

# CAPLAW

Community Action Program Legal Services, Inc.

## Purposeful Planning How to Focus Board & Staff Efforts to Guide Your CAA to Success

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**Will the future arrive before  
your plan is done?**

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**Will it matter?**

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## Pre-Webinar Poll Results

- 17% say their Management Team **Rarely or never** refers to their plan when working through significant choices
- 38% refer to their plan **frequently**

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## More Pre-Polling

- 33% say their **Board rarely or never compares actual results** to their strategic plan
- 21% say their **Board makes plan to actual comparisons frequently**

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## Organization-wide Plans

- What's in a name?
  - **Strategic Plan**
  - **Business Plan**
  - **Long Range Plan**
  - **Comprehensive Plan**

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## Common Elements

- Vision, mission, values
- Needs Assessment/Market Analysis
- Niche/ Competitive position
- Governance
- Management

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## More Common Elements

- Core services
- Funding/ Financial model
- Financial projections
- Organizational capacities/core competencies
- Progress indicators

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## Strategic vs. Business Plans

### Strategic Plan

- Community Needs
- Niche
- Governance & management
- Core services
- Funding strategies
- Budget

### Business Plan

- Market analysis
- Niche/ competitive analysis
- Leadership
- Lines of business
- Financial model
- Financial projections

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## Why do Organization-wide Planning?

- Required
- Board expects it
- Bring board & staff together
- Integrate multiple plans
- Identify & resolve major choices
- Set goal posts & scoring system
- 1<sup>st</sup> step in turning the ship

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## Required?

CSBG requires:

- Maximum feasible participation by low income individuals
- Community Needs Assessment
- ROMA or other similar results-oriented management & accountability system

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## Desired!

Community Action Partnership **Standards of Excellence** include effective **strategic planning** within the 34 Best Practices

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## Plan Development Elements

- People
- Information & analysis
- Issue/choice identification
- Strategic direction setting
- Goal setting
- Targets – progress indicators
- Plan document
- Plan adoption

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## Getting the Right People on the Bus



Jim Collins: Good to Great in the Social Sector

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## Your Planning Bus?

- Who's **on board**?
- Who's **driving**?
- Who's **navigating**?
- Anyone **left behind** at the stop?
- Anyone getting **pushed off**?
- Anyone thrown **under the wheels**?
- Is the bus **visible** to staff & community?

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## Planning Roles

- Leadership
- Data collector/ analyst
- Facilitator
- Information sources
- Input providers
- Feedback providers
- Decision makers

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## Planning Plan...

- Role clarification
  - Planning Committee
  - Board
  - Executive Team
  - Line staff
  - Participants
  - Community members

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## Staffing the Plan

- Staff
- Consultants
- Board
- Volunteers

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## Worth Paying For?

- Plan Project Management
- Facilitation of key decision-making processes
- Information gathering & analysis
- Plan drafting
- Final plan production

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## Is “Free” ever really Free?

- Student interns
- Graduate student teams
- Volunteers



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## Your Plan to Plan

- Clarify desired outcomes
- Establish overall time frame
- Identify:
  - Required elements
  - Desired elements
  - Data & info needs
  - Ownership goals

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## Your Plan's Primary Goals?

- Documentation/affirmation/justification
- Investigation/ exploration/ innovation
- Making choices/ redirection
- Building unity & buy-in

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## Process Goals

- Strengthening **relationships** among Board and staff
- Deepening connections with **low income individuals** and community leaders
- **Developing** Board & Staff **Leaders**

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## Begin with the End in Mind

- Focus planning time & resources on resolving the **critical choices**
- Identify the info & analysis **needed for resolution**
- **Build unity** & commitment

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## Critical Choices

What are the key decisions your CAA must make?

- Services
- People served
- CAA workforce
- Funding strategy
- Infrastructure

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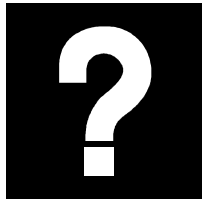
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## What info will you need?



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## Where will you find it?



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## Community Needs Info

- Readily available data sources
  - Census
  - Needs assessments
  - 211 data
  - Equity Atlas projects

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## Community Needs Info

- Direct input from community members:
  - Key informant interviews
  - Electronic & paper surveys
  - Focus groups



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## Niche/Role Info

- What **other resources** are available to address the needs you identify?
- What **changes** are anticipated in the **availability** of these alternative resources?
- Your CAA's **niche**/market position

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## Before You Ask ?

- What do you really want to know?
- How could the info gathering process build community buy-in?
- How will you record & tabulate the info to facilitate analysis?
- What will you do with the info you collect?

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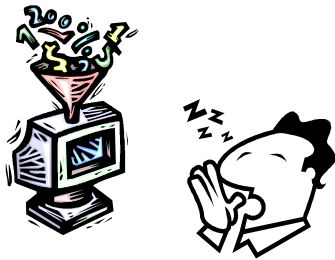
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## What will you do with the info?



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## Prepare Brief Briefings

- **Less is often more**
- **Map your niche-** where does your CAA fit within the universe of needs & resources?
- **Graph the trends**
- **Use quotes** ... Convey key ideas in community members' own words
- Highlight **emerging** issues

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## Major Program Trends Briefing

- # served
- Eligibility
- Nature of service
- Inter-relationship with other services
- Program model changes
- Compliance issues
- Anticipated major shifts

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## Financial Briefing

- Your Financial health **trends**
  - Net Assets
  - Cash
  - Net Income
  - Major sources of funds
  - Major uses of funds
- Major **anticipated funding shifts**

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## Core Capacities Briefing

- **Core competencies** required to support program & financial directions
- Major **improvements** undertaken
- Key remaining **infrastructure limitations**
- Monitoring or audit **findings**

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## Critical Choices



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## Forks in the Road?

- Reduce # served or reduce cost per unit of service?
- Eliminate positions or reduce hours, benefits, pay rates?
- Eliminate some services?
- Develop/expand specific services
- Invest more/less in seeking private support?

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## Critical Choice Pitfalls

- Too many questions
- Asking about details rather than directions?
- Too much “blue sky”
- Not enough relevant information
- Missing the “elephant in the room”

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## Preparing to Make Choices

- Identify **options**
- Use Committees, Work Groups, or staff to make **recommendations**
- Identify **info needed** to evaluate recommendations
- Use **neutral facilitator** for discussion of options

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## Financial Modeling

- Project **financial implications** of each option
- Personnel & other **costs** to implement the proposed direction
- **Income** sources & mechanisms
- **Cash flow** implications
- **Risk** assessment



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## Expressing Directions

- Reduce or eliminate
- Sustain
- Increase
- Enhance
- Explore
- Create

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## Goal Posts versus Game Plans



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## Strategic Plan ≠ Work Plan

- Strategic Plan Sets Key Directions for:
  - Program
  - Finances
  - Infrastructure
- Work Plan provides detailed objectives, timelines, performance measures

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## Strategic Plan Progress Indicators

- Key indicators for **Board monitoring?**
- Key indicators for **Executive Team monitoring?**
- Key indicators for **community accountability?**

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## Plan Document Draft...Part 1

- Vision, mission, values
- Community needs/ market analysis
- Niche/ competitive position
- Core competencies
- Management
- Governance

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## Plan Document Draft.... Part 2

- Key strategic directions
  - Program
  - Financial
  - Infrastructure
- Multi-year financial projections
- Progress Indicators

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## Consistency Check

- Compare draft plan to existing program plans and budget documents
- Check for anticipated changes in funding requirements & levels
- Determine whether draft plan is consistent with available info
- Internal consistency review

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## Feedback on Draft Plan

- Board
- Executive Team
- Staff
- Community

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## Feedback Strategies

- Facilitated discussions
  - Community
  - Line staff
  - Executive team
  - Board
- Structured electronic surveys
- Key community partner interviews

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## Plan Approval

- Clear timeline & process
- Executive Summary presentation
- Comments from public?
- Recommendation for approval
- Approval

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## Living Plan Documents

- Brief, well-designed summary
- Progress indicator checklist
- Schedule Board review of progress
- Consult in prep of all funding applications
- Require review during annual budget process

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## www.compasspoint.org

- **Nonprofit Sustainability: Making Strategic Decisions for Financial Viability:** Jeanne Bell, Jan Masaoka, Steve Zimmerman
- **Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations,** 2nd Edition: by Michael Allison and Jude Kaye

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## Your Next Steps

- Clarify **primary goals** of your planning process
- **Clarify roles:** Board, staff, consultants
- Establish **timeline** for process
- Identify **critical choices**
- Develop your **plan to plan**

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