

ACS Howard County Strategic Plan

Updated: September 19, 2018

Strategic Plan Snapshot

We recognize the value in and responsibility for creating a meaningful multi-year strategic plan that will guide us to be the foremost resource for our members. This strategic plan was developed with past progress, integrated stakeholder feedback, and shared values in mind. While building on and supporting our vision, mission and values, this strategic plan outlines priorities, clear strategic focus areas, related goals, and action plans.

MISSION

We support Howard County nonprofits in the achievement of their missions because strong nonprofits improve the quality of life for all.

VISION

For Howard County to be a community where all residents have access to the resources they need to thrive.

VALUES

We believe in the following shared principles, beliefs and priorities:

- Respect – We treat nonprofits and those they support with dignity and respect.
- Focus – We prioritize activities that effectively further our mission and goals
- Collaboration – We connect people and create a place where collective knowledge can be leveraged for the greater good.
- Leadership – We strive to be a role model for other nonprofits in leading change.

Our 2018-2021 Goals

We identified four strategic goals and related objectives that will guide our work for the next three years. These goals are:

- **Goal 1:** Build a stronger more sustainable nonprofit community in HoCo
- **Goal 2:** Engage the community in dialogue and action to reduce barriers and to improve the quality of life of HoCo residents

- **Goal 3:** Exemplify best practices in nonprofit management/Be a role model and change agent
- **Goal 4:** Build brand awareness/Be the trusted voice/trusted advisor

Year 1 (2018-2019) Implementation Plan

To support these goals, we developed one-year objectives under each goal area. These were further developed into tactical implementation plans. These objectives will be reviewed at the end of the first year, and modified, as needed, for year 2.

GOAL #1: Build a stronger more sustainable nonprofit community in HoCo

Objective 1.1. Diversify our member-base through targeted recruitment

Action Items

Actions ACS will focus on in 2018.

	Description	Timeline
1.1.1	Revamp Membership Committee and reconvene	8/15/18
1.1.2	Develop membership profiles	7/1/18
1.1.3	Membership Committee reviews membership profile and establish priorities for recruitment	8/31/18
1.1.4	Develop recruitment plan based on targets and new branding (include the “why” of ACS in this effort)	4/30/19
1.1.5	Explore opportunities for expanding on the success of the NPC in order to help sustain and connect additional nonprofits.	6/1/19

Year 2 and Beyond Priorities

The following are additional priorities that have been identified as a continual focus for the organization in 2018-2020. These priorities will be re-assessed and incorporated into implementation planning in subsequent years:

- Evaluate membership (levels and benefits)
 - Individual – community advocates
 - Nonprofit members
 - Corporate members
- Develop a task force to reach out to potential members (active recruitment)

Objective 1.2. Engage our members so that they grow and thrive

Action Items

Actions ACS will focus on in 2018.

	Description	Timeline
1.2.1	Determine what FY 19 Education and Training plans are (What will a scaled back approach look like?)	7/15/18
1.2.2	Implement stop, start, continue recommendations (from task force)	12/31/18
1.2.3	Online Discussion Forum	
1.2.4	Exec to Exec	Oct/Jan/April/July
1.2.5	Member Meetings	Sep/Dec/Feb/May
1.2.6	Mentoring Program (January through June)	6/15/19
1.2.7	Membership Matters Newsletter and Job Openings	monthly
1.2.8	Board Development Program in partnership with LHC (replacing BPS) 1 workshop w/ social	5/31/19

Year 2 and Beyond Priorities

The following are additional priorities that have been identified as a continual focus for the organization in 2018-2020. These priorities will be re-assessed and incorporated into implementation planning in subsequent years:

- Refine our onboarding process
- Evaluate how ACS handles membership (supports and manages members)
- Assess the needs of our members and refine programming to meet those needs
- Regularly assess member satisfaction and proactively make needed changes (follow up)

Objective 1.3. Reinvigorate our connections with the community

Action Items

Actions ACS will focus on in 2018.

	Description	Timeline
1.3.1	Assess the Housing Affordability Coalition as a possible pilot or role model for future ACS coalitions	6/1/19
1.3.2	Establish partnership with Maryland Nonprofits for trainings in board excellence, Advocacy 101, program and outcome evaluation, into to Standards for Excellence	6/31/18

Year 2 and Beyond Priorities

The following are additional priorities that have been identified as a continual focus for the organization in 2018-2020. These priorities will be re-assessed and incorporated into implementation planning in subsequent years:

- Outreach to business community and associations we aren't connected with (like the African-American Roundtable)
- Develop active campaigns to engage non-members in coalitions, etc.
- Develop relationships with people who aren't familiar with ACS/Allied partners who build upon our goals
- Develop a scholarship program (solicit corporate sponsors for smaller nonprofits)

GOAL #2: Engage the community in dialogue and action to reduce barriers and to improve the quality of life of HoCo residents

Objective 2.1. Advocate for the good of HoCo residents

Action Items

Actions ACS will focus on in 2018.

	Description	Timeline
2.1.1	Conduct needs assessment at annual meeting	6/14/18
2.1.2	Pilot Housing Affordability Coalition	8/31/18
2.1.3	Candidate Information Forum	9/12/18
2.1.4	Expand SSIR to include additional indicators of need and services	8/31/18
2.1.5	Conversation with State-level Candidates	10/10/18
2.1.6	Conversation with County-level Candidates	10/10/18
2.1.7	Conversation with HCPSS Superintendent	11/30/18
2.1.8	Conversation with State Delegation	1/15/19
2.1.9	Develop recruitment plan based on targets and new branding (include the "why" of ACS in this effort)	6/30/19

Year 2 and Beyond Priorities

The following are additional priorities that have been identified as a continual focus for the organization in 2018-2020. These priorities will be re-assessed and incorporated into implementation planning in subsequent years:

- Develop coalitions
- Convene diverse groups
- Direct members and board to existing coalitions (when available)
- Implement solutions that will help address needs (or define appropriate action and facilitate the process)

Objective 2.2. Communicate the impact of nonprofits on community life

Action Items

Actions ACS will focus on in 2018.

	Description	Timeline

Year 2 and Beyond Priorities

The following are additional priorities that have been identified as a continual focus for the organization in 2018-2020. These priorities will be re-assessed and incorporated into implementation planning in subsequent years:

- Collect data to develop points that highlight community strength (highlight best practices, stories and impact of nonprofits that are doing an outstanding job of enhancing lives, reducing barriers, etc.)
- Town halls to engage community (social media, virtual, in person, education campaigns); ensure intentionally diversity

Objective 2.3. Create and increase connections within the community

Action Items

Actions ACS will focus on in 2018.

	Description	Timeline
2.3.1	Conversation with the County Council	3/15/19
2.3.2	Conversation with the County Executive	4/15/19
2.3.3	Advocacy 101 Training - partner w/ MdNP - target Dec	1/30/19
2.3.4	1st Quarter - Happy Hour	10/31/18
2.3.5	Social Media	ongoing
2.3.6	Sector Groupings (needs, issues) Sept Member Meeting	9/30/18
2.3.7	Networking Event	1/30/19
2.3.8	Guide to Community Services	11/15/18
2.3.9	Position the NonProfit Collaborative as a hub for the nonprofit community and the Human Resources Campus.	6/30/19

Year 2 and Beyond Priorities

The following are additional priorities that have been identified as a continual focus for the organization in 2018-2020. These priorities will be re-assessed and incorporated into implementation planning in subsequent years:

- Continue to create forums for connections

GOAL #3: Exemplify best practices in nonprofit management/Be a role model and change agent

Objective 3.1. Ensure our financial sustainability

Action Items

Actions ACS will focus on in 2018.

	Description	Timeline
3.1.1	Clarify the role of the Resource Development Committee to include the creation of development plan (Staff & Board)	12/31/18
3.1.2	Evaluate/Add/Change the members of the Committee, as needed (Board)	1/31/19
3.1.3	Assess potential funding approaches and sources (diversify beyond membership, for-profit models, sponsorship models, in-kind, partnerships, and donor strategies) (Resource Development Committee)	4/30/19
3.1.4	Develop a plan to present to the board	5/31/19
3.1.5	Board approves plan	6/30/19

Year 2 and Beyond Priorities

The following are additional priorities that have been identified as a continual focus for the organization in 2018-2020. These priorities will be re-assessed and incorporated into implementation planning in subsequent years:

- Continue to diversify revenue and work the plan

Objective 3.2. Develop and support our human capital – staff and board

Action Items

Actions ACS will focus on in 2018.

	Description	Timeline
3.2.1	Decide on a method for assessing staff capacity (Staff)	6/31/18
3.2.2	Hold orientation for new board members	8/15/18
3.2.3	Review Committee structure and revise as necessary	7/15/18
3.2.4	Select Committee chairs	7/15/18
3.2.5	Develop roles and responsibilities for each committee	7/15/18
3.2.6	Select Committee members and invite	7/15/18

3.2.7	Develop an annual calendar that highlights Board, Staff and volunteer major tasks, roles and responsibilities by month (Staff & Executive Committee)	9/30/18
3.2.8	Hold Committee orientation	8/15/18

Year 2 and Beyond Priorities

The following are additional priorities that have been identified as a continual focus for the organization in 2018-2020. These priorities will be re-assessed and incorporated into implementation planning in subsequent years:

- Explore volunteer engagement/coordinator
- Show the way (be the role model) regarding implementing key learnings from seminars, workshops, etc.

Objective 3.3. Develop an infrastructure that supports our work

Action Items

Actions ACS will focus on in 2018.

	Description	Timeline
3.3.1	Develop a Task Force to assess all ACS programming	6/31/18
3.3.2	Task force conducts a stop, start, continue assessment of all offerings/programs and makes a final recommendation to the Board	12/31/18
3.3.3	ACS undertakes a self-assessment using the Maryland Standards for Excellence program as a guide	4/30/19

Year 2 and Beyond Priorities

The following are additional priorities that have been identified as a continual focus for the organization in 2018-2020. These priorities will be re-assessed and incorporated into implementation planning in subsequent years:

- Develop strategy for enhancing technology (i.e. Web-based)
- Achieve Standards of Excellence
- Planning for nonprofit campus
- Expand the visibility of our role “NPC is powered by ACS”

GOAL #4: Build brand awareness/Be the trusted voice/trusted advisor

Objective 4.1. Develop a communication and marketing strategy

Action Items

Actions ACS will focus on in 2018.

	Description	Timeline
4.1.1	Establish roles and responsibilities for a Communications task force and determine desired outputs (Staff)	8/15/18
4.1.2	Identify funding sources for the RFP (Joan)	10/15/18
4.1.3	Create/staff the Communications Task Force and have the first meeting where they develop the RFP for a rebranding effort (Communications Task Force)	8/31/18
4.1.4	Solicit support/release the RFP (Communications Task Force)	10/31/18
4.1.5	Review proposals and select a person or firm for the work (Communications Task Force)	11/30/18
4.1.6	Begin rebranding process (Branding Company)	11/30/18
4.1.7	Complete rebranding process (Branding Company)	2/28/19
4.1.8	Develop RFP for Communications Consultant (Communications Task Force)	4/30/19
4.1.9	Select a consultant (Communications Task Force)	5/31/19
4.1.10	Conduct a full communication audit and develop a plan/recommendation report based on new branding guidelines and messaging (Communication Consultant)	6/30/19
4.1.11	Increase awareness of ACS' role in the development and Management of the NonProfit Collaborative and its role in the Human Resources Campus.	6/30/19

Year 2 and Beyond Priorities

The following are additional priorities that have been identified as a continual focus for the organization in 2018-2020. These priorities will be re-assessed and incorporated into implementation planning in subsequent years:

- Identify and segment audiences
- Develop clear communication campaigns that align with our “why”
- Establish a marketing campaign for ACS
- Develop a social media platform (by audiences and focus on content development)
- Revisit content from social media training (and implement it)