SECTION 1. PREPARE

GETTING YOUR ORGANIZATION READY FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

A strategic plan can move your organization in a different direction; the results can be dynamic and positive. Still, the planning process should not be taken lightly, because change is inherently difficult. Before you start, you should prepare for what is ahead by taking a critical look at your organization and asking: Is my organization ready to embark on the strategic planning process?

Every organization is fundamentally different; each will be at a different level of readiness for a strategic plan, and each will have different needs that should be addressed in the strategic planning process. When you prepare for your strategic plan, you attempt to understand how such a plan can work in your organization. By identifying key players and setting the stage for the planning process, you can obtain buy-in and build consensus about your strategic plan. The short-term preparation work that you do will pay off for your plan in the long run, increasing its ultimate chance for success.

What is the point in running when you're not on the right road?

—German Proverb

WHAT IS IN THIS SECTION?

This section outlines the steps you need to take when you prepare for your strategic planning process. We discuss:

STEP 1. DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP

STEP 2. FINDING OUT IF YOUR ORGANIZATION IS READY FOR A STRATEGIC PLAN

STEP 3. ESTABLISHING COMMON GROUND FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

STEP 1.   DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP

The first step in preparing for your strategic plan is to put together a planning group. Your planning group can be formal or informal. Sometimes a strategic planning group is a formal team chartered to create the plan together. Other times, there is a core team of decision-makers and a loose affiliation with other players who contribute feedback throughout the process. The bottom line is to think critically about who can and should contribute to your strategic plan, and to get them involved early in the process.

You may not immediately know who to include in your planning group. A comprehensive strategic planning process requires significant input from both clients and stakeholders. Clients and stakeholders can contribute a great deal to your planning process — as contributors, advisors, reviewers, subject-matter experts, or even as financial backers.

Your clients and stakeholders are the people or groups who use your organization's services or are affected by your organization's actions. Identifying both your clients and your stakeholders will help you assess the current environment of your organization by giving you an understanding of who will be affected by your plan or want to contribute input.

A client is anyone whose best interests are served by your organization, or who receives or uses your organization's resources or services. Organizations may have many different clients. You can have internal clients (such as units or employees in your organization) and external clients (such as crime victims, allied service providers, or community members).

A stakeholder is any person or group with a vested interest in your organization; or who can expect a certain level of performance or compliance from your organization. Organizations may have many different stakeholders. Stakeholders may not necessarily use the resources or receive the services of a program; they may be advocates of the program or other community members who are affected by the program.

As you develop your planning group, you will want to think about including people both internal and external to your organization. Your strategic planning group should be representative of key organization decision-makers, but it should also rely on significant contributions from your stakeholders (including community members or other partner groups) and even your clients. You should ensure that your planning process allows you to get feedback from a representative cross-section of people who are invested in your organization.

You might worry that bringing together the opinions and thoughts of so many different people will make the planning process more difficult. Though it may be harder to achieve consensus among a wide range of people with different insights and interests, having such a range of input will greatly benefit your plan. When people contribute valuable insights and data to the strategic planning process, they are often more receptive to the final plan. They will be naturally interested and encouraged to see the outcomes of their contributions.

TOOLS FOR SECTION 1, STEP 1 includes more detail regarding the client and stakeholder identification process. This section has two checklists — a Stakeholder Analysis Checklist and a Client Analysis Checklist. These checklists help you identify your stakeholders and clients, and give guidance on how to elicit and incorporate feedback from them.

STEP 2: FINDING OUT IF YOUR ORGANIZATION IS READY FOR A STRATEGIC PLAN

Once you have a planning group in place, you will be ready to determine your organization's *readiness to plan*. How well you analyze the conditions under which strategic planning will take place can mean the difference between your plan succeeding or failing. Assessing *readiness* can help identify issues that may impede the process, opportunities for strengthening it, and potential allies or supporters who will help move the planning process forward.

To find out if your organization is ready for strategic planning you should:

■   Conduct a systematic assessment of your organization's readiness to plan.

■   Anticipate and prepare for the challenges of strategic planning.

2.1 CONDUCT A SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT OF YOUR ORGANIZATION'S READINESS TO PLAN

How do you determine if an organization is *ready to plan?* Like most ventures, strategic planning processes require a certain degree of readiness in order to succeed. States, organizations, and individuals must be prepared to make sure that the planning process will provide the maximum benefit. It is important to recognize that conditions only need to be conducive—not perfect—for planning to be successful. Planning takes time, coordination, expertise, objectivity and preparation. By making sure that your organization is ready to invest these resources in the process, you will better ensure your plan's success. Additionally, if you find out that your organization is not ready to plan, your group can stop and try to fix the situation before proceeding with the strategic planning process.

Therefore, it is important to frankly and honestly gauge your organization's readiness to pursue a strategic planning process. There is no standard procedure or protocol for conducting a preliminary readiness assessment. There are, however, some publications and authors that provide guidance about how to determine an organization's *readiness to plan*.

TOOLS FOR SECTION 1, STEP 2.1 includes a Pre-Planning Readiness Checklist. This short checklist gives you "big picture" concepts to think about as you decide whether to start the strategic planning process.

2.2 ANTICIPATE AND PREPARE FOR CHALLENGES TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

The very process of strategic planning can be challenging and time-consuming. Often, the potential challenges to strategic planning are viewed as excuses to simply not plan. However, many of these challenges to strategic planning are quite common. By understanding these challenges in advance, you can be ready to address them effectively so that your strategic plan stays on track.

Challenges and solutions in strategic planning
The following ten challenges to strategic planning are based upon the experiences of states and jurisdictions that have successfully implemented strategic planning for victim services.

Challenge	Why does it happen?	How can you solve it?
Challenge 1. Misunderstanding: "All we have to do is just write down the things that we want to do over the next couple of years. Why do we actually need a strategic plan?"	Sometimes VOCA administrators, agency directors, and board members do not have a clear understanding of what strategic planning means. They are not informed or convinced about the *purpose and benefits* of developing such a plan. To many, the term "strategic planning" itself can be intimidating. They do not know how to begin the process so they stay away from it.	**Solution:** First, thinking patterns must be changed. Participants must learn—and "buy in" to—the value of planning. Done correctly, it looks not only at where they want the states, local jurisdictions, or organizations to go, but will examine where they are and even where they have come from. Strategic planning is the "road map with a commonly agreed upon destination" to help create a set of goals based upon a sound mission and shared values.
Challenge 2. Training: "I don't need anyone to show me how to write down goals and objectives. I've done this stuff for years."	Many victim assistance organizations are grassroots programs with leaders who may have a passion for what they are doing, but have little or no formal training in how to accomplish it. The concept of "planning" is difficult to comprehend when there appears to be limited time and resources for providing direct victim services. Without training and technical assistance or a basic understanding of strategic planning, many potential participants will not be interested in joining a process that should be inclusive.	**Solution:** The Strategic Planning Toolkit has been designed in a manner to facilitate both training and technical assistance about the strategic planning process. States, local jurisdictions and organizations can utilize its many components— as well as technical assistance available from OVC's Training and Technical Assistance Center's (TTAC's) strategic planning consultants—to guide strategic planning initiatives or to receive training about strategic planning processes.

Challenge	Why does it happen?	How can you solve it?
Challenge 3. Commitment: "I think strategic planning is fine, as long as someone else has the time and resources to do it."	Strategic planning requires time as well as human and financial resources. Many VOCA administrators and agency directors feel that they do not have the time to invest in this significant effort while completing their day-to-day requirements for basic program management and victim assistance.	**Solution:** In order to be most effective, the planning process has to be viewed holistically, with each participant identifying some value or positive outcome resulting from his or her participation. The final plan should yield useful results not only for the strategic planning sponsors, but for all states, organizations, and individuals who contribute to its success. Ideally, the planning process will be integrated into the organization's operations on an ongoing basis. It's helpful to find a person or a team of persons—the *change agent(s)*—who will drive the overall project. These are people who are well respected and committed to seeing this project to its conclusion. They have the enthusiasm to motivate participants and are committed to being inclusive.
Challenge 4. Funding Resources: "We simply don't have it in the budget. We have to raise money for services and nothing else! We have to watch the bottom line!"	The strategic planning process can be costly in terms of time and human resources. Project sponsors must develop a budget and a time-task-cost plan that clearly delineates both costs and funding priorities when there are limited dollars available.	**Solution:** Yes, planning can be costly, but not as costly as time wasted on unfocused activities that do not advance the mission of the organization. Further, lack of resources should never be an excuse not to plan, given the situation. The *Determining resources* portion of **Section 4: Implement**, of this Toolkit contains valuable information about resources for supporting a strategic planning initiative. Many funding sources see the value of strategic planning and are encouraging (and even *requiring*) agencies to undertake the process. In addition, local resources such as universities and United Way programs can support strategic planning initiatives. Sometimes, professors are willing to use this initiative as a class project or a graduate level individual activity.

Challenge	Why does it happen?	How can you solve it?
Challenge 5. Buy-In: "I'm not sure we need to do this, but if others feel so strongly about it, go ahead."	It is imperative that the leadership of an organization agrees to undergo this process. Mere verbal assent is not enough. "Buy-in" involves everyone's time, talents and resources.	**Solution:** Potential participants need to see how beneficial the strategic planning process and potential outcomes are. One way to overcome this type of thinking is to ascertain what the needs are of those who are slow to come aboard, and use these needs as a "jump start." However, it is important to draw parallels that demonstrate how their needs or concerns impact other segments of the system. The idea here is to avoid any undermining, while building a stronger working team.
Challenge 6. Lone Ranger Approach: "It's her duty as director to come up with the plan. We'll review it and decide if it is the way that we want to go. We can help if she needs anything."	Strategic planning is frequently assigned to the Executive Director to carry out. However, good planning involves the collaborative commitment and participation of everyone.[1]	**Solution:** If everyone participates, then individuals are less likely to attribute the blame to others for problems with the plan. In addition, working as a group can help increase objectivity and focus the plan, which otherwise might get bogged down in personalities and politics.
Challenge 7. Denial: "I'm OK, you're OK." "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!"	Good planning means looking at oneself and the agency critically. Planners have to sit and listen to the truth, no matter how painful, and accept it as beneficial to "the big picture."	**Solution:** The goal of a good strategic plan is to remedy some of the problems the agency or jurisdiction is facing in developing and/or implementing its mission, vision, goals, and objectives. It is not designed to "sugar coat" the truth. Sometimes it is good to take a hard look at what has been and is currently being done. If it is right, the plan will confirm it.

Challenge	Why does it happen?	How can you solve it?
Challenge 8. Time: "I've checked my calendar and I am available on my lunch hour on Thursday and for two hours on Friday afternoon. If the rest of the board will make a similar commitment, we can knock this thing out quickly!"	Strategic planning is seen as a long and complicated process. There is immense pressure to maintain services and generate funds. Many VOCA administrators, agency directors, and their board members feel they simply *cannot* take on anything else.	**Solution:** You cannot develop a strategic plan overnight. A well-managed organization builds strategic planning into its normal operations in an ongoing manner. Strategic planning and implementation requires a lot of time and energy. Although the demand for planning can appear overwhelming in light of the day-to-day operations of programs whose staff are needed for the planning process, states, organizations, and individuals must be made aware that the benefits can outweigh the time challenge.
Challenge 9. Getting Pertinent Players to the Table: "I realize victim services is important, but I don't think the Chief will let me give any more time." "I have a heavy trial calendar and I can't devote any more time to this." "Unfortunately, running a major corporation keeps me really busy. Maybe my secretary can sit in on some of the meetings."	It can be challenging, at best, to get all of the stakeholders to the table to map out a blueprint for the state's, organization's, or jurisdiction's programmatic direction. People who serve on nonprofit boards are often very busy and over-committed, and VOCA administrators and allied professionals are under their own occupational time and resource constraints. The "traditional players" in victim services do not always reflect the cultural, gender, and geographic diversity that is required for success.	**Solution:** A "time-task-responsibility plan" can help determine whose input is needed at what point in the strategic planning process (a sample is included in **Section 2, Assess, Tools**). While core strategic planning team members should clearly understand what is required of them in terms of time, the multitude of people who will contribute to the planning process should be asked to get involved with clear expectations, as well as time commitments, provided. Ongoing efforts should be made to ensure that cultural competence is achieved in terms of planning team leadership and participation throughout the planning process.

Challenge	Why does it happen?	How can you solve it?
Challenge 10. Finding the Right Consultant: "No one out there understands what we're going through."	Admittedly, it can be difficult to locate consultants who have some knowledge about the victim service field, but they are out there. Many consultants have experience in strategic plan development and implementation, as well as other skills, and can offer "process expertise" to complement the victim assistance expertise among strategic planning team members.	**Solution:** You can use consultants who have a good working knowledge of the field of victim assistance. Since a number of states have developed strategic plans for victim assistance, solid references for consultants to guide the process are readily available. In addition, technical assistance for strategic planning is available for VOCA administrators and grantees from the OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center (866-OVC-TTAC).

STEP 3. ESTABLISHING COMMON GROUND FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING[2]

Finding common ground for your strategic planning process is critical to the ultimate success of your plan. Your planning group and your organization need to start from a common frame of reference. By making sure that everyone is on the same page, you can better create a strategic plan that meets everyone's expectations. At the same time, you can ensure that your planning process has a set of common ground rules so that people interact respectfully and productively.

Whether you are engaging in a state-wide strategic planning process or a local level process, a wide range of stakeholders will be involved. Each participant comes with his or her personal and organizational history, perspectives, experiences, successes, and visions. "Turf" issues are often cited as a major hurdle in working cooperatively: programs and/or administrators often seem reluctant to share information, resources, or ideas. Establishing the "common ground" shared by participants leads to group appreciation of the strengths brought by each member, a valuing of their potential contributions, and an understanding of the needs and wishes of all involved: an important first step to countering "turf-ism."

There are planning practice techniques designed to help groups of diverse organizations or departments come together to form cooperative, effective, and dynamic entities. From these entities—that must be founded on common ground—you can enhance the "bottom line" of your plan—be it profits or services. The practices and techniques may have different design formats, but they share key commonalities that have proved very effective.

Whether working with a small internal group or one that is very large, complex and diverse, there are key principles that can help you create the final, cooperative environment needed for action. You may choose to engage a trained facilitator to lead a process designed specifically for this purpose or you may develop your own methods. Either way, the key principles below offer significant insights into promoting an environment for cooperation and change.

Two important ways to help develop common ground are to:

■ Establish a foundation of trust and cooperation in your planning group, and,

■ Ensure that there is cultural competence in your planning group.

3.1 ESTABLISH A FOUNDATION OF TRUST AND COOPERATION AMONG YOUR PLANNING GROUP

For your plan to be a success, you must have an effective team. But creating an effective team is about more than inviting the right people. It is also about creating a productive and positive atmosphere where change can happen.[3]

- **Establish a "strengths-based" approach.** In any process, you will find elements that are working. Identify those elements and capitalize on them. When we think of Strategic Planning, we often tend to focus on the weaknesses: "needs," "gaps," "deficiencies," "frustrations," "breaks in services," "funding declines," etc. What we sometimes fail to consider are the past and present practices that are working, supporting, and enhancing services for victims. As you work in your planning group, focus on how you can expand on what is working. Additionally, find avenues for each participant or organization to enhance their contributions to the process.

- **Develop relationships: the key to change.** You should recognize and value what each participant and organization brings to the table. Ask questions to get people talking about what they believe is important in the planning process. Set up activities that require inter-agency work. And above all, remember that developing relationships among key stakeholders is critical to the success of your ultimate plan.

- **Promote mutual sharing and learning among stakeholders.** Everyone at the table has something to offer. The more diverse the group, the richer the opportunities to learn from each other.

- **Appreciate and apply lessons from past successes.** Keep track of changes, developments, and new practices, both positive and negative. Your planning group should take what is working, improve it, and apply it to new endeavors. Planning groups that create a historical timeline that represents a shared history develop an understanding of each other. They also tend to respect and value each other when they see what they have accomplished together through often difficult circumstances.

- **Develop a shared vision for the future.** Determine the ideal scenario and then work together to identify ways to get there. Have participants think about 5 to 10 years in the future. What would be the ideal situation, and, most importantly, how would they get there? You can use fun strategies including skits, songs, developing book titles and chapter headings that describe the process, and having "60-minutes-type" interviews.

- **Gather together a diverse group where each person makes valuable contributions: participatory change models.** Diversity includes not only gender and ethnicity, but also job responsibilities, personal styles, and wide-ranging stakeholder groups. One model for large group strategic planning states that if you don't have some people at the table who make you uncomfortable, you probably haven't included all the stakeholders who should be there. Inclusion in the process leads to "buy-in" and action.

- **Avoid a problem-solving process.** Even though "needs" are identified, strategic planning should involve looking for creative strategies to try, not re-hashing the reasons for failure in the past. Focusing on problems gives the process a negativity that can pervade and undermine the work.

- **Recognize that language is important.** Use positive, upbeat language. Instead of saying "It won't work," say "Let's try." "Challenges" feel like they are more easily overcome than "barriers." It sounds simple, but negative language can be intentionally (although maybe subconsciously) used to sabotage some actions. Unintentionally using negative language can support an environment counterproductive to change.

3.2 ENSURE THAT THERE IS CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN YOUR STRATEGIC PLANNING

When you work on your strategic plan, you need to focus on inclusivity—or *recognizing* and *valuing* the diversity, backgrounds, experiences, and assets of crime victims and those who serve them. Inclusion is integral to and necessary for the success of strategic planning.[4]

The National Institute of Justice, Pickett Institute defines cultural competence as "a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, and policies that come together in a system, agency, organization, or individual that enables it to work effectively in cross-cultural situations." To better understand where you are in the process of becoming more culturally competent, it is useful to think of the possible ways you can respond to cultural differences from an organizational standpoint.

The Pickett Institute identifies six points along a developmental continuum and the characteristics that might be exhibited at each position. Each stage progressively builds on the former one and requires the participating organization to assess the biases, prejudices, and assumptions it makes about peo-

ple who are different. A more personal examination requires individuals to look at how they can provide support and direction and help improve the way their organization deals with employees and volunteers. The points on the continuum also help participating organizations develop and implement policies, procedures, systems and practices to break the barriers that hinder cross-cultural understanding and communication.[5]

1. **Cultural Destructiveness.** Organizations representing the first developmental stage adopt attitudes, policies, and practices that are destructive to cultures and, consequently, to the individuals in the culture.

2. **Cultural Incapacity.** While the system or organization in developmental level two does not intentionally seek to be culturally destructive, it lacks the capacity to help minority clients or communities. Some examples would be maintaining discriminatory hiring practices, sending subtle messages to people of minority status that they are not valued or welcome, and espousing lower expectations of minority clients.

3. **Cultural Blindness.** At the midpoint of the continuum, the system and its agencies in developmental level three provide services with the expressed philosophy of being unbiased, and feel that color or culture makes no difference. They believe that helping approaches traditionally used by the dominant culture are universally applicable. Such services ignore cultural strengths, encourage assimilation, and blame victims for their problems.

4. **Cultural Pre-competence.** The pre-competent organization at developmental level four realizes its weakness in serving certain cultural groups and attempts to improve some aspects of their services to a specific population. The danger at this stage is that an organization may take on a false sense of accomplishment by feeling that by fulfilling one major goal, it has met its obligation to a particular cultural group. Another danger is tokenism. Hiring minority staff does not ensure that services will be more accessible, staff will be more sensitive, and the needs of the targeted cultural groups have been fully met.

5. **Cultural Competence.** Culturally competent organizations reflecting developmental level five are characterized by acceptance and respect for difference. They continue self-assessment regarding different cultures, pay careful attention to the dynamics of difference, continuously expand cultural knowledge and resources, and adapt service models to meet the changing needs of various cultural groups. They also hire unbiased employees and volunteers, and seek advice from and the involvement of various cultural groups to improve services.

6. **Cultural Proficiency.** The developmental level six organization holds culture in high esteem. It supports and/or conducts research and develops new approaches to serving different cultural groups, supports or publishes the results of demonstration projects, and hires staff members who are specialists in culturally competent practice.

Organizations that have successfully developed and implemented strategic plans emphasize the importance of ensuring cultural competence in the client/stakeholder identification process. Ensuring cultural competence requires that, as part of the process, the organization seeks and incorporates input and opinions from individuals and groups that are diverse by culture and ethnicity (and also by gender, geography, disability, and life experiences). Strategic planning efforts should always try to reflect the clients ultimately served, as well those who are underserved and unserved (often due to cultural marginalization). This may mean understanding and including groups of people more representative of all clients and stakeholders.

Tools for Section 1, Step 3.2, "What principles can you use to ensure cultural competence?" discusses cultural competence in more detail. It includes a definition of cultural competence in terms of selecting clients and stakeholders. It also includes principles to follow to ensure cultural competence.

3.3 APPLY CULTURAL COMPETENCE TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

In order to develop a planning process and a strategic plan that are culturally competent, strategic planning team members must consider how cultural competence affects the representation in your organization, the assistance your organization provides, and organization members' own feelings.

Cultural competence and how it affects the representation in your organization
The level of cultural competence you achieve can affect:

■ How well diverse cultures and a wide range of points of view are represented in strategic planning initiatives (i.e. on planning teams, advisory boards, research, data collection and outreach efforts, and through public education initiatives, etc.)

■ How programs are planned, implemented, and developed with respect to cultural diversity.

■ Research about the impact of victimization, particularly any differences

in how victims of various cultures are affected by crime, trauma, and their treatment by justice processes and personnel and victim service providers.

■ How you develop staff performance measures and program evaluation criteria.

■ The need for participants in the strategic planning process to feel validated, safe, and respected, regardless of their culture, ethnicity, gender, geography, or disability.

■ How you plan to address the rights and needs of victims who have physical or mental disabilities, and how you would plan to include representatives in planning efforts who can address important participation and outreach issues (i.e., compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, interpreters for the deaf, outreach resources in Braille, etc.).

Cultural competence and how it affects the assistance your organization provides

The level of cultural competence you achieve can affect:

■ How crime victims of diverse cultures are viewed and treated by the justice system and allied professional agencies and organizations.

■ How crime victims perceive their treatment, by collecting relevant data throughout the planning process to document their treatment and perceptions.

■ Outreach and dissemination efforts that engage and involve representatives from culturally diverse communities as paid staff, partners, volunteers, liaisons, and other important linkages to crime victims and allied professionals.

■ How criminal and juvenile justice, victim service providers, and allied professionals are trained to identify and address the needs and concerns of diverse cultures.

■ The need for language interpreters to facilitate strategic planning processes, as well as basic implementation of victims' rights throughout the justice system, provision of system- and community-based victim services, and victim and community outreach.

■ The need to provide victim information and outreach resources in the languages of the various cultures in your community (in print, audio, video and Web-based formats).

■ How you ultimately develop a strategic plan that must incorporate and address the needs of all victims of crime and those who serve them.[6]

Cultural competence and how it affects organization members' feelings

The level of cultural competence you achieve can affect:

■ Strategic planning team members' or program members' own feelings, perspectives, and possible biases that relate to strategic planning, collaboration, and the overall provision of victim services.

■ How you combat tokenism. Your focus on culturally diverse representation in strategic planning initiatives should be driven by a desire for the best possible plan and outcomes, not a need to achieve "bonus points" for diversity. If you do not recognize and respect the contributions of diverse populations, they will not have the positive impact that you need for real success.

ENDNOTES

1. Common Ground, N.C. Center for Nonprofits, May-June 1999, *Board Development: the New Work of Nonprofit Boards*, N.C. Center for Nonprofits.

2. Adapted from: Marvin R. Weisbord, 2002, *Discovering Common Ground: Establishing a Foundation for Trust and Cooperation in Strategic Planning across Personalities and Organizations*, San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Kohler Publishers.

3. Two useful references on establishing a foundation of trust and cooperation are:

   • Marvin R. Weisbord, *Discovering Common Ground: How Future Search Conferences Bring People Together to Achieve Breakthrough Innovation, Empowerment, Shared Vision and Collaborative Action*, San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers. Available at: www.futuresearch.net

   • Sue Annis Hammond, *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry*, Plano, TX: Thin Book Publishing Co. Available at: http://appreciativeinquiry.cwru.edu

4. Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center, 2003, *Strategic Planning Training-of-Planners Conference*, Baltimore, MD: Office for Victims of Crime, Training and Technical Assistance Center.

5. National Institute of Justice, Pickett Institute, 2002, *Cultural Competency*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.

6. Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center, 2003, *Strategic Planning Training-of-Planners Conference*, Baltimore, MD: Office for Victims of Crime, Training and Technical Assistance Center.

TOOLS FOR SECTION 1: PREPARE

WHAT IS IN THIS SECTION?

This section contains tools you could use when you prepare your organization for strategic planning. These tools apply to:

STEP 1. DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP

- Stakeholders Analysis Checklist
- Client Analysis Checklist

STEP 2. FINDING OUT IF YOUR ORGANIZATION IS READY FOR A STRATEGIC PLAN

- Preplanning Readiness Checklist

STEP 3. ESTABLISHING COMMON GROUND FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Head Start's Eight Multicultural Principles Checklist

STEP 1: DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP

1.1 CLIENT/STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND INCORPORATION PROCESS

We have included two checklists to help you fully identify your clients and stakeholders so that you can incorporate their views into your strategic plan.

Stakeholders[1] Analysis Checklist

Step 1: Identify who your stakeholders are
- ☐ List all the primary stakeholders.

- ☐ List all the secondary stakeholders.

- ☐ List all the external stakeholders.

- ☐ Identify all potential supporters and opponents of your project.

- ☐ Identify your key stakeholders.

- ☐ Identify the interests of vulnerable groups (*e.g.* the poor).

- ☐ Rank all your stakeholders in importance to your project.

- ☐ Note any new primary or secondary stakeholders that are likely to emerge as a result of the project.

Step 2. Identify stakeholder interests
- ☐ List the individual interests of each stakeholder. (Try to be objective and look for covert interests as well as obvious ones.)

- ☐ Record the stakeholders' expectations of the project.

- ☐ Catalog likely benefits for the stakeholder.

- ☐ Determine resources the stakeholder will wish to commit (or avoid committing) to the project.

- ☐ Discover other interests the stakeholder has which may conflict with the project.

- ☐ Identify how the stakeholder regards others on the list.

Step 3. Assess the impact of your project on each stakeholder
- ☐ Assess the impact of your project on each stakeholder – is it positive, negative, neutral or unknown?

- ☐ List which stakeholder interests converge most closely with project objectives.

Step 4. Assess the influence of each stakeholder on your strategic plan

☐ Identify clearly who can influence your project.

☐ Know where command and control rests in relation to budget; in relation to clinical matters.

☐ Identify leaders/champions.

☐ Record who controls strategic resources. Will they commit these to your project?

☐ Catalog who has specialist knowledge crucial to your project. Will they support you?

☐ Determine who occupies a strong negotiating position in relation to other stakeholders.

Step 5. Assess the level of stakeholder participation your plan will have

☐ Decide which stakeholders you must involve as partners.

☐ Evaluate which stakeholders need to be consulted with but who may not wish to be active in the program.

☐ Establish which stakeholders you need to keep informed only.

Step 6. Find out what your stakeholders think and want

Use the following tools (described in detail in **Section 2, Assess, Tools**) to collect this information:

☐ Written or telephone surveys.

☐ Focus groups.

☐ User groups.

☐ One-on-one interviews.

☐ Client assessment surveys.

☐ Client advisory committees or working groups.

☐ Public hearings and meetings.

☐ The Affinity Diagram process.

Step 7. Incorporate stakeholder feedback.

Use stakeholder feedback to:

☐ Further build your strategic planning group.

☐ Address problems that you identify in the strategic plan.

☐ Communicate more effectively with them about the strategic planning process. (Please see **Section 5, Communicate**, for more details.)

Clients Analysis Checklist

Step 1. Identify who your clients are

☐ List all groups of people who receive or use the resources and services produced by your organization.

☐ Record any new primary or secondary clients likely to emerge as a result of the project.

☐ Rank all your stakeholders in importance to your project.

Step 2. Identify client Interests

☐ Decide what clients need from your programs.

☐ Record what they want and expect.

☐ Determine what other options clients have when obtaining similar resources or services.

☐ Identify the interests of vulnerable groups (e.g. the poor).

☐ Establish who should receive or use such resources and services, but are not adequately represented.

☐ List the clients' expectations of the project.

☐ Identify likely benefits for the clients.

Step 3. Assess the impact of your project on each client group

☐ Assess the impact of your project on each client group — is it positive, negative, neutral or unknown?

☐ Decide which client group interests converge most closely with project objectives.

Step 4. Assess the level of client participation your plan will have

☐ Determine which clients you must involve as partners.

☐ Establish which clients need to be consulted with but who may not wish to be active in the program.

Step 5. Find out what your clients think and want

Use the following tools (described in detail in **Section 2, Assess, Tools**) to collect this information:

☐ Written or telephone surveys.

☐ Focus groups.

☐ User groups.

☐ One-on-one interviews.

☐ Client assessment surveys.

☐ Client advisory committees or working groups.

☐ Public hearings and meetings.

☐ The Affinity Diagram process.

Step 6. Incorporate client feedback.

Use client feedback to:

☐ Further build your strategic planning group.

☐ Address problems that you identify in the strategic plan.

☐ Communicate more effectively with them about the strategic planning process. (Please see **Section 5, Communicate**, for more details.)

STEP 2. FINDING OUT IF YOUR ORGANIZATION IS READY FOR A STRATEGIC PLAN

2.1 CONDUCT A SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT OF YOUR ORGANIZATION'S READINESS TO PLAN

Pre-Planning Readiness Checklist

The Alliance on Nonprofit Management (ANA) has developed a short check-list to help you assess your organization's readiness to plan. You can review and address the following elements or conditions before you commit to strategic planning.[2]

ANA Pre-Planning Readiness Checklist

❑ A commitment of active and involved leadership, with continuous leadership engaged throughout the planning process.

❑ A resolution of major crises that may interfere with long-range thinking during the process, commitment to the plan, and participation in the planning process (e.g., insufficient funds for next payroll, etc).

❑ Board and staff that are not embroiled in extreme, destructive conflict.

❑ Board and staff who understand the purpose of planning and what it can or cannot accomplish, as well as consensus about expectations.

❑ Commitment of resources to adequately assess current programs and the ability to meet current and future client needs.

❑ Willingness to question the status quo and to look at new approaches to perform and evaluate the business of the organization.

STEP 3:   ESTABLISHING COMMON GROUND
FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

3.2 ENSURE THAT THERE IS CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN YOUR STRATEGIC PLANNING

What principles can you use to ensure cultural competence?
The Head Start Program is federally mandated to be culturally relevant and multiculturally sensitive. Head Start has developed eight "multicultural principles" that must be reflected in its programming and are equally relevant for organizations engaged in strategic planning. The principles are paraphrased below.

Head Start's Eight Multicultural Principles Checklist[3]

Check off each principle as it is discussed in your strategic planning process:

❏ Every individual is rooted in culture.
❏ The cultural groups represented in the communities and families are the primary source for culturally relevant programming.
❏ Culturally relevant and diverse services require learning accurate information about the culture of different groups and discarding stereotypes.
❏ Addressing cultural relevance is necessary in all activities.
❏ Every individual has the right to maintain his or her own identity while acquiring skills to function in our diverse society.
❏ Culturally competent programs reflect the community.
❏ Culturally relevant and diverse programming examines and challenges institutional and personal biases.
❏ Cultural recognition and competence are incorporated in all services.

ENDNOTES

1. BC Heart Health, "a01-stakeholder_analysis.pdf,"www.heart-health.org/resources/hhs/toolkit/PDF/worksheets.

2. Alliance for Nonprofit Management, "Frequently Asked Questions," The Alliance Raising the Bar on Quality, www.allianceonline.org/faqs/.

3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1992, *Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs*, Washington, DC: Administration for Children and Families, Head Start Bureau. www.bmcc.org/Headstart/Cultural/index.htm.