

## Strategic Thinking for Nonprofits: Discussion Guide

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*This Strategic Thinking framework was developed as a companion guide to "[COVID-19: Questions Nonprofit Leaders Should be Asking Right Now.](#)"*

**Instructions:** *First, convene your Strategic Thinking work group. This group should be a combination of staff and Board leaders. Set a purpose and agree on some desired outcomes for your conversation. Then, proceed through the worksheet and pose questions to the group for discussion.*

### PART I: VISION, MISSION, AND ASSETS

**VISION:** A brief statement describing the clear and inspirational long-term desired change resulting from an organization's work. It answers the question "What do we want to see in place in the world?"

**MISSION:** A succinct expression of the organization's *reason for existence*, clarifying the "whom" you serve and the "where" you serve them. It answers the questions:

- Why does our organization exist?
- What is our role in accomplishing the larger societal vision?

**ASSETS:** The unique capacities, skills, and value your organization possesses, allowing it to uniquely deliver on its mission.

#### VISION

**Discuss:** What change do we want to see in our world (or community) in 30 or 40 years as a result of our work? What vision are we unrelentingly working toward over the long term?

**Discuss:** Who else might share our organizational vision? (organizations, funders, partners, businesses, others)

**MISSION**

**Discuss:** Why does our organization exist? How do we uniquely contribute to the achievement of our societal vision?

**Discuss:** How does our mission differentiate our organization from others who share a similar vision? *(Specify a target population, approach, model, etc.)*

**ASSETS**

**Discuss:** Why is our organization best suited to deliver on this mission? What unique assets and value do we provide and for whom?

## **PART II: EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT**

**Discuss:** How are our constituents most affected by the current situation (e.g. health-related impact, financial/socio-economic hardship, or other)? Will they be adversely affected over the long term differently than they are now?

**Discuss:** Are our core services still relevant to our constituents? Are there new audiences or groups for whom our services may be relevant right now?

**Discuss:** Are there additional services we can offer that better meet the changing needs of our target audience?

**Cross-check your responses with your vision and mission work:**

- Would a shift in our target beneficiaries or services still support our organization’s vision and mission?
- How would this shift leverage our unique assets?
- Are there community or sector partners better equipped to lead this work with these constituents or in these service areas? If so, how can we contribute to their efforts?

**PART III: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

**“What We Have”**

**“What We Need”**

	<b>How has this area been affected? Strengthened, stretched, unaffected?</b>	<b>How is this area directly linked to accomplishing the mission-aligned changes we are making?</b>	<b>What financial/in-kind resource can we access to strengthen this area?</b>
<b>Governance and Board</b>			
<b>Staffing</b>			
<b>Fundraising</b>			
<b>Technology</b>			
<b>Communication</b>			
<b>Facilities</b>			
<b>Financing</b>			
<b>Other:</b> _____			
<b>Other:</b> _____			
<b>Other:</b> _____			