



Introduction

In May 2016, Philanthropy West Virginia launched a strategic planning process to update its existing strategic plan, *Twenty Years and Thriving*. To prepare for focused discussions about the future, members of the board of directors and staff completed an online pre-retreat survey for purposes of identifying key organizational issues and questions. Additionally, the consultant convened planning calls with both the President and members of the Strategic Planning Task Force (Board Chair, Vice-Chair, and President). Eleven members of the board of directors and all staff members completed the survey for a response rate of 79%.

This briefing summarizes organizational themes, key questions, and strategic directions to use as a starting point to shape future directions as the organization moves into its next phase of development. Additional preparatory materials, including results from a membership satisfaction survey and a summary of promising practices, will also be considered to set the stage for planning.

Organizational Identity

To strengthen future strategy work, a clear understanding of the mission, vision, and core values of the organization, along with the scope of its work, will be revisited as part of the retreat process.

The current mission of Philanthropy West Virginia is *to strengthen philanthropy in the Mountain State*. The vision is *to serve as West Virginia's leading voice and premier resource for philanthropy*.

Snapshot of the Current Environment

The current environment of the philanthropic field in which Philanthropy West Virginia operates is in a continual cycle of change, and will need to be monitored on an ongoing basis to proactively advance its mission. The following point-in-time snapshot examines strengths, opportunities, trending topics, key questions and strategic priorities.



In building upon the successes of the 2013 strategic plan, respondents identified the following as key areas of strength:

- Programs (87%)
- Government Relations/Public Policy (73%)
- Collaborations (67%)

Member services was ranked as a strength by 47% of the respondents, followed by engaging regional and national partners (33%). Sector data and resources and one-on-one consultation and resources were ranked as a strength by 20% of the respondents.

Additional asset advantages include strong name recognition, current partnerships, and the leadership of a statewide board of directors.



Respondents identified several opportunities on the horizon for the organization to consider as it sustains and grows its impact, including:

- Development of stronger philanthropic partnerships (nationally and regionally)
- Impact investing
- Effective grant making
- Collaborative grant making through affinity groups
- Collectively addressing social issues of interest and serving as a change agent
- Expansion of public policy initiatives
- Economic revitalization and diversification
- POWER (+) Plan

The challenging economic environment in West Virginia, including the opioid epidemic, reduced government funding, and the public education system were noted as additional **trending topics**.



Key issues and questions

Respondents identified **financial sustainability** most often as a critical issue to address during strategic planning. How to achieve long-term financial success will be one of several key questions to address during the retreat:

1. *What proactive strategies are needed to attract new, diverse sources of revenue to **sustain** Philanthropy West Virginia? How will programs and services be tied to **financial stability** moving forward?*
2. *In what ways do we **continue to expand philanthropic giving** in West Virginia?*
3. *What new strategies do we implement to **retain and grow our membership base**?*
4. *What additional **value-added services and programs** (beyond our core) should we provide to our members given our current capacity?*
5. *What new **partnerships** need to be cultivated as we move forward?*
6. *How will our **impact** and success be defined, measured and articulated?*
7. *How do we enhance our relationship with the **West Virginia Nonprofit Association** during this next phase of our development?*
8. *How do we continue to strengthen our **public policy and advocacy efforts**?*
9. *What steps do we take to keep a strong **staffing infrastructure in place**? What new strategies are needed to assure an **effective governance structure**, including, **leadership transition**, continues?*



Strategic Priorities for the Future

Based upon pre-retreat groundwork, organizational and strategic considerations are framed into **four strategic priorities or building blocks**. Input from survey respondents regarding key retreat issues and results, in addition to ongoing strategies in the current plan, are highlighted to frame plan revisions and offer “sparks for strategy development”.

Membership Engagement and Growth (Membership and Outreach)

- > Cultivate new members
- > Retain and engage current members

- > Expand value-added member services and programs to continue to build knowledge and leadership
- > Broaden consulting services to respond to needs
- > Continue the annual conference, community foundations institute, and other highly valued and requested programs, trainings, and networking opportunities
- > Establish national relationships that bring value-added partnerships with our members

Philanthropic Giving and Impact (Philanthropic Wealth & Partnerships)

- > Grow (at least 10%) the state's base of endowed philanthropy and strengthen the work of the current grant making community
- > Identify and launch a Collaborative Funding Project
- > Move towards impact investing
- > Champion the creation of new foundations and endowments
- > Establish national relationships and partnerships for rural philanthropic development
- > Facilitate research and gather data to educate the public and other stakeholders (*Transfer of Wealth Study*)
- > Create and initiate a philanthropist and foundation leader mentorship program

Public Policy and Advocacy (Leading with a Collective Voice)

- > Define and enhance our partnership with the West Virginia Nonprofit Association
- > Continue to enhance public policy and serve as the collective voice for members and key stakeholders as the "go-to" resource
- > Continue implementation of the communications and marketing plan

Sound Operations and Financial Stability (Board Governance, Staffing, and Financial Sustainability)

- > Establish an endowment fund of one to two million dollars to support annual operations
- > Grow consulting services to maintain diversification of revenue streams

- > Ensure staff retention and capacity exists to continue programming and member services
- > Define clear roles and responsibilities of the board of directors
- > Develop a board leadership succession plan
- > Strengthen volunteer, committee, and board involvement

Issue Brief Summary prepared by Becky King, June 10, 2016