

**BLUE RIDGE FOUNDATION
NEW YORK**

BLUE RIDGE FOUNDATION NEW YORK

BLUEPRINT
GUIDEBOOK

PILOT VERSION

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OVERVIEW

These worksheets are designed to guide Blue Ridge Foundation New York portfolio organizations in developing elements important to their success.

Each organization will be in a unique position as it joins the portfolio. One organization may be very clear about its program description, but lack a statement of expected benefits. Another organization may need to develop its vision for the future. For this reason, the sequence of work for each organization will vary depending on which worksheet needs the greatest attention. Worksheet can be developed at different points in time, and may be returned to after more information is gathered or greater clarity is reached. They are best filled in after a discussion of the goals of each worksheet, as some judgment must be made on how extensively to work in each area.

An up-front assessment should be done to determine the best approach for your organization. This Guidebook can be used as part of a participative process - where staff fill out worksheets and come together in discussion to understand the organization and reach consensus around issues. It can also be used by one or two individuals in the organization - in some cases a participative process may not be required. How it is used will depend on the organization and its needs.

One of the central goals of this Guidebook is to create a relatively straightforward set of measures that you can use to work through critical areas of organizational development. It is not intended to represent all of the operating actions or delegated tasks within an organization. As you work towards filling in the worksheets, focus on reaching great clarity around a small set of core directions and measures for your organization.

Blue Ridge Foundation New York seeks to have its organizations work in a relatively autonomous way, and make their own decisions about how to accomplish their benefits and operating achievements. This Guidebook will be one tool to help portfolio organizations clarify their mission, vision, and program structure.

WORKSHEET 1: MISSION & VISION

In this section, you develop your mission and vision. The mission describes your organization's purpose, the business it is in, and the values that guide your work. Your vision differs from your mission, being an observable set of accomplishments that the organization will achieve over time. Accordingly, the vision will need to be updated once you have realized it, or as conditions change.

1A: MISSION

1. Purpose (our "ends"):

- What need or opportunity is our organization here to address?

- Who is affected by this opportunity or need?

- How would the world be improved once we have addressed this need or opportunity?

- Drawing from your answers to the first three questions, write a short statement of our organization's purpose, including what you seek to accomplish, for whom.

2. Business (our "means"):

- Describe the programs or activities the organization uses to realize its purpose. Make a short, overview statement - more specific descriptions of the program will be asked for in a later section.

1A: MISSION (CONTINUED)

3. Values (answer each question from the viewpoint of four groups - the program's clients, the larger community in which the program is imbedded, the program's staff, and current or potential funders):

- What values underlie the service we provide to each constituency?

CONSTITUENCY	VALUES EMBEDDED IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH CONSTITUENCY
Clients	
Greater community	
Staff	
Funders	

- What shared assumptions underlie our work and cause us to choose what we do as an organization?
- How do we choose to work together?

4. Our mission - using your work from points 1 through 3 above, and discussing it with others in your organization, arrive at a short, direct statement of your organization's mission. Use something like the following format:

The mission of _____ (this organization) is to provide _____ (benefit) for _____ (a population). We do this by _____ (activities or programs). As an organization, we are guided by _____ (values, beliefs, principles) in practicing our work, and accomplishing our mission.

1B: VISION

A vision is a guiding image of success for your organization - a view of what the organization can aspire to over time. Write a short paragraph describing an inspiring yet realistic vision of success. Include a time frame, such as the next five years. Consider the following as you do so:

- How the world will be improved through our work.
- The most important services that we will provide.
- The major characteristics of our organization (e.g., people, processes, resources, infrastructure).
- Those things that make us unique.
- The benefits received by our participants, our staff, the greater community, and our funders

Once you have written your paragraph, work with others in your organization to create a short, direct, and inspiring vision statement to which you all can ascribe.

Vision Statement:

WORKSHEET 2: THEORY OF CHANGE DIAGRAM

Make sure you have answers to the following, either written here, or in your answers to the previous section (worksheets 1a and 1b):

- a) **What social problem is the program designed to address?**
- b) **What are the core aspects of the program that will address the problem?**
- c) **What social benefit will ensue from the work of the program?**
- d) **How will you be able to observe this benefit?**
- e) **What other related benefits will occur as a result of the work of the organization?**

Draw a diagram that relates each of these pieces to each other. You may find your diagram is linear, or contains loops showing that certain activities contribute to others, etc. Be creative. There is no one right way - the goal is to create a simple, effective diagram that shows the program's underlying theory of change. This diagram can be used to communicate to funders, staff members, and other.

For purposes of this worksheet, define the Theory of Change at a high level. Later steps in the guidebook allow you to get more specific about program goals, a specific description of the program, and specific program outputs.

WORKSHEET 3: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

As an overview of the program, write short descriptions of the following areas. This is not meant to be an exhaustive description of the program, but a way of making sure the specifics of the program are clearly articulated which will help in completing other sections of this guidebook.

1. **Goals** - What do you expect the organization to accomplish? (Consider both outputs and outcomes).
2. **Program model** - Describe how the program works, particularly the unique or important aspects.
3. **Specific service offerings** - What services does the program provide?
4. **Organization structure** - How is the organization structured to do the work?
5. **Work culture** - How do we choose to work together?
6. **Affiliations** - What other kinds of organizations do we intend to affiliate with?
7. **Differentiation** - What makes our program different or uniquely innovative?
8. **Competitive advantage** - Describe what keeps other organizations from doing exactly what we do —what is the “moat” or “barrier to entry” around our organization? How will you sustain your differentiation over time?
9. **Revenue sources** - What are all of our expected funding and revenue sources?
10. **Cost structure** - What are the cost elements of our operation, and roughly their sizes?
11. **Other considerations** - What other factors should be included to describe our program?

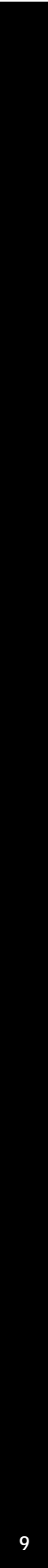
WORKSHEET 4: EXPECTED BENEFITS

Going one level more detailed than the theory of change diagram, define what benefits you expect the program to create, in four groups: Expected benefits to the program's service recipients, the greater community, the staff, and funders. Consider benefits that can be measured in numerical terms, benefits that cannot be easily measured in numerical terms, and benefits that can be measured in financial terms. Benefits should be outcomes experienced by each of the four groups, not outputs from the organization to each group.

In each case, choose benefits that can reasonably be attributed to your program, at least in part. You may also consider benefits with different time horizons, such as short term (1 year), medium term (2-5 years) or long term (over 5 years). Write your expected benefits for each of the four groups on this page and the following three pages. Use these pages as a guide for your thinking - you do not need to fill in every column on every page. Be as specific as you can. In a later worksheet, you will describe the data you expect to collect and the timeframe for achieving these benefits.

4A: EXPECTED BENEFITS FOR SERVICE RECIPIENTS

MEASURABLE BENEFITS	HARD TO MEASURE BENEFITS	MEASURABLE FINANCIAL BENEFITS



4B: EXPECTED BENEFITS FOR THE GREATER COMMUNITY

MEASURABLE BENEFITS	HARD TO MEASURE BENEFITS	MEASURABLE FINANCIAL BENEFITS

4C: EXPECTED BENEFITS FOR THE STAFF

MEASURABLE BENEFITS	HARD TO MEASURE BENEFITS	MEASURABLE FINANCIAL BENEFITS

4D: EXPECTED BENEFITS FOR FUNDERS

MEASURABLE BENEFITS	HARD TO MEASURE BENEFITS	MEASURABLE FINANCIAL BENEFITS

WORKSHEET 5: PLANNED OPERATING ACHIEVEMENTS

Operating achievements are things the organization does as a way of creating benefits (but are not the benefits themselves). They can include either accomplishing a task (e.g., setting up a recruiting process), or achieving a certain level of performance (e.g., reaching a ratio of applications to acceptances of 3:1). Consider operating achievements relating to:

- Internal business processes (such as launching a marketing campaign, recruiting a certain number of candidates, or setting up a donor database),
- Staff development and feedback (such as training activities, evaluation of staff, and upward feedback for the leadership),
- Financially oriented accomplishments that were not included in the previous benefits worksheets 4a through 4d, (such as achieving a certain level of funding or fee based income by a certain date),
- Or any other operating achievements relating to how the organization functions.

Some of the planned operating achievements will be one-time events (such as forming the board of directors) and others will be recurring (such as holding an annual fundraising event).

	INTERNAL BUSINESS PROCESSES	STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND FEEDBACK	FINANCIALLY ORIENTED	OTHER
ONE-TIME EVENTS				
RECURRING EVENTS				

WORKSHEET 6: ANTICIPATED MILESTONES

6A: MILESTONES FOR KEY EXPECTED BENEFITS

Review your expected benefits (worksheets 4a through 4d) and select those that you believe are key to measuring the overall success of your organization in achieving its mission. Strive for a relatively small number of key benefits that sum up the overall results of the organization, but cover enough aspects to create a full picture. Identify a benefits target that can be observed or for which data can be collected, define how the data will be gathered, and specify the date that the target will be accomplished. For multi-year benefits, define what the target will be for this year.

Important: Be careful not to omit the non-numerical benefits simply because they are difficult to measure. Think through how you might gain some insight into the achievement of these benefits.

Keep in mind that you will be reporting your progress on these benefits to Blue Ridge Foundation New York.

CATEGORY	KEY BENEFITS	2002 TARGET	DATA GATHERING METHOD	ACHIEVEMENT DATE
Service recipients				
Greater community				
Staff				
Funders				

6B: MILESTONES FOR PLANNED OPERATING ACHIEVEMENTS

Review your planned operating achievements (worksheet 5) and select those achievements that you believe are key to your organization's ability to realize its mission. Identify a relatively small number of operating achievements that can serve as the key markers for the progress of the organization. Identify a performance target that can be observed or for which data can be collected, define how the data will be gathered, and specify the date that the target will be accomplished. For multi-year benefits, define what the target will be for this year.

Keep in mind that you will be reporting your progress on these operating achievements to Blue Ridge Foundation New York.

ONE-TIME EVENTS

RECURRING EVENTS

KEY OPERATING METRICS	2002 TARGET	DATA GATHERING METHOD	ACHIEVEMENT DATE

WORKSHEET 7: REPORTING TIMELINE

To make sure that the organization is achieving its goals, a regular schedule of reporting must be planned. In these meetings, progress and performance will be discussed, and the portfolio organization will be held accountable for achieving the metrics and milestones established in worksheets 6a and 6b. List the dates when performance reviews will be held for your organization by Blue Ridge Foundation New York. Plan dates for at least the next 18 months, perhaps on a quarterly basis.

DATE	TO REPORT	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
Key Benefits		
Key Operating Metrics		
Key Benefits		
Key Operating Metrics		
Key Benefits		
Key Operating Metrics		
Key Benefits		
Key Operating Metrics		
Key Benefits		
Key Operating Metrics		
Key Benefits		
Key Operating Metrics		

WORKSHEET 8: REPORTING TEMPLATE

Use the templates on the following two pages as the primary pages of your report on performance for each of your scheduled meetings. You may also choose to show additional pages as well.

On the templates, list the key benefits or operating metric, the target and the planned achievement date of this target.

Indicate status of this benefit with the following designations:

- Achieved:** The target has been achieved.
- On track:** We are on track for accomplishing our target on the date planned.
- Delayed:** We still expect to realize the planned benefits or operating metrics, but we will be delayed in doing so (give an expected date in the comments section).
- Stopped:** We have stopped working towards this target (give an explanation in the comments section).
- Not yet started:** The activity is planned, but no work on it has been started.

KEY BENEFITS - PORTFOLIO ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE REPORT

PORTFOLIO ORGANIZATION NAME:				
DATE OF REPORT:				
KEY BENEFITS	TARGET	PLANNED ACHIEVEMENT DATE	STATUS TODAY*	COMMENTS

* For Status Today, indicate: Achieved, On Track, Delayed, Stop, or Not Yet Started