

**SUSTAINABILITY**

**PLANNING**

**WORKBOOK**

# Building for the Future

Sustainability is a critical issue for the wide array of programs and initiatives that promote healthy children, strong families, and safe communities.



The **FINANCE**  
**PROJECT**

## WHY DO SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING?

**S**ustainability is a critical issue for the wide array of programs and initiatives that promote healthy children, strong families, and safe communities. Time-limited grants; narrow, categorical funding streams; and budget cuts at the state and local levels leave program developers in a constant scramble to find funds to continue and grow the work they are doing. Again and again, program developers and community leaders come back to the question: How do I build a stable base of support to sustain valuable community programs and initiatives over time?

Sustainability depends on developing a clear plan for putting in place and keeping in place the key elements that make an initiative successful. It inevitably requires finding adequate funding. But it also requires an array of other resources: political, technical, and administrative. Figuring out what resources are needed and how to marshal them is what sustainability planning is all about.

Good sustainability plans help the developers of promising programs and initiatives clarify where they are and where they want to go. They help policy makers, opinion leaders, and investors decide how and why to get on board. They help key audiences understand what the initiative is and why it is needed. They give program managers a road map for where they are going and benchmarks for determining whether they are successfully reaching their goals.

Sustainability planning should be done throughout the life of an initiative. A sustainability plan works best when it is used and reviewed on a continual basis. Whether an initiative is in the formative stages, or has been in existence for several years, developing a sustainability plan is an important step in securing its future.

Developing a sustainability plan is a lot like developing a business plan. Starting a business requires a clear concept of how to meet a market need creatively and a plan for developing the resources to do it profitably. Creating and sustaining a promising community program or initiative similarly requires a clear concept of how to address the critical needs of families and children effectively and how to marshal the resources to make it happen.

# SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING TOOLS

**T**he **Sustainability Planning Workbook** is structured in a hands-on, easy-to-follow format. Each module contains a variety of tools and worksheets to assist users through the planning process, complete with step-by-step instructions. These tools include:

- A **self-assessment** to benchmark progress
- A **logic model** to clarify sustainability goals and measure progress toward their results
- **Budget worksheets and financial forecasting tools** to estimate the fiscal needs of an initiative over the timeframe of the sustainability plan
- **Funding source evaluation tools** to help determine what sources are most appropriate for a particular initiative
- An **environmental scan tool** to take stock of the initiative's external environment
- **Strategy design worksheets** to help identify critical resources and consider implementation issues
- A **sample sustainability plan** that can serve as a model for an initiative's own written plan

The workbook comes with a **CD that includes copies of all of the tools and worksheets**. This helps to ensure that initiative leaders can quickly and easily complete the worksheets as well as adapt the tools as needed.

The cost of the **Sustainability Planning Workbook** is \$125.

## For Additional Information

To order the **Sustainability Planning Workbook**, and for information on volume discounts, contact The Finance Project at 202-587-1000.

The Finance Project also offers a variety of technical assistance and training services to facilitate the planning process described in the workbook. For information on these services, contact Cheryl D. Hayes or Barbara H. Langford at 202-587-1000.

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**T**he **Sustainability Planning Workbook** helps program developers and community leaders identify basic issues in sustaining promising initiatives; address the strategic details; and develop a comprehensive plan. The workbook is for those involved in a wide range of community-based programs and initiatives. While each initiative will have unique goals and strategies for developing needed resources, the key questions that guide the development of a sustainability plan are the same.

The workbook begins with a **Planning to Plan** guide to help community leaders think strategically about how to structure a planning process and who to include in the planning effort. Since no two planning processes are alike, this guide also provides information on how to tailor the process to the needs of a particular initiative. The guide includes model planning structures, as well as worksheets to help initiative leaders track their progress through the planning process.

The rest of the workbook is organized into five modules that help initiative leaders identify specific resources and strategies that are needed to successfully sustain effective programs and services. Together, they make up a comprehensive process for developing a written sustainability plan.



## MODULE I: Building a Sustainable Initiative

The first step in sustainability planning is to consider the wide range of resources—both fiscal and nonfiscal—that are critical to sustaining community initiatives. **Module I** presents

The Finance Project's **eight elements of sustainability** and provides guidance on how to use this framework during the planning process. These elements of sustainability include:

- Vision
- Results Orientation
- Strategic Financing
- Key Champions
- Community Support
- Adaptability to Changing Conditions
- Strong Internal Systems
- Clear Sustainability Plan

Before initiative leaders can plan where they want to go, they must first assess where they currently are. **Module I** also includes a **self-assessment tool** that allows initiative leaders to benchmark their progress and identify their initiative's strengths and weaknesses.

## MODULE II: Developing a Vision and Results Orientation

Leaders of successful initiatives have a clear and compelling vision of what they want to accomplish and what results they hope to achieve. An important step in sustainability planning is for initiative leaders to clarify what they want to sustain—be it a set of programs, a service delivery model, or a governance structure, for example—and what they mean by sustainability.

Using a **logic model** process, **Module II** helps initiative leaders define what they want to sustain, the results they are trying to achieve, what strategies and activities will help them make progress toward those results, and how to measure their progress.





## **MODULE III: Creating a Strategic Financing Plan**

Adequate fiscal resources are also critical to the long-term success of community initiatives. **Module III** takes community leaders through the process of developing a **strategic financing plan**. The process includes:

- Estimating the fiscal resources needed to sustain an initiative
- Mapping current resources that support the initiative
- Identifying funding gaps, and
- Analyzing a range of funding sources and financing strategies to meet the fiscal needs of the initiative

**Module III** helps community leaders make reasonable fiscal estimates and provides information on a variety of funding sources and financing strategies that can support community initiatives. **Module III** also provides tools to help community leaders determine what funding sources and financing strategies are most appropriate to their particular initiative.



## **MODULE IV: Building Organizational Capacity and Community Support**

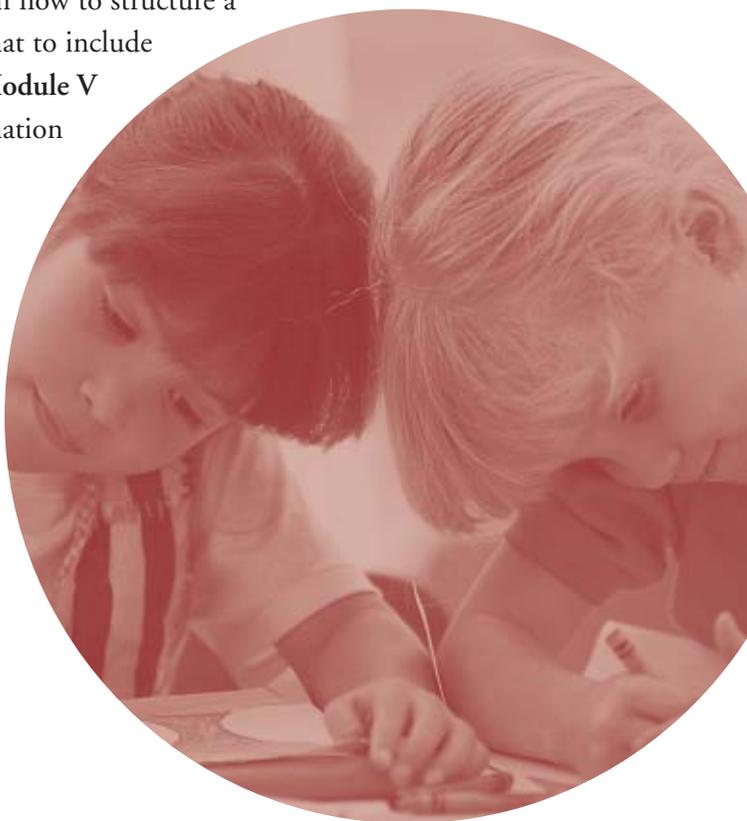
In addition to financing strategies, the leaders and developers of promising initiatives also need to develop strategies to marshal other non-monetary resources that are necessary to sustain their work, such as mobilizing community support, cultivating leadership, and building organizational capacity.



Using the results of the **self-assessment** and an **environmental scan**, this module helps community leaders determine the array of strategies and specific activities they will need to sustain their initiatives. **Module IV** highlights examples of successful strategies and provides guidance in designing strategies that meet an initiative's most critical needs. Because initiative leaders operate with scarce time and resources, this module also includes tools for prioritizing strategies related to organizational capacity and community support.

### **MODULE V: Developing and Writing the Plan**

**Module V** provides practical instructions on how to translate all of the information generated in the first four modules into a clear written plan, the final element of sustainability. This module includes guidance on how to structure a written plan and what to include in the document. **Module V** also provides information on how to use a sustainability plan to generate support for an initiative, to assist in fundraising efforts, and to guide future decision making about the initiative.





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