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A SAFE PLACE

STRATEGIC PLAN, 2017-2020

Understanding Today - Planning for Tomorrow

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A Safe Place: Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020

You don't need to predict the future. Just choose a future -- a good future, a useful future -- and make the kind of prediction that will alter human emotions and reactions in such a way that the future you predicted will be brought about. Better to make a good future than predict a bad one.

- Isaac Asimov

The best way to predict the future is to invent it.

- Immanuel Kant

I skate to where I think the puck will be.

- Wayne Gretsky

I. Introduction

Strategic Plans set the roadmap to fulfill an organization's goals and point its direction forward. Today, we often chart our courses using a GPS allowing us to choose between alternative routes. The board and staff of A Safe Place have put time and effort into exploring several possible routes for the next few years. This plan is their informed choice of the right direction for ASP in the current environment and is the result of hard work and thoughtful, open participation.

II. Background/Process:

A Safe Place engaged Levine Partners to work with them on strategic planning in June of 2016. A board and staff Planning Committee was formed to work with Levine Partners. This engagement consisted of three phases:

- Phase I: Assessment and Discovery:
During this phase, Levine Partners gathered data via small group and individual interviews with Board, staff, service providers and other key informants (government, funders, businesses, etc.). More than 66 interviews were conducted. In addition, Levine Partners gathered demographic and ethnographic information about Lake County, IL as well as articles and reports that would add to the base for planning.
- Phase II: Assessing Possible Futures
During this phase, Levine Partners and the Planning Committee used the information gathered to develop four different strategies/options for future directions for A Safe Place.
- Phase III: Agreement on the Strategic Direction for A Safe Place
A board/staff retreat was held in November 2016 to assess options and determine directions for final consideration. Emerging from that retreat was a working consensus that two paths forward warranted further development:
 1. Expand to Serve All of Lake County

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2. Find a Strategic Partner

In the intervening period (December 2016 – February 2017) external factors, including the lack of an Illinois state budget, raised more immediate concerns for A Safe Place. Maintaining the current service level and the prioritizing infrastructure issues that emerged during the retreat became, given the uncertain funding picture, more immediate and urgent priorities than the longer term, expansion-focused strategies that had emerged from the beginning stages of the Planning Process. It was evident that building greater stability and sustainability needed to be the focus for the strategic plan for the next two to three years. Given success in this, the desired expansion remains feasible when the resource picture becomes more positive.

III. Decisions on Direction to Maintain the Current Service Level

A number of factors went into the decision by the Planning Committee to limit expansion and focus on maintaining and improving the levels of service now provided to women and families in domestic abuse situations. They include the following:

a. Political Environment:

The lack of a state budget and dramatic cuts to state funds for the work of A Safe Place as well as possible federal cuts in DV and Section 8 Housing funding place additional pressure on A Safe Place and make expansion of services to a broader geographic area difficult for the near future.

b. Funding Environment:

The situation described above impacts many in the Lake County nonprofit community and makes the funding environment more competitive and shrinks the options for funding sources.

c. Building a Stable, Sustainable Organization:

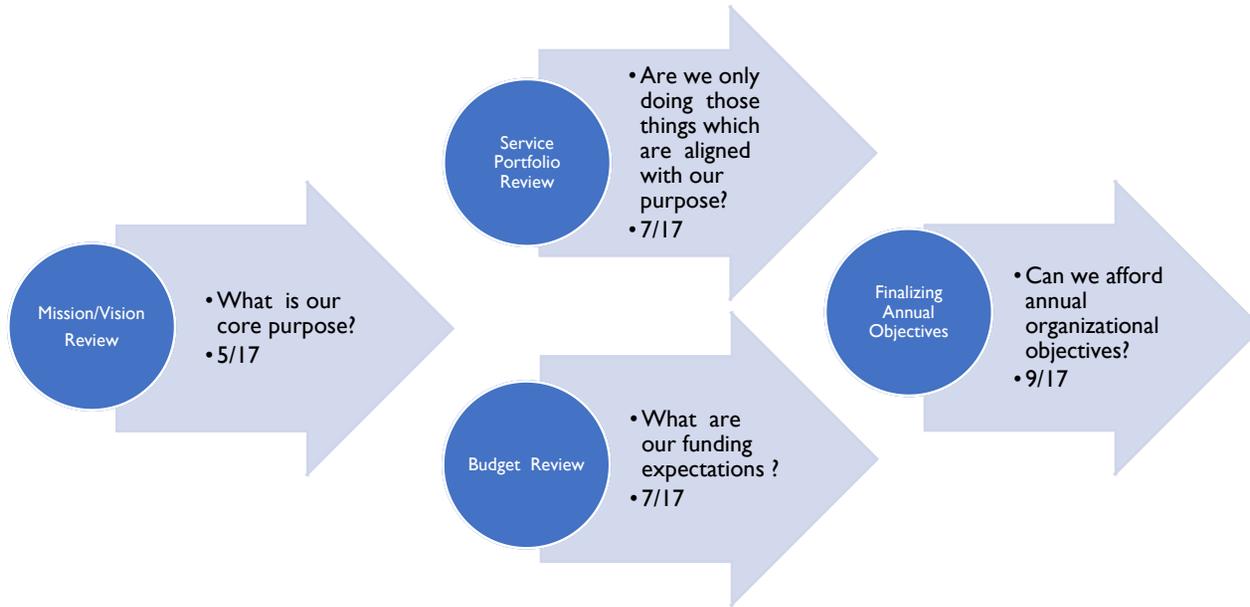
It was clearly demonstrated during the November 2016 Board/Staff retreat that taking time to work with staff and board to stabilize and develop strategies to further engage staff and board will lead to a more sustainable organization. The goal of building on the high-quality services delivered by highly qualified staff and developing a stronger board that can be the strong support and governing body that will propel A Safe Place forward is the right focus.

A Strategic Plan is never final.

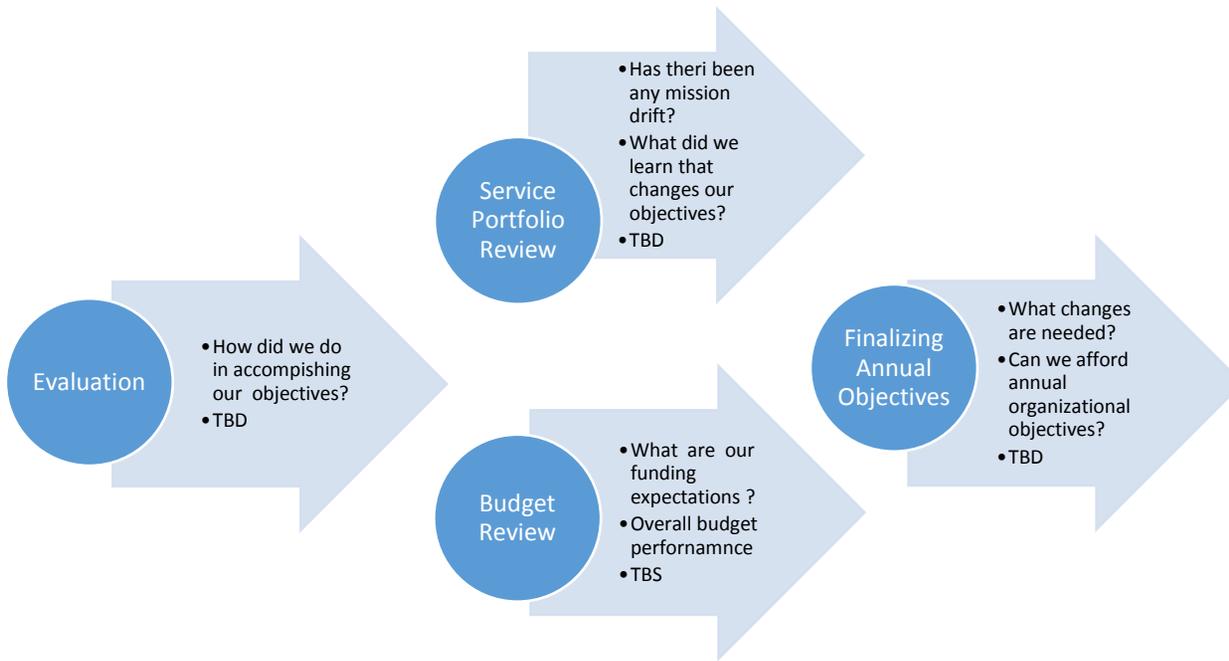
It is critical that the Strategic Plan be reviewed and revised annually so that it reflects the current state of affairs internally and externally. When doing this review, it is prudent to strategize beyond the 3 years of this plan.

Before Year 1 service objectives are finalized, any changes that emerge from the review of A Safe Place’s Mission and Vision need to be reconciled with the organization’s service portfolio and modifications made as called for. At the same time, the revenue picture of a safe place should be reviewed so that a realistic picture of government funding and internal fundraising is reconciled with the full cost of the plan’s objectives. Further modifications to the program objectives to align with the revenue expectations can be made.

Aligning the Strategic Plan with Operational Realities



A similar process is recommended for Year's 2 and 3:

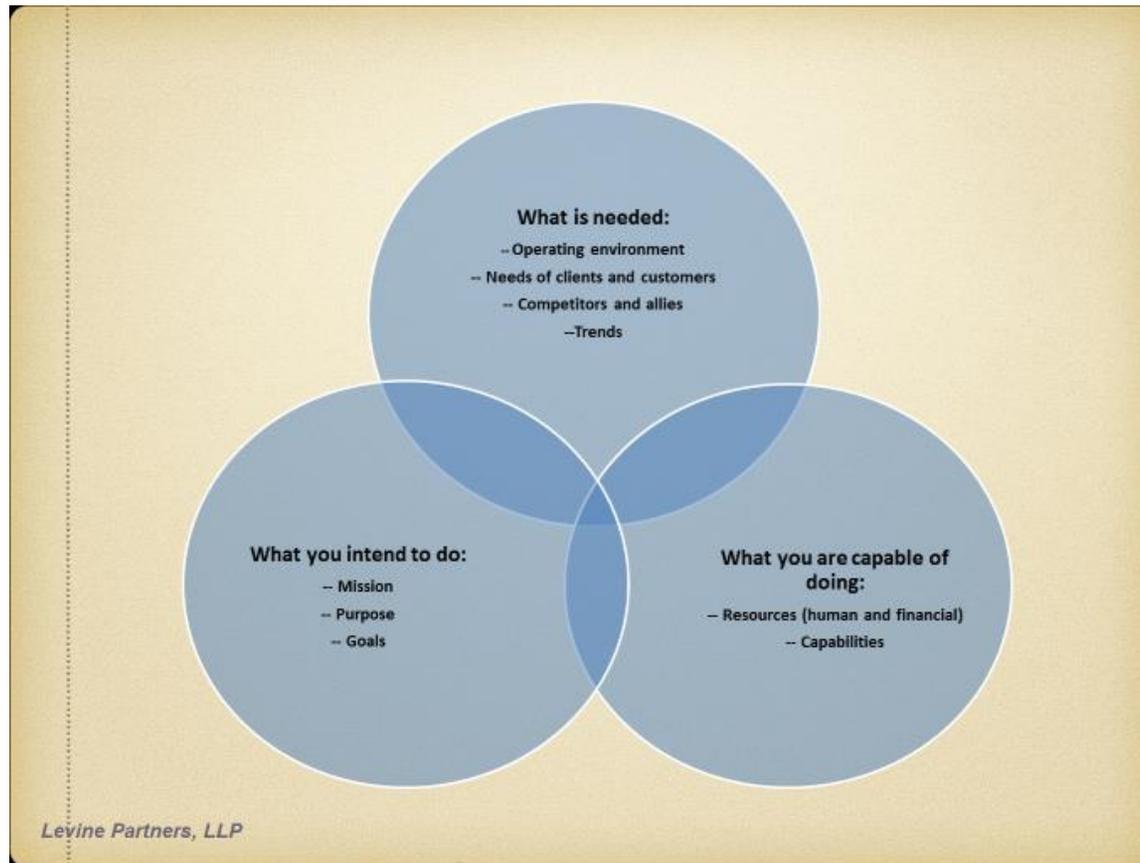


A critical evaluation of each year's performance will provide the needed understanding of changes that need to be made in the coming year's plan. Can more be done because more resources are available? Are we still unable to afford the level of service we had planned to offer? Have we added activities that "drift" away from our Mission and Vision?

The Strategic Plan for A Safe Place provides direction toward a strong, sustainable organization over the next three years.

A Safe Place Strategic Plan 2017- 2020

A Safe Place's 2017 – 2020 Strategic Plan has been developed to ensure that A Safe Place becomes stronger internally while maintaining its current levels of service. This will position the organization for a growth and expansion strategy as additional resources become available. The graphic below indicates the intersectionality of the thinking by A Safe Place's Planning Committee, board and staff.



Maintain Current Levels of Domestic Violence Services

The current scope of services provided by A Safe Place strives to fulfill its current Vision and Mission. For the next three years, the overall goal is to be able to maintain current levels of service. However, the strategic plan calls for ASP to review its Vision and Mission by the end of year 1; based on this review, the service objectives for years 2 and 3 should be reviewed and modified as needed to reflect any changes in the organization's core focus. Objectives will also need to be reviewed based on the Illinois budget situation and any modifications or changes in the organization's overall fiscal status

Service	Description	Responsible Staff	Current Service Level	Year 1 Goals/Objectives	Year 2 Goals/Objectives To be reconsidered following Mission/Vision Review and Illinois Budget status	Year 3 Goals/Objectives To be reconsidered following Mission/Vision Review and Illinois Budget status
Domestic Abuse Hotline	A 24/7 crisis line for those experiencing domestic abuse seeking help. (including bi-lingual services)		Operates on a 24/7 basis with staff and volunteers. 2,833 callers in FY 2015 (10% increase from 2014).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maintain 24/7 operation of the hotline. ➤ Increase the number of Hotline volunteers. ➤ Conduct 3 to 4 40-hour training for new volunteers, adding 60 or more new volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maintain 24/7 operation of the hotline. ➤ Increase the number of Hotline volunteers. ➤ Conduct 3 to 4, 40-hour training for new volunteers adding 60 or more new volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maintain 24/7 operation of the hotline. ➤ Increase the number of Hotline volunteers. ➤ Conduct 3 to 4, 40-hour training for new volunteers adding 60 or more new volunteers.

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Emergency Shelter	An emergency shelter for women and children fleeing domestic abuse and needing shelter. Can accommodate up to 35 women and children. (provides Spanish language services)		Operates on a 24/7 basis with staff and volunteers. 188 victims sheltered/7,233 shelter nights. Staffing shortages at times limit the number of residents that can be accommodated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stabilize staffing patterns to allow full use of shelter beds ➤ Develop plan for feasible facility improvements and improved supports for house-keeping functions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue to operate at capacity ➤ Continue implementation of facility improvements and staff support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue to operate at capacity ➤ Continue implementation of facility improvements and staff support.
Transitional and Affordable Housing/Housing Assistance.	Provides Section 8-supported affordable rental housing to women leaving abusive situations. 40 apartments are available.	Sub-contracted. Reports to CFO.	41,355 nights of safe housing in FY 2015 (16% increase from 2014).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue to manage so that apartments are vacant for as few days as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue to manage so that apartments are vacant for as few days as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue to manage so that apartments are vacant for as few days as possible.

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D-100: Waukegan Courthouse Help with Orders of Protection/Legal Advocacy.	Support clients through the process of requesting and obtaining Orders of Protection. (bi-lingual services)		3,001 Orders of Protection filed (16% increase from 2014).	➤ Maintain current level of service.	➤ Maintain current level of service.	➤ Maintain current level of service.
Family Visitation Center	Provides a safe, supervised space for mandated parental visits and custody exchanges. (bi-lingual services)		188 Children had parental visits. 1,403 Custody exchanges. 1,194 Family visitations.	➤ Maintain current level of service.	➤ Maintain current level of service.	➤ Maintain current level of service.

<p>Community Education, Prevention and Advocacy</p>	<p>Provides programs on Domestic Violence prevention. Works with government (police, judiciary) to ensure the safety of DV victims and promotes policies that will provide support for DV services and victims.</p>		<p>Domestic Violence presentations and education for teens on healthy relationships.</p> <p>2,648 teens received education on healthy relationships.</p> <p>8,159 people attended domestic violence presentations.</p> <p>Presentations to police and other government (court) officials on working with DV victims.</p>	<p>➤ Maintain current level of service.</p>	<p>➤ Maintain current level of service.</p>	<p>➤ Maintain current level of service.</p>
<p>Counseling: Individual and Groups</p>	<p>Provide group and individual counseling for adults and children.</p>		<p>558 adults received counseling.</p>	<p>➤ Maintain current level of service at the Shelter and at other</p>	<p>➤ Maintain current level of service at the Shelter and at other sites that</p>	<p>➤ Maintain current level of service at the Shelter and at other sites that</p>

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			158 children received therapeutic counseling.	sites that are currently operating.	are currently operating.	are currently operating.
Community Collaboration	Participate in and help lead community collaborations and build partnerships with other organizations. Work with community leaders across Lake County.		ASP holds a leadership role in the Partnership for a Safer Lake County and in statewide DV coalitions.	➤ Maintain current level of engagement.	➤ Maintain current level of engagement.	➤ Maintain current level of engagement.

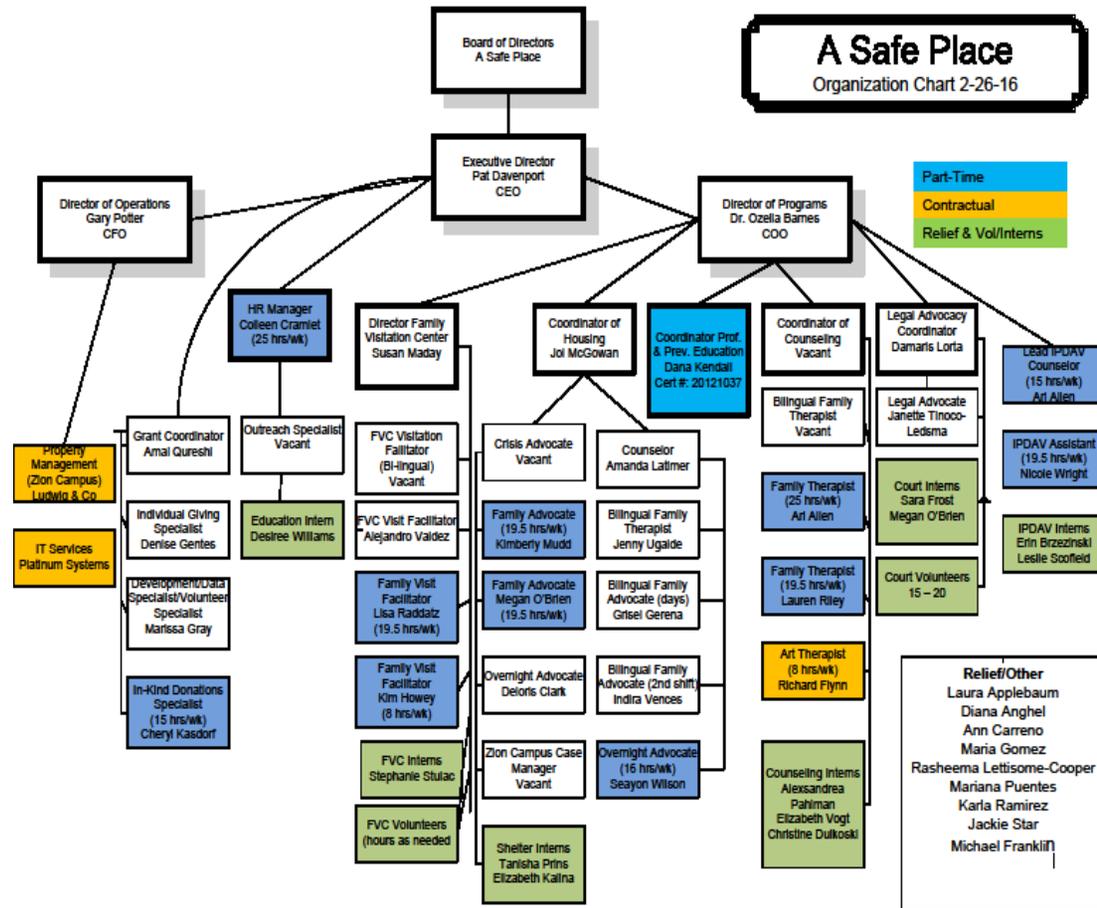
Additional Service Considerations

Budgetary Considerations: The above plan is predicated on A Safe Place continuing to bring in resources to meet the costs of maintaining services and the incremental costs to fully stabilize and sustain A Safe Place at the current service levels. Costs will be incurred in addressing staffing and personnel issues; in building the infrastructure and maintaining the physical plant of ASP; and in taking on new development strategies which are laid out in the strategic plan components that follow.

Data Collection Considerations: Most of staff time on task is in direct service to clients. Data is kept on numbers of clients served and what types of services are provided. But little follow up data exists once a client moves on from ASP services. This poses a dilemma of documentation and getting to outcomes. The lack of ability to “follow” a client is caught up in issues of confidentiality as well as the staff time and effort to be able to document outcome measures. As more and more funders seek this kind of data, ASP may want to explore options for data documentation, consulting and collaborating with other domestic violence providers in Illinois and in other locations.

Sanctuary Model and Trauma-Informed Services: A Safe Place’s implementation of the Sanctuary Model and Trauma-Informed Services is viewed as a positive focus for all of the work of the organization. Building a means for collecting outcome data for this model is a challenge to be looked at from both a training and technology perspective. Giving consideration to this, along with the overall need for data collection could be worth the staff time and effort in terms of validating the work of ASP.

Address Personnel Issues and Build a Strong, Committed, Highly Qualified Staff



The success of A Safe Place relies on a skilled and dedicated staff who are able to support, counsel and protect the organization's clients through dangerous and turbulent moments in their lives. Even with very constrained resources, it is critical for A Safe Place to address the personnel weaknesses that have been identified and to build more effective systems for increasing morale, decreasing turnover and strengthening coordination across the organization.

To accomplish this ASP will take steps to address and ameliorate the personnel problems identified during the initial phases of the Planning process:

- i. Staff feel underpaid and have gone without raises for multiple years.
- ii. It is difficult to afford and maintain the level of staff needed. Beds in the Shelter are empty due to lack of staff to service clients. When there are staff vacancies, remaining staff fill in but are concerned about their positions and keeping up with responsibilities. The ideal staffing plan paired with a focused funding strategy could remedy this.
- iii. ASP has high staff turnover resulting in a loss of experience, relationships and institutional memory. The average tenure of currently filled permanent full and part time staff is slightly more than 2 years; 9 are filled with employees hired in the last year. Six (6) positions are currently unfilled. There is a steep learning curve for new staff with limited people to orient and mentor them.
- iv. Open staff positions mean remaining staff expand their work to keep up the need. There is limited additional compensation, if any, for assuming additional work. Staff are devoted to this work, but facing possible burnout situations as this continues.
- v. Non-existent support staff means that all staff, including senior staff, are taking on support roles that consume time that could or should be spent in their skill areas.
- vi. The lack of a staff succession plans is an area of concern for the stability of the organization.
- vii. Isolation of Organizational Components: Internally, ASP service and support units, operate in silos and struggle to see themselves as part of an overall organization with a common mission and strategy. While senior staff know one another, line staff do not and are, for the most part, only familiar with their component of ASP operations (Shelter, Family Visitation Center, D100, etc.) and have a limited sense of the interconnectedness of their work to these other ASP components. This is a recognized issue among senior staff, but needs more attention.

Building a Cohesive Staff	Year 1 Goals/Objectives	Year 2 Goals/Objectives	Year 3 Goals/Objectives
1. Conduct an annual, confidential, staff morale survey: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First year survey will further identify and clarify key issues from staff perspective, set priorities, and establish a benchmark to measure progress year to year. 	X	X	X
2. Establish a multilevel staff personnel committee, representing all organizational components chaired by HR Director: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee’s charge is to review current personnel situation and develop improvement recommendations for senior management consideration. • The Committee will review the results of the staff morale survey annually and make further recommendations. 	X	X	X
3. Develop Staff Coverage Improvement Plan, led by senior staff with input from line staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the coverage needs for both planned and unplanned needs. • Review current system for ensuring proper coverage and identify its weaknesses. • Develop and implement a plan to address problems 	X		
4. Increase inter-unit understanding and coordination (Breaking down the Silos): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review staff orientation process to ensure that it fully integrates agency-wide and job specific perspectives. • With staff personnel committee develop and implement regular all agency staff meetings designed to increase understanding. These should be in-person meetings or video meetings so that staff see one another. • Develop a communication system so that staff are aware of current organizational activities and challenges. • Provide opportunities for staff from one unit to “job shadow” in another to better understand the depth and breadth of the work of ASP. 	X X X X X	 X X X	 X X X

Compensation	Year 1 Goals/Objectives	Year 2 Goals/Objectives	Year 3 Goals/Objectives
1. Conduct an annual salary review comparing ASP scale against Lake County and Chicago Metro salaries.	X	X	X
2. Establish plan to align ASP salaries with the marketplace that sets a target for all positions, defines the funding need for bringing ASP in alignment with its targets and establishes a multiyear process for alignment.		X	
3. Review and revise overtime policy with input from the Staff Personnel Committee.	X		

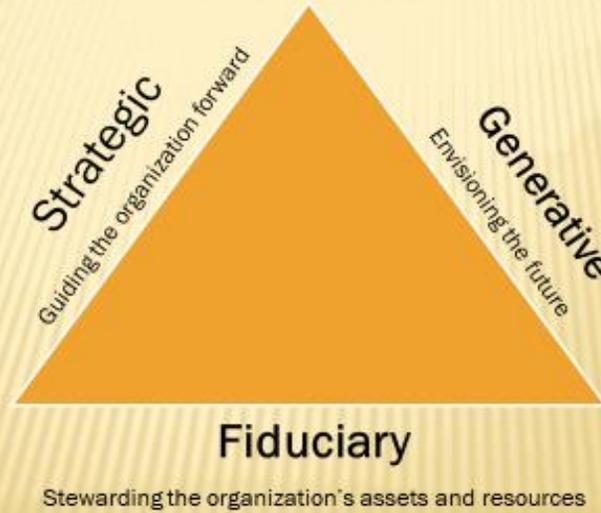
Succession Plan	Year 1 Goals/Objectives	Year 2 Goals/Objectives	Year 3 Goals/Objectives
1. Develop a succession plan for all key positions.	X		
2. Develop a “career ladder” for all positions across the organization.		X	

Build a Strong, Supportive Governing Board

A Safe Place needs to ensure that it has the Board it needs to meet current challenges and to insure future success. Over the next three years the A Safe Place will take action to strengthen its Board by addressing these components:

- Building the board of the future: implementing strategies for gaining more diversity on the board as well as engaging members who have status and reach in order to open doors and raise funds for ASP.
- Clearly defining the “work of the board” including fiduciary/fundraising responsibilities, setting direction and policy and succession planning.
- Developing a plan for board commitment to both giving and “getting” for ASP.

GOVERNANCE AS LEADERSHIP IN PRACTICE THE THREE MODES OF BOARD WORK



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Building the Board of The Future	Year 1 Goals/Objectives	Year 2 Goals/Objectives	Year 3 Goals/Objectives
1. Conduct an annual Board Survey to assess engagement, satisfaction and commitment. Share and discuss the results with the entire board.	X	X	X
2. Develop a Board Matrix to assess the skills and expertise of the current Board. Use this annually to establish the skills and constituencies that are needed but not present.	X	X	X
3. Review and revise Board member recruitment process. Develop and implement a plan for outreach and cultivation of potential board members.	X	X	X
4. Develop and implement a Succession Plan for Board officers.		X	
5. Review and revise Board orientation process.	X		

Defining and Refining the Work of The Board	Year 1 Goals/Objectives	Year 2 Goals/Objectives	Year 3 Goals/Objectives
1. Board Training on Governance and Leadership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conduct one or more Board training experiences on the work of a Board and the role of a Board member as a part of overall orientation to the Board. ➤ Include some form of Board training (no more than 30 minutes) at each Board meeting. ➤ Share materials/articles and information on high functioning board with members between meetings. 	X	X	X
2. Assess Board's historic agenda and determine how much of the Board's work will be devoted to "Generative", "Strategic" or "Fiduciary" tasks.	X	X	X
Establish and implement a process to ensure that meeting agendas reflect this expectation.	X	X	X
Board Giving and Getting	Year 1 Goals/Objectives	Year 2 Goals/Objectives	Year 3 Goals/Objectives

1. Clarify policies and expectations for Board giving and for Board engagement in outreach to others. Include this as a key component in orienting new board members.	X		
2. Include Board members as solicitors with key staff in cultivating major donors.	X	X	X
3. Use time at a board meeting, at least once a year, to either train on fundraising strategies, or to have a board brainstorming session related to specific areas of fundraising (such as securing major gifts, endowments, opening corporate doors).	X	X	X
4. Develop “champions” among past board members to work with current and new ones on fundraising.	X	X	X

Develop a Comprehensive Funding Strategy that Considers a Major, Multi-year Capital Campaign

Retiring the existing \$700,000 mortgage on the Zion would ease budget pressures significantly. With this as one goal, a plan for a capital campaign will be developed by ASP staff and board including consideration of whether it should target more than the mortgage, perhaps including an endowment, other capital improvements, program support, etc. ASP will determine whether planning for this can be accomplished by current staff and Board or if an outside consultant is needed.

Develop a Comprehensive Funding Strategy	Year 1 Goals/Objectives	Year 2 Goals/Objectives	Year 3 Goals/Objectives
Assess the current ASP funding needs and expectations in order to determine their ability to maintain the current service level and address staffing and maintenance needs.	X		
Annually assess current and projected status of state funding. Determine on a year-to-year basis whether they expect to receive state funds and if they need to plan on financing these funds if state contracts are not fulfilled.	X	X	X
Account for additional costs in stabilizing the current staffing model as to its impact on funding efforts.	X		
Annually assess funding prospects (state, grants, events, major donors, campaigns, etc.) in terms of supporting the continuation of current services and the capacity of current staff to manage these fundraising components.	X	X	X
Determine the feasibility and potential scope of a capital campaign and the need for outside consultation.	X		
Develop organizational marketing strategies as a component of all fundraising, including a capital campaign and direct service components.	X	X	X