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FACILITATION GUIDE FOR: **SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING TOOLS**

This document provides guidance on how to use the Sustainability Planning Tools available in the Summer Learning Toolkit. You can also access the tools in the Planning and Management section of the Toolkit.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<a href="#">How to Navigate and Use the Sustainability Planning Tools</a>	2
<a href="#">Introduction</a>	2
<a href="#">Why is Sustainability Planning Important?</a>	7
<a href="#">Tips for Getting Started: Designing and Organizing your Approach</a>	9
<a href="#">Tips for Effective Planning and Facilitation</a>	12
<a href="#">Additional Sustainability Planning Resources</a>	31

HOW TO NAVIGATE AND USE  
THE SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING TOOLS

1. Read the introduction and visit the Action Plan Tool.
2. Skim the additional Tools outlined below.
3. Return to this Facilitation Guide to receive tips on getting organized and facilitating the process.

# INTRODUCTION

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## ABOUT THIS FACILITATION GUIDE

The Facilitation Guide provides an overview of the three Sustainability Planning Tools – the Self-Assessment, Strategy Development, and Action Plan - available in the Summer Learning Toolkit. This guide provides helpful tips for summer program leads to prepare for and facilitate a collaborative planning process using those three tools. To prepare, this guide asks you to consider who should lead and participate in planning, the appropriate scope and timeline for planning, and strategies for when and how to engage a team. It also includes tips for facilitating and documenting these steps to build your Action Plan. The Tips for Getting Started section of this guide includes tips for selecting a planning lead. We expect that a primary audience for this guide is planning leads, once they've been identified.

## ABOUT THE SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING TOOLS

The Sustainability Planning Tools are adaptable templates for sustainability planning team collaboration, facilitated by one or more leads. Each tool facilitates one step in a sequential sustainability planning process: Self-Assessment, Strategy Development, and Action Plan. However, you don't have to complete all sections to benefit. After designing and completing a process that best meets your needs, you will have an actionable plan for generating **lasting support** for your program.

### WHAT TYPES OF SUPPORT CONTRIBUTE TO SUSTAINABILITY?

Support can come in many forms and will hopefully evolve as relationships with stakeholders grow and mature. When engaging champions of key organizations and offices, consider the contributions they may be able and willing to offer. Here are examples of requests you may want to consider:

- **Verbal support:** Incorporate talking points about the importance of summer learning into speeches about priorities for youth and families.
- **In-kind support:** Contribute facilities, staff, and/or equipment.
- **Operational support:** Build buy in among departments and organizations so that planning for summer is a part of year-round operations and responsibilities.
- **Policy support:** Develop and promote policies that promote access, quality, and sustainability of programs.
- **Funding support:** Commit to funding the program by January.



### TIP

Well-organized site visits for influential district and community leaders are a powerful and effective way to grow support.

The Tools draw from a one-year planning process led by National Summer Learning Project (NSLP) partners, including five districts and their city agency and intermediary partners. The organizing framework builds upon a number of [published resources on sustainability planning](#) and has been adapted for use in summer learning. This Facilitation Guide offers a number of tips to help you organize and customize your planning process to meet your needs.



## AREAS OF FOCUS

The three Sustainability Planning Tools—the Self-Assessment, Strategy Development, and Action Plan—are designed to be completed sequentially. Within each tool, planners are guided through focus areas:

- First, analyze and brainstorm strategies for the **program or set of programs** you're working to sustain;
- Second, focus on the broader view of your **organization and community** context; and
- Finally, examine the greater **policy and funding** context that impact the sustainability of summer programs.

## WHAT ARE THE SUSTAINABILITY TOOLS?

Each tool provides guidance on a specific step in the sustainability planning process. They are:

### TOOL 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT



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*Rate readiness, identify strengths and weaknesses, and brainstorm potential strategies for improvement.*

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The Self-Assessment asks those engaged in the sustainability planning process to begin by rating the strength of the program, organization and community, and policy and funding context on 32 dimensions of readiness to identify strengths and weaknesses. This process will prepare teams to identify early priority areas in steps two and three.

### TOOL 2: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT



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*Brainstorm potential strategies to strengthen quality, alignment, engagement, messaging, and support.*

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This tool is where the greatest portion of your sustainability planning work is taking place. It will help you analyze and document critical discussions regarding:

## Program

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These worksheets ask you to identify the goals of your program and whether and how they're connected to the goals of your organization/school district(s) and the community. This check for alignment will enable you to craft messages that build stronger connections and support from district and community leaders.

## Organization and Community

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Strong institutional and external support is paramount to the sustainability of summer learning programs. This worksheet asks you who from your organization and community you'll need to engage as a part of your efforts to secure long-term backing for your program(s).

## Policy and Funding

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These worksheets help you analyze the policy and funding landscape for your program to identify opportunities and barriers to sustaining summer learning now and in the future. It will help you develop initial steps toward prioritizing fundraising strategies within your Action Plan.

### TOOL 3: ACTION PLAN



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*Establish a road map and assign accountability for how the work will be accomplished.*

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The culminating step is to prepare an Action Plan that will help you refine your vision for sustainability and turn your goals and ideas into reality. In doing so, you'll revisit the potential strategies you identified in steps one and two and work to reach consensus on the priority actions that will help you reach your vision.

### HOW LONG WILL THE PROCESS TAKE?

We recommend that teams commit to a minimum of 3 months to one year to complete the process, with 6 months as an ideal target.

## WHY IS SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING IMPORTANT?

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Sustainability is about more than money. It's a **multifaceted** process that should include a strong focus on:

### **PROGRAM**

- Quality programs, stakeholder satisfaction, and high attendance
- Data and information for continuous improvement
- Institutionalizing strong planning and operations across district departments and partner organizations
- Identifying **core elements** to sustain
- Alignment of program goals and outcomes with your organizational and/or district and community goals and priorities

### **ORGANIZATION AND COMMUNITY**

- Leadership and stakeholder engagement strategies
- Multifaceted support from district and community leaders, including verbal, in-kind, operational, policy, and funding
- Robust partnerships that strengthen and evolve over time

### **POLICY AND FUNDING**

- Supportive policies that impact quality and scale
- Strategically prioritizing and securing funding sources
- Identifying cost efficiencies

To achieve your goals for students and build a culture of participation in your community, it's critical that high-quality summer programs are a service young people and families can count on each year. Unfortunately, the reality is that it's not always easy to sustain summer learning programs. Summer learning programs are often not mandated services of school districts, meaning they are not only forced to compete against numerous priorities for limited funding, but also for staff leadership, facility priorities, and political will. Funding for programs is typically short-term, just one summer at a time, and contingent upon support from district, organization, and community leaders who are often in transition. While summer programs can benefit tremendously from the support of key leaders, true sustainability goes beyond relationships and buy-in from high-profile individuals to a collective commitment to sustaining core elements of a program. That kind of embedded support across a district or organization helps summer programs survive and thrive across leadership transitions and changing priorities.

## KEY POINTS

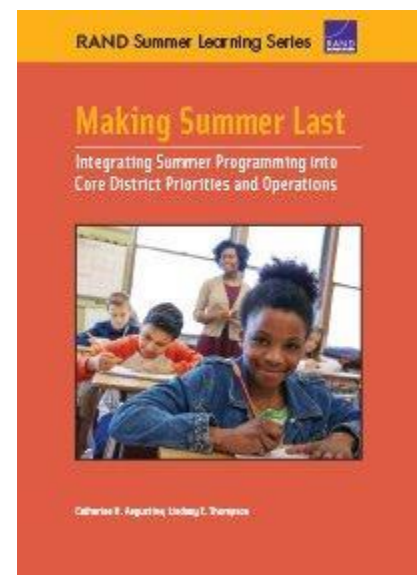
- o Sustainability planning is a **multifaceted** process. Strengthening program operations and quality and building a broad base of awareness and support in your community is paramount to your success.
- o Sustainability planning begins and ends with assessing opportunities to engage stakeholders to build support.

Increasing the degree to which your funding is reliable and predictable will help you engage in early planning, promote instructional quality, and carry out other critical practices that contribute to effective summer programs. However, sustainability requires much more than predictable funding. The strength of your planning, operations, and relationships will also affect the quality and financial stability of your programs.

In **Making Summer Last: Integrating Summer Programming into Core District Priorities and Operations**, RAND studied the tactics districts used to sustain and institutionalize summer programming—or in other words—to ensure that among other things, funding was reliably allocated when needed, and planning and implementation procedures were routinized by cross-departmental teams.

RAND found that program leaders focused on three overarching strategies to ensure the durability of their programs:

1. Building awareness of their programs and connecting program goals to larger district goals;
2. Ensuring all relevant departments were represented in the planning process; and
3. Involving expert staff members and existing district systems in supporting the programs.



The Sustainability Planning Tools are designed to take all of these factors into account. They will catalyze collective assessment, strategy development, and action planning for sustainability—both inside your organization and through community-wide collaboration.

## TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED: DESIGNING YOUR APPROACH

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Summer sustainability planning efforts require the input of many stakeholders, and therefore can be time intensive to organize and lead effectively. Additionally, it will be important to “right size” your approach based on what you know about the size, scope, and maturity of your program. Below, we offer “food for thought” in the form of “questions to consider” about how to get started. While reviewing, think about how you may want to customize your approach to best meet your program and organization’s complexity and needs.

### o **Orient yourself with the process**

Review the Self-Assessment, Strategy Development, and Action Plan tools to understand the work involved and begin thinking about how you might organize your sustainability planning process.

#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What would a successful sustainability planning process result in?
- What could these three steps look like in action? Where can we adjust the process based on our capacity and needs?
- How could different district departments and partner organizations contribute?

### o **Establish the focus and goals for sustainability planning**

The Sustainability Planning Tools can be used for one program or a portfolio of programs with similar or diverse program models. Before you begin, determine whether the focus of planning should be on a single program or multiple programs. If the latter, consider where adjustments may be necessary as you move through the tools and worksheet prompts, which are generally worded for one program.

#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What is the problem we’re trying to address? What are our goals for sustaining summer learning?
- Would focusing on one program or a broader group of summer learning programs most benefit the youth and families we serve? What is most logical for my organization and its partners? What are the tradeoffs? How would we need to approach the process differently in terms of participation, management, and planning based on the focus?
- Are there organizational or external leaders who I should reach out to now to help determine the direction or build buy-in for this process?



o **Determine sustainability planning lead(s)**

Your sustainability planning process will require dedicated leadership from one or more leads. Leads should have easy access to influencers and decisionmakers such as organizational executives and policymakers and understand the best ways to gain traction in your organization and community. At the same time, leads must be familiar with the program at the center of the work and able to dedicate time to organize meetings and agendas, manage information gathering and synthesis, and communicate effectively with all team members. If you're reading this guide, you may have already been designated as the lead. Consider whether partner organizations such as an out-of-school time intermediary or United Way could add valuable capacity and experience as a co-lead for the sustainability planning process.

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

- Who has standing with key influencers, organizations, and departments that have a role in the sustainability of the program?
- Who has the capacity and expertise needed to lead our effort?
- Should we divide leadership tasks among more than one person? If so, what roles and responsibilities are best for each lead?

o **Identify your sustainability planning team**

Review the tools to determine your ideal planning team, including additional contributors or advisors. Vet your list and strategy with senior leadership from all organizations that manage the program or programs you're planning to sustain, and seek advice on how and when to engage individuals in the process. Some teams may benefit from starting small and adding more members as momentum builds. The Organization and Community worksheet within the Strategy Development tool is a helpful resource to organize your thoughts on whom to engage and when.

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

- Who should be at the table?
- Should the full group participate in all of the planning steps?
- Are there ways to engage different stakeholders at different points while ensuring that everyone is informed about the process?
- Is there a core group who should be engaged throughout?
- What are the pros and cons of engaging various organizational representatives or external constituents?

## o Craft your approach

Examine all three Sustainability Planning Tools to customize your approach. Determine which aspects may be most useful or least relevant, and right-size the approach to your local context or needs. While we suggest that you approach these steps within a 6-month process as a target, you may need to factor in time periods that are unrealistic for making progress, such as the beginning or end of the school year, and adjust your timeline accordingly.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- By when do we need to complete our initial sustainability plan? How might we need to adjust the approaches provided here to fit our context, capacity, and timeline?
- How often do I need to be in communication with the full or individual members of the team? What are the most effective ways to share updates or receive their input?
- Given the overall process and team members in mind, where can we collect and synthesize data as an initial starting point for discussion with the larger planning team?
- Where in the process are in-person meetings most critical?
- What are the most pressing questions to address within our meeting agendas?

## o Engage the team

Asking people to take on responsibilities above and beyond their full workload can be challenging for all. Still, engaging champions from your organization and partner organizations may help you communicate the importance of the sustainability planning process and secure active participation among members. When inviting individuals to join the sustainability planning team, it's important to provide them with details about "the why," including the problem you'll be working to solve, why collaborative planning and their contributions are important, and your starting vision for sustaining progress. In addition, provide details on the full scope of planning, including their role and time expectation, to help them determine whether they are interested and able to commit to the process. You may also consider collecting input on preferred timing for in-person meetings.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- In what parts of the planning process is each individual invited or expected to participate?
- Which aspects of their involvement are most critical?
- How does their role fit within the full process?
- What is the anticipated time commitment for in-person meetings?
- What contributions will they be asked to provide, if any, outside of meetings?
- What information and mechanisms would help me communicate clearly?

- Am I the best person to invite the individual? Is there a leader or partner who could help?

## TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE PLANNING AND FACILITATION

Now that you've formulated your approach and engaged your team, you can shift your focus to strategies to collect input and organize productive conversations. Below we offer tips for facilitating the process and instructions for completing the Sustainability Planning Tools. Keep in mind that you are encouraged to adapt the process based on your capacity and needs. In some cases, you may opt to skip sections entirely.



### TOOL 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT

The **Self-Assessment** asks planning team members to assess internal organizational readiness, strengths, and weaknesses across 32 indicators of sustainability within the following areas:

- o **PROGRAM:** Project Leadership and Management, Human Resources and Staffing, and Use of Program Data
- o **ORGANIZATION AND COMMUNITY:** Organizational Setting and Culture, Project Champions, Policies and Procedures, Broad Community Support, and Partnerships
- o **POLICY AND FUNDING:** Financial Resources and Financing Strategies and Laws, Regulations, and Policies



Use the Self-Assessment to survey planning team members on their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of internal processes and the climate/conditions for sustainability.



#### TIP

Translate the Self-Assessment into an electronic survey tool to efficiently collect and analyze team member input and ratings. An example survey is available [here](#).

Once you have summarized the findings of the survey, convene a meeting to discuss the implications and brainstorm action steps that would strengthen capacity and readiness. Write those strategies in the yellow **Potential Strategies for Action Plan** boxes at the end of each section in the Self-Assessment.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PLANNING TEAM CONVERSATIONS

- Based on the ratings, strengths, and weaknesses identified, what potential strategies should we suggestion for our Action Plan?



#### TIP

At a number of points in the first two tools, you'll be asked to brainstorm potential strategies for your Action Plan. Think big! Don't get stuck on whether something is a strategy or an action step or whether an idea is feasible during the brainstorming process. You'll have the opportunity to revisit, organize, and prioritize when pulling together your Action Plan.



## TOOL 2: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Strategy Development comprises the majority of sustainability planning work. This tool includes three sections:

1. Program
2. Organization and Community
3. Policy and Funding

Each section has several worksheets to help you collect and organize information related to the **purpose of the program**, its **key stakeholders**, and its **policy and funding context**. What follows are instructions and tips for each section, sample worksheet entries to get your wheels turning, and guiding questions to help organize your work and get team input.





### TIP

Complete a first pass on each section before bringing together your planning team. Use face-to-face time to discuss key questions, build on or challenge your ideas, and brainstorm potential strategies or action steps for sustainability. To facilitate a successful meeting:

- a Take steps to translate your work within the tools into easy-to-digest summaries.
- a Review the guiding question prompts in this Facilitation Guide to craft an effective agenda and facilitate productive conversations.

## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT SECTION 1: PROGRAM



The Program worksheets ask you to identify the goals and core elements of your program and whether and how they align to the goals and priorities of the leaders and organizations whose advocacy and involvement are important to program sustainability. These worksheets guide you through four areas:

1. Shared Mission and Vision Statement
2. Core Program Elements
3. Goal and Priority Alignment
4. Potential Strategies for Action Plan

By clarifying your shared vision, core program elements, and program's role within your local ecosystem, you'll be better equipped to convince leaders to focus their attention and support on your program.

## SHARED MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

You'll start by identifying your program's shared mission and vision. Some questions to consider: What do we seek to achieve through our summer learning program? Why is the program important? What benefits does the program provide to the community? What's the value proposition?



### TIP

Need help creating a shared mission and vision statement? Communications experts from your district and partner organizations may be able to help clearly and effectively communicate about the program.

Don't spend too much time wordsmithing your mission and vision statements at this point. Strive for clarity rather than a finished product at this point in your planning.

## CORE PROGRAM ELEMENTS

List the core elements of the program that you're working to sustain through changing political or funding contexts. **Ask yourself: What are the features of our program that are non-negotiable or absolutely essential to its quality and success?** Core elements should include programmatic features - curricula, hours of programming, and partnerships - as well as important details about your cross-departmental planning process, staffing model, professional development strategy, and continuous improvement process.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PLANNING TEAM CONVERSATIONS

- Which features of our program provide the most benefit to the students we serve? Which features most benefit families and our community?
- Which elements of our program, staffing, planning, and continuous improvement process would we not want to sacrifice, even in tough financial times?
- If we are forced to serve fewer students, which students should we prioritize?

**EXAMPLE:**

CORE ELEMENTS OF THE SUMMER PROGRAM	ASSOCIATED BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES
<b>DOSAGE AND DURATION:</b> 25 days / 150 program hours with at least 1 hour per day for math and 2 hours per day for language arts	Internal evaluation has provided evidence that students make greater gains when there are at least 3 hours of academic instruction in core subjects. RAND found that students who received approximately 25 hours of math instruction and 34 hours of language arts benefitted from summer programs (Augustine et al., 2016).
<b>STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:</b> 10 hours minimum of school and enrichment partner leadership pre-program development; 16 hours of preprogram planning for all staff with opportunities to practice with the curriculum; One hour/week in-session collaborative planning time for teachers and enrichment partners. Strategies to promote core values and positive behavioral management will be a focus area among leadership and staff.	Advance planning among site leadership and staff will result in greater program quality, staff satisfaction, youth experiences, and ultimately, higher attendance rates. Staff have indicated that the professional development we provide, paired with the opportunity to innovate and develop strong relationships during the summer has benefitted their professional practice.
<b>YOUTH EXPERIENCES:</b> Five field trips designed to reinforce learning within new settings, including parks and cultural institutions.	Data collected from family and students has shown that they mostly highly value exposure to new opportunities and places during the summer. Field trips will help meet this need while boosting youth engagement, attendance, and extend applications of learning.

**GOAL AND PRIORITY ALIGNMENT**

The worksheets in this section help you identify the strategic goals and priorities of your organization/local school district(s) and community and consider how your summer learning program aligns to and furthers those goals.

**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PLANNING TEAM CONVERSATIONS**

- What are the goals or priorities of our organization/local school district(s) as stated in their strategic plans? Does our program help advance these goals or priorities? If so, how? Are there opportunities to make a stronger case for how summer programs align with and support those goals?
- What are the goals of partner or community organizations that serve our youth and families? Does our program help advance these goals or priorities? If so, how? Are there opportunities to make a stronger case for how summer programs align with and support those goals?



EXAMPLE:

O R G A N I Z A T I O N	STRATEGIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES	HOW THE SUMMER PROGRAM FURTHERS THESE GOALS
	DISTRICT: Achieve third grade reading proficiency for all students	Summer learning is one of the three strategies identified by the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading to move the needle on Third-Grade Reading Proficiency. Our program serves rising 1st through 3rd and has a strong focus on English Language Arts. Teacher selection criteria included grade-level and subject-matter expertise, and ability to develop positive relationships with students.
	DISTRICT: Promote positive site climate and relationships	
C O M M U N I T Y	STRATEGIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES	HOW THE SUMMER PROGRAM FURTHERS THESE GOALS
	MAYOR'S OFFICE: Promote youth safety.	Summer learning programs not only provide a safe space when school is out and help working families – but also promote healthy development and boost academic skills to help youth thrive in school and in their future careers.
	MAYOR'S OFFICE: Promote workforce readiness.	



TIP

Need help determining the strategic priorities of your local school district(s) or community? Begin by asking organizational representatives and visiting the websites of your district, partner schools, local foundations, out-of-school time intermediary organizations, the United Way, and public officials.

- a Look for strategic plans, listed goals, or featured funding programs or initiatives.
- a Document information or messages about why these initiatives are a priority for the organization, what they're hoping to accomplish, and how they propose to achieve progress.





## POTENTIAL STRATEGIES FOR ACTION PLAN

Look back over the Program worksheets you completed in this section and identify **Potential Strategies for your Action Plan**.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PLANNING TEAM CONVERSATIONS

- Given our discussions and findings, what program-related strategies or action steps should we consider for our Action Plan?
- In addition to the Self-Assessment, consider your most recent end-of-summer recommendations for improving program quality and operations here.

### EXAMPLE:

#### POTENTIAL STRATEGIES FOR ACTION PLAN

Collect national and local data and refine talking points about summer learning's role in promoting youth safety and workforce readiness.



### TIP

When brainstorming program-focused strategies or action steps, revisit the Self-Assessment tool and consider annual continuous improvement findings to develop strategies that may help contribute to improved quality, stakeholder satisfaction, and attendance. Additional resources to monitor quality are available within the Planning and Management section of the Toolkit.



Strong institutional and community backing are paramount to the sustainability of summer learning programs. This section of the tool prompts you to identify whom from your organization/local school district(s) and community you'll need to engage to secure long-term support. These worksheets guide you to consider:

1. Stakeholder Engagement
2. Potential Strategies for Action Plan

#### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Begin by brainstorming stakeholder groups or individuals who could play a valuable role in the sustainability of summer programs. For example, these stakeholders could participate in the program, encourage families to participate, speak publicly to advocate for the program, support professional development and evaluation efforts to improve the program, use their influence to strengthen supportive policies, or secure funding for programs.

Next, consider the extent to which the group or individual is aware of or bought into the value that summer learning programs provide. Then, describe their potential role or contribution and messages that could help enlist their support.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PLANNING TEAM CONVERSATIONS

- Which individuals, groups, and organizations have the greatest influence on the long-term sustainability of our programs in terms of driving awareness/demand, political support or influence, and funding?
- To what degree are these individuals or groups aware of summer learning? Do they understand the value of summer learning?
- What role do they or should they have in our shared mission to sustain summer learning? Should we work to get their input upfront or just make sure that they are informed?
- When and how should we engage them? What opportunities exist to enlist their support?
- Who will need to be aware of and bought into the action plan we develop to ensure that implementation of the plan is broadly supported?

**EXAMPLE:**

ORGANIZATION	STAKEHOLDER	CURRENT SUPPORT	ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION	MESSAGES
	District Chief Academic Officer	While supportive of our objectives and program, summer planning is not integrated into the core responsibilities of the Curriculum and Instruction Department.	Ensure that summer curriculum modifications and professional development design and delivery are embedded within the department's year-round work and assumed roles and responsibilities.	Highlight our work to help children ready proficiently by third grade and program improvement recommendation to plan and deliver curricula with the necessary planning steps and resources required to meet this goal.

COMMUNITY	STAKEHOLDER	CURRENT SUPPORT	ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION	MESSAGES
	Parents	Unknown	Drive demand for program, ensure high attendance of children enrolled, advocate for programs within PTA and with elected officials	"This program includes a mix of academics and fun, while helping your child sharpen the math reading and writing skill needed to succeed in fourth grade and beyond."



**TIP**

For more ideas, see the Summer Learning Recruitment Guide tips on creating engaging messaging.



## POTENTIAL STRATEGIES FOR ACTION PLAN

Look back over the Stakeholder Engagement worksheets and identify potential strategies related to organization and community for your Action Plan.

### GUIDING QUESTION FOR PLANNING TEAM CONVERSATIONS

- Given our discussions and findings, what organization- and community-related strategies or action steps should we consider for our Action Plan? In addition to the Self-Assessment, consider your most recent end-of-summer recommendations for improving program quality and operations here.
- What is the ideal timeline for engaging various key stakeholders?

### EXAMPLE:

#### POTENTIAL STRATEGIES FOR ACTION PLAN

Next fall: Organize presentations about the programs findings at school board meeting and school PTA meetings. Engage principals to lead school-based presentations and equip with talking points.



This section of the tool helps you analyze your policy and funding landscape to identify opportunities and barriers to sustaining summer learning. These worksheets are divided into three sections:

1. Policy
2. Funding
3. Potential Strategies for Action Plan



#### TIP

As your work progresses, revisit earlier steps to ensure that new ideas carry across. For example, the Policy and Funding worksheets may illuminate groups with whom you need to raise awareness about the value and importance of your summer learning program. You can return to your Organization and Community worksheets to add new individuals and groups.

#### POLICY

The Policy worksheet is largely based on the SWOT Analysis strategic planning method. Use it to analyze the opportunities and barriers that may exist within your organization/school district, community, and state context now, one year from now, and three years from now. Consider if elections or other events may result in leadership or administrative policy changes locally or within your state. If it simply doesn't make sense for your program to examine the state policy context, feel free to only complete the relevant sections.

**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PLANNING TEAM CONVERSATIONS**

- When we think about political support for summer learning, what are the greatest opportunities and challenges within our district or organization now and in the future? What about our broader community?
- What are the greatest opportunities and challenges at the state level now and in the future?
- How could leadership transitions within the district or among our elected officials or community leaders impact the sustainability of our summer learning program? What could we do to secure support for summer learning through those transitions? What communications tools would we need to have in place?

**FUNDING**

Use the Funding worksheets to examine current funding sources and prospects, the estimated funding range and time horizon for each source, the level of effort required, and the likelihood of renewing or securing funding from each source. This process will help you identify prospects, and their associated effort and reward, as a first step toward prioritizing fundraising strategies within your action plan.

Begin by listing current funding sources. To help brainstorm potential funding sources, review the district and community priorities identified in the Program worksheets and consider how those priorities are funded and whether those sources could be leveraged to support your summer learning program.

**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PLANNING TEAM CONVERSATIONS****CURRENT FUNDING**

- What are the primary funding sources for summer learning in our city and district?
  - Consider to what extent your funding is dedicated for summer programs and if it comes from diverse sources: Where do you face financial vulnerabilities?
  - Which sources of summer funding are the most stable?
  - What is the funding timeline for each resource? What is the likelihood of renewal for each resource?
- Is there the potential for shifts to our funding now, a year from now, or farther in the future?

**PROSPECTIVE FUNDING**

- What are the known sources of funding for programs with similar goals for youth and families? What are the known funding sources for the aligned district and community priorities from the previous Core Program Elements worksheet?



- Are there additional public and private funding sources we should consider? Can we replace or supplement time-limited resources with more stable, long-term funding? What are possible joint funding strategies with partner organizations?
- What does it require to apply for these funds? What is the scale of funding each source could provide (low, medium, or high)? What is the percent likelihood of securing funding?

#### **PRIORITIZATION**

- Based on our analysis, which current or potential funding sources are low effort, high reward? Which are high effort, high reward?
- Which funding sources should we prioritize pursuing now and in the future?



#### **TIP**

Use a Quadrant Analysis or similar tool to categorize and prioritize revenue sources and strategies. Discuss important criteria as such as the knowledge of funding ranges and the perceived burden of the application, compliance, and reporting requirements.



#### **TIP**

Visit the Summer Budget tool to analyze current funding sources and project future revenue for your program.

## POTENTIAL STRATEGIES FOR ACTION PLAN

Look back over the Policy and Funding worksheets and identify **Potential Strategies for your Action Plan**.

### GUIDING QUESTION FOR PLANNING TEAM CONVERSATIONS

- Given our discussions and findings, what policy- and funding-related strategies or action steps should we consider for our Action Plan?



## TOOL 3: ACTION PLAN

The culminating step is to prepare an Action Plan that will help you refine your vision for sustainability and turn your goals and ideas into reality. To prepare for your Action Plan, revisit the **Potential Strategies for Action Plan** you identified in the previous tools: **Self-Assessment** and **Strategy Development**. Examine the ideas you generated in each section, and work as a team to determine the overarching strategies that will help you reach your vision. When doing so, consider what's most critical, feasible, and potentially impactful. Use the Action Plan tool to organize your overarching strategies. For each priority strategy, you'll need to identify concrete action steps, how and by when you're committed to achieving them, and the expected outcome. The goal is to help the sustainability planning team achieve greater clarity, efficiency, buy in, and accountability for your collective work – as well as individual or partner roles and responsibilities to deliver on the plan.



### TIP

#### How far out should we plan?

Consider starting with a 3-year plan. Commit to updating your approach and reporting out on progress annually or when faced with important changes to your local context.



The following are recommendations for developing your Action Plan:

o **Revisit your shared mission and vision for your summer learning program**

Before you finalize your Action Plan, revisit the shared mission and vision statement you listed in the Program section in Strategy Development. Document any revisions to the mission and vision that capture key points raised during the sustainability planning process and strengthen your external messaging.

o **Determine priority sustainability strategies**

Begin by reviewing and organizing the **Potential Strategies for Action Plan** you identified in earlier worksheets. One way to do this would be to pull all earlier ideas into a document and begin to group them by themes.

**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PLANNING TEAM CONVERSATIONS**

- Are there overarching sustainability strategies that could help organize our work on the priorities we identified? If so, what are they? How would progress in this area help sustain our efforts? What are appropriate action steps for making progress? Who would need to be involved? Who would be responsible? Who would need to be informed? Over what timeframe?
- Where are there gaps in our approach? What else would we need to do to realistically sustain our program for the long-term?
- What are the 1-2 strategies that are most critical, feasible, and potentially impactful in each area:
  - Program
  - Organization and Community
  - Policy and Funding



**TIP**

Review prioritization techniques to help finalize your action plan strategies. Here are two common examples:

- a Must do, might do, don't do rankings
- a Group voting strategies, including colored dot stickers or dropping pennies into buckets
- a Apply a set of criteria (i.e., furthers our mission, engages key stakeholders, and increases funding opportunities) to assess the relative merits of potential strategies.

o **Identify who will take action, the timeline, and expected results**

For each strategy, you will have multiple action steps. Complete the plan by assigning roles and responsibilities, the timeframe and/or deadline, and the expected results of your actions.

**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PLANNING TEAM CONVERSATIONS**

- Who will lead or manage each action step and be accountable for ensuring progress and reporting back to the team?
- When do they commit to beginning and completing the work involved?

**EXAMPLE:**

STRATEGY #1. List the strategy in the space to the right.		Establish ongoing engagement of a cross-departmental team with expertise in all areas.	
ACTION STEPS	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	TIMEFRAME	EXPECTED RESULTS
Create annual planning calendar with key tasks, due dates, and staff roles	Summer Coordinator (responsible) Summer Working Group (engaged)	monthly from August – May	Earlier and more effective planning for voluntary and mandatory summer programs among all central office departments and with community partners
Convene a cross-functional working group on a monthly basis	Summer Coordinator (responsible) Summer Working Group (engaged)	monthly from August – May	
Bring key community partners to the table	Summer Coordinator (responsible) Summer Working Group (engaged)	monthly from August – May	

o **Get ready to implement your plan**

Before finalizing, discuss your plan to vet the identified strategies with appropriate partners and decisionmakers who will help secure support for implementing the plan.

**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR PLANNING TEAM CONVERSATIONS**

- What resources (i.e., money, staff) are required, if any, to implement the plan?
- Which areas may require the most vetting in order to implement and make progress?
- What are the immediate action steps the team is committing to take to implement the plan?

Once the sustainability plan has been finalized, consider strategies to spread the word and ensure accountability through community forums and posting on organizational websites. If pursuing the latter, consider an additional step to translate your plans into messages and formats that will resonate most with your intended audiences.



**TIP**

How are other communities updating stakeholders about their summer program outcomes and community progress? Visit Boston's 2017 State of Summer report as a great example.

**TIP**

Make sure your plans don't sit on a shelf. Commit to periodically updating to respond to changes within your local context.

## ADDITIONAL SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING RESOURCES

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The Summer Sustainability Planning tools drew upon approaches from The Wallace Foundation's School Leadership work, as well as the resources listed below.

Savaya, R & Spiro, S. (2012). Predictors of Sustainability of Social Programs. American Journal of Evaluation, 33(1): 26-43. DOI: 10.1177/1098214011408066.

Levenson, N., Baehr, K., Smith, J.C., & Sullivan, C. (2014). Spending Money Wisely: Getting the Most from School District Budgets. Retrieved from District Management Council website:  
<https://www.dmgrouper12.com/docmanlinks/dmj-document/32-spending-money-wisely-getting-the-most-from-school-district-budgets-e-book-1/file>.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Adolescent Health. (2014). Building Sustainable Programs: The Framework. Retrieved from HHS website:  
[https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/sites/default/files/creating\\_sustainableimpacts\\_framework.pdf](https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/sites/default/files/creating_sustainableimpacts_framework.pdf).

Center for Community Health and Development. (2017). Chapter 8, Section 1: An Overview of Strategic Planning or "VMOSA" (Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategies, and Action Plans). Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas. Retrieved from the Community Tool Box: <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/strategic-planning/vmosa/main>.

### ADDITIONAL TOOLS

[https://smarterschoolspending.org/eform/submit/self\\_assessment\\_form](https://smarterschoolspending.org/eform/submit/self_assessment_form)

<https://sustaintool.org/plan-for-sustainability/>