Strategic Plan Template for Newly Developed Networks

Network Planning Technical Assistance

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# Background and Purpose

Rural Health Innovations (RHI), LLC, is a subsidiary of the National Rural Health Resource Center (The Center), a non-profit organization. Together, RHI and The Center are the nation’s leading technical assistance and knowledge centers in rural health. In partnership with The Center, RHI enhances the health of rural communities by providing products and services with a focus on excellence and innovation. RHI is providing TA to the Network Planning grantees through a contract with the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy.

This *Strategic Plan Template for Newly Developed Networks* was created to provide support to Network Planning grantees in writing an effective and dynamic strategic plan based off of a participative planning event.

This template is designed for use in conjunction with the *Strategic Planning Guide for Newly Formed Networks*. For samples of the completed strategic plan components reviewed in the guide and template, see the *Strategic Plan Samples for Newly Formed Networks* document. Additional resources on strategic planning can be found on RHI’s [Aim for Impact and Sustainability page](https://www.ruralcenter.org/rhi/network-ta/aim-for-impact).

# Instructions

Although a specific template for the strategic plan is not required as part of the Network Planning grant deliverable, the following components are recommended:

* Network Purpose and Shared Vision
* Environmental Scan and Analysis
* Strategic Objectives and Key Initiatives

There is no one “correct” way to present a strategic plan. We offer this template to provide your network with ideas and a starting point as you make decisions about creating your report. To use this template for documenting your network’s strategic plan, complete the following steps:

* Revise the cover page to display the appropriate network/program information, including name, location, the authors of the report, and the date
* Remove the Background and Purpose section and the Instructions section within the first two pages of this template document
* Change the headers and footers to reflect your network name
* Complete the sections provided with relevant information in the form of narratives, tables, diagrams, and charts as appropriate
* Update the Table of Contents to reflect your new content layout

# Strategic Plan Components

## Network Purpose and Shared Vision

Keep this section to no more than two pages. Standard narrative text is typically the most functional format for this component, although visuals could certainly be created if desired. See page 11 of the *Strategic Planning Guide for Newly Formed Networks* for details.

We recommend including the following when writing this section of the strategic plan:

* **Network History**
* **Network Members**

* **Network Mission**

* **Network Vision**, along with a brief description of your process for reaching consensus on and/or reviewing the shared vision

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## Environmental Scan and Analysis

The data presented from the environmental scan can be summarized in narrative form or listed as appropriate. A visual of the analysis findings and conclusions may be a useful format. The description of the environment and the accompanying analysis should be not more than two pages. See pages 11-12 of the *Strategic Planning Guide for Newly Formed Networks* for details.

We recommend including the following when writing this section of the strategic plan:

* **Summary of Environmental Scan**
* **Environmental Analysis Findings**

## Strategic Objectives and Key Initiatives

When writing this section of your strategic plan, we recommend using a visual to illustrate alignment of the network’s strategic objectives and key initiatives. See page 13 of the *Strategic Planning Guide for Newly Formed Networks* for details. Also, refer to the *Strategic Planning Samples for Newly Formed Networks* document for both a traditional strategic plan framework presentation and a logic model framework presentation of strategies and initiatives.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Strategic Objective** | **Key Initiatives** | **Resources**  | **Timeline** |
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# Next Steps in the Strategic Planning Cycle

For newly formed networks that have just completed the initial Analyze & Plan phase of the strategic planning cycle, next steps include considering the next phases of communication, operationalizing the plan, and monitoring and adjusting. When writing the strategic plan, it would be appropriate to summarize how the network plans to approach these next steps. Providing a timeline of upcoming review sessions or committee meetings may prove helpful to the reader.

* **Communicate strategic objectives throughout the network organization (e.g., communication plan)**
* **Operationalize key initiatives with project management (e.g., work plan)**
* **Monitor progress of the strategic objectives and adjust to keep aim on the shared vision (e.g., evaluation plan)**