

Mission Statement

An organization's **MISSION STATEMENT** communicates its reason for existence. It should complement the IRS submitted "statement of purpose," communicating a concise, compelling image.

It is a board responsibility to determine and advance the organization's mission. The strategic planning retreat is when a board reviews, affirms or updates the statement. Leaders and staff should be able to easily articulate the mission.

Most statements answer three questions: Who we are, whom we serve, and what we offer.

An organization that cannot find its mission statement should reference the IRS Form 990 to reference the "statement of purpose," as well as the preamble to the bylaws and articles of incorporation.

Contemporary mission statements are 15 to 25 words --- conveniently fitting on the back of a business card and the bottom of a meeting agenda. Let clarity determine length.

The primary audience – persons served by the organization – should be near the start of the statement. If a secondary audience is identified, (i.e. for the benefit of the public, enhancing the community, suppliers), identify it in the latter part.

Omit references to history or successes; those should be communicated in narratives about the organization.

Do not mistake mission with a vision statement (long-term desired outcome as a result of accomplishing the mission) nor a values statement (principles for governing and managing the organization.)

Promote the mission statement often: on the front page of a website, in the conference room, on coffee mugs and on the back of name tentcards, for instance.

Be cautious not to broaden the mission statement reviewed by the IRS; potentially endangering tax-exempt status

"The Society serves as a leading component, committed to the diverse needs of members by providing and pursuing excellence in advocacy, community service and education"

"The Association is the unrelenting advocate for physicians, ensuring health for all citizens."

"The Chamber helps its members grow and prosper by building relationships, developing their employees, promoting best practices, and by effective political involvement."