



# Introduction to Strategic Planning

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*“Moving beyond brainstorming, strategic planning sessions help us evaluate our current situations, create effective solutions and plans to implement those solutions, and look toward future goals of our organizations.”*

## Strategic Planning is For Everyone

Strategic Planning  
is for Everyone ..... 1

Don't be frightened. Strategic planning may sound scary, but the word is just another way to address the conversations around a future plan for your organization. Moving beyond brainstorming, strategic planning sessions help us evaluate our current situations, create effective solutions and plans to implement those solutions, and look toward future goals of our organizations.

Understanding  
the Lingo ..... 1

Whether your organization is small and all-volunteer or large with a paid staff, strategic planning can be beneficial for organizational development. There are literally hundreds of ways to conduct strategic planning. Some organizations hire a facilitator and have a very formal process while some others take a half-day with management staff and follow their own strategic planning process.

The Planning Process  
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## Understanding the Lingo

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Before you organize a strategic planning session, an overview of the “lingo” will help you feel more comfortable with the process:

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### Vision/Mission/Values Statements:

**Vision statements** describe how your organization will be viewed in the future, e.g. ending hunger. **Mission statements** define the purpose of the organization. **Values statements** describe how the organization will operate and usually include some link to important moral values.

### Goals/Objectives/Tactics:

**Goals** are overall accomplishments the organization should achieve. **Objectives** are specific results needed to achieve each goal. **Tactics** are defined methods needed to reach an objective.

### S.W.O.T Analysis:

This analysis is often used at the beginning of a planning session to help define the organization's current environment. It gives an overview of the organization's **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.**

### Annual Plan/Work Plan:

**Annual Plans** include the entire organization's goals, objectives and tactics. **Work Plans** include all of the above but are for single departments/projects.

# Strengthening Alaska's Anti-Hunger Network

## The Planning Process Basic Steps

The strategic planning process may take several days or just an afternoon, but the following basics should be covered to get a solid plan:

- **Identify Purpose:** Create or update your vision, mission and values statements
- **S.W.O.T. Assessment :** Create a clear picture of your internal and external environments
- **Select Strategic Goals:** Identify goals for several different timelines (e.g. 1 year, 3 year, 5 year, 10 year)
- **Identify Objectives:** Clarify the specific results needed to achieve each goal
- **Identify and Assign Tactics:** Create a plan that describes the tactics for achieving each objective, assign a staff member in charge of implementing those tactics and the associated staff that will participate or be affected
- **Monitor and Update the Plan:** Create a calendar that will allow the strategic planning group to meet and discuss any changes that need to be made to the plan

## Keeping it Real

With all of the talk around strategic planning, one would assume that having a strategic plan will solve all of your organization's problems. Not only is that not the truth, but it's the farthest thing from the truth.

In reality, strategic planning is more about the process than the actual plan that is created. It's probably not going to be an "awakening" either. What the process does do is get players away from the day-to-day fires and allow them to see the big picture.

In the process, things are never as bad as what you thought they were, but they usually aren't as good you planned them to be. Don't let that dissuade you from the project. Start simple and build on what you know--once you get the first one complete, the subsequent strategic plans will be much more fluid.

## More Resources

If you have questions about strategic planning or for more resources, contact Kerri Burrows, Alaska Food Coalition Manager, at [afc@foodbankofalaska.org](mailto:afc@foodbankofalaska.org) or 907.222.3103.

**Next Month:  
Marketing Plans --  
How to Tell Your  
Story**

