**VISION**

*“I have a dream”*

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King’s vision changed a nation. That famous speech is a dramatic example of the power that can be generated by a person who communicates a compelling vision of the future.

A **vision** is a *guiding image of success formed in terms of a contribution to society.* If strategic planning is the “blueprint” for an organization’s work, then the vision is the “artist’s rendering” of the achievement of that plan. It is description in words that conjures up a similar picture for each member of the group of the destination of the group’s work together.

* You will never be greater than the vision that guides you.
* Your vision must stretch your expectations, aspirations and performance.
* The vision statement will answer the question “What will success look like?”
* A vision statement should be realistic and credible, with articulated and easily understood, appropriate, ambitious and responsive to change. It should be consistent with the organizations *values.*

*“By the end of the decade, we will put a man on the moon.”*

- John F. Kennedy

When the moon came out that night, we could all look out the window and imagine….

Think about the following questions:

* In five years, how do you want your community to be different as a result of your work?
* In five years, what role do you want to play in your community?
* In five years, what will “success” look like?

**VALUES**

* Values are *beliefs* which members hold in common and endeavor to put into practice. The values guide your organization’s members in performing their work. Examples of values include: a **commitment to excellent services; innovation; diversity; creativity; honesty; integrity, and so on.**

Examples of organizational values:

* “We strive to deepen children’s commitment to pro-social values such as kindness, helpfulness, personal responsibility and respect for others – qualities we believe are essential to leading humane and productive lives in a democratic society.”

- The Development Studies Center

* “AARP is dedicated to enhancing quality of life for all as we age.”

- AARP

Ask and answer the question “What are the basic beliefs that we share as an organization?”

**MISSION**

A mission statement needs to communicate the essence of your organization to your stakeholders and to the public. To distinguish between a vision and a mission statement, *a vision statement expresses an organizations optimal goal and reason for existence* while the *mission statement provides an overview of the group’s plans to realize that vision by stating a purpose, describing how business will be conducted and the values of the organization.*

**What should be in a mission statement?**

A mission statement includes three parts:

* **The Purpose Statement** – clearly states what your organization seeks to accomplish – why does your organization exist? What is the ultimate result of your work? Purpose statements usually include two phrases:

1. An infinitive that indicates a change in status, such as to increase, to decrease, to prevent, to eliminate;
2. An identification of the problem or condition to be changed.

An example of a Purpose Statement is **“to eliminate homelessness**.” It should focus on *outcomes* and *results* rather than methods.

* **A Business Statement** – outlines the “business (es)” (i.e., activities or programs) your organization chooses in order to pursue the purpose. You must answer, “What activity are we going to do to accomplish our purpose? Business statements often include the verb “to provide” or link a purpose statement with the words “by” or “through”. For example: “**To eliminate homelessness by providing job training to homeless individuals.”**
* **Values Statement** - Values are beliefs which your organization’s members hold in common and endeavor to put into practice. The values guide your organizations members in performing their work. Specifically, you should ask “What are the basic beliefs we share as an organization?” Examples of values include: a **commitment to excellent services; innovation; diversity; creativity; honesty; integrity, and so on.**

**SAMPLE VISION STATEMENT**

As a premier professional association for educational advancement, CASE aspires to be the leading resource for professional development and information, the leading proponent of professional ethics and standards, and the leading advocate for diversity.

- Council for Advancement and Support of Education

**SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENT**

The Council advances and supports educational institutions (*purpose)* by enhancing the effectiveness of the alumni relations, communications, and fund-raising professionals who serve them (*business)*. Fundamental to CASE’s success is service to education and members as a primary focus; respect for volunteers and staff as leaders, partners and shareholders; and a commitment to integrity, ethical behavior and inclusiveness as key characteristics of leadership (*values).*

- Council for Advancement and Support of Education