

4. SAMPLE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

A sample sustainability plan follows to illustrate how an organization might draw on the sample activities presented above in Section 3. It is intended to serve as an example only, not as a substitute for your own plan.

DEVELOPING YOUR SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

1. Group the components (“what you’re going to do”) together in the year in which they are expected to occur. In this example, the plan presents activities during two program years in two large tables.
2. List the components in the first column of each table in the order in which they are expected to occur. In the example, the organization has chosen to present components that are part of a capacity building strategy based on increasing and diversifying resources (see above, Section 3, Part D). Notice how the organization has based its components on the list of activities common to most fundraising methods presented above in the discussion on Increasing and Diversifying Resources.
3. List appropriate action steps (“how you’re going to do it”) in the second column of each table that correspond to the components. These steps should show that you have thought through what is necessary to make each component you have listed happen. Be sure to mention AmeriCorps members’ roles in each of these activities. You may find the “Sample Activities for Members” in the discussions of Strategies for Capacity Building Activities (Section 3) helpful.
4. Finally, estimate a timeline (“when you’re going to do it”) in the third column of each table for each component. If a component or activity will not have a specific conclusion, you can substitute “ongoing” for a future completion date.

Sample Sustainability Plan—Year 1

Component /Method	Action Steps <i>(Remember to include how marketing and volunteers can help you do this)</i>	Timeline
<p><i>Develop: Mission, Vision, Case for Support</i></p> <p><i>Research and identify potential stakeholders</i></p> <p><i>Communicate with stakeholders</i></p>	<p><i>Talk to staff and community members about why this program is needed, who will benefit, why your organization is the best organization to undertake it.</i></p> <p><i>Identify and talk to informal community leaders who might have common vision/mission.</i></p> <p><i>Solicit ideas from Commission, schools, other agencies, faith communities about who might share interests with your program.</i></p> <p><i>Talk to local businesses about how your program can benefit their interests.</i></p> <p><i>Introduce self and program to local media. Provide media tour, press kit or news release.</i></p>	<p><i>Month 1-3</i></p> <p><i>Month 1-3</i></p> <p><i>Month 1-3</i></p>
<p><i>Initiate relationship with potential stakeholders</i></p>	<p><i>Schedule community/partner meeting.</i></p> <p><i>Select informal team of helpful community members, agency representatives and business people act as advisory committee. Formulate meeting agenda.</i></p> <p><i>Prepare invitations and ask folks who recommended individuals to invite them personally.</i></p> <p><i>Prepare written materials for participants outlining the program's general purpose and vision. Language should match community interests garnered from earlier community interviews.</i></p>	<p><i>Month 4</i></p>

Sample Sustainability	Plan—Year 1, continued	
<i>Continue to cultivate stakeholders</i>	<i>Hold meeting. Include shared vision exercise to get input and expand vision to more stakeholders.</i>	<i>Month 4</i>
<i>Create buy in</i>	<p><i>Output of meeting should be:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Expanded vision that includes community stakeholders/potential partners</i> • <i>Identification of interested individuals and organizations to continue to advise the project</i> <p><i>Summary of meeting highlighting groups that participated and seemed most interested.</i></p> <p><i>Assign Advisory Committee to share with those who could not attend.</i></p> <p><i>Invite press to cover meeting, highlight participants and outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>Determine follow-up steps to re-contact participants quickly.</i></p> <p><i>Send thank you notes and copies of press coverage.</i></p>	<i>Month 4</i>
<i>Make the ASK</i>	<p><i>Determine best strategic partnerships and key community leaders to involve.</i></p> <p><i>Determine appropriate level of collaborative commitment to ask for.</i></p> <p><i>Determine who should ask for partnership involvement. Jointly develop strong “case” for potential partner’s involvement. Be specific about level of commitment requested.</i></p>	<i>Month 5</i> <i>Month 5-8</i>
<i>Follow-up</i>	<i>Formalize relationship with MOU’s, volunteer position description, formalize advisory committee roles, etc.</i>	<i>Month 5-8</i>

Sample Sustainability	Plan—Year 1, <i>continued</i>	
<i>Be a Good Steward</i>	<p><i>Continue to cultivate current partners and new stakeholders through:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Offering opportunities for continued involvement in shaping the program through regular meetings and dialogue.</i> • <i>Sharing the credit.</i> • <i>Celebrating small successes.</i> • <i>Making sure program is mutually beneficial to all partners.</i> 	Month 8-ongoing

<i>Sample Sustainability Plan—Year 2</i>		
<i>Component /Method</i>	<i>Action Steps (Remember to include how marketing and volunteers can help you do this)</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
<i>Develop: Mission, Vision, Case for Support</i>	<i>Talk with staff, and community partners and stakeholders about outcomes of year 1. Review progress toward goals, who will benefit, who else needs to be involved. Review community needs and trends. Revise mission and vision as necessary. .</i>	<i>Month 13-14</i>
<i>Research and identify potential stakeholders/ prospects</i>	<i>Research corporations, local businesses, foundations other givers who have an interest in your cause. Solicit ideas from partners, staff, volunteers, advisory committee about contacts they might have to potential givers who share interests with your program.</i>	<i>Month 13-14</i>

<i>Sample Sustainability Plan—Year 2</i>		
<i>Component /Method</i>	<i>Action Steps (Remember to include how marketing and volunteers can help you do this)</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
<i>Communicate with stakeholders</i>	<p><i>Talk to local businesses about how your program can benefit their interests. Ask for their ideas.</i></p> <p><i>Identify any products or services of your program that are valued in the community and could produce income to offset project expenses. Create a team and marketing plan to develop and market this business.</i></p> <p><i>With staff and advisory committee, discuss financial goal of \$20,000. Identify budget items that could be provided in-kind by partners, other stakeholders. Select methods and teams for fundraising/resource gathering for the year. Use more than one fundraising method (grant writing, direct mail, special event, in-kind resource gathering, phone-a-thon, personal solicitation).</i></p> <p><i>Cultivate relationship with media. Craft messages. Announce fundraising campaign. Highlight accomplishments. Share credit with partners.</i></p>	<i>Month 13-16</i>

<i>Sample Sustainability Plan—Year 2</i>		
<i>Component /Method</i>	<i>Action Steps (Remember to include how marketing and volunteers can help you do this)</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
<i>Initiate relationship with potential prospects</i>	<p><i>Select team from advisory committee and other community leaders to act as fundraising committee.</i></p> <p><i>Formulate strategy for meeting with prospects individually.</i></p> <p><i>Prepare fundraising/resource gathering plan with objectives and timelines.</i></p> <p><i>Launch fundraising effort.</i></p> <p><i>Prepare and send requests for appointments and letters of inquiry.</i></p> <p><i>Prepare written materials for solicitation teams outlining the program’s vision, mission and case for support.</i></p>	<i>Month 14</i>
<i>Continue to cultivate prospects</i>	<p><i>Invite prospects to tour program, review accomplishments, suggest improvements. Ask them who else should be involved.</i></p> <p><i>Match language and outcomes to prospect’s interests.</i></p> <p><i>Send thank-you notes for meetings and contacts.</i></p>	<i>Month 15</i>

<i>Sample Sustainability Plan—Year 2</i>		
<i>Component /Method</i>	<i>Action Steps (Remember to include how marketing and volunteers can help you do this)</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
<i>Create buy in</i>	<p><i>With fundraising committee, ask for donations, share solicitation responsibilities.</i></p> <p><i>Invite press to cover progress, highlight participants and outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>Plan on-going meetings with fundraising committee. Celebrate successes.</i></p> <p><i>Send thank you notes and copies of press coverage to all committee members and prospects.</i></p>	<i>Month 15-ongoing</i>
<i>Make the ASK</i>	<p><i>Depending on method being used, implement—write and submit grants, develop mailing list and pitch for direct mail, meet with prospects—ask for specific support</i></p> <p><i>Remember limitations for staff and AmeriCorps members’ involvement in this task!</i></p>	<i>Month 16-18</i>
<i>Follow-up</i>	<p><i>Confirm pledges, arrange for payments to be recorded, follow up on grant requests—is more information needed?</i></p> <p><i>Schedule to re-contact donors to thank and update on progress, build mailing list. Plan next part of fundraising effort.</i></p>	<i>Month 16-18</i>

<i>Sample Sustainability Plan—Year 2</i>		
<i>Component /Method</i>	<i>Action Steps (Remember to include how marketing and volunteers can help you do this)</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
<i>Be a Good Steward</i>	<p><i>Continue to cultivate current partners and new stakeholders through:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Offering opportunities for continued involvement in shaping the program</i> <i>• Sharing the credit.</i> <p><i>Celebrating small successes.</i></p> <p><i>Making sure donors are updated, invited to be involved in new ways.</i></p> <p><i>Review fundraising efforts and identify lessons learned for future campaigns.</i></p>	<i>Month 18-ongoing</i>

Sample Sustainability Plan—Year 3

Component /Method	Action Steps <i>(Remember to include how marketing and volunteers can help you do this)</i>	Timeline
<i>Develop: Mission, Vision, Case for Support</i>	<p><i>Talk with staff, donors and community partners and stakeholders about outcomes of year 2.</i></p> <p><i>Review progress toward financial goals, who will benefit, who else needs to be involved.</i></p> <p><i>Review community needs and trends revise mission and vision as necessary.</i></p> <p><i>Develop annual report to summarize progress and attract new supporters.</i></p>	<i>Month 24</i>
<i>Research and identify potential stakeholders/prospects</i>	<p><i>Research corporations, local businesses, foundations other givers who have an interest in your cause.</i></p> <p><i>Look for influential people who are stakeholders to act as program champions.</i></p> <p><i>Build your advisory committee with business leaders and other local influential community members.</i></p> <p><i>Ask for feedback from any corporation or foundation that did not fund. Use contact to build future relationship. Try to target next ask to their interests and philosophy.</i></p> <p><i>Solicit ideas from partners, staff, volunteers, advisory committee about contacts they might have to potential givers who share interests with your program.</i></p>	<i>Month 25-26</i>

Sample Sustainability Plan—Year 3

<i>Component /Method</i>	<i>Action Steps</i> <i>(Remember to include how marketing and volunteers can help you do this)</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
<i>Communicate with stakeholders</i>	<p><i>Talk to local businesses about how your program can benefit their interests. Ask for their involvement.</i></p> <p><i>Identify any the progress your income-producing products or services have made in offsetting expenses. Review and revise marketing plan.</i></p> <p><i>With staff and advisory committee, discuss financial goal of \$50,000. Identify budget items that could be provided in-kind by partners, funders, other stakeholders.</i></p> <p><i>Determine core elements of your program. Brainstorm other means to provide them, beyond AmeriCorps funding.</i></p> <p><i>Select methods for fundraising/resource gathering for the year. Determine whether to repeat last year’s methods. Use more than one fundraising method (grant writing, direct mail, special event, in-kind resource gathering, phone-a-thon, personal solicitation).</i></p> <p><i>Cultivate current and new relationships with media. Craft messages. Announce fundraising campaign’s progress. Highlight accomplishments. Share credit with partners.</i></p>	<i>Month 25-28</i>

Sample Sustainability Plan—Year 3

<i>Component /Method</i>	<i>Action Steps</i> <i>(Remember to include how marketing and volunteers can help you do this)</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
<i>Continue to cultivate prospects</i>	<p><i>Invite prospects, donors to tur program, review accomplishments, suggest improvements. Ask them who else should be involved. Ask them to be involved in new ways.</i></p> <p><i>Match language and outcomes to prospect’s interests.</i></p> <p><i>Send thank-you notes for meetings, contacts, donations.</i></p> <p><i>Talk with partners about resources available to meet common goals and defray expenses</i></p>	<i>Month 27 - ongoing</i>
<i>Create buy in</i>	<p><i>With fundraising committee, ask for donations, share solicitation responsibilities.</i></p> <p><i>Invite press to cover progress, highlight participants and outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>Plan on-going meetings with fundraising committee. Celebrate successes.</i></p> <p><i>Send thank you notes and copies of press coverage to all committee members, prospects, and donors.</i></p>	<i>Month 28- ongoing</i>

Sample Sustainability Plan—Year 3, continued

<i>Component /Method</i>	<i>Action Steps</i> <i>(Remember to include how marketing and volunteers can help you do this)</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
<i>Make the ASK</i>	<i>Depending on method being used, implement—write and submit grants, develop mailing list and pitch for direct mail, meet with prospects—ask for specific support. Remember limitations on staff and AmeriCorps members’ involvement in this task!</i>	<i>Month 16-18</i>
<i>Follow-up</i>	<i>Confirm pledges, arrange for payments to be recorded, follow up on grant requests—is more information needed? Schedule to re-contact donors to thank and update on progress, build mailing list. Plan next part of fundraising effort.</i>	<i>Month 26-ongoing</i>
<i>Be a Good Steward</i>	<i>Continue to cultivate current partners and new stakeholders through:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Offering opportunities for continued involvement in shaping the program</i> • <i>Sharing the credit;</i> • <i>Celebrating small successes;</i> • <i>Making sure donors are updated, invited to be involved in new ways.</i> 	<i>Month 28-ongoing</i>