

**THE NCDA STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS
AND
UPDATED STRATEGIC PLAN**

Adopted by

**The National Community Development Association
Board of Directors**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
SECTION I. ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT	2
SECTION II. ASSESSMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION	3
SECTION III. MISSION OF NCDA	4
SECTION IV. STRATEGIES: IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION	5

INTRODUCTION

The NCDA Board of Directors has begun a process of strategic planning in order to more clearly define the mission and focus of NCDA, to establish priorities and to chart the direction of the organization for the next several years.

NCDA's strategic planning process was developed from a model of strategic planning obtained from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. ("Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations", Information Series No. 66, 1992, National Trust for Historic Preservation) The strategic planning process is continuous, dynamic and consists of five basic steps as described below:

1. Assessment

- Analysis of the environment in which the organization functions
- Assessment of the nature, strengths, and weaknesses of the organization

2. Long-Term Planning

- Development of a mission statement
- Establishment of 3-5 year goals and objectives

3. Short-Term Planning

Development of an Annual Work Program

4. Implementation

Accomplishment of the Annual Work Program

5. Evaluation

- Evaluation of the organization's progress
- Evaluation of whether the programs and actions of the organization are further the mission and goals as expected

The first session of the strategic planning process was held on April 24, 1994 in Washington, DC in conjunction with the Annual NCDA Conference. Approximately twenty individuals participated in the session including Board members and NCDA staff. A consultant facilitated the session. The group completed the Assessment phase and began phase two; Long-term Planning.

The following report outlines the work which was accomplished, including the assessment of the external environment, assessment of the organization, development of a mission statement and identification and prioritization of strategies.

SECTION I. ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Key trends and issues were identified as being in the external environment within which NCDA functions. The issues and trends were first identified in small group brainstorming sessions. They were then grouped together and any duplication was eliminated by the full group.

Social Environment

1. Increase in poverty, crime, substance abuse, aging and immigration
2. Decrease in the middle class
3. Decrease in personal responsibility

Technological Environment

1. Instant access to and dissemination of information, in particular to the “information super highway”

Economic Environment

1. Increase in low paying jobs with no benefits
2. Mismatch between available jobs and the skills and training of potential employees
3. Decrease in financial resources as a result of decreases in the tax base and reduction in federal and state grant funds

Political Environment

1. Increase in NIMBY (not in my back yard) and, in particular, no low- and moderate-income people in my back yard

2. Mismatch in federal, state and local priorities leading to micro management of local programs by federal or state government
3. Focus on deficit reduction, resulting in diminished resources

SECTION II: ASSESSMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION (NCDA)

The full group identified, using the brainstorming technique, areas in which NCDA excels and areas in which improvement is desired.

What we do well

1. Quality and timeliness of information gathered and produced
2. Collective “political” power of membership, i.e. ability to influence decisions at federal level
3. Staff capability
4. Adaptability to changing environment]
5. Financial stability and independence (i.e. stable revenue stream from member dues; not dependent for survival on contracts with outside entities)
6. Strong, committed membership
7. Good communication by staff with NCDA members and with Congress
8. Good, non-competitive relationships with other interest groups

What we would like to do better

1. Recruitment of new members, especially in regions where membership is low
2. Technical assistance services to members, e.g. more use of Peer Assistance Line (PAL)
3. Education and professional development of members, i.e. more opportunities for training in both community development -specific as well as general management skills
4. Governance of the organization, i.e. more participation and involvement by the Board and the membership in organizational decision-making (suggestion: orientation program for both NCDA

members and Board members)

5. Planning and evaluation of program and activities by Board of Directors
6. Recognition of good program and projects which are being carried out by member communities (building on the success of the Audrey Nelson Awards)

SECTION III: MISSION OF NCDA

The facilitator of the strategic planning process first noted that NCDA did not have, as far as he had been able to determine, an explicit, formal mission statement. However, several references to the purposes and functions of NCDA had been identified. These were used and refined by the group, in light of the external and internal environments previously described, in developing the mission statement for NCDA.

MISSION: To assist local governments to achieve high-quality, locally responsive programs for making communities better places to live and work, particularly for low and moderate income people.

SECTION IV: STRATEGIES

In small groups, participants identified strategies with advanced the mission of NCDA, capitalized on areas in which we excelled and addressed areas in which improvements or changes were desired. Strategies include those which are already in use and those which we could or should do. The full group then reconvened and the strategies were grouped in two categories: Advocacy & Public Policy, and Member Goods and Services.

Priorities were then determined by the full group using the nominal group method (dot exercise) whereby participants were given ten (10) dots and told to place the dots next to the strategies which they believed to be the most important. The numbers in parenthesis after the strategies indicate the number of “votes” cast for that strategy. Strategies marked with asterisks are those which received ten or more dots and are, therefore, considered to be of high importance.

Lastly, the group determined which strategies should actually be pursued. Each strategy was considered and it was decided whether it was 1) a good activity which should be continued, 2) a new initiative to be pursued, 3) an activity which is desirable because it broadens participation by members, or 4) an activity which should be eliminated. The key below indicates the meaning of the numbers to the left of the strategies.

Key:

1. Good activity; should be continued
2. New Initiative
3. Broadens participation by members
4. Should be eliminated

Key

#

Advocacy and Public Policy Strategies

3	*Connect Board and membership for policy development: clarify process and timing (16)
1	*Network with other organizations (16)
1	*Work with Congressional and HUD Staff (14)
1	* Organize Community Development Week (11)
2	Restructure Executive Symposium to give direction to NCDA committees (9)
2	Expand regional network of members
2/3	Refocus Committee Structure
2	Expand Public Relations
1	Implement Legislative Action Campaign
1	Give Recognition Awards

1 Testify before Congress

Key

#

Membership and Member Goods and Services Strategies

- 3 *Move Annual Conference around the USA (20)
- 1 *Provide information to members (20)
- 2 *Get on the information highway (16)
- 2 *Provide training for members (13)
- 3 *Provide Board member and new member orientation
- 3 *Provide more opportunities for members to get involved in the organization (12)
- 3 *Clarify administrative and policy roles and relationships (10)
- 3 Recruit new members (9)
- 2 Establish Technology Committee (9)
- 2 Expand topics for information dissemination, e.g. information on Health and Human Service programs (6)
- 2 Provide training as a means of generating revenue (5)
- 3 Clarify role of the Executive Committee (5)
- 2 Redefine the role of State Whips (4)
- 2 Establish more linkages between members (3)
- 2 Standardize selection of Board members by Region (3)
- 2 Market services to non-members as a way to generate revenue (2)
- 1 Provide technical assistance referrals to members (1)
- 1 Hold conferences and meetings (1)
- 2 Incorporate trade/consultant shows into meetings as a means of generating revenue (1)

NCDA STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATES

March 25, 1998

Mission: To assist local governments to achieve high-quality, locally responsive programs for making communities better places to live and work, particularly for low and moderate income people.

Objective A: To develop and advocate public policies that strengthen and support local communities

Action Steps:

1. Actively solicit and engage members in the development and support of NCDA policies.
 - * Streamline committee structure (We currently have twelve (12) different committees. Some are ad hoc.)
 - * Use committee structure to drive, determine and validate policy direction.
2. Continue educating members on federal legislation and related regulation that impact local committees and the importance of cultivating relations with Congressional and senior HUD staff.
3. See additional opportunities to network with other national organizations (NLC,USCM, NAHRO, NAC COSCDA, NACCED, etc)
4. Further link legislative initiatives with regional associations.
5. Organize, expand and energize “National Community Development Week.”
6. Advocate the establishment of a “National Logo” that would be use on CDBG projects across the United States.
7. Sustain Audrey Nelson Awards as a means of recognizing outstanding, innovative programs, and communicating the CDBG story to Congress.

8. Set up a mechanism to collect data necessary to make out case to Congress on benefits of CDBG program (perhaps use IDIS)
9. Redefine the role of State Whips.

Objective B: To retain and expand membership by providing quality service.

Action Steps:

1. Conduct an assessment of current services and correlate this with membership needs. From this evaluation determine how resources, both staff time and dollars could be better allocated to address membership needs. The utilize this process as the first step in an overall revision of the strategic plan. Also link assessment outcomes to our next year's budget.
2. Consider utilizing the Executive Symposium as an opportunity to facilitate the overall update of the strategic plan. Think of this session as "NCDA Creative Brain Trust" sessions. Also the Executive Symposium should be used as a time to evaluate prior year activities and where necessary modify our Annual Work Program and Budget.
3. Establish a marketing strategy that effectively communicates how NCDA helps communities.
4. Place more emphasis on providing technical information to members including technical (TA) referrals to other members via the internet and Peer Assistance Line (PAL) online service, offering a consultant list, and maintaining a TA provider list.
5. Provide additional technical assistance to CD Director/Manager by periodically conducting surveys relating to organizational structures of CD functions, salary/compensation etc. (interns might be utilized to accomplish these tasks)
6. Evaluate the effectiveness of the regional entities and what could or should NCDA at the national level do to: increase regional association effectiveness; strengthen relationships between NCDA staff, NCDA members and HUD, especially on a regional basis; standardize how regions appoint national board members and leverage regional political strength at the national level.

7. Applaud and preserve NCDA's leadership role in utilizing technology.
8. Continue to move meetings around the USA to provide members opportunities to showcase their programs, as well as their communities.
9. Enhance orientation sessions for new City members or new staff designated as City Representatives.
10. Sustain emphasis on member training that spotlights basic program requirements as well as new innovations.
11. Schedule annual professional development sessions.
12. Provide training and on going information that better equips NCDA members in understanding and utilizing the variety of resources available to public developers.
13. Maintain and affordable dues structure to assure financial stability and independence (not dependence on contract or outside entities.)
14. Expand informal and formal networking opportunities at the NCDA Annual Conference the Legislative Meeting and the Executive Symposium.

Board action was taken to accept the Strategic Plan updates at the June 1998 Board meeting that was held in conjunction with the Annual Conference in Miami, Florida.

** Note: The implementation of the new committee structure, the creation of the position of Executive Director, has been voted on and incorporated into the Association's By Laws. Most of the action steps and recommendations in the Strategic Plan have become standard operating procedure for the Association.*