

Committee recommendations to enhance the usefulness of the NSF Strategic Plan:

1. Actionable items:

- a. Define process terms, -- develop common definitions for key terms such as “performance goal,” “strategic goal,” “target.”
- b. Prioritize performance goals/targets with timeframes --you can't do everything.
- c. Implement a “Leadership Communication Plan” --so that top leadership can demonstrate interest and commitment to the strategic planning **process** as a priority on an ongoing basis, i.e., keep leaders engaged.
- d. Engage more program staff and leadership throughout the Foundation in the design of the process, not just as an “afterthought;”--identify champions for each performance goal/target.
- e. Engage stakeholders in a broader communication and engagement strategy. There may be different stakeholders for each goal (those who have a vested interest in how well you perform).
- f. Develop an overall communication plan that is meaningful and accessible--all should at least be aware.
- g. Celebrate both success and improvement that demonstrate progress towards goal achievement.
- h. Frame performance goals in terms of outcomes instead of processes.
- i. Develop a strategic view about how evaluation is framed across the agency (starting from the Director level).
- j. Ensure the integration of the strategic plan into other planning activities such as budgeting, facility planning, performance reviews, etc.
- k. Evaluate for redundancy in the data collection process.

2. Overarching principles:

- a. The Strategic Plan should be a high level and “living” document.
- b. Start with issues that are the most meaningful to the organization.
- c. The Strategic Plan should not impede **strategic thinking**.
- d. Recognize the importance of valid, meaningful and limited data collection process.
- e. Caution that what and how you choose to measure may have unintended consequences.
- f. If you don't know what you are going to do with data to be collected, or if it is highly unlikely that the data will influence decision-making, don't collect it.
- g. Commit to defining “meaningful” measures.
- h. Don't promise too much.
- i. A Strategic Plan written for an external audience may diverge from the organization's planning needs--may need both internal and external planning, goals, and measurement.
- j. As part of the strategic planning process, some data collected may be more useful for internal purposes than for sharing externally.
- k. Do not become a “slave” to the Plan; don't hesitate to shift course when new information becomes available.

3. Other

- a. Systematically solicit feedback from the Advisory Committee.