

# Designing a Needs-Based Volunteer System

When you have thoroughly reviewed local needs, assessed local capacity and resources, and have considered community values, you are ready to develop a system that combines a common vision and a thorough process. You may want to utilize this with your local 4-H advisory group.

## Developing a Common Vision

Chances are likely that there's a program gap between "what is" and "what could be". The difference between the two serves as an incentive for action

Discovering and clearly defining your vision is essential for helping others join your effort to turn "what is" into "what can be." A positive, meaningful vision of the future can give compelling direction for the present!

A vision statement is a shared and deep expression of what people within an organization want the organization to be. It reflects values of the organization and is a stretch from the current situation. It captures our imagination, generates ownership, and moves us toward what we choose to be. It is constructed by the very people who will live the vision; it isn't dictated from the top down.

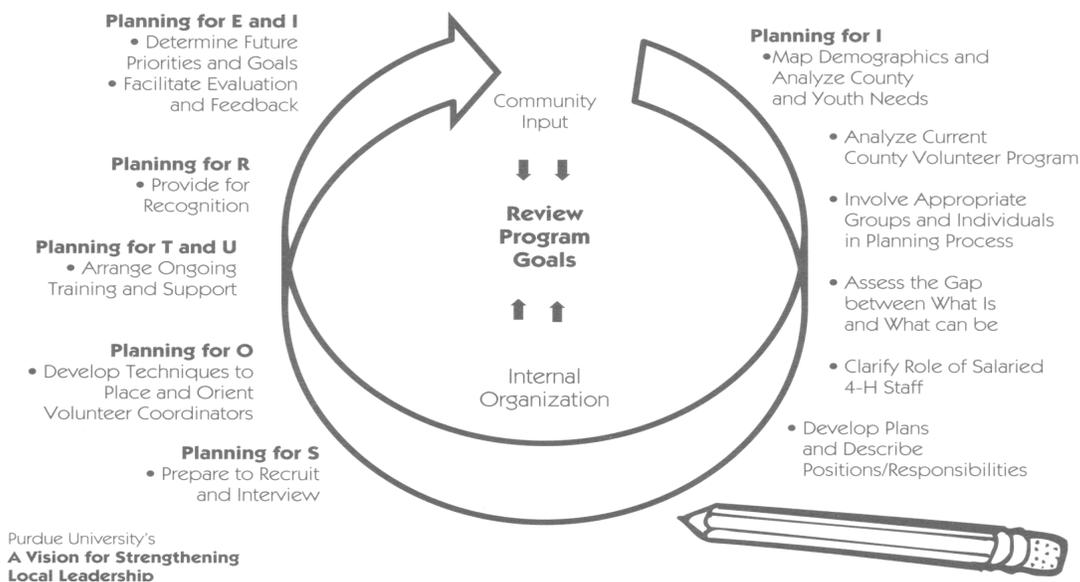
Crafting so much into a one-statement summary is a worthwhile challenge. Tackle it by reviewing and discussing your program needs and current situation, then dividing your planning team into work groups of 3 – 5 people. Each group should draft its own statement and use newsprint to share the statement with the entire planning committee or task force. Participants, with two votes each, vote on statements that best summarize their vision for the volunteer program. Solicit one person from each work group to design a vision statement using the most preferred ideas. When complete, the group discusses team concerns and adjusts the statement as group discussion leads.

Record the resulting exciting, motivating, compelling, and noble statement that captures your imagination and moves your program toward what you choose to do and be. \_\_\_\_\_

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## The Guidepost Model

The Guidepost Model illustrated here is one step-by-step guide for designing a volunteer delivery system. It is a result of research conducted in the New England states and Indiana as a component of the national "Volunteers for the Future" effort sponsored by W.K. Kellogg and the National 4-H Council. Adapt it to your own program, as you plot ways to turn your vision into reality. Completing each step in this model is vital to the long-term success of your volunteer system. There is a significant time investment and those involved in the planning process must communicate at each stage.

These planning steps take place before you ever actually begin the process of ISOTURE. There is a separate **VNG Fact Sheet** on ISOTURE.

### Assessing the Current Situation

Adapt this 4-H tool to your own program, to provide direction for your committee. Better yet, actually map the existing areas of program and leader strengths, to visually depict the current situation.

1. How many young people are now involved in your program? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many volunteers do you now have?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Activity leaders?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Organizational leaders?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Key leaders?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Project club leaders?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Resource leaders?  
What is the ratio of adult volunteers to youth participants in your program?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Which communities have strong programs?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Which ones don't?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Which project areas have strong leader support?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Which project areas need leader support?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
What are the priority project areas needing volunteers?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How many volunteers are currently involved in helping determine program priorities and direction? \_\_\_\_\_  
What additional skills are needed among these decision makers?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Which additional segments of the community should be involved?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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Is this a truly diverse group, fully representative of the community or county? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How many volunteers are currently supporting program delivery, for example, as newsletter compilers, publicity coordinators, fund raisers, enrollment processors, etc.?

\_\_\_\_\_

List possible support roles for volunteers. \_\_\_\_\_

7. How many volunteers are now involved with short-term special interest efforts?

\_\_\_\_\_

List special interest areas for which groups should be formed.

8. How many local clubs are there? \_\_\_\_\_ Which communities need volunteers to organize local clubs?

\_\_\_\_\_

How many volunteers currently recruit and support club leaders? \_\_\_\_\_

Which areas of the community need this assistance?

9. Which county events, contests, delegations, or programs are coordinated by volunteers?

\_\_\_\_\_

Which ones aren't?

10. What are the driving forces promoting change from the current situation? What are the restraining forces resisting change?

### Emerging Priorities

1. Does your county program have a vision or long-range goals? (If not, describe your own vision for the program).

\_\_\_\_\_

What new volunteer roles are needed to turn the vision into reality?

2. What new projects, communities, clubs, audiences, delivery modes, collaborations, special interest projects, and program support do you envision?

\_\_\_\_\_

What volunteer roles are vital to the success of the vision?



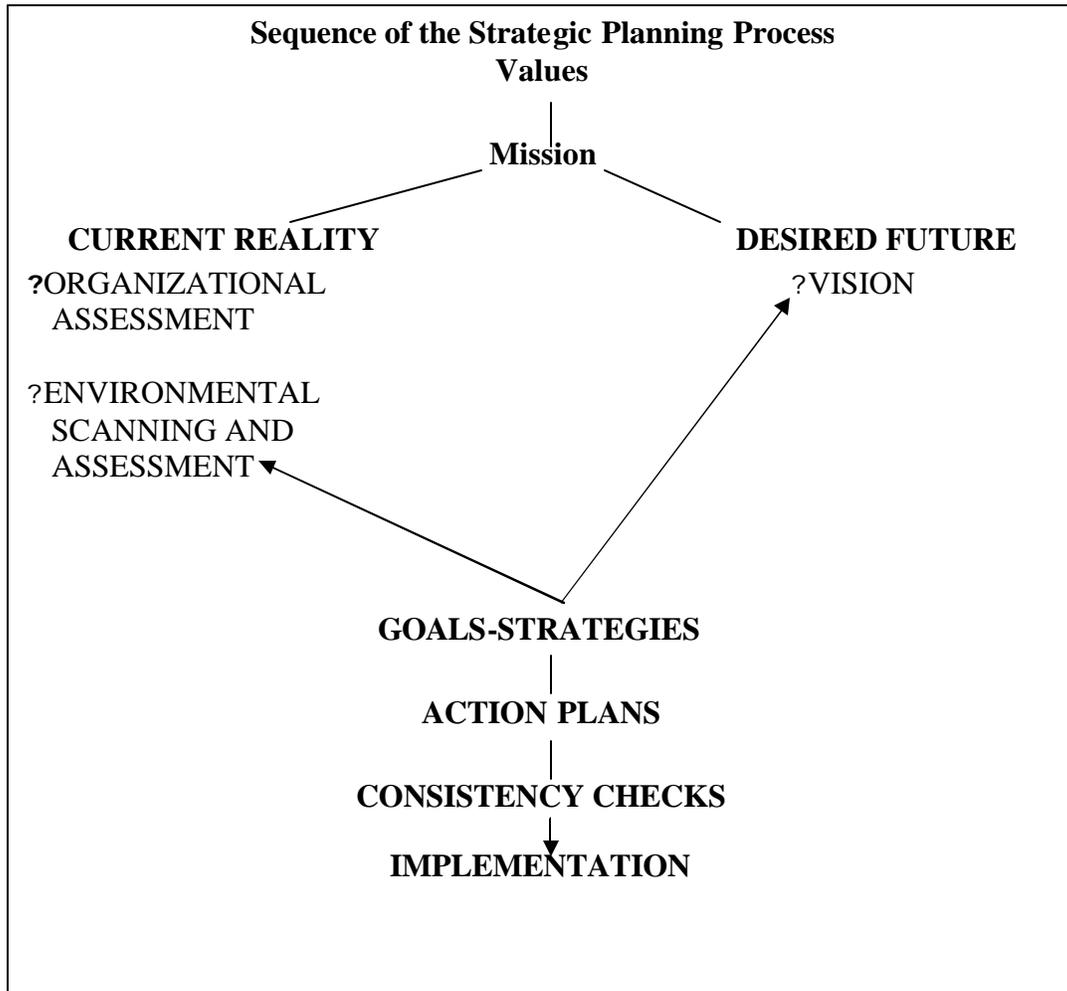
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## Moving Toward Our Vision by Closing the Gap (between Reality and Vision)

Turning vision into reality is no simple matter. But a worthwhile vision demands a proven process. We have one!

In his concept paper "Operationalizing the Concept of Current Reality", Dr. Michael Brazzel diagrams the process of moving from sequence, the strategic planning process using: values, mission; organizational assessment, environmental scanning and assessment; strategies or goals; action plans, consistency check; and implementation.



We close the gap between where we are and where we want to be with goals and strategies, action plans, consistency checks, and implementation. As the plans are implemented, check progress and adjust the goals and plans as needed to reach the vision.

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