



A Framework for Evidence-Based Decision Making in Local Criminal Justice Systems

Starter Kit

1i: Developing a Mission for Your Policy Team¹

Navigating the Roadmap

Activity 1: Build a genuine, collaborative policy team.

Introduction

If the vision statement is a *picture of the desired future*, the team's mission statement describes *what your team will do*. The mission will define the team's work together in a realistic and meaningful way; it will translate your overarching vision of the future into a shorter-term set of activities that can be more readily accomplished while bringing your community closer to the ideal you envision.

The mission should be concrete, represent tangible targets of change activity, and be connected firmly to achieving some part of the larger vision. When developing your mission, it is important to be clear about what you want to achieve through your work (e.g., what problems or issues your team wants to overcome). This will make it easier when your team begins to develop specific goals and objectives for achieving your mission.

Purpose

To facilitate a dialogue among team members that will result in a statement reflecting the mission for the justice system in your community

Participants

All policy team members should be involved in the development of your mission statement.

Instructions

The following steps will guide your team through the development of your mission statement:

1. Ask each team member to consider the following questions:
 - What function does the team perform?
 - For whom does the team perform these functions?
 - Why do you exist as a team?

Provide team members a few minutes to jot down their ideas about these questions. When they are finished, go around the room and record each person's first response on a flip

¹ Language adapted from CEPP, 2006 and CSOM, 2007.

chart. Go around the room again and note each person's second response. Continue this process until all ideas are recorded.

2. Review the keywords generated. Discuss each one and ensure that its meaning is clear. Eliminate duplications. Develop a statement or set of statements that answers the questions and that reflects the consensus of the team.
3. If multiple statements are produced, prioritize these by asking each member to rank order the statements; then tally the "votes" for each one.
4. Follow the same process to answer the following questions: What must the team do to accomplish its vision? What are the team's activities?
5. For each question, develop a single statement (this may be one sentence or a full paragraph) that synthesizes the prioritized ideas into a mission statement. This process may take some time; you may not be able to complete this work in one session or even as a full team. You may decide it best to have one person or a subcommittee work on developing these statements between team meetings.

Tips

- Try to make your mission clear enough to explain your work and purpose to a third party. Ask non-team members to read the mission and see if they understand what you are trying to accomplish.
- Know that it is okay to let go of some key words or ideas that were shared early in the development process.
- Rather than get overwhelmed by all the work that your team needs to do to accomplish its vision, focus on the work that your team needs to get done in the immediate future.
- Revisit your mission periodically to determine whether the targets of change are still accurate or need to be revised.

Example: Charlottesville–Albemarle County, Virginia, Mission Statement

"Working together for a safer community, one person at a time."

The agencies in the Charlottesville-Albemarle Criminal Justice System seek to achieve justice and make communities safer by working closely together, applying the best known research to policies and practices, listening to those affected by crime, and recognizing that every interaction can lead to improved outcomes.

Additional Resources/Readings

Center for Effective Public Policy (CEPP). (2005). Collaboration: A training curriculum to enhance the effectiveness of criminal justice teams. Retrieved from www.collaborativejustice.org/docs/2005_Collaboration_Curriculum.pdf

———. (2006). Getting it right: Collaborative problem solving for criminal justice. Retrieved from <http://nicic.org/Downloads/PDF/Library/019834.pdf>

Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM). (2007). Enhancing the management of adult and juvenile sex offenders: A handbook for policymakers and practitioners. Retrieved from http://www.csom.org/pubs/CSOM_handbook.pdf