



2008 – 2010 STRATEGIC PLAN

Introduction

This Strategic Plan builds on the work of the 2005 – 2007 Strategic Plan, drafted by the Colorado Nonprofit Association board and staff in 2004. The 2008 – 2010 Plan is intended to serve as a high-level, strategic view of the work of the Association, focusing on goals and key strategies that will lead to their accomplishment. The staff will use this document to create annual operational plans that outline tactics, roles, and timelines.

Vision

The Colorado Nonprofit Association is the “voice of the sector” striving to cultivate an effective, vibrant nonprofit sector that enhances the quality of life in Colorado, and serves the needs of people and communities throughout the state. The Association envisions a Colorado where:

- Nonprofit organizations are effective in achieving their missions to improve life in their communities.
- The public understands, appreciates, and contributes generously to the important work of Colorado's nonprofit organizations.
- Nonprofit organizations have the resources they need to operate efficiently and effectively.
- Legislators and other public sector officials understand and appreciate the nonprofit sector, and they actively maintain a positive legislative and regulatory environment that supports the sector's work.
- Business leaders statewide value the economic contributions that a thriving nonprofit sector makes to the workforce and the state and they actively support the work of the sector through financial, human, and other resources.

Mission

The mission of the Colorado Nonprofit Association is to lead, serve and strengthen Colorado nonprofit organizations.

Advocacy and Service

The Colorado Nonprofit Association serves two key roles: it is a **membership organization** providing services to its members, and it is an **advocacy organization** representing the needs and interests of the broader nonprofit sector.

- As a membership organization, we seek to strengthen our members' ability to accomplish their missions, and to help them to engage in the work of the sector. We provide opportunities for members to receive professional development and learn about smart practices from one another. Members receive significant discounts on insurance and other products through Nonprofit Resources, and pay reduced fees for programs and events.
- As an advocacy organization, the Association represents all members of the nonprofit community to legislators, community leaders, and the general public. Through legislative efforts, work to promote excellence in the sector, and efforts to promote charitable giving, the Association seeks to help improve the operating environment for all nonprofits in Colorado.

These two roles – membership and advocacy – are fused sides of the same coin. A larger Association membership base translates into greater credibility and power on the advocacy side. Likewise, successful advocacy raises awareness and credibility of the Association among nonprofits and drives increased membership. The two sides work in tandem and with strong support from the board and staff.

Values

The Colorado Nonprofit Association ascribes to the following values:

We value the sector.

- The nonprofit sector throughout Colorado has a proud history of service, innovation, and social change, and the accomplishments of the sector deserve acknowledgement, affirmation, and celebration.

We value our role as an advocate.

- Advocacy and lobbying are fundamental rights for nonprofits and legislation and public policy initiatives that impact nonprofit resources and freedoms should be monitored and communicated to interested parties.

We value equity.

- All parts of the nonprofit sector are equally valued, regardless of size, program focus, or geographic location.
- Nonprofit services, programs, and facilities should be financially affordable, physically and geographically accessible, and readily available to all those who could benefit from such access.

We value diversity and inclusiveness.

- The strength of the sector derives, in part, from its diversity in culture, ideas, dreams, style, and mission. The viewpoints of diverse organizations are included in the leadership of the Association.
- Member organizations across Colorado should promote the dignity of various individuals and groups, and encourage positive interaction among members holding diverse opinions and representing diverse backgrounds. Proactive efforts should be made to reach out to and include constituents who represent the richness of Colorado's communities.

We value accountability and transparency.

- The nonprofit sector state-wide must maintain high ethical standards which ensure accountability to the community: donors, volunteers, government, and the public.
- Nonprofit organizations throughout Colorado should serve as responsible and transparent stewards of charitable dollars through adherence to ethical fund raising practices and taxation provisions, prudent expenditures, accurate and timely reporting, and valid measurement and accurate reporting of program outcomes.

We value partnerships.

- Partnerships, connections, and collaborations between the nonprofit sector, the corporate sector, and the public sector are essential to a health community.

Key Objectives and Suggested Strategies

Membership

Recognizing that the strength of our membership helps “fuel our work,” the Colorado Nonprofit Association will continue to build membership, improve the quality of member benefits and services, and engage members in Association work. The Association will:

- Establish measurable annual membership goals
- Increase member engagement in the work of the Association, develop a sense of community among our members statewide, and encourage members to connect with their own power as advocates
- Explore expanding eligibility beyond 501(c)(3) nonprofits
- Evaluate opportunities to increase and engage business members and purchasing partners
- Incorporate “best practices” from other membership organizations into our procedures and practices
- Increase the number of large nonprofit members by leveraging our success in the public policy arena.

Public Policy and Civic Engagement

The Colorado Nonprofit Association works on behalf of the entire Colorado nonprofit sector to promote a public policy and regulatory environment that supports the state’s nonprofit organizations and their work. The Association will:

- Identify and respond to public policy issues that have substantial impact on Colorado’s nonprofit sector; such impact may affect the whole sector, major sub-sectors, and/or critical organizations, including both member and non-members organizations
- Ensure that our process of making public policy decisions and recommendations is clearly defined, transparent and open to stakeholder input to the maximum extent feasible
- Engage nonprofits in activities to monitor, support or oppose legislation and regulations, and provide them opportunities for education, input, and active participation
- Maintain positive relationships with key lawmakers and elected officials who have influence on policies impacting our work
- Partner with other associations and coalitions to leverage influence, avoid unnecessary duplication, and maximize impact

- Take leadership when appropriate in developing and promoting legislation that advances the nonprofit sector

Strategic Communications

The Colorado Nonprofit Association will work to increase public awareness and understanding of the nonprofit sector and its value to our quality of life. The Association will:

- Strengthen its position as the recognized “voice of the sector” and “go to” organization for nonprofit organizations, public officials, media representatives, the business community, and members of the public
- Research and publish data on the economic impact of Colorado nonprofits
- Compile and analyze information about charitable giving in Colorado in order to increase giving by individuals and corporations
- Develop a strategic communication plan, including key messages, audiences, tactics and tools
- Increase two-way communication with our members
- Develop new communication tools and strategies to improve communication to areas throughout the state, in particular through new technologies
- Represent the nonprofit sector in key conversations about issues, resources and opportunities affecting nonprofit organizations, their work, and the environment in which they work
- Provide the tools for staff, board members, and other volunteers to be ambassadors for the Association and the sector
- Celebrate the work of the sector and sector leaders through high-profile events such as Colorado Nonprofit Week

Professional Development

The Colorado Nonprofit Association will develop and sponsor a wide range of education and networking programs designed to build capacities to increase nonprofit effectiveness. The Association will:

- Promote conversation among sector leaders about overarching issues impacting the sector
- Provide technical assistance and training opportunities, minimize duplication with other offerings, and incorporate feedback to improve program quality
- Sponsor an annual conference with an appropriate mix of topics and experience levels
- Develop and sponsor training to help nonprofits adopt or adapt *Principles and Practices for Nonprofit Excellence*
- Engage member organizations as presenters at educational programs and conferences
- Provide technical assistance and training opportunities statewide
- Consider how new technologies (e.g. distance learning, webcasts) might be employed as part of a professional development program
- Develop resources to help members measure and communicate impact
- Create or promote leadership development opportunities for members, particularly for CEOs and senior leaders
- Increase profitability of educational programs

Resources and Infrastructure

The Colorado Association will have the resources and organizational infrastructure to support program excellence and impact. The Association will:

- Establish a financial resources plan that encompasses membership dues, earned income, and contributed income to fund the infrastructure required to achieve the goals of the association as outlined in the strategic plan
- Develop a committee structure that aligns with the strategic plan and that will support staff at a strategic level
- Strategically allocate resources among individual member organizations, members as a collective, and the Colorado nonprofit sector as a whole
- Develop a diverse, engaged, and representative group of Board, volunteers, and staff members
- Develop a compensation structure and work environment that will attract and retain quality staff
- Strategically utilize volunteers in support of staff work, particularly in the areas of fund development, relationship-building, and planning