



STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION

The Ohio CDC Association is a statewide membership organization of community development corporations that engages in capacity building, advocacy, and public policy development that fosters socially and economically healthy communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE
This plan is the collaborative product of OCDCA's board of trustees and staff assisted by Linda Fabe of Oasis Consulting Inc. A special thanks and acknowledgement go to the Planning, Leadership and Organizational Development committee (PLOD).

The OCDCA board of trustees, staff and stakeholders convened for a year to create the future five year strategic direction of the organization. The process placed an emphasis on a stakeholder listening process to gain perspective and guidance, and to better engage the membership.

The plan participants established the following purpose statement to guide the process:

- We will create a shared vision with our members and stakeholders, and a sense of purpose versus a reactive approach.
- We will engage our members and stakeholders as partners and owners and build their involvement.
- We will strengthen and prioritize current strategies, while leaving ourselves open to new ideas.

METHODOLOGY

The board and staff participated in a kick-off retreat to clarify the planning purpose, examine environmental trends, critical issues, and begin the process of looking at the organization's strengths and areas for growth.

The Strengths Opportunities Aspirations Results (SOAR) model comes out of the work of Appreciative Inquiry. The OCDCA planning process has been structured to keep a focus on its many strengths and what is working well. Problems and threats are reframed into "opportunities" and "what can OCDCA do to become stronger", whenever possible.

Board members interviewed 15 constituent members representing varying perspectives of differing constituents such as funders, lenders, and intermediaries. Planning participants facilitated 6 Membership Meeting Conversation Circles to hear the perspectives of CDCs in different geographic parts of the state (city, suburban, rural) and levels of maturity from around the state. About 100 people participated in these, including about 15 non-members resulting in a Stakeholder Interview

Findings Report. A Similar-Type Organization Analysis was conducted to determine opportunities for collaboration and to avoid duplication.

A community-wide "Café Conversation" on the topic of, "How do CDC's need to be thinking about our field in Ohio, in order to make the greatest difference and stay current with the times?" was held at the 2008 Annual Conference.

The findings from the Conversation Circles and Stakeholder Interviews were used as input to creating Strategic Goals.

OCDCA's Strengths, Opportunities and Aspirations are the key elements that determine Strategic Goals or desired Results.

ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION, VALUES AND VISION

DIVERSITY

We believe:

- We must mirror the many faces of our communities – racially, ethnically, socio-economically, in gender, in sexual orientation, and in age.

- Urban and rural collaboration is vital to the strength of our association.

MEMBER DRIVEN

We believe:

- Members' needs and concerns determine the programming, advocacy and activities of the association.

ADVOCACY AND CAPACITY FOCUSED

We believe:

- Achieving our mission depends upon developing partnerships with a range of stakeholders (e.g. members, elected officials, intermediaries and other associations)
- The success of our field requires a unified political voice.
- It is a priority to assist organizations to improve their capacity to carry out their missions.

PROGRESSIVE

We believe:

- In the importance of an entrepreneurial orientation and vision both for OCDCA and for our members.

STRENGTHS

Plan leaders confirmed the five strengths identified in the Stakeholder Interviews as follows:

1. A “go to” place for training and technical assistance
2. A voice and advocate for CDCs on a statewide level
3. A resource for information, support and guidance
4. Fosters dialogue, collaboration, networking, information sharing among members
5. An incubator and provider of resources

OCDCA's strengths are:

- Capacity
- Relationships
- Voice

WHAT WILL MAKE OCDCA STRONGER?

Participants affirmed the findings of the stakeholder interviews which identified six opportunity areas for growth. Several of the areas identified are synonymous with its strengths, signifying that what OCDCA is doing is valued but can be improved.

PRIMARY THEMES:

- Build power and unity to strengthen advocacy
- Become a stronger resource
- Build relationships and community to strengthen member effectiveness and impact

SECONDARY THEMES:

- Improve communication and implementation of decisions
- Clarify the brand and market the CDC industry
- Strengthen collaboration

GOALS

The process and methodology supported the general strategic direction of the organization. Strengths identified include its training and technical assistance, guidance and support, and advocacy work.

Plan leaders identified the following six goals, which build on the current activities of OCDCA, as strategic initiatives to help OCDCA be better and stronger at what we do:

GOAL 1: Create a unified voice for CDCs statewide.

OCDCA's members are among its greatest strength and resource. Building the collective energy of a diverse membership, with varying self-interests, for the well-being of the whole is a critical goal for increasing advocacy success. There is a necessity to successfully create consensus and build power among the OCDCA membership.

GOAL 2: Build relationships through heightened communication with our members

It is important for OCDCA to expand its information-sharing capabilities around current changes, issues, trends and best practices.

GOAL 3: Clarify our brand and market the CDC industry

It is understood that much of the public is unaware of the outstanding impactful work of the industry in communities all across Ohio. Whether it be revitalizing distressed neighborhoods, developing affordable housing, mobilizing a community for impactful change, or raising households out of poverty it is important that the powerful stories of CDC successes are communicated.

GOAL 4: Strengthen collaboration to better support members and maximize shrinking resources

Greater collaboration is critical to maximizing finite resources while increasing organizational impact. OCDCA has a history of collaborative activity that can be bolstered to create added results for the membership and the organization.

GOAL 5: Maintain and strengthen financial stability

It is necessary to decrease dependence on traditional funding streams through increasing unrestricted funds that will result in a more financially sustainable and flexible organization. Strengthening financial stability will allow the organization to focus on services that are most valued by the membership.

GOAL 6: Increase industry capacity

This goal covers keeping a “big-picture” eye on OCDCA's key activities such as training, funding, advocacy and other programs and services through which the mission is accomplished. This is important to strengthen the organization's effectiveness, and to increasing membership and attendance.

IMPLEMENTATION

To keep implementation moving forward, the board, staff and committees will review progress on the plan regularly. The organization will hold themselves and each other accountable for commitments made to results. Performance measures will be established for each goal area to assess progress.

Continued input from the membership is desired and valued. To provide feedback please contact OCDCA. The plan is subject to modification based on member needs and changing environments.

Over the past quarter of a century, OCDCA has a long history of significant accomplishment. Together, the membership, board, staff and partners can realize the fulfillment of the stated goals and grow into a more sustainable organization serving our mission and the dynamic community development industry.



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