

TOOL: DEFINING YOUR VISION, MISSION, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND ACTION PLAN

What is the purpose of your organization? How will you achieve it? The VMOSA process helps your initiative develop a blueprint for moving from dreams to actions to positive outcomes for your community. VMOSA gives both direction and structure to your initiative.

VISION

Your group's vision is your dream, a picture of the ideal conditions for your community. As a unifying statement for your effort, it also reminds you what you are striving to reach and guides important decisions.

A vision statement should be a few short phrases or a sentence that conveys your hopes for the future. Catchy phrases such as "Healthy teens," "Safe streets, safe neighborhoods" and "Education for all" illustrate the common characteristics of a vision statement. Craft a statement that is:

- Understood and shared by members of the community
- Broad enough to include a diverse variety of perspectives
- Inspiring and uplifting
- Easy to communicate (fits on a T-shirt!)

MISSION

Your mission statement is more specific than your vision. As the next step in the action planning process, it expresses the "what and how" of your effort, describing what your group is going to do to make your vision a reality. An example of a mission statement: "Our mission is to develop a safe and healthy neighborhood through collaborative planning, community action, and policy advocacy."

While your vision statement inspires people to dream, your mission statement should inspire them to action. Make it concise, outcome-oriented, and inclusive.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives are the specific, measurable steps that will help you achieve your mission. Develop objectives that are SMART+C: specific, measurable, achievable (eventually), relevant to your mission, and timed (with a date for completion.) An example of an objective would be: "By the year (x), 90 percent of the area's drug houses will be eliminated from our target area."

The +C reminds you to add another important quality to your goals: make them challenging. Stretch your group to make improvements that are significant to members of the community.

STRATEGIES

Strategies explain how your group will reach its objectives. Broad approaches for making change include advocacy, coalition building, community development, education, networking and policy or legislative change. For example, a child health program could choose a broad strategy of social marketing to promote adult involvement with children.

Specific strategies guide an intervention in more detail. To promote the health of children, you might also enhance people's skills (offer training in conflict management), modify opportunities (offer scholarships), or change the consequences of efforts (provide incentives for community members to volunteer as youth mentors).

ACTION PLAN

Your action plan specifies in detail who will do what, by when, to make what changes happen. It may also note the resources needed, potential barriers or resistance, and collaborators or communication lines that need to be active.

An action plan guides you to your dream through "do-able" steps. You can rely on this plan to know what actions you should take day by day.