

Part II

***Support
for the
Process***

Both the short- and the long-term success of your planning process depends on your ability to gather in-kind resources, that is, donations of goods and services and outright adoption of an activity or program. In the long term, the sustainability and success of your plan depends on local organizations and people both implementing and continuing to carry out the strategies. While this could include a commitment of funds, more often the “cost” will be hidden in the value of goods and services or in the outright change in behavior (doing business in a new way) that adoption entails. Planning sponsorship for the shorter-term work of the planning group begins the process of developing longer-term commitments to the outcomes of the plan.

According to Jeanette Nagy, the answer to the question, “When should you develop a plan for financial sustainability?” is “It’s never too early to start planning. If you need money, and you plan to be around for the long haul, you should do this from the start. Planning should take place as soon as the project begins.” In describing the “what” of a financial sustainability plan, she suggests that it “will also include other types of resources you might obtain, such as in-kind support, volunteer staff, or shared resources from other organizations. It may even include convincing another organization to take on a project you started.” Here are the things she suggests will be included in your plan for sponsorship, both for the planning process itself and in your finished strategic plan.

- ◆ a list of all items and needs of the project
- ◆ the amount of money and time required to sustain each item
- ◆ current resources
- ◆ resources still needed
- ◆ potential matching and funding organizations or individuals that might match or fund needs
- ◆ amount that will be requested from each organization, individual, or funding source
- ◆ how it will be requested (and by whom, and when).

In-kind Support Provides More Than Funding

Rebecca Wolff points out that “in-kind support helps build community support for your work. When someone donates a computer or some staff time, their connection to your cause grows stronger. They have more of a stake in seeing you succeed. So it’s not only goods and services you are receiving; you are getting some good will in the bargain, and developing new allies, too.” She also advises that it is important to put a dollar value on all in-kind support you receive, and she notes that if you are seeking grant support, such donations may serve as matching funds. If nothing else, they testify to the support your process receives from your community. When grant-

Planning Sponsorship and Finding Sponsors



making organizations review proposals, they also assess sustainability after their funding ends, so in-kind support provides evidence that your community will adopt and continue the strategies of the plan you develop. Be sure to include your team members' time or donations when you tally up the value of in-kind support.

How Do You Get Support?

Here are Nagy's recommendations:

- ◆ Be helpful to others! That way, later on, you can collect on those favors by asking for support.
- ◆ Giving public recognition to your supporters is also important. Thank your benefactors publicly!
- ◆ Be able to gather and interpret information about the target population, other potential client populations, new service opportunities, and the community as a whole.
- ◆ Be sure to give supporters lots of feedback about their efforts. This helps them know how they are being most helpful and ways that they can improve.
- ◆ Most of all, impress them with outcomes. The best motivator for potential supporters is how good your cause is. . . . People who are going to give you resources—funders in particular—want to see results. Strategies include letting supporters see that the people the program serves are pleased with the results, being as involved in high-level decision making (e.g., lobbying, campaigning for sympathetic legislators, participating in hearings where rules affecting your group are being considered, etc.) as possible [though some funders set restrictions on this], and appealing to their particular vested interests by showing them how your program can help them accomplish their own goals.

Here are a few additional suggestions.

- ◆ Develop relationships. People give to causes, organizations, and individuals that they know or recognize. Attend events where you can network with others and join your local chamber of commerce and service organizations (or recruit planning team members who belong to these groups).
- ◆ Develop a one-page summary of the project and how people can help, and distribute it to those with whom you've developed relationships.
- ◆ Bring the issue before the public. Use your social marketing skills (see [Chapter ____](#)) and strategies to increase the number of people who know and care about the issues.

The Nitty-Gritty

To begin thinking through a plan for sponsorship, start with the tools on the next pages or similar ones that your team has developed. Identify what team members need to do, when, and what resources you'll require. Be as detailed as possible in describing the activities—it's easy to overlook the value of having someone fold letters and stuff envelopes, write and mail 15 copies of the minutes, or remain in a building after hours to make a meeting room available. The sample "Shopping List" provides some suggestions, but it is far from complete. What else could you add? You might want to devote a single list to each activity, but consolidating them may allow you to see where you could get one source to cover several similar tasks (all the copying, for example) or where you may be asking a disproportionate amount of a single donor.

As your team develops the shopping list, begin to identify people or organizations that might be willing to help. Be creative. There may be several ways to get your needs met. An organization that might be unwilling or unable to provide money or staff time might be willing to provide a work space or access to their equipment.

Be sure to identify how helping the planning initiative helps the donor. Knowing this will make it easier to "sell" your request. A caveat, though: Consider also how sponsorship may affect public perception of your plan. For example, it may not be wise to ask for sponsorship from organizations that have a vested interest in the outcome. Whether or not they can provide disinterested support for your plan, public perception may be that they will have undue influence over the outcomes and strategies you eventually select.

Determine how you will make your approach. Do you have someone on the planning committee who already has a relationship with the donor? Can that person make the first contact or provide a name? Even when your first contact is in person or by telephone, you should send a letter that outlines

- ♦ what you need
- ♦ how much you need
- ♦ when you need it
- ♦ what the benefit to the donor is
- ♦ what the outcome will be of having their donation.

Finally, as Nagy suggests, thank your donors early and often—on brochures or other printed matter, with posters or table tents at meetings, in interviews with the press—and with individually written thank-you letters.

Resources

Nagy, Jenette. Developing a committee to help with financial sustainability. *Community Toolbox*. http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/sub_section_main_1299.htm

Rabinowitz, Phil. Becoming a line item in an existing budget. *Community Toolbox*. http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/sub_section_main_1330.htm
Wolff, Rebecca. Soliciting contributions and in-kind support. *Community Toolbox*. http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/sub_section_main_1340.htm

See also

Nagy, Jenette. Strategies for sustaining the initiative. *Community Toolbox*. http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/sub_section_main_1330.htm

Some helpful books

Burnett, Ken. 2002. *Relationship Fundraising*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Keegan, Burke. 1994. *Fundraising for Nonprofits: How to Build a Community Partnership*. New York: Harper Resource.

Warwick, Mal. 2001. *How to Write Successful Fundraising Letters*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



A Shopping List for Local Sponsorship

Time Frame: _____

Events/Activities (list): _____

Needs:

Goods	Services	Management	Likely Source	Team Contact

A Shopping List for Local Sponsorship

Sample

Time Frame: January-March

Events/Activities (list): Planning Meetings, 1/10, 2/10, 3/5

Community Forum, 3/15

Needs:

Goods	Services	Management	Likely Source	Team Contact
Planning Meetings				
Minutes copied	Reminder call Minutes typed	Meeting room	Senior Center Area Agency on Aging Interfaith Council	
Community Forum				
<i>Publicity</i>				
Fliers copied	Newspaper ads Fliers created Fliers distributed		County Courier (weekly) AARP Chapter Boy scouts	
<i>Logistics</i>				
Materials copied	Box lunch Materials developed	Site	Community College Widget Mfg.? TastyBiscuit? Interfaith Council Ditto Photocopy	

Two Worksheets Adapted from the Community Toolbox

Worksheet for tracking in-kind donations

In-Kind Donations for the Month of: _____

Donor	Donation	Dollar Value	Contact Person	Thank You Note Sent?

In-Kind Donor Prospect Profile

Prospect's Name _____

Business _____

Title _____ Phone _____

E-mail _____ Who will contact? _____

Known Giving Patterns _____

Areas of Possible Interest _____

Suggested Donation _____

Method of Contact _____

History of Contacts _____

Adapted from the *Community Tool Box*, http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/sub_section_tools_1340.htm

Counties in North Carolina have authority and funding powers over many of the long-term care services and issues of interest to your local planning team, including Home and Community Care Block Grant services, transportation, and parks and recreation services. County government here is stronger and given more authority than in many other states.

A common saying in North Carolina is, "If you've seen one county, you've seen one county," because county characteristics, structures, and governance varies so widely. Although counties differ greatly, the county government structure in all 100 includes a board of county commissioners, a chairman of that board, a county manager, and a clerk to the board. These are all people in your county who could have a significant influence over the success of the planning process and resulting long-term care reform; thus, your planning team should strive to include them in the planning process, educate them about long-term care issues and the planning process within your community, and develop working relationships with them.

As lead agent, it is important to first understand and then educate the planning team about how your county government operates. Then, when the team members understand how the system works and who holds the power over issues and services, they can begin to design ways in which to influence county policies.

County Government Primer

The Board of County Commissioners

All North Carolina counties have boards of county commissioners whose members are elected by the general public in November of even numbered years. These boards are responsible for the overall county government structure and can be thought of as the county's legislative body. Among their specific responsibilities are establishing county policies, setting local property tax rates, allocating county funds and adopting the county budget (which affects social, public health, and home and community-based services for older and disabled adults), assessing and establishing priorities, ensuring that mandated services (such as Medicaid, emergency medical services, and jail services) are provided, and deciding which optional services (such as parks and recreation) the county should provide. Although every county has a board, no two are exactly the same, varying by the number of members, the lengths of terms, methods of election, and ways of selecting a chairman.

Boards are required by state law to hold at least one meeting per month, usually at a regular meeting date, time, and place. However, many counties have found it necessary to

Working with County Commissioners and Other Public Officials

*Local
government
touches
our lives
every day.*

—W. Brian Hiatt

meet twice a month. The clerk to the board can tell you when your local board meets. Boards can also call special meetings to discuss matters of importance, but they must post notice of the meeting 48 hours in advance in the county courthouse. (If your county has a website, notice of meetings may be posted there, as well. Similarly, local newspapers often run notices.) The Open Meeting Statute of 1971 requires public bodies to allow the public to attend all meetings, and it applies to commissioners' meetings, except in special circumstances. Attending meetings can be a great way to begin to understand your county's governance structure, learn what issues are of special importance to the board, begin to develop relationships with your county commissioners, and ensure that your planning team is aware of any policies or funding changes that the board is considering that may affect the long-term care system. Consumer representation at board meetings is especially powerful. If the board is considering an issue that is important to your planning team, you or other team members can speak during the public comment phase of their agenda. To do this, contact the clerk or simply show up at the meeting and follow the public comment guidelines. To request that an item be placed on the board's agenda, contact your county manager.

Usually, commissioners hold several public hearings per year. These are also excellent opportunities for you and other planning team members to attend, hear what the county is considering, and advocate for reform. Again, the county clerk can give you information on when and where the public hearings will be held.

If you are unable to attend a commissioners' meeting or public hearing, you can request minutes from the county clerk, and this person can also usually provide you with any "agenda package"—supporting documents for the agenda—used during or for preparation before the meeting. (Here, too, check the county website. The agenda and supporting documents are often posted and remain available thereafter.)

It is extremely important to develop support from the commissioners for your county's planning process and resulting long-term care reform efforts. Many strategies that result from the planning process will have to be approved by the commissioners before they can be implemented, while others may require county funding that they control. In addition, if the commissioners are behind the planning process, it may gain more media attention and support from the community than it would otherwise.

The Chairman of the Board

The chairman presides over all meetings of the Board of County Commissioners and acts as the chief executive of-

ficer of the county. In addition, the chairman is the official speaker for the commissioners and represents them at local ceremonies, celebrations, and meetings. Board members generally elect the chairman at the first regular meeting in December. Although the chairman has no more legal power than the other members of the board, he or she often has significant influence within the county. If possible, taking steps to educate the chairman about your planning process can be extremely helpful in securing support for the initiative and future reform. Your planning team should also consider inviting the chairman to important meetings and public events, if for no other reason than to make him/her aware of your work.

The County Manager

In all 100 counties, the county manager is appointed by the commissioners and is responsible solely to the board. County managers are responsible for managing the general operations of the county government and all departments under the board's control, developing a county budget for consideration by the board, bringing matters of importance in the county to the board, managing county expenditures, and hiring (and firing) personnel in the county departments under the commissioners' authority. The county manager does not have personnel responsibilities for departments run by other elected officials, such as the sheriff or registrar of deeds, or departments that are overseen by an independent board (such as the county departments of social services or health).

The county manager is a very important person to get to know, because he or she is aware of almost everything happening of importance. County managers often have significant influence over the board's decisions, because they have been described as the "eyes, ears, and legs" of the board. The county manager can bring matters that he or she feels are important to the board's attention. You might consider inviting the county manager to participate on the team (or to appoint a representative). If no one from the county manager's office is able to participate, send minutes from your meetings to keep them aware of your planning team's activities.

The Clerk to the County Board

The clerk to the board is appointed by the commissioners to be the official record-keeper for the county. Clerks are responsible for:

- ♦ preparing and maintaining the minutes of board meetings and public hearings (including votes on issues)
- ♦ filing county ordinances in an "ordinance book"
- ♦ maintaining other county records, including contracts, resolutions, board correspondence, signed

*Although
county
governments
are similar in
many ways,
each county
has a distinct
personality that
reflects the
character and
history of the
people who live
there.*

—Gordon P. Whitaker

- oaths of offices, and legal notices
- ♦ giving public notice of meetings
- ♦ conducting any research requested by the board
- ♦ preparing the board's agendas and compiling agenda packets.

The clerk can be a very helpful contact, because he or she generally knows the ins and outs of the board and serves as a link between the board and the public by providing information to interested citizens. You should contact the clerk if you need to determine when the board is meeting or holding a public hearing, would like to receive minutes or agenda packets, or have a question about an ordinance, resolution, or county record.

How Can the Planning Team Begin to Influence County Policy?

- ♦ The commissioners, chairman, and county manager work for you. Try not to be intimidated by them.
- ♦ Educate the commissioners and staff about the planning process. Your planning team can't expect the "power players" in your county to support its work unless they understand what is taking place and where it is leading. Request meetings with the county manager, chairman, or individual commissioners to discuss your planning process and bring along team members and consumers. If that isn't convenient, ask the county manager to allot an agenda item for an educational presentation at a board meeting.
- ♦ Invite the chairman and the county manager to participate personally or to designate a representative. Representatives of county government can bring insights and information to the planning process that others can't. They can also be vital links to other county government departments.
- ♦ Invite the commissioners and county manager to public forums and focus groups. Even if they have not participated in the overall planning process, they may be willing to participate in one or two public events. You can increase the likelihood of their participation by asking them to provide an introduction or by introducing them at the beginning of a public forum or focus group. Keep in mind that the commission's rules about quorum may require formal notification of a public meeting if more than that number of commissioners attend your event.
- ♦ Keep them updated. Send minutes from every planning team meeting, as well as any special reports,

- focus group or public hearing results, and issue briefs, to the chairman, the county manager, and any interested commissioners.
- ◆ Use informal opportunities to discuss the planning process. If you see a commissioner or the county manager at a meeting, public event, or even at church or your child's baseball game, make sure to introduce yourself and put in a short plug for the planning process.
 - ◆ Stay informed about county government meetings and issues of importance. The clerk can be a wonderful resource to you in knowing the commissioners' schedule. Get a subscription to and read your local newspaper. As lead agent, go to board meetings, even if issues related to long-term care are not being discussed, to stay on top of issues important to the county, learn about the personalities of the county's government officials, and figure out what types of approaches work best when asking for assistance. When issues relating to long-term care are being addressed, bring team members and consumers with you to lend support. Request the agenda packet from the clerk before the meeting so that you and the team members will be prepared for what will be discussed and can bring along supporting documents if you need to challenge an opinion or resolution.
 - ◆ When the planning team must comment on an issue at a board meeting, ask for consumer participation. Public officials are often swayed more strongly by consumers than by agency representatives. If you have consumers who are strong public speakers, ask them if they would feel comfortable attending the meeting and speaking for the planning team.
 - ◆ Write Letters to the Editor. Commissioners and county managers read the paper.
 - ◆ Write letters and e-mails to them on specific issues of importance, but keep your correspondence short and to the point. In years past, e-mail commanded attention because of its rarity, but letters now may get more attention because they have become less common.
 - ◆ Conduct petition drives. If an issue or vote is very important to long-term care reform in your community, but the county government is not making it a priority, petition drives can be useful in showing how many constituents are concerned that it be addressed.

Resources

- Bell, Fleming A. Facts about NC's clerks. 1990. *Popular Government* 55, p. 43.
- Bell, Fleming A., and Warren J. Wicker, eds. 1999. *County Government in North Carolina*. Chapel Hill: NC Institute of Government.
- Fleer, Jack D. 1994. *North Carolina Government and Politics*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Nagy, Jenette. Writing letters to the editor. *Community Toolbox*, http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/sub_section_main_1239.htm
- National Association of Counties, <http://www.naco.org/>
- NC Association of County Commissioners, <http://www.ncacc.org>
- NC Civic Education Consortium. Teacher resources—Community resources for the classroom (by County), <http://www.iog.unc.edu/programs/civiced/teacherresources/resources/index.htm> (Lists contact information for all county governments.)
- NC Institute of Government, <http://www.iog.unc.edu>
- Orr, Douglas, and Alfred Stuart. 2000. *The North Carolina Atlas*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- State Library of North Carolina. *County Government Historical Perspective*. <http://statelibrary.dcr.state.nc.us/NC/CNTYOUT/PRECOUNT.HTM>
- Whitaker, Gordon, and the NC City and County Management Association. *Local Government in North Carolina*. <http://www.ncmanagers.org/teachers/textrevised/index.html> (This resource is designed for teachers of high school students, but it is a wonderful introduction to government in North Carolina. See also W. Brian Hiatt's Preface.)

Informal community leaders gain their power and influence through relationships, and that's how you will find them. With good luck and planning, some of these leaders are already part of your planning effort.

Who Are Informal Community Leaders and Why Are They Important?

These are the “go-to” people in the community. Some may be leaders of faith communities, presidents of civic or fraternal organizations or of local groups organized around an interest (e.g., League of Women Voters, Friends of Residents of Long-term Care), or respected longtime residents of the community. They are important to your planning effort because they have their finger on the pulse of the community and know the real issues and barriers. Because they are trusted, they can help publicize your effort through informal channels, help you gather information from stakeholders, and motivate the people around them to support your planning process.

How Do You Find and Work with These Leaders?

The chapters in this guide on Identifying and Engaging Stakeholders and Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers offer some suggestions on this issue. Here are a few more.

- ♦ Early in the process, get the planning team to brainstorm a list of groups that aren't yet represented, make suggestions about people who might be effective contacts, and agree to get in touch with the ones they know to invite them to participate.
- ♦ Do some research in the community newspapers. Go to the library or the paper's website and look up articles related to community planning or to long-term care, or to such related topics as accessibility and affordable housing. Which reporters write about this topic? What local sources do they quote?
- ♦ There are always “the usual suspects”—community activists who appear regularly on the boards or among the officers of organizations. These people often suffer from meeting fatigue, but they may be willing to refer you to someone just as well respected who doesn't participate as frequently and may be willing to help. Also remember that your team can help nurture and incubate new community leaders and help them develop in that role.
- ♦ Go to or watch town council or county commission meetings, or review the minutes. You may be able to identify citizens or groups you haven't included.

Identifying and Involving Informal Community Leaders

*A leader is
anyone capable
of delivering a
following.*

—Charles Dobson

Similarly, look for participants among the ranks of former council members and commissioners, who often look for ways to continue their public service after they leave office.

- ◆ Go to places where the people you want to involve go. Identify yourself and explain clearly what you want help with. Bring along a brochure explaining the planning process and what it will involve. Ask questions: “If you wanted advice about _____, who would you ask in this community?” “Is there someone here who helps get things done? Would you give my name and number to that person?”
- ◆ Is there some other hot topic in your community, now or in the recent past, that could be related to long-term care? Which citizens got involved in that effort?

Overcoming the Barriers to Participation

Chris Hampton and Eric Wadud’s article in the *Community Toolbox* suggests that it is critical to think clearly about barriers to participation and ways of reducing them. Here’s a shortened, revised version of their list.

- ◆ Preconceptions and attitudes within your organization about the people you want to involve (“Low-income older adults would never. . . .” “Caregivers are so busy giving care that they couldn’t. . . .”)
- ◆ Inadequate publicity about the planning effort
- ◆ Limited experience in community planning efforts on the part of the people you want to involve. Be clear about your expectations for involvement, and be prepared to teach them how to participate effectively.
- ◆ History of being ignored or a sense of powerlessness
- ◆ Lack of time (pay attention to when participants are available)
- ◆ Lack of transportation to meetings
- ◆ Lack of care for family members who can’t be left unattended
- ◆ Previous bad experiences with action groups and meetings.

The title to Vilela, Nagy, and Fawcett’s article says it all. If you want to see lasting changes as a result of your planning effort, it is important to develop grassroots support for it through influential community leaders. Both those who benefit and those who help design and make the plan acceptable are vital to enduring change.

Resources

- Center for Participatory Change. <http://www.cpcwnc.org/index.html>
(Grassroots Efforts in Western North Carolina. See their *Toolbox*.)
- Dobson, Charles. The Citizens' Handbook: A Guide to Building Community. <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/> (For the quote, see his article on IAF organizing, <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/iaf.pdf>.)
- Hampton, Chris, and Eric Wadud. Involving people most affected by the problem. *Community Toolbox*, http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/sub_section_main_1084.htm
- Vilela, Marcello, Jenette Nagy, and Stephen B. Fawcett. Identifying targets and agents of change: Who can benefit and who can help. *Community Toolbox*, http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/sub_section_main_1145.htm
- W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Leadership on-line. <http://www.leadershiponlinewkkf.org/> (See especially <http://www.leadershiponlinewkkf.org/local/learningcenter/Pubs/Grassroots/workbook/grworkbooktoc.htm>)

