic plan is critical to the success of the collaborative group's community organizing work. As Joel Barker stated, "*Vision without action is daydreaming, but action without vision is just random activity.*" A strategic plan not only prevents random activity by connecting actions to the larger vision, it also:

- Creates a coordinated, comprehensive and synergistic approach to the work the group is trying to accomplish, and it's even in writing!
- Avoids group chaos, conflict and confusion among group members by getting everyone focused and on the same page about the group's smaller activities and steps to meet their agreed upon priorities, which all work together to help realize their collective vision.
- Provides an opportunity for input and involvement from other key stakeholders in the community who are not involved in the detailed work of the collaborative group but are important to the group's work.
- Helps the group to consider how to demonstrate successful activity through measurable objectives that are tied directly to the plan.
- Provides a means for tracking plan progress as the plan is being implemented.

Once a collaborative group has prepared for strategic planning by completing Step 2 – Get In the Know by Taking Stock, the group is ready for strategic planning.

The strategic plan should include:

- Identification of a preferred future vision for the local community.
- Strategies to further identify how the preferred future vision, as well as the collaborative group's vision and mission statements, will be accomplished.
- Measurable outcomes to demonstrate plan implementation success.
- The specific activities and action steps that you'll engage in to successfully implement the plan and demonstrate measurable outcomes.
- Identifying the resources needed to make the plan a success.

These tools help a group developing a community organizing strategic plan identify the preferred future vision for ending sexual and domestic violence in their local community, which is one of the important elements of the strategic plan.

The purpose of indentifying the preferred future vision is to gather the strategic planning participants around a collective future vision, some of whom will be the core collaborative group and some of whom will be additional stakeholders. The purpose is NOT to rewrite the ongoing core collaborative group's vision and/or mission statements developed in Step 1B – Setting Up Your Collaborative Group for Success: Tools for Determining Your Purpose(s).

### HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

The collaborative group can use this tool to identify the preferred future vision for ending sexual and domestic violence in their local community as part of strategic planning. This tool is meant to be used in conjunction with the "Strategic Planning Overview, Process & Elements" document located in the same section of the toolkit as this tool.



The steps to strategic planning (which are provided in whole in the “Strategic Planning Overview, Process & Elements” document located in the same section of the toolkit as this tool) use the consensus decision process, including brainstorming and consensus building tools. This process and example tools are outlined in the “Consensus Decision Process with Brainstorming & Consensus Tools” document in Step 1C: Setting Your Group Up for Success: Tools for Determining How You’ll Work Together of the toolkit.

The strategic planning process step that helps to create the preferred future vision using the example visioning activities in this tool is:

2. **Create a vision.** Ask a question that inspires vision. Here are some examples:

- *What is our ideal or preferred future?*
- *What are the indicators of a good outcome?*
- *What would it look like if we got it right?*

The example visioning activities and their process steps are detailed on the following pages. Note that these are just examples, so be creative and adapt or develop your own visioning activity. Remember that the purpose is to gather the planning participants around a preferred future vision to help energize them, get their creative juices flowing, get them talking and interacting, and set the tone for the strategic plan development. This will also help to inspire their sense of ownership and involvement in the plan and its successful implementation.

## BRIDGE BUILDING ACTIVITY & PROCESS

### **Supplies Needed**

- 1 large piece of paper (8 ½ x 14) with "Current State"
- 1 large piece of paper (8 ½ x 14) with "Ideal Future State"
- 2 per person: Blank, large name tag-like stickers
- Brown Bags filled with:
  - Styrofoam coffee cup
  - 2-4 large marshmallows
  - 10-12 small marshmallows
  - 10-12 coffee stir sticks
  - 3-4 rubber bands
  - 8-10 paper clips
  - handful of toothpicks

### **Step 1 Instructions**

- On the table are two sheets: one labeled "Current State" and one labeled "Ideal State." Also on the table are additional blank name tags. Make sure that each person at the table has two additional blank name tags. We'll work individually to begin with.
- On 1 blank sticker ask participants:
  - Consider yourself as a facilitative leader. What is my current state? How am I already different than when I first began learning about facilitative leadership? (Note: You can also ask a group to consider the current state of an issue or the group/organization.)
- On 1 blank sticker ask participants to write about the "ideal future state":
  - How do I see myself operating ideally as a facilitative leader 2 years from now? (Note: This question relates to "If we got it right" and can be applied to an issue or group/organization accordingly.)
- Give participants 2-3 minutes for each question.
- When everyone is finished, each person share with the others at the table what you wrote for each state (Note: You can facilitate a call-out of the future ideal states from each table.)

### **Step 2 Instructions**

- Separate the "current state" sheet and the "ideal state" sheet by about 1 foot.
- A brown bag will be distributed at the table by the facilitator, but table groups cannot look inside of it.
- Each table is going to have to work together shortly following a few rules.
- Hand out the brown paper bags, putting them directly between in the two 8.5 x 14 sheets, repeat if necessary that groups cannot look inside the brown bags until instructed to do so.
- Call out the 3 rules:
  - After emptying the contents of the brown bag on the table, table groups will have 1 minute to plan as a group – they can't touch anything.
  - The task is to build a bridge to the future between the current state and the ideal future state (Note: This is the first time during the activity that you'll identify the task as "bridge building.")
  - Table groups will have 3 minutes to build a bridge connecting their current and ideal states.
- Give the instruction to open the brown bags and begin building following the above 3 rules
  - Facilitator calls out when 1 minute is up



- Facilitator calls out when 3 minutes are up and table groups should conclude building
- Large group call out “take aways” discussion:
  - What were the challenges to this task?
  - What factors enabled you to be successful?

### **Activity Debrief**

- Today is about building a successful bridge between our current state and our preferred future.

## **NOW HEAR THIS! SUCCESS STORY ACTIVITY & PROCESS**

### **Supplies Needed**

- Now Hear This! Success Story Worksheet for participants
- Flipchart paper on easel
- Marker

### **Activity Instructions**

1. Ask participants to:
  - “Imagine that it’s the year \_\_\_\_ (25 years from now). Imagine that all the work that has been done for the last 25 years has paid off tremendously, and we’ve reached your ultimate goal. A national newspaper is featuring our local community’s community organizing work to end sexual and domestic violence on the front page. Imagine...in a huge front page headline...THERE WE ARE! What does it say?”
  - Consider the success story highlights/key points. These detail HOW the success was accomplished
2. Have participants work individually or in small groups to develop:
  - the success story headline – the WHAT is the big success
  - the success story highlights/key points – the HOW the success was achieved
3. Next, do a call-out of ideas, recording the ideas on a flipchart of :
  - the success story headline – the WHAT is the big success
  - the success story highlights/key points – the HOW the success was achieved

### **Activity Debrief**

- Discuss with participants their insights from what’s been collectively shared. Record any implications for the strategic plan on a flipchart to keep in front of the group as they continue the strategic planning process.
- Discuss the activity analogies to the strategic plan (if not already identified by participants in the previous debrief discussion):
  - The success story headline – the WHAT the success was – is the vision of the preferred future
  - The success story highlights/key points – the HOW the success was achieved – is the beginning formation of strategies or strategic themes, which can be built off of in the strategies development step in the strategic planning process (See the “Strategic Planning Overview, Process & Elements” document located in the same section of the toolkit as this tool for details).



**NOW HEAR THIS!  
SUCCESS STORY**

Success Story Headline: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Story Highlights (Key Points):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

