

CENTER FOR RURAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION

The Center for Rural Policy and Development provides high quality, objective and non-partisan research to examine and advance policy and decision-making, rural advocacy, and civic engagement for Greater Minnesota's development.

VISION

The Center for Rural Policy and Development is the leading and most trusted source of policy, research and recommendations to advance and improve the quality of life in Greater Minnesota.

VALUES

Research Excellence

Excellence is the product of risk, but so is failure. We strive for excellence in every project in which we engage.

Non-Partisanship

Non-partisanship is the foundation of our work. We are committed to maintaining that reputation.

Collaboration

Collaboration will be the hallmark of our future work. Our success will be defined by the partnerships we create.

Commitment to Minnesota

A strong Minnesota requires a healthy and vibrant Greater Minnesota. We are committed to supporting quality decision-making that will impact Greater Minnesota's ability to thrive.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: Expand and enhance CRPD's research capability, scope and impact on issues and priorities of vital importance to Greater Minnesota.

Rationale: The Center for Rural Policy and Development has developed a unique strength, capability and reputation for producing credible and objective work dealing with issues affecting Greater Minnesota. By expanding its scope and extending its research outcomes, the Center for Rural Policy and Development can enhance its impact and extend its capabilities to influence outcomes -- on a regional, national and international basis -- that will positively and measurably impact Greater Minnesota.

Strategies:

1. Adopt a new research decision-making model that expands the Center for Rural Policy and Development's research scope and extends the research outcomes to include, when appropriate, policy alternatives and specific recommendations.
2. Develop and implement processes and guidelines to support the Center for Rural Policy and Development's role as a facilitator/convener/leader on the development of strategies and solutions that can have a positive impact on Greater Minnesota.
3. Establish and implement performance indicators, benchmarks and measurements to accurately and continually monitor the efficacy and quality of the CRPD's research products.
4. Develop and implement processes and methods to broaden the distribution and visibility of the Center's research products.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: To increase public accessibility to the Center for Rural Policy and Development; improve brand awareness and recognition; enhance and improve all communications initiatives.

Rationale:. Through the creation and implementation of comprehensive communications strategies and processes, the Center for Rural Policy and Development can increase its public support and level of funding to capitalize on opportunities for growth and impact.

Strategies:

1. Evaluate existing communications tools to measure their effectiveness and identify needed improvements and enhancements.
2. Define each of the Center's principal constituencies and develop specific communications objectives for each. Identified constituencies should include, but not be limited to: State legislators (rural caucus); foundations, corporate and other funding sources; city, county, state and federal employees and elected officials; the research community; academia; potential research product customers and non-profit organizations.
3. Develop and implement a comprehensive long-range communications plan including specific objectives that includes each of the Center's principal constituencies. The long-range plan should address external, internal and two-way communications processes; key messages to various constituencies; leveraging the knowledge and passion of current and past advocates ("CRPD Champions") to bring the Center's message to identified external audiences – including the news media and new communications tools for the future.
4. Establish and implement performance indicators, benchmarks and measurements to continually monitor the quality and effectiveness of all communications activities.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: Develop key strategic partnerships that will leverage CRPD's capabilities, expertise, credibility and knowledge base to the benefit of Greater Minnesota.

Rationale: By aggressively prospecting and developing key partnerships, the Center can more effectively leverage its existing strengths and position itself to broaden its reach, impact and contribution to the well-being and vitality of Greater Minnesota.

Strategies:

1. Research and identify “best practices” of other organizations in creating effective and enduring partnerships.
2. Develop and implement a systematic process for identifying potential partner organizations that includes the utilization of key advocates. Tailor a message to each organization to gain their support in a partnership. Each new partnership should have specific objectives identified before it becomes formalized in any way.
3. Establish specific methods and objectives for increased external funding resulting from key partnerships.
4. Incorporate the expanded research scope and outcomes model into the process and content of the partnership development initiative.

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: Strengthen CRPD’s Board governance practices in order to enhance the effectiveness of the board and its contribution to the development and growth of CRPD.

Rationale: Increasing the emphasis of the board on governance issues will strengthen CRPD’s reputation and credibility and support the expansion of CRPD’s research scope and outcomes, contributing to increased visibility, impact and growth.

Strategies:

1. Develop a clear definition of the board’s roles and responsibilities,.
2. Research and identify “best practices” of other organizations in creating successful governance by the board of directors.
3. Create and implement a process for increasing each board member’s effectiveness that includes a position statement on individual commitment, mutual expectations and team building.
4. Develop and implement a systematic process of board development including board member recruitment, orientation, and training.
5. Review and audit all existing board governance documentation and develop a specific plan for improvement.
6. Determine and articulate the board’s role in resource and funding initiatives and financially supporting CRPD as individuals.
7. Prepare a board of director’s policy and procedures manual.

STRATEGIC GOAL 5: Build organizational capacity, functions and infrastructure that will fully support CRPD's fundraising goals for growth.

Rationale: Achievement of each of the Center's strategic goals depends on a solid and improving infrastructure and a growing support capacity. By employing specific strategies to build capacity, CRPD can better leverage its existing strengths and broaden its reach, impact and contribution to the competitiveness and strength of Greater Minnesota.

Strategies:

1. Develop a 3-5 year resource development plan including funding diversification, the role of individuals, CRPD Board members, other organizations, government appropriations and foundation grants to support CRPD's growth. Consider both fundraising and "friendraising" strategies.
2. Determine future staffing needs linked to strategic goals and the anticipated allocation of research initiatives to be supported by internal capacity, outsourcing and contract agreements.
3. Develop a sustainable process for measuring customer satisfaction, with built-in measures to respond to deficiencies and capitalize on opportunities.
4. Evaluate the creation of a fundraising task force to focus on resource/funding development and establishing quantitative targets for contributor funding and earned income.
5. Create a process for identifying and prospecting individual contributors and developing membership concepts.
6. Determine and implement quality control measures for internal management systems critical to effective and accountable operations.