

CRAFTING A MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement provides focus to your organization's initiatives and goals and sets your work into motion. Your mission statement needs to articulate the root problem your organization addresses in a clear and unconfusing manner. It explains why your organization exists.

Explain why, who and how when crafting your mission statement:

- **Why:** Clarify your purpose by envisioning your end result. What would the world be like if your organization were to succeed? Be careful not to be too specific (which might require you to rewrite your mission in the future) or too general (be concrete enough so people can envision what you do).
- **Who:** Describe the people who will benefit from your organization, and focus on their needs when defining your organization's areas of focus.
- **How:** Briefly specify the organization's programs and activities that will accomplish your purpose.

Your mission statement should primarily focus on why your organization exists, not necessarily the products or services your organization provides. Keep it short so the statement is easily expressed and digestible. To stand out from other organizations, boost your mission statement by incorporating unique terminology. For example, 68% of nonprofits use the verb "provide" in their mission statements. You could attract more attention for your organization by differentiating yourself. Aim to be memorable and clear when summing the essence of your organization in your mission statement.

Once your draft is complete, confirm that your board members agree with the mission statement. These words define your organization's programs, policies and initiatives, so board member agreement on the statement is critical to the success of your organization's progress. The mission statement reminds your board members why they are doing what they're doing, helping them to expand their vision beyond the day-to-day operations of the organization. It acts as a guide when making difficult decisions, so keep the mission front and center during your board meetings and in your day-to-day work as well.

REFERENCES:

Great Mission. Bad Statement. (Stanford Social Innovation Review)

bit.ly/great-mission-bad-statement

10 Killer Mission Statement Examples for Nonprofits (Classy)

bit.ly/mission-statement-examples

6 Tips for Writing a Nonprofit Mission Statement (Dummies)

bit.ly/tips-writing-mission-statement

Tips for Developing a Mission Statement (BoardSource)

bit.ly/tips-boardsource

The Link Between Mission, Vision and Strategy (AchieveIt)

bit.ly/AchieveIt-mission