

Northampton Survival Center
STRATEGIC PLAN
2013 – 2016

INTRODUCTION

Following completion of the capital campaign, the board decided to create a new plan to guide our work in the years 2013-2015. During a board retreat facilitated by Dan Kirsch, we broke into three groups to look at possible goals and strategies in three areas: Program, Governance/Staff, and Development.

Our core Program of providing food to those who need it is supported by Development and Governance/Staff, essential aspects of board work.

If there are themes to this planning work, they might include:

- Partnership. If we think of hunger as a public health issue, an economic issue, and a community issue, who are our potential allies and partners who might help us have greater impact without increasing our own budget?
- Client-Centeredness. What is the appropriate stance for us to take regarding nutrition and health and the choices clients make about what they choose to eat?
- Leadership. How can the Survival Center proactively respond to the needs of our community rather than reacting to things beyond our control? What would it look like for us to be a model pantry for others across the country?

The NSC has been through tremendous change over the past three years, completing our first-ever capital campaign and building the facility we need in order to serve the community well. This plan does not call for radical changes. Instead, it proposes that the board and staff ask critical questions, do the research we need to find answers, and then consider where we need and want to go in the next three years.

PROGRAM STRATEGIES

1. Within our limited food budget, optimize the food supply in terms of client need and demand.

- Through fundraising, farm partnerships, possible reallocation of resources, and other means, provide clients with regular access to milk, good meat, cheese, juice, fresh produce, and culturally desirable items.
- Review our distribution system and identify options for distribution that would maximize client choice while maintaining the nutritional value of the food they take home.
- Consider the possibility of offering a mini-store or other model to enable clients access to staple products at subsidized prices as they become more independent.

2. Increase outreach to potential clients who are not currently being served.

- Seek a partnership with a college or university to have a student group design and carry out a study to gather data about potential clients not being served.
- Develop a strategy for reaching these potential clients and determine the amount of outreach we want the NSC to do within the context of available resources and other priorities.

3. Provide more opportunities for our clients to move toward self-sufficiency.

- Work with Smith School of Social Work (or other partners) to have social workers on site to help clients access assistance and training programs.
- Build a more robust, year-long workshop series to educate clients about budgeting, food stamps, nutrition, and other topics.
- Explore potential partnerships with other organizations in the county.

GOVERNANCE & STAFFING STRATEGIES

1. Have a full board of members reflecting the diversity of the community and a waiting list of qualified individuals wanting to serve on the board.

- Identify areas of diversity to be represented (profession, gender, race, geography, etc.).
- Develop and implement effective board recruitment guidelines.

2. Establish protocols and practices for achieving and maintaining excellence in board service.

- Review and improve board orientation materials and trainings (perhaps in collaboration with others).
- Establish a protocol for regular review of by-laws and other governance documents to ensure that they reflect the best in nonprofit governance.
- Ensure that director and officer job descriptions, term limits, and succession and transition processes are clear.
- Establish formal oversight or review of how all committees are functioning.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

1. Make and implement a decision about an endowment.

- Have the Finance Committee develop a proposal for board discussion that includes pros and cons, costs, and other issues.
- If we vote to proceed, work with the Executive Director to create a plan to launch the program.

2. Plan and launch a planned giving program.

- Analyze the wide variety of planned giving programs, from basic to complex, to determine the most appropriate scope for our program.
- Create a plan, timeline, and budget, and clarify staff and board roles.

IMPLEMENTATION

Prior to the November, March, and June Board meetings for 2013-2016, the Governance Committee will request that the different committees responsible for implementing the Strategic Plan report on their progress. In terms of benchmarks, the Governance Committee expects that the Strategic Plan will be implemented and monitored roughly along the following parameters:

1. 2013-2014—During this time period, committees responsible for implementing the Strategic Plan will focus on and wrap-up research and evaluation necessary to implement measures.
2. 2014-2015—During this time period, committees responsible for implementing the Strategic Plan will should focus on actual implementation.
3. 2015-2016—During this time period, committees responsible for implementing the Strategic Plan will should focus on continuing implementation and evaluating implementation.