



advancing | connecting | strengthening

## Maine Association of Nonprofits Strategic Plan 2008-2010

### I. Introduction

Dear MANP Members and Friends,

For the past ten months, the Maine Association of Nonprofits (MANP) has undertaken a comprehensive strategic planning process. Beginning in February 2007, a strategic planning committee, comprised of the MANP management team and four board members, clarified the strategic questions we sought to answer; reviewed the organization's history and current operating and financial environment; and gathered information on the trends facing the nonprofit sector in Maine and nationally in order to clarify MANP's leadership role going forward (see appendix). The group's goal was to develop a strategic plan for 2008-2010 that builds on MANP's accomplishments and strengths over the past 12 years, while identifying and clarifying leadership opportunities to strengthen the effectiveness of the sector. This plan fully recognizes the circumstances in which MANP operates while highlighting the opportunities that exist.

To answer our strategic questions, MANP sought extensive input, and conducted over 100 one-on-one conversations with nonprofit leaders, academic institutions, funders, leaders in state government, nonprofit practitioners, key researchers, and state associations and management support organizations nationally. In addition, MANP contracted with the Portland-based market research firm, Market Decisions, to conduct a survey of over 650 nonprofit members, 300 lapsed members, and more than 800 non-members.

#### MANP in Context:

Over the past 12 years, MANP has developed a solid business model, based on 95 percent earned income from service fees, membership dues, sponsorships, and training revenue. Membership, currently at 650, has grown at a steady 12% annually. In addition, MANP, which is part of a national network of nonprofit associations, has established itself as a strong statewide presence in Maine by offering a broad range of education, advocacy and other programs and services, including cost effective employee benefits, a bi-annual wage and benefit survey, a nonprofit job board, and many tools for nonprofit management, including the new *Guiding Principles and Practices for Nonprofit Excellence and Basic Infrastructure Checklist*. MANP has been able to establish such a broad and cost-effective reach by developing a strong web-based platform that delivers a variety of services to members and non-members, statewide conferences, and a nonprofit management training program that is offered weekly at venues statewide. MANP currently employs eight employees, comprising 6.5 FTEs.

The forces and market realities influencing this strategic planning process include the opportunity to build on MANP's core strengths and accomplishments; MANP's desire to both lead and respond to sector needs; the continuing growth of the sector; leadership transitions in Maine and nationally; the influx of a younger retiree population to Maine; funding and legislative

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pressures on nonprofits; and the challenging insurance market. What has emerged from this thorough review of MANP's internal and external environments is a challenging and exciting outlook for the organization and the state. The following discoveries will drive MANP's work over the next three years:

### **Key Discoveries**

MANP is in a unique position in Maine to lead and help strengthen and advance the nonprofit sector. As a statewide membership organization, MANP has a direct connection to the entire sector. As a member of a national network of field-building organizations, MANP is linked to the latest research, trends and innovative practices. Because of its particular role, MANP is well positioned to partner with others to strengthen and advance the state's nonprofit sector.

### **Nonprofit Members:**

Six hundred and thirty four MANP members responded to a market research survey, revealing the following:

- MANP members are highly satisfied with their membership, and indicate customer service is excellent.
- The vast majority of members come through referrals from other members.
- There is an opportunity for MANP to help members better understand the range of services it currently offers.
- While satisfaction with MANP's services is very high, MANP also has an opportunity to continue to develop additional relevant and valuable services.

### **Capacity Building**

- A clear need exists in the state for more knowledge and a deeper understanding of the true leadership and organizational needs facing organizations of varying sizes, sub sectors, life stages, geographies in Maine;
- An opportunity exists for all organizations that seek to strengthen the sector (academic institutions, funders, government, nonprofit consultants and practitioners) to work together as a network to better understand and address the needs of nonprofit organizations.
- An opportunity exists for MANP and its capacity building partners to use the knowledge that is generated to develop pilot educational and management support programming, targeted to different types of organizational needs.

### **Advocacy:**

- A need exists to better understand the public perception of the nonprofit sector in Maine and to monitor trends over time.
- An opportunity exists to develop a more in-depth understanding of the social and economic impact of the sector.
- There is a need to develop a communications strategy that effectively advocates for the entire Maine nonprofit sector.

Based on our past performance and the highlighted opportunities and threats, MANP presents the following plan, and looks forward to working with you as we carry it out over the next three years.

Sincerely,

Chris Amann  
President, MANP Board

Scott Schnapp  
Executive Director, MANP

## **II. Vision, Mission and Values**

### **Mission**

The mission of the Maine Association of Nonprofits is to strengthen the leadership, voice, and organizational effectiveness of our state's nonprofits so that they can better enrich the quality of community and personal life in Maine.

### **Vision**

- MANP is the leading source of knowledge about nonprofit organizations and issues/trends in the nonprofit sector in Maine
- MANP effectively communicates that information to nonprofit, foundation & business leaders, philanthropists, policy makers, and the media.
- MANP and its partners are better-informed and can provide more effective leadership to nonprofit concerns, including issues related to both internal practices and public policy.

### **Values**

Flexibility and responsiveness  
Accountability and stewardship  
Measured risk taking  
Generosity and tolerance  
Collaboration and inclusiveness  
Forward thinking leadership

### III. Priorities, Goals and Objectives

**Priority 1:** Significantly increase MANP's knowledge and depth of understanding of the management and leadership needs and opportunities of Maine nonprofits.

*The purpose of this priority is to conduct research on needs and trends facing the sector, to develop programming that will strengthen Maine nonprofits, and to raise awareness and further the conversation among capacity building partners about needs of the sector.*

**Goal:** Create structured opportunities to better understand, share and discuss capacity building needs of Maine nonprofits that will help MANP and its partners develop and deliver programming to meet those needs.

**Priority 2:** Expand range, type and vehicles for learning.

*The purpose of this priority is program/product development, based on understanding of market needs.*

**Goal:** Determine vehicles for program delivery and opportunities to expand content and types of programming.

**Priority 3:** Better understand the sector and public perception of the sector to develop a communications strategy that effectively advocates for the sector.

*The purpose of this priority is to build the tools and knowledge necessary to effectively advocate for Maine's nonprofit sector*

**Goal A:** Increase MANP's understanding of the public's perception of the sector, improve that perception, and monitor trends over time.

**Goal B:** Increase MANP's understanding of the economic and social impact of the sector and monitor trends over time.

**Goal C:** Continue to clarify MANP's advocacy role in the areas of legislative activity and education.

**Priority 4:** *Develop effective strategies to reduce the cost of employee benefits.*

*The purpose of this priority is to ensure that MANP is providing its members with the best product options and service that the Maine insurance market has to offer.*

**Goal A:** Work with Bureau of Insurance, our endorsed broker and the MANP membership to create aggregated programs for health and benefit coverage

**Goal B:** Assess MANP's current insurance model to ensure the best possible programs and service for our members

#### **IV. Organization Development Priorities, Goals and Objectives**

*The purpose of these organization development priorities is to ensure that MANP develops its capacity in the areas of resource development, governance, infrastructure, and marketing/knowledge management in order fully accomplish its mission priorities and achieve its vision.*

**Resource Development Priority:** MANP will develop its internal capacity to raise philanthropic capital through grants and a major donor program, and will develop a new fee for service pricing structure, when appropriate.

**Governance Priority:** MANP Board of Directors will take an increasingly more active role in knowledge generation (serving as MANP's eyes and ears on the ground), and revenue and partnership creation.

**Infrastructure Priority:** MANP will consciously adapt its budgeting and financial management, technology, logistics, program management, marketing systems and staffing to accommodate shifting focus areas.

**Marketing/Knowledge Management Priority:** MANP will focus on integrating and disseminating new knowledge to build on the foundation of knowledge developed over the past 12 years.

## Appendix One

### **Strategic Planning Committee Members**

#### MANP Board Members

- Anna Kent, Maine Women's Fund
- Peter Taylor, Maine Community Foundation
- Kathi O'Grady, Unum
- Jane Richmond, The Nature Conservancy

#### MANP Staff

- Scott Schnapp, Executive Director
- Brenda Peluso, Director of Public Policy
- Elizabeth Banwell, Director of External Affairs

## Appendix Two

### **Strategic Questions**

- How can MANP best develop and deepen its educational, management support and capacity building services for Maine nonprofits?
- What is MANP's role in regard to advocacy in Maine?
- Where is MANP going with its non-educational services?
- What is MANP's leadership role in regard to each of the three areas: educational programs, advocacy, and non-educational services?

## Appendix 3

### Key Findings from Environmental Scan

#### Environmental Scan

MANP conducted one on one conversations with:

- 25 state associations and management support organizations nationally.
- 70 foundation leaders, national and Maine academics and researchers, consultant partners, and nonprofit leaders.
- 30 nonprofit leaders about their organizations' capacity building needs

In addition, MANP contracted with a market research firm to conduct a survey of 600-plus nonprofit members, 300 lapsed members and 800-plus non-members.

#### Key Findings

Education/Training:

- Maximize MANP's statewide and national position to build MANP's capacity to understand the management & leadership needs and opportunities of Maine's nonprofits
- Build out MANP's leadership and adaptive capacity-building programs
- Develop a core group of consultants to learn with and from us
- Integrate new technologies into the delivery of MANP's educational programming (webinar, video conferencing, online peer learning)
- Integrate different formats and types of learning opportunities (peer learning, series programs, coaching, etc.)
- Add additional content to educational offerings
- Contract/partner with foundations, State of Maine, groups and organizations.
- Further clarify MANP's niche in the capacity building marketplace (Loran, ICL, Continuing Ed., Common Good)

Advocacy:

- Develop a more in-depth understanding of the economic and social impact of the sector
- Better understand the public's perception of the sector
- Develop a communications strategy that effectively advocates for the sector