

2021

Strategic Planning in Small Nonprofit Behavioral Health Organizations

Amanda Machamer Becker
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Organizational Behavior and Theory Commons](#), and the [Psychology Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Amanda Machamer Becker

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Kristen Chesser, Committee Chairperson, Psychology Faculty

Dr. Nancy Bostain, Committee Member, Psychology Faculty

Dr. Richard Thompson, University Reviewer, Psychology Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2021

Abstract

Strategic Planning in Small Nonprofit Behavioral Health Organizations

by

Amanda M. Becker

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Psychology in Behavioral Health Leadership

Walden University

August 2021

Abstract

Rural communities in the United States depend on small community-based nonprofits to provide access to food, nutrition, transportation, and other social determinants of health. Despite this essential role, some leaders of small nonprofits forgo participating in strategic planning because they believe that the process can be time consuming and expensive. Strategic planning may help organizations of any size to be organized, mission focused, outcome based, and successful. The strategic planning process helps to identify which outcomes demonstrate effectiveness and increase program sustainability. The purpose of this study was to explore the ways that strategic planning may assist small rural community-based nonprofits in building sustainable programs. A single-case study design was used. Data were collected from semistructured interviews with board members and a review of organizational documentation. The Baldrige excellence framework was used to examine the study organization. Thematic analysis produced six themes: mission, passion, working board, unidentified goals, youth of the organization, and strategic planning. The findings reinforce how much rural communities rely on small nonprofits to provide essential services. The study's implications for positive social change include providing small nonprofit leaders with insight into ways that participating in the strategic planning process may increase organizational viability and sustainability so that the needs of communities continue to be met.

Strategic Planning in Small Nonprofit Behavioral Health Organizations

by

Amanda M. Becker

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Psychology in Behavioral Health Leadership

Walden University

August 2021

Dedication

This study is dedicated to my children, Rachel and Sam, who supported me and to remind them that you are never too old to learn. To my fiancé, Robert, whose love and faith never wavered. Thanks to my mom, Marty; sister, Becky; stepmom, Barbara; and all my family for being my cheerleaders. Thanks to my dad, whose lifelong career in academia served as an inspiration. I also extend thanks to my PsyD support group, Syreeta, Topaz, Shanee, Nidal, and Sadio, without whose collective knowledge and endless support I may never have finished this academic journey.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my friends and family for accompanying me on this journey. To my doctoral committee members, Dr. Kristen Chesser and Dr. Nancy Bostain, I thank them for their guidance and patience. To my university research reviewers, Dr. John Schmidt and Dr. Richard Thompson, I thank them for their diligence and support. To my editor, Barb Elwert, thanks for always going above and beyond. And finally, I thank the small nonprofit organization that served as the case for this study, whose staff and leaders did everything they could to support me as I completed my doctoral degree.

Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	iv
Section 1a: The Behavioral Health Organization	1
Introduction.....	1
Practice Problem	2
Purpose.....	4
Significance.....	6
Summary	7
Section 1b: Organizational Profile.....	9
Introduction.....	9
Organizational Profile and Key Factors.....	9
Organizational Background and Context.....	13
Summary	14
Section 2: Background and Approach—Leadership Strategy and Assessment.....	16
Introduction.....	16
Supporting Literature	16
Sources of Evidence.....	18
Leadership Strategy and Assessment.....	20
Clients/Population Served.....	22
Workforce and Operations	22
Analytical Strategy.....	23
Summary	24

Section 3: Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management Components of	
the Organization.....	26
Introduction.....	26
Analysis of the Organization	26
Knowledge Management	30
Summary	31
Section 4: Results—Analysis, Implications, and Preparation of Findings.....	33
Introduction.....	33
Analysis, Results, and Implications.....	34
Themes.....	35
Theme 1: Mission	35
Theme 2: Passion	37
Theme 3: Working Board	38
Theme 4: Unidentified Goals.....	41
Theme 5: Youth of the Organization	44
Theme 6: Strategic Planning.....	46
Implications of the Findings and the Potential for Social Change.....	47
Strengths and Limitations of the Study.....	48
Section 5: Recommendations and Conclusions	50
Introduction.....	50
Recommendations.....	51
Recommendation 1	51

Recommendation 2	53
Recommendation 3	54
Recommendation 4	54
Recommendation 5	56
Recommendation 6	57
Recommendations for Future Studies.....	59
Summary.....	60
References.....	62

List of Figures

Figure 1. Organizational Chart 11

Section 1a: The Behavioral Health Organization

Introduction

Small nonprofit organizations have been defined as having a budget of \$250,000 to \$500,000 (Kim & Peng, 2018; Trzcinski & Sobeck, 2008); however, despite their relatively low budgets, small nonprofits make up 75% of all nonprofits in the United States (Kim & Peng, 2018). These organizations are essential to addressing community needs that cannot be met by local and federal government social welfare programs (Gratton, 2018; Kim & Peng, 2018; Trzcinski & Sobeck, 2008). Health inequity was defined in the current study as the inability of certain populations to access social determinants of health such as food, health care, transportation, a safe living environment, economic security, and social support systems (Andress & Fitch, 2016). Health inequity is a persistent problem in rural areas, as evidenced by community members having limited resources, inability to or difficulty accessing care, and greater volumes of geographical food deserts (Zhang et al., 2020).

SNPF, the pseudonym of the community-based nonprofit organization that I studied, is a small, private nonprofit foundation in a rural area in the southeastern United States. For the purposes of this study, I used SNPF's documentation and web information, but I withheld its internet address from the references to ensure anonymity. According to its website, SNPF was created to help to address health inequities in the surrounding rural areas and to meet its vision of expanding to other communities. SNPF's website states that its mission is to build community programs that focus on the social

determinants of health and remove barriers to care to promote health equity in underserved and marginalized communities.

SNPF's bylaws, which were revised in May 2020, define its organizational structure as comprising a board of directors, board committee members, and an executive director. In December 2019, SNPF reported that the board decided to focus specifically on food insufficiency, lack of transportation, and inability to access mental health and medical care. Because older adults and low-income mothers with small children are disproportionately represented in rural communities, SNPF in January 2019 chose to focus on those vulnerable populations (Zhang et al., 2020). The website states that SNPF is currently developing several programs to distribute food to people who live in rural food deserts, as well as planning support groups for new mothers and an exercise sports team program for youth.

SNPF's 2020 budget reflected its use of grant money, private donations, and subsidies from its larger for-profit side, SNP LLC (limited liability company), the pseudonym for a health consulting company. SNPF's founder stated that the organization is currently dedicated to helping the communities associated with the LLC side. The SNPF founder also explained that SNPF relies on community partnerships to assist with the implementation of its health equity programs. Forging successful partnerships in the community is a key area of need for this organization.

Practice Problem

The goal of SNPF, as stated on the organization's website, is to build and expand sustainable community programs to resolve health inequity. Economic trends, changing

policies, and politics challenge nonprofit leadership to maintain the revenue needed to fulfill missions (Gratton, 2018; Hu et al., 2014; Kapucu et al., 2011). Strategic planning is one of the key elements of and an important tool in the success and sustainability of nonprofits of any size in fulfilling their missions (Gratton, 2018; Mara, 2000; McHatton et al., 2011; Reid et al., 2014). According to the founder, SNPF does not have a plan that was developed through a strategic planning process. The chair of the board explained that the board decides short- and long-term goals based on the organization's overall mission and the availability of funding. The chair elucidated that SNPF struggles to secure consistent long-term multifaceted revenue streams for its programs.

This study focused on answering the question of how using strategic planning may benefit SNPF's mission and meet short- and long-term goals to address health inequity in rural areas. Rural areas often lack access to larger nonprofit organizations and rely on community-based nonprofit organizations like SNPF to address social determinants of health that cause health inequity (Erwin et al., 2010; Kim & Peng, 2018; Long et al., 2018). Walters (2020) noted that urban areas in the United States have 3 times as many nonprofits as rural areas. The lack of access to health care services, lower socioeconomic status (SES), and higher mortality rates are more prevalent in rural areas (Erwin et al., 2010). Disparities in the accessibility of mental health resources in rural areas compounds extant physical and SES issues for community members (Pass et al., 2019). These gaps in care have meant that rural communities depend on organizations such as SNPF to meet their care needs (Kapucu et al., 2011; Kim & Peng, 2018; Trzcinski & Sobeck, 2008).

SNPF is representative of many rural community-based nonprofits in the United States that were started because of the passion and determination of community members to address care gaps in their communities (Slatten et al., 2020). These organizations may lack the necessary strategic planning and finesse to meet their stated aims. Indeed, SNPF's website contains only vague mention of its short- and long-term goals. SNPF depends on grant money and the grants parameters to define and implement programs (Henderson & Lambert, 2018). This dependence leaves the organization vulnerable to being unable to reach its double bottom line of being mission driven and financially solvent (McDonald et al., 2014).

Purpose

The study demonstrated to the leadership of SNPF and other small nonprofits the feasibility, value, and potential impact of formalized strategic planning, which often is overlooked or viewed as unnecessary in small nonprofit organizations, despite the positive impact on large nonprofits (Reid et al., 2014). The lack of attention to such planning is problematic because small nonprofits need to be nimble enough to adapt to changing economic times and political landscapes while being intentional in their visions, measurable in their impact or value added, and financially stable (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2013; Mannarini et al., 2018; McDonald et al., 2015). This flexibility and purposeful organizational design can be difficult to achieve without strategic plans being in place (Reid et al., 2014). This study provided a detailed examination of SNPF through the lens of the Baldrige excellence framework (National Institute of Standards and Technology [NIST], 2017).

The Baldrige excellence framework (NIST, 2017) is a systems approach to reviewing and evaluating the ability of organizations to achieve their missions, goals, and values. The Baldrige excellence framework itemizes the criteria for excellence into organizational profiles and seven categories: leadership, strategy, customers, measurement/analysis/knowledge management, workforce, operations, and results (NIST, 2017). Each category is interwoven and interdependent to the success of organizations (NIST, 2017). Strategic planning, or strategy, is one of the elements needed for the success of each aspect of organizational design (NIST, 2017). The framework emphasizes the importance of organizations being aligned holistically in their strategic planning and goal development process (NIST, 2017). This study of SNPF adds to the current body of research in explaining how strategic planning is integral to small nonprofits achieving their mission of meeting the needs of the communities that they serve (Hall & Lawson, 2003).

In this qualitative study, I conducted interviews with SNPF board members and the executive director. I completed a comprehensive review and evaluation of data to determine the organization's strategy in reaching its goals. Data included previous meeting minutes, past and current budgets, current policies and procedures, bylaws, organizational structure designs, SNPF's website, and any grants or activities that the organization engaged in from January 2019 through January 2021. Organizational leaders provided access to this information to facilitate completion of the study. I received the information either through email or in person at the organization's main office. I conducted and recorded the interviews through video conferencing.

Significance

The review of SNPF's background, history, organizational profile, internal and external stakeholders, processes, and activities gave me insight into areas where strategic planning may benefit this newly established organization. Small nonprofits can meet the needs of the communities they serve only if they remain viable (Kim & Peng, 2018; Walters, 2020). Strategic planning provides the leaders of community-based nonprofits with guidance to achieve their missions (Hu et al., 2014; McHatton et al., 2011). Organizations that do not have strategic planning processes and reviews can be disorganized, vague in their goals, and lacking sufficient funding sources, all of which may challenge their long-term survival and ability to meet the crucial needs of communities (Gratton, 2018; McDonald et al., 2014; McHatton et al., 2011). Strategic planning gives organizational leaders the means to collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to develop comprehensive pictures of the organization, current needs, assets, threats to viability, and capacity for growth (Reid et al., 2014; Shumate et al., 2017).

This study of SNPF's struggles to be effective and remain sustainable illustrated the impact of strategic planning. The findings also demonstrate how the organization can use affordable formalized strategic planning to create processes that may assist with sustainability, financial stability, goal achievement, and potential growth. Effectiveness in providing services and sustainability is especially important in rural communities that look to nonprofit organizations to provide needed resources to promote health equity (Kim & Peng, 2018).

Global rural communities rely on nonprofits such as SNPF to educate, advocate for, and meet the needs of citizens (Gratton, 2018; Kim & Peng, 2018; Trzcinski & Sobeck, 2008). Rural communities experience barriers such as distance from medical services, access to healthy food, shortage of health care practitioners, and lack of transportation (Pass et al., 2019). Local and often small organizations may be the only available services to assist these communities (Walters, 2020). The results of this study may help SNPF's leadership to understand the rationale behind strategic planning and its importance in building sustainable programs with growth potential (see Hu et al., 2014).

Summary

Nonprofit organizations are an important resource for rural communities in the United States. These organizations often are started to address an emergent need such as health inequity. For these rural communities to improve population health outcomes, they need these organizations to be focused, financially solvent, long lasting, and able to extend their services to larger areas (Peterson et al., 2020; Trzcinski & Sobeck, 2008). Strategic planning is an essential element to building such organizations. I took an in-depth look at a small nonprofit organization that provides services to rural communities to determine how participation in strategic planning may strengthen the organization's ability to refine and meet its short- and long-term goals.

In Section 1b, I provide a comprehensive description of SNPF's organizational profile, including its mission, values, structure, and leadership. The section also includes details about SNPF and how the organization leaders understand and engage in

operations to meet short- and long-term goals. I further explore the organization's understanding and utilization of strategic planning.

Section 1b: Organizational Profile

Introduction

Strategic planning is a deliberate process that organizations use to define their missions, goals, and the ways that they will achieve them (Bryson, 2018). This process provides the vision and mechanisms for organizations to be successful and sustainable (Reid et al., 2014). The world is constantly changing, and organizations need to be nimble enough to adapt to change (Bryson, 2018). When organizations participate in strategic planning, they deliberately design objectives, develop workflows, allocate resources, set time lines, and designate ownership of goals (Bennett & Kenney, 2018; Reid et al., 2014). The process provides organizations with a foundation that is strong enough to survive and potentially thrive (McNamara, 2005). The problem is that leaders of small nonprofit organizations often perceive strategic planning as an unnecessary and expensive process (Hu et al., 2014). There has been minimal research to validate and demonstrate viable ways for nonprofits, regardless of size, to participate in strategic planning (Reid et al., 2014). The purpose of this study was to demonstrate how SNPF and other small nonprofits benefit could benefit from comprehensive strategic planning.

Organizational Profile and Key Factors

As shown in its organizational bylaws, which were published in 2019, SNPF is a young organization that was established less than 2 years ago. The board chair described SNPF as being created by the chief executive officer (CEO) and owner of the parent for-profit organization. According to SNPF's website, the for-profit organization provides consultative services to communities related to health care and economic growth. The

founder of SNPF stated that the organization was created as an extension of the for-profit company to give back to the communities with whom the agency works. The board chair stated that the vision and goals were created by the founder of SNPF and that the founder personally recruited all board members for their knowledge and influence in the communities that they served. The founder explained that to ensure their ongoing position and leadership on the board, and to remain an essential part of the organization, the board of directors signed a written contract that the founder drafted that prevented them from ever removing the founder from a position on the board.

SNPF's bylaws state that it is governed by the 13-member board of directors. One board member explained that each board member represents an important link to external stakeholders. A review of the board members' résumés confirmed that the members are diverse and connected to the community. The chair is a retired mayor and city council member. The vice chair is a director of a large behavioral health company. The secretary is the director of the local parks and recreation department. The treasurer is the head of community programs for a different area of parks and recreation. The remaining members are a retired U.S. Army colonel and chief of staff for a local university, a physician who created a local accountable care organization, a vice president of a large Medicare brokerage firm, an acquisition specialist, a director of a Fortune 500 company, a senior pastor for a large community church, the CEO of a consulting company, and the principal of an inner-city school.

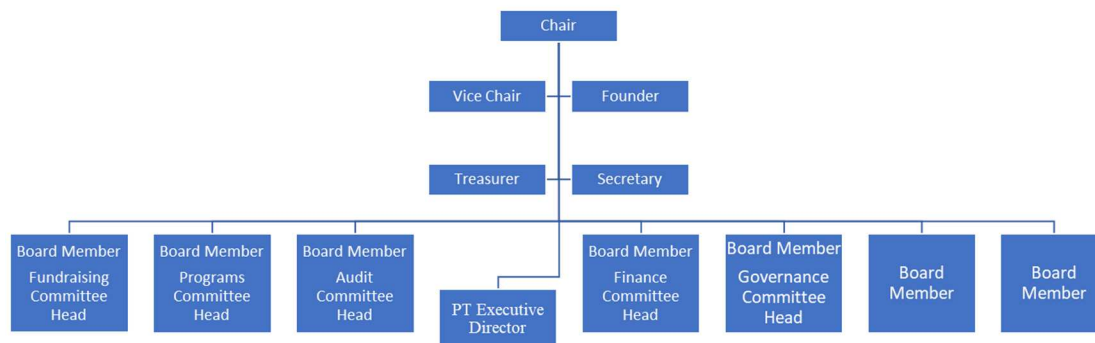
According to the February 2020 board minutes, the board of directors creates committees based on current identified needs. Committees are composed of only board

members. The committees include a programs committee, a fundraising committee, a finance committee, an audit committee, and a governance committee. The board also has subcommittees (i.e., housing, finance, food, health, social justice, and behavioral health/opioids) that are led by board members and may include additional external stakeholders. Only the housing, finance, and food subcommittee are currently active.

SNPF's organizational chart (see Figure 1) shows that it employs one part-time executive director, who according to the website has extensive experience running nonprofit organizations. The founder explained the board also had hired a program director to develop and implement programs. However, the director has since left SNPF, and organizational leaders have not replaced that position. Instead of hiring another part-time program director, the organization added those duties to the responsibilities of the board members who are leading various programs.

Figure 1

Organizational Chart



SNPF's website contains details about the organization's mission, which is to help communities to find real solutions to improve the overall well-being of their citizens by advancing health and social equity. The organization believes that rural communities have an inherent ability to address inequity through the development of community relationships, education on equity and discrimination, grassroots programs, and governmental policy changes. Communities do this by partnering with organizations such as SNPF that create and/or sponsor programs that address specific social determinants of health, such as food, education, access to behavioral and medical care, education, and economic stability (Kim & Peng, 2018). The founder explained that SNPF's board of directors serve as the link to each aspect of community development.

The board meeting minutes from May 2020 documented that the organization is running a program that provides food to vulnerable populations. The program grant explains that this service is accomplished by partnering with local social services for referrals, parks and recreation departments for distribution sites, local churches for volunteers and food donations, restaurants for food donations, and food banks for referrals and food. The program provides this service in three localities.

The review of SNPF correspondence indicated that the organization received an emergency grant to assist individuals and families affected by food insufficiency during the COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals qualify for the program based on their report of food insufficiency. Board minutes explained that participants of the program sign up on the website by answering nine questions or being referred by local agencies. The SNPF website explains that the executive director and board members work with local

stakeholders to provide the food and that the organization provides transportation using two vans and a part-time driver. The vans were donated by the parent for-profit organization.

In reviewing the language of the grant, the direction of the organization is aligned with the grant requirements. The board secretary confirmed that SNPF is applying for several other grants to support additional programs, such as a program focused on maternal health and child fitness. The community relations board member explained that the establishment of new relationships and stakeholders both within and outside of the current program reach is the only element of strategic planning currently used.

Organizational Background and Context

In reviewing the 2020 financials, it became evident that SNPF depends on in-kind and financial donations from its affiliated LLC, partnerships with community organizations, and grants to offer programs. SNPF's 2019 and 2020 financial records showed that the organization received only one grant for these years. SNPF's vision is to provide programs that will meet health needs in rural communities and increase health equity. Health inequity occurs when certain populations are unable to access social determinants of health, such as food, health care, safe environments, economic security, and social support systems (Andress & Fitch, 2016). The review of board meeting minutes from the past 2 years indicated that the direction of SNPF relies on the ability of board members to obtain funding rather than focus on strategic planning to develop processes to meet this mission. SNPF uses parliamentary procedures, as evidenced by board meeting minutes, to run board meetings and make decisions about which grants to

apply for or where to locate potential funding sources. Board members provide suggestions of potential funding sources, and the board asks for volunteers to assist with acquiring the funding.

I conducted interviews with the board members and executive director. I also reviewed data from previous meeting minutes, budgets, policies and procedures, organizational structure designs, and SNPF's website, as well as any current grants or activities that the organization has engaged with over the past year. Findings show how organizational leaders used short-term financial grants rather than strategic planning to achieve the organization's mission.

Summary

SNPF's mission is to build programs that will address health inequity in rural communities in the southeastern United States. SNPF is a fairly young organization that depends on funding sources to shape the direction of its mission. The development of a strategic plan may help SNPF leaders to develop short- and long-term goals to achieve the organization's mission rather than depend on funding sources alone. There are many benefits to establishing a comprehensive strategic plan. Strategic planning includes having the organization's board members and stakeholders deliberately design objectives, develop workflows, determine the allocation of resources, set time lines, designate ownership of goals, and monitor progress (Brosan & Levin, 2017; Reid et al., 2014; Zhu et al, 2016), all of which might assist SNPF in becoming a stronger organization with a greater potential for longevity, social impact, and expansion (see Mannarini et al., 2018; Strang, 2018).

SNPF's board members are chosen not only for their passion and dedication but also for their power and influence in the communities that SNPF serves. The board also serves as the leaders in the organization. In Section 2, I review the leadership structure of SNPF, the organization's current strategies, and the demographics of the clients being served. Reviewing this aspect of the organization will facilitate an understanding of the ways strategic planning could be implemented. Section 2 also provides details about the ways the organization currently defines and achieves its outcomes and how more formalized strategic planning could improve the organization's ability to meet its short- and long-term goals (see Bennett & Kinney, 2018).

Section 2: Background and Approach—Leadership Strategy and Assessment

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the need and benefit for small nonprofit organizations to engage in strategic planning. This study identified the importance and effect of strategic planning on small nonprofit organizations such as SNPF. In the study, I explain how the organization cannot meet its current goals and demonstrate how it could use affordable and formalized strategic planning to determine and reach short- and long-term goals. This study provides further evidence to other small nonprofits of the value of participating in strategic planning to meet their individual goals and missions.

In the literature review, I summarize previous findings about the importance of strategic planning in small nonprofit organizations. I collected and analyzed my study data using multiple techniques to provide a comprehensive picture of the organization and its need for strategic planning. I also explain the rationale and methodology to support the validity of the study.

Supporting Literature

I located peer-reviewed research articles and books using Walden University Library's Thoreau Multi-Database Search tool, which included access to EBSCOhost and Directory of Open Access Journals databases. The databases connected to several sources of peer reviewed academic sources such as SAGE Journals, DOAJ, PubMed, Medline, SocINDEX, and APA PsycINFO. The search terms included *strategic planning*, *strategic planning in small nonprofits*, *small rural nonprofits*, *social determinants of health in rural areas*, *healthy inequity*, *rural nonprofits*, *board of directors' management*, *grant*

funding, nonprofit outcome, organizational development, strategic planning rural nonprofits, nonprofit leadership, volunteer management, nonprofit outcome measures, stakeholders, and social value. Searches using these terms yielded articles that addressed the everyday challenges of board-managed small nonprofits, grant funding, and strategic planning. The original research scope was supposed to be limited to the last 5 years, but only scant sources were found, so I expanded the time frame to the last 21 years. The early research shared similar outcomes in theories and results as more recent research, thus providing additional evidence of the importance of strategic planning for small nonprofits.

Strategic planning is an essential tool for small nonprofits to achieve their short- and long-term goals, develop revenue diversity, obtain sustainability, and ensure growth capacity (Shumate et al., 2017). Researchers have explained that strategic planning gives organizations a framework to develop and implement shared visions and missions (Hu et al., 2014; Mara, 2000; McHatton et al., 2011). Despite the challenges of time, financial resources, and board members' involvement, researchers have found that participating in strategic planning still leads to positive results for organizations (Brosan & Levin, 2017; Mara, 2000; Reid et al., 2014).

In their research on capacity building, Kim and Peng (2018) described the ways that organizational assets, constructs, and board member dynamics position organizations for growth. Gratton (2018) asserted that regardless of size, nonprofits that do not participate in either formal or informal strategic planning are unlikely to remain viable because the quantity of charitable contributions has decreased significantly in recent

years while the number of nonprofits has increased concomitantly, meaning greater competition for fewer resources. These findings indicate that nonprofit organizations need strategic planning to develop ways to remain viable in the marketplace.

In studying the introduction and implementation of two strategic planning techniques, Mara (2000) found that the process did not tax organizations either financially or timewise. Mara was able to describe how, after implementing strategic planning, leaders achieved organizational goals. In a later study, Reid et al. (2014) surveyed 678 nonprofit organizations that were representative of a cross-section of sizes and missions. Reid et al. determined that regardless of size or purpose, nonprofit organizations that took the time to plan, implement, and continuously monitor strategic goals were the most successful.

Nonprofit leaders are challenged with maintaining a double bottom line that sustains the organizations while meeting the needs of the communities that they serve (McDonald et al., 2014). This review of SNPF aligned with previous researchers' conclusions that strategic planning provides organizations with the tools to be successful. Metrics for success include achieving short- and long-term goals, financial stability, and growth potential.

Sources of Evidence

Before I began this qualitative study, SNPF's board of directors voted to approve the study and granted access to the information needed to conduct the research. I also received approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board to conduct the study (IRB approval # 06-23-20-0993837). After obtaining full approval from the

organization and Walden University's IRB, I collected the data in person at the organization's headquarters and through email. The data analyzed included previous meeting minutes, board member résumés, budgets, policies and procedures, organizational structure designs, SNPF's website, as well as current grants or activities that SNPF had been engaged with over the past 2 years. I also conducted, recorded, and transcribed semistructured interviews with seven board members for the qualitative analysis. Four interviews were with the executive board members, one with the founder of the SNPF, one with the community liaison board member, and one with a regular board member. The executive director declined to be interviewed. All board members whom I interviewed had been members since the start of SNPF.

I completed a review of all SNPF board meeting minutes over the past 2 years, including ad hoc reports from subcommittees, and I analyzed grant applications, along with all associated data. I also collected and analyzed the organization's job descriptions, organizational chart, financial records, policies and procedures, and board member handbooks for relevant content. The documentation review of SNPF established an understanding of the organizational structure, strategic planning themes, processes, and mechanisms for decision making. The organization's policies, procedures, and financial records provided structural and fiscal insight towards short- and long-term goal achievements. The information contained sufficient data for me to conduct an analysis of SNPF's organizational structure and the ways the board members understood strategic planning and its role in SNPF's current processes.

Leadership Strategy and Assessment

As stated in the 2019 bylaws of SNPF, the 13-member board of directors governs SNPF. The executive board members are the chair, vice chair, secretary, and treasurer. Formally, the chair of the board follows the parliamentary procedures to run meetings. Informally, the board is directed and run by the founder of SNPF. Even though the founder holds no formal board officer title, the founder still sits on the board and is considered part of the executive board. The board chair describes this individual as a transformational leader whose positive energy, enthusiasm, and dedication keep the board members engaged and active in the organization (see Berraies & El Abidine, 2019; Hu et al., 2014). From a situational leadership model perspective, this leader is a participating intuitive leader (see Uzonwanne, 2015). There are significant positive relationships between the founder and the remaining board members. The founder leads by example, standing side by side and working with the other board members. The intuitive part of leadership comes from the direction that is provided. The board secretary explained that the direction is developed through impassioned conversations on what are perceived or heard to be issues or opportunities for the organization (see Uzonwanne, 2014). The research and validity testing often are delegated to other board members to confirm.

According to the board chair, this informal leadership role is accepted by all of the board members. The board chair described the board as looking to the founder for the organization's mission and programs. Because the founder handpicked all of the board members for their connections or expertise and the board is less than 2 years old, this role makes sense. The leader shares the passion for addressing health equity with the other

board members, and this informal relationship provides the members with the connectivity needed to start and maintain a working board. Monthly scheduled board meetings are used to develop the internal board relationships and encourage dedication and support (see Zhu et al., 2016).

SNPF board members, as shown in the board meeting minutes, propose activities and programs during the board meetings. Per parliamentary procedures, a majority vote from the board is required to make decisions about the organization's activities. The organization is focused on addressing any current needs identified through grant opportunities within the communities where the board members either live, work, or worship. All board members were chosen for their connections to communities and leadership. One board member explained that once a program is chosen, all operational decisions are determined by board committees or the executive director. The executive director and/or the committee leads, who are board members, are responsible for providing the board with monthly reports on activities and data from programs. This reporting is dependent on the grant requirements for content.

All of the board members have equal leadership and voting power within SNPF. The SNPF board chair explained that the organization's founder acts as the unofficial leader of the organization. In the board minutes, the founder often takes the lead in generating ideas and reminding the other board members of their commitment to the organization through service. Board members refer to themselves as a working board, and the members participate in the committees, design the programs, and run them. SNPF uses a reactive style of service engagement. The emergent needs of the communities and

the ability to acquire funding steer the direction of the organization. The board members are committed to and passionate about the organization's vision of improving the social determinants of health and strengthening communities.

Clients/Population Served

SNPF's focuses on the communities in which board of directors either live, work, worship, or have other affiliations. The organization defines its clients as individuals or families affected adversely by the inequity of resources that affect the social determinants of health, which include, but are not limited to, mental health, food, housing, transportation, and/or recreational activities. The community liaison explained that SNPF gathers information from clients through direct interviews, relationships with partnering agencies, participant surveys, and local religious leaders. Most of the information is collected informally and reported to external stakeholders through client quotes and articles on the SNPF website. Formal client data are collected in accordance with the organization's current grant requirements.

Workforce and Operations

SNPF is a rural community-based organization that uses a grassroots approach to engage clients and build relationships (see Coston, 1999). Board of directors either have direct relationships with the religious communities, local government, and community organizations or SNPF uses the board community liaison to conduct outreach and develop relationships. Because of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions limiting face-to-face, in-person interactions, SNPF could use only video conferencing, mailings, and emails to conduct outreach and develop relationships at the time of the study (see Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). Referrals are generated either through the SNPF website or partnering community organizations. SNPF's program facilitators work directly with clients to educate, support, and provide them with access to necessities to improve their standard of living. SNPF is dedicated to addressing the current gap in resources for the community members whom it serves and building its relationships by providing supportive services.

Analytical Strategy

I interviewed seven of the 13 board members. Five interviewees were on the executive board, one was a community liaison board member, and one was a regular board member associated with the programs committee and the finance committee. The executive director declined to be interviewed. SNPF's October 8, 2020, board meeting minutes stated that of the five other board members, four only recently joined the board, with one position remaining open. I selected the interviewees based on their positions and length of time with the organization. The interviewees were the most likely individuals involved with SNPF to have sufficient knowledge of the organization's processes and mission to answer the questions regarding strategic planning.

I analyzed the collected data using a qualitative research model. This model included using purposeful sampling to identify key informants who were knowledgeable of the phenomenon under investigation. This sampling was used in conjunction with semistructured interviews. I collected data from interviews and the organization's official documents. The interviews were guided by five items: (a) What does strategic planning mean? (b) Describe the organizational mission, vision, and goals. (c) How will you reach

those? (d) Challenges? and (e) How do you measure success? I then coded and sorted the data as part of the thematic analysis (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Themes were centered around the organization's strategic planning, organizational processes, and understanding of the organization's short- and long-term goals. The themes were identified through repetitive coding of the data around the research question: Is strategic planning an essential element in the viability of small community-based nonprofits? (see Clark & Vealé, 2018; Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

I conducted the interviews over 1 month through video conferencing because of COVID-19 restrictions on in-person meetings. After completing the interviews, I transcribed the participants' recorded responses to the interview questions. I collected the official written data from the organization's board secretary within a 3-month period. I stored the collected data on a secure, password-protected, cloud-based folder, and I printed the collected data only as needed to assist with interpretation. Upon completion of the analysis, I shredded all documentation to maintain privacy and confidentiality. I established the validity of the data through data triangulation (see Farquhar et al., 2020).

Summary

The collection of data helped me to understand the structure of SNPF. This structure included defining the leadership and its processes for making decisions. Organizations need to have a strong understanding of their own internal and external systems (Inglis & Minahan, 2005). Understanding SNPF's internal and external systems helped me to understand how the organizational leaders determined their goals and

reached their mission. I used a qualitative research design to provide a holistic understanding of SNPF.

Included in Section 3 are details about SNPF's workforce, operations, measurement, analysis, and the ways that it conducts knowledge management. This understanding includes the organization's processes, how and what are measured as key performance indicators, and the organization's utilization of this information in developing its strategic plan. Knowledge management and data-driven planning provide organizations with insight into what is working and what opportunities are available to developing viable organizations (McDonald et al., 2015; Strang, 2018). Small nonprofits such as SNPF have limited financial resources, so having a strong understanding of and the data to prove whether their programs are effective can have an impact their ability to secure future funding. Understanding how SNPF leaders captured and used their data helped me to further understand their approaches to strategic planning.

Section 3: Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management Components of the Organization

Introduction

Small nonprofit organizations may benefit from participating in a strategic planning process that defines the organizations' missions, values, and short- and long-term goals. Slatten et al. (2020), in their research on small nonprofits, emphasized the importance of using strategic planning as a mechanism for successful decision-making, resource allocation, and vitality. SNPF is a small nonprofit dedicated to addressing the inequities of health in rural areas in the southeastern United States. The organization has not participated in a strategic planning process. In this case study, I analyzed ways that strategic planning may benefit small nonprofits such as SNPF.

I used the Baldrige excellence framework (NIST, 2017) to understand the structure of SNPF. I used qualitative analysis to identify themes from the semistructured interviews and board meeting minutes. A review of financial documents, grant applications, résumés of board of director members, and SNPF policies and procedures provided corroboration of the findings. I coded and characterized the collected data into similar themes around strategic planning. The research provides an understanding of the organization as a whole and how leaders view, understand, and may benefit from strategic planning to address health inequity.

Analysis of the Organization

The founder of SNPF explained that the board members were personally selected individuals who were known for their commitment to health equity and need to address

social determinants of health. The individuals also were chosen for their power, knowledge, and influence within the communities that SNPF serves. By gathering board members who shared this commitment to change, the board meetings served as a reminder and continual commitment to creating lasting change (see Kim & Peng, 2018; Smith, 1999; Zhu et al., 2016). The board member handbook and bylaws state that membership on the board is voluntary. The board chair explained that the board of SNPF is a working board, meaning that board members are actively involved in selecting programs, writing funding grants, creating program designs, and implementing the programs (see Deffenbaugh, 2015). The founder emphasized that this organizational structure means that board members who are not interested in participating directly in the programs or generating funding programs must either leave the board or be willing to accept advisory positions.

SNPF's environment is one in which the board members are involved and engaged directly in the programs that the organization supports. One board member described the board members as sharing a passion for the social programs that the organization develops. This shared passion motivates the board members to remain active and engaged by supporting a culture of collaboration and support (see Kim & Peng, 2018; Slatten et al., 2020). Because the board members are volunteers, this culture provides them with a sense of belonging and satisfaction for dedicating hours to SNPF (Kim & Peng, 2018; Slatten et al., 2020). According to Reid et al. (2014), board members who have little involvement in organizations create significant challenges to organizational success. SNPF's board members volunteer hours outside of board

meetings to support the community programs offered by the organization. This support helps to alleviate the need to hire workers or coordinate volunteers.

One issue is that all of the programs that SNPF creates are contingent on acquiring grant money. Each grant comes with specific requirements for reporting and outcomes (see Henderson & Lambert, 2018). These requirements drive the organization's workforce of the board members, part-time executive director, and volunteers to remain actively involved. Grant requirements also dictate the programs' performance measures.

SNPF's website states that the organization is committed to creating social programs to address health inequities that are affected by social determinants of health. The website lists the programs, which include a food delivery program for seniors and families living in food deserts, a support group for mothers experiencing postpartum depression and anxiety, and an educational support program for elementary school-age children. According to the board minutes of April 2020, the board of directors locate various grants that can be used to fund programs that address these issues, such as food insufficiency and access to behavioral health services, housing, transportation, and medical care. The founder explained that the board members have an affinity for different aspects of health inequities and participate in programs that align with their community interests and connections. This organizational design of small nonprofits allows the organizations to target specific programs, obtain support, and leverage the expertise and connections of the board members (Hu et al., 2014; Trzcinski & Sobeck, 2008; Zhu et al., 2016). The founder also confirmed that board members write grants with the help of external volunteers.

A part-time executive director manages the grant-funded programs; this individual is active in delivering services and reports monthly to the board. Each grant has specific key performance indicators that need to be monitored and reported. The leader's goal is to use these metrics to monitor the effect of the programs on the communities that SNPF serves. According to the current grant and meeting reports, SNPF also partners with other local nonprofits and state agencies to help to support the programs regarding in-kind donations and referrals.

The community liaison explained that one of the board members is the primary leader in the operations and effectiveness of the programs. This informal leader has the necessary managerial and interpersonal skills to keep the rest of the board members active. According to Kim and Peng (2017), this type of leadership provides small nonprofits with the skills and commitment necessary to facilitate collaboration and successful programming. The executive director's monthly report stated that the executive director also is working on the programs, thus leaving high-level oversight to the board. The vice chair of the board explained that the number of board members directly overseeing the programs depends on their type and size. The community liaison reported that three board members are directly involved in ensuring that the organization's food transportation program is active and are collecting the grant data requirements. The maternal mental health program is coordinated and run by one board member, who coleads the program with a community volunteer. The board secretary also commented that the board member who wrote the grant often assumes a leadership role in the program.

Grant funding requires that organizations recount how the grant money was spent and the effect of the program (Henderson & Lambert, 2018; Mihaltan, 2015). Board meeting minutes from March, April, and November 2020 reflected that the management of program operations and outcomes was the responsibility of the designated board member or members with or without the executive director's assistance. A key performance indicator of the effect of programs, such as the number of individuals served, is reported monthly to the entire board for review through reports given by the board members who are directly involved, the executive director, or the board treasurer.

Knowledge Management

The collection and analysis of key performance metrics and data provide not only grantors but also organizations with the information necessary to understand the capacity and effectiveness of programs in reaching the stated goals (Henderson & Lambert, 2018; Kapucu et al., 2011; Shumate et al., 2017). How organizational leaders do this is through their knowledge management processes and policies (McDonald et al., 2015; Strang, 2018). SNPF, the community liaison explained, decides what data are collected based on grant funding requirements of the programs or determinations made by the board members self-designated to be the program leaders. For example, the current grant for 2020 requires that SNPF collect data for its food transportation program on the number of individuals served, program capacity, accessibility of resources needed to run the program, and recipient surveys. The data are collected through an intake and ongoing survey located on the website or conducted telephonically by a volunteer. The information is stored in a Microsoft Excel sheet kept by the board member designee. Per

the SNPF grant requirements for 2020, data are submitted to the grant as quarterly reports. According to one board member for SNPF's maternal health program, the board member leading the program determined what data to collect. The collected data for the program included demographic information and participation satisfaction surveys.

One SNPF board member noted that there is no standardized organizational process for this analysis of performance and improvement plans. The community liaison recounted that SNPF collects data through manual counting, website request forms, paper or telephonic surveys, and word of mouth. The board secretary reported that all of the information is stored in a cloud-based repository. The organization lacks a comprehensive documentation system and relies on individually created trackers and spreadsheets. Financial records for 2019 and 2020 showed that the for-profit side of the organization donated the technology, including laptops, printers, and scanners, and fulfilled other office management needs and website upkeep and design. Information is shared either by request or by monthly or quarterly board meeting reports. The information is not located centrally and is designed and managed by the designated board member.

Summary

SNPF board members engage their talents and interests to create and manage programs. The board members decide which programs they want to participate in based on their experience and passion. The board members who facilitate the programs develops their own mechanisms for collecting and reporting data. Data are reported based on the requirements of the grants or are chosen by the leading board member and then

reported at board meetings. Once reported, the data are kept in a cloud-based repository with other board documentation. All collected data can be used by any board member and the executive director to improve extant programs. SNPF does not have a standardized process for program oversight, data collection, or process improvement.

The purpose of this case study was to analyze the organizational structure of SNPF and suggest ways that strategic planning could assist organizational leaders to meet the organization's missions and goals. SNPF is dedicated to promoting health equity within the rural communities that it serves. I used a qualitative case study design to interpret and organize the data in a thematic process to determine how the organization's leadership understood strategic planning. The results could provide the leaders of this small nonprofit with insight into ways that strategic planning could assist the organization in developing and potentially achieving the short- and long-term goals of the SNPF mission and promote the long-term viability of the organization.

Section 4: Results—Analysis, Implications, and Preparation of Findings

Introduction

SNPF is a small nonprofit organization that serves rural communities in the southeastern United States. SNPF's founder created the organization in 2019 to address health inequity in rural areas. The organization assists the communities that the founder provides services to through a for-profit business. The founder created the mission and the vision of the organization and personally chose 13 board members and one part-time executive director. SNPF's board members have never participated in formal strategic planning.

Members of SNPF's board of directors have struggled to find a way to ensure the organization's long-term success. The leaders depend on grants to design and implement programs as well as determine the direction of the organization. SNPF lacks a comprehensive strategic plan to help the board members to narrow their focus, develop standard processes, and measure success. Strategic planning is key to ensuring organizational success and viability, regardless of whether the organization is for profit, nonprofit, large, or small (Reid et al, 2014). I took an in-depth look at SNPF to examine its current level of strategic planning and make recommendations on ways that SNPF board members could better develop short- and long-term goals, measure success, and increase the organization's continuing viability. Strategic planning could be used to help SNPF's organizational leaders to choose programs and collect data based on organizational vision rather than solely on the requirements of the grants that they were able to obtain.

I used a qualitative research method that included semistructured interviews with board members and reviews of board meeting minutes, the organization's website, grant applications, and committee reports. I collected documentation to conduct an analysis to find emergent themes and patterns. SNPF leadership provided unlimited access to board meeting minutes, financial documents, grant applications, grant reports, and committee reports. Seven board members participated in interviews that included answering follow-up questions. The executive director declined to participate in the study. The thematic analysis produced six themes: mission, passion, working board, unidentified goals, youth of the organization, and strategic planning.

Analysis, Results, and Implications

Even though SNPF has four active programs, according to its website, the treasurer clarified that only two of the four programs, a food insecurity program and a maternal health program, are operating. The food insecurity program is focused on addressing the social determinants of health in rural communities. Specifically, the program addresses food insecurity for older adults and vulnerable populations in three counties. This program transports perishable and nonperishable food and hot meals 4 days a week to the homes of individuals in need. The other program is a psychoeducational support group focused specifically on the mental health of mothers who are experiencing postpartum depression and anxiety.

The treasurer explained that the lack of funding has delayed implementation of the other two programs. According to the vice chair, the active programs are led by one or more board members. The food insecurity program is run by two board members and

the executive director; only one board member oversees the maternal health program. The board members were responsible for the design and implementation of the programs. The board chair explained that board members volunteered to be the leads on the programs and are responsible for collecting and reporting the data for their perspective programs. The vice chair explained that the collected data are completed through summative evaluations to determine the number of participants, demographics of the participants, participant satisfaction with the program, and if the programs are meeting the needs of the participants. The secretary of the board added that these data are collected for both programs and that neither program has specific goals.

Themes

Six themes emerged from the research. The themes of mission, passion, and a working board were consistently expressed across all interviews and were directed toward the organization's programs. These themes reflected the strengths of SNPF. The remaining three themes of unidentified goals, youth of the organization, and strategic planning focused on the organizational structure and leadership. These three themes reflected opportunities to improve outcomes and strengthen the organization.

Theme 1: Mission

The mission of the organization is to address social determinants of health that create health inequity. Participant interviews, the information obtained from the SNPF website, and the review of board meeting minutes articulated the organization's mission. The fact that each board member was able to explain the same mission demonstrated their

collective knowledge, which provided a means for the members to create and implement programs. The interviewees' responses supported this theme.

The community liaison board member explained:

The...mission, you know, which promotes collective work and responsibility within our communities that we serve...focusing on improving health well-being and the equity in [area served] and to build a culture where everyone in the community is fair has a fair and a just opportunity.

The board secretary stated that the organization “was started to address various social determinants of health and to be able to...assist individuals who are in need of some type of assistance or maybe need resources to be able to help them.”

The founder said that “the work of advancing health equity and level the playing field for individuals living in marginal lives and rural communities by trying to do something to change the paradigm.”

All of the board members identified and spoke passionately about the organization's mission to promote the health of the communities that they served. Theme 1 was interwoven with Theme 2 and Theme 3. Although initial results suggested that these two latter themes, passion and working board, were similar, further analysis showed that there was variation, as demonstrated by the designation of specific programs by specific board members.

Theme 2: Passion

Passion to help others is the core belief of the board members. This theme was tied to Theme 1: Mission. Board members were chosen by the founder for their expertise and passion.

The founder explained that “they [board members] all have a passion [and] share the same value.”

This passion is related to the organizational mission to help the communities that members of the board of directors live or work in by addressing the social determinants of health that lead to health inequity.

One board member stated, “I work every day to, trying to make lives better for people.”

The board secretary explained, “Helping people has...allow[ed] me to do what I’ve always done growing up...helping people.”

Boards whose members have a shared passion toward the missions of their respective organizations are more likely to be higher functioning boards with greater strategic abilities (Zhu et al., 2016). Zhu et al. (2016) explained that this cohesiveness around the organizational mission encourages board members to work together more effectively and remain active in their voluntary board positions. SNPF board members shared the same passion and commitment to addressing health inequities in the communities that they served.

Theme 3: Working Board

The members of working boards are directly involved in selecting programs, writing finding grants, creating program designs, and implementing the programs (see Deffenbaugh, 2015). SNPF's board members engage in one or more of these tasks. Because the organization has only one part-time executive director, program success depends on the involvement of board members.

As the board treasurer stated, "This board and collection of members that we have ...nobody...is hesitant to roll up their sleeves and literally go to work."

This commitment to providing hands-on participation in programs also was evidenced by the board membership. The 2 years of board meeting notes documented that board members who failed to engage or attend board meetings were allocated to an advisory position off the board.

The secretary explained:

I think some, some people may be on it because of their loyalty to the Creator or the founder of the foundation and may not want to disappoint in that regard but not necessarily...suited to be on the board, but I think it's good as we grow, too, because you see people have come off. So, I think I think because when you're in Year 2, we shall see as we continue that people are going to realize where we going and the work that can be involved and they'll bring yourself off. I don't foresee a lot of the people that are in it to be in it staying because it will require work.

Ten members have been on the board since the organization's inception, and 10 other board members have been excused or have resigned from the board. Of the 10 remaining, each has been directly involved in grant writing as well as the development and implementation of the programs. This involvement was exemplified through their participation in the food insecurity program.

The food insecurity program is funded by a single grant that dictates data collection. The food insecurity program is required to track the number of individuals served, counties offering the program, partnerships that have been created, and participant satisfaction survey results. To assist with the tracking and the creation of partnerships, the board founder created a volunteer community liaison position on the board that was assumed by a current board member.

According to the community liaison, the organization manually collects data from referring agencies, requests for assistance on the website, and surveys. Board members and volunteers conducted an 11-item survey telephonically and through the mail to determine how helpful the food insecurity program service was; whether it was easy or difficult to access; satisfaction with the service; and demographic information such as age, ethnicity, and type of household. The data collected were more extensive than the grant required. According to the 2020 first quarterly report to the grantor, SNPF provided meals to 2,094 individuals in three counties. Of those served, 97% were over the age of 65 years.

Another example of the working board is the maternal health program. The maternal health program depends completely on volunteers to operate and report on the

success of the program. The program does not rely on a grant for funding; therefore, it collects only demographic information and end-of-program surveys results. The inaugural maternal health program had nine participants. According to the program lead, an initial survey was conducted 3 weeks into the program that collected demographic information on gender, age, marital status, education, ethnicity, household income, number, and ages of children. These survey data showed that all the participants were African American/Black women between the ages of 25 and 34 years. The majority had at least some college education, and 50% were divorced. The majority had two children under the age of 12 years. The final survey reviewed the participants' attendance, knowledge level of the group leaders, and whether the program helped the women to understand postpartum depression and anxiety. The last two questions on the survey asked the participants to share their thoughts about positive aspects of the program and suggestions on ways to improve the program.

The program lead explained that the survey responses were used to improve the next maternal health group. The groups operate on a 6-week cycle. Surveys are provided after each program. SNPF has completed only one support group cycle. The results of the survey indicated that the majority of participants were unable to attend all the meetings because of family or work commitments. The participants found that the program was helpful and the leaders were knowledgeable. All of them indicated that they would recommend the group to others.

Both programs demonstrated that SNPF's working board is effective in providing services to assist with the organizational mission of addressing health inequity in the

communities that SNPF serves. The community liaison explained that the success of the programs pointed to the dedication and passion of the board members leading them. The founder of the organization described the position of executive director as being more akin to a paid volunteer who helped to deliver food rather than a program executive director. The founder further explained that board member volunteers ran the program and did the volunteer outreach. For the food insecurity program, all but two board members actively participated in the distribution of food at one time or another. The founder reported that of the two who did not directly assist, one lived outside the region, and the other participated in writing and obtaining grants instead. The participating members also reached out to their own friends and family for additional assistance and volunteers.

One board member provided a comment that exemplified SNPF's working board philosophy, noting that "there's two type of board members: those who actually grind, and those who just write a check, and I've never wanted to do the check writer."

The first three themes highlighted the organization's strengths and commitment. The next three themes (Theme 4: Unidentified Goals, Theme 5: Youth of the Organization, and Theme 6: Strategic Planning) focused more on the organizational structure of SNPF. These three themes collectively acknowledged SNPF's weaknesses.

Theme 4: Unidentified Goals

SNPF's vice chair explained that "[the founder] had ideas about starting the board but...wasn't so clear about what the board was supposed to do."

The board members focused on obtaining grants supporting the larger mission, but they failed to set specific goals. The terms *mission*, *vision*, and *goals* were used synonymously throughout the interviews with the board members.

Another board member stated, “And so I think we’re moving toward those goals. The question would be if you ask everybody individually what that means. I think you would get several different answers.”

The board chair concurred with the board member’s response, noting that “my vision probably might be different to some people’s [board members] vision because some people vision on the board is very community oriented.”

The vice chair believed that “75% are hearing the same goals.”

Another board member explained:

Now when I say that I know that we’re doing lots of good things and we are, in fact, meeting the needs of people, but collectively if you say, “How are we actually measure steps toward our short-term and long-term goals?” I’m not sure.

Despite having no specific written short- or long-term goals for the organization, the board members are dedicated. SNPF’s leadership structure is an essential element in understanding how the organization determines which actions to take. SNPF relies on a strong volunteer network that includes not only board members and their families but also community members. The organizational volunteers are passionate and committed to the programs. The program leaders have shown their dedication by donating countless hours to the development and implementation of the programs. The board members do

not track volunteer hours, but each program depends on board members providing their services at no cost.

The chair of the board explained that the board members became involved with SNPF because the founder had chosen them for their passion and belief in wanting to change the lives of the people being served. The maternal health program lead affirmed that the hours dedicated to the program were the result of the dedication of board members to helping individuals experiencing health inequity. This dedication was evident in the board meeting minutes, which recount the members' participation in the programs. Several board members described SNPF's board as a working board.

The 13-member board is composed of nine board members, a chair, a vice chair, a secretary, and a treasurer. SNPF also has various board-led committees and an advisory committee of ex-board members and community members. The review of the board minutes and the interviews with multiple board members showed that leadership in the organization is driven more by personality than board member roles. The founder is a board member who acts more like an unofficial chair or advisor to the board and informally leads the organization and meetings. Other board members have taken leadership roles in other ways: Some have become the leads on programs, others have been assigned the task of locating resources, and some have done both. According to the chair, even though board program leads can make program decisions without board approval, they are still expected to report their decisions to the board. The review of the board minutes indicated that the program leads give monthly reports on the progress of the programs. These reports are not discussed further and are informational only. The

leadership structure and accountability of the board are attributed to the fact that the organization is only 2 years old. Following are details about Theme 5: Youth of the Organization.

Theme 5: Youth of the Organization

The interviewees explained that the lack of coordination around the organization's vision was the result of the short time (i.e., 2 years) that the organization has been in existence. The reason given by the members for the organization lacking a stronger infrastructure is that SNPF has only been in existence for 2 years.

The vice chair explained, "This organization is so new...we are still in the learning stages."

The founder similarly remarked:

I hadn't gotten that far yet in terms of because we actually we're young organization would like in them. In the just in the in the infancy stages of it, you know being just only 2 years old. Not there yet. We're not there yet in terms of how we will measure progress toward goals.

The treasurer added:

I think that it should be noted that in order to be [SNPF] is a baby in the aspect of board and board relations, all of us have sat on or participated in some way somehow or other types of things like this...we should do this and probably will happen within time and just have to get there because we're still, like, we're still ironing out the pieces of the equation that can make us stronger [quantify success].

SNPF's inadequate infrastructure is a concern because it might challenge the sustainability of the organization. Trzcinski and Sobeck (2008) wrote that regardless of age or size, nonprofits need to have internal and external structures that allow them to remain nimble enough to be viable through changing times. They explained that many small nonprofits are at greater risk of failing because they lack standard infrastructures.

Although SNPF was able to produce positive results for the food insecurity and maternal health programs, neither program possessed any written plans or processes that would outline how the programs were to continue once the original grant was spent, as in the case of the food insecurity program, or if the board member leader left the organization, as in the case of the maternal health program. The majority of board meeting minutes reflected the founder's request that all board members voluntarily research and find new grants. Two board meeting minute reports (August 2020 and September 2020) referred to a grant for more than \$1 million being written by three board members. The founder reported that the grant was lost because the board member who was the lead on the grant missed the submission deadline. SNPF's projected budget indicated that the organization would need to generate significant financial resources to maintain current programs and initiate new programs. According to the last board meeting minutes (November 2020), no additional grants have been awarded, and no fundraising activities have been planned. SNPF lacks diversified revenues sources, a situation that threatens its capacity to sustain current programs.

Theme 6: Strategic Planning

The SNPF board is made up of professionals with various experiences. Each was brought onto the board specifically for their expertise, knowledge, or influence. Within the group, there is a wealth of experience developing, implementing, and running programs and organizations. When asked about strategic planning, the board members were able to articulate the importance and need.

The vice chair remarked, “Everything that you do you need to be on that page with the strategic plan, right. In some respects. I do think that the organization missed that step.”

The treasurer agreed, stating that “strategic planning works. So strategic planning would help set like realistic goals. That can be achieved.”

Another board member remarked:

No, I think it [strategic planning] absolutely needs to be done. Right, because we have to first educate, and when I say educate or that’s a bad term, so that sounds like that they don’t know, but we need to review for everybody what our goals and objectives are short- and long-term make sure that they align with our mission statement and more importantly where everybody fits into moving forward.

SNPF’s focus on its passion to create change has failed to address the double bottom line, defined as mission and money, required to generate sustainable nonprofits (McDonald et al., 2015). Nonprofits need to have both to remain viable and flexible enough to endure changing socioeconomic times (Hu et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2015; Walters, 2020).

Implications of the Findings and the Potential for Social Change

Rural communities depend on small nonprofits such as SNPF to fill gaps in care (Walters, 2020). Rural communities in the United States have significant health disparities that have led to higher mortality rates among adults and children (Erwin et al., 2010). The results of this study may help small nonprofits to gain a more in-depth understanding of how participating in strategic planning may help to increase their sustainability and capacity. SNPF's food insufficiency program and maternal health program have provided needed resources for several rural communities. This study was conducted to help SNPF to understand the ways strategic planning can provide essential organizational elements to promote longevity so that SNPF and other small nonprofits can continue to meet the needs of rural communities.

Capacity and growth are challenging issues facing small rural nonprofits because of their reliance on volunteerism and limited funding sources (Walters, 2020). SNPF's strength lies in the commitment of the board members to building health equity and improving the social determinants of health in rural communities. Even though board members have dedicated countless hours to leading and implementing programs, SNPF is similar to other small nonprofits in lacking short- and long-term goals. In addition, SNPF has no standard processes or performance metrics to determine success. This lack of organizational structure has created multiple structural silos focusing on day-to-day operations rather than ongoing development and success. The lack of specified leadership roles and tasks has compelled the organization to depend on unstructured resource attainment.

SNPF is actively engaged in current programs and is committed to making them work through the efforts of its volunteers, but as one of SNPF's board members stated, "You can get sidetracked, and then, you know, lose sight of where you're trying to go." Several board members agreed that SNPF's lack of strategic planning has meant that board members remain in survival mode while running the programs rather than planning, developing measurable processes, and investing time in diverse revenue streams for continued viability. The board members appeared to have a strong understanding of the need to participate in strategic planning.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

One strength of this study was that SNPF leadership gave me access to data, documentation, and board members. Except for the executive director, board members were willing to be interviewed and contacted to answer follow-up questions. This access gave me a holistic understanding of the organization. A limitation was that documentation was sometimes vague. For example, board meeting minutes were summarized rather than recorded, leaving out important relational data. The board secretary explained that the minutes only report the outcomes of the meeting and omit any debates, processes, or additional information not directly aligned with the board agenda. Several board meetings were cancelled, and board members admitted that many informal side conversations between members were used to make decisions and discuss challenges. No record of these conversations existed, so I relied on the interviews to recapture the information. The results of this study may not be generalized to other small

rural nonprofits because of SNPF's availability of funding from the LLC that acts as a safety net for the organization.

An unanticipated limitation as well as a strength of the study was that it was conducted during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 restrictions required the use of video conferencing and electronic data collection because I was prohibited from visiting the site of the organization. The strength of this time frame was that it highlighted the importance and resiliency of small nonprofits in providing needed services to underserved rural populations. During this time, significantly more funding opportunities were available to provide support during the pandemic. Before the pandemic, funding sources were scarce and more difficult to obtain (Gratton, 2018; Mara, 2000). Given the increased funding sources, it was difficult to determine if the success of the SNPF programs was the result of increased funding availability or their organizational structure.

Section 5: Recommendations and Conclusions

Introduction

Small nonprofits fill an essential role in meeting the needs of individuals living in rural areas in the United States that cannot be met by governmental agencies (Kim & Peng, 2017; Walters, 2020). Nonprofits like SNPF provide these communities with resources and services, and the communities depend on them to do so (Walters, 2020). The purpose of this study was to conduct an analysis of SNPF through the lens of the Baldrige framework (NIST, 2017) criteria to identify how strategic planning could help SNPF leaders to meet their mission of addressing rural health inequity. In conducting this single-case study analysis of SNPF, several strengths and recommendations arose.

Two strengths regarding SNPF emerged from the qualitative thematic analysis: commitment and knowledge. Every board member who was interviewed stated that all the board members shared a similar commitment to addressing health inequity.

One board member commented, “Well, it’s exciting to see people sharing the same value that you have, as wanting to promote equal or a level playing field for marginalized communities.”

Another board member shared, “I think to sum it up, everyone that is a part of [SNPF] has the buy in because we all believe in this position...of social equity...that is what we all represent.”

Another positive theme involved the collective knowledge and experiences of the board members, both of which gave the organization a board of directors familiar with running successful organizations.

The chair of the board explained, “People on the board are seasoned...their passion is people...their careers show that.”

The third positive theme highlighted the board members’ understanding of strategic planning and how it was essential to the success of the organization.

One board member explained, “I think [strategic planning] absolutely needs to be done...we need to review for everyone what our goals and objectives are short and long term.”

Each board member expressed a similar understanding of what strategic planning was and how it could help the organization. The strengths of the organization’s board members are foundational to achieving the recommendations offered in the case study. After reviewing all the information collected during the study of SNPF, I prepared six recommendations that may help the organization’s leaders to understand and implement strategic planning.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The first recommendation is that SNPF’s founder hire or designate an organizational leader (see Gratton, 2018; Hu et al., 2014; McHatton et al., 2011). Organizations need dynamic leaders, board chairs, and executive directors to be successful (Walters, 2020). Nonprofit organizational leaders are challenged to provide innovative work environments that inspire volunteers and employees to do the work of the mission while developing strategies for sustainability, capacity, and growth (Brimhall, 2021; Shier & Handy, 2020). The governance relationship between the

executive director and the board chair is considered key to this organizational success (Matthews, 2019). Both the chair and the executive director need to be working towards all the organization's goals and mission. In the case of SNPF, the executive director is focused solely on the organization's food insecurity program. According to board meeting minutes, the executive director spends his part-time work hours being the primary driver and deliverer of the food for the food insecurity program. There was no evidence that the executive director participated in any other function once the food program began. Leaders need to be able to fulfill other areas of need in their organizations. According to researchers, organizational leadership should motivate internal and external stakeholders and move the organizations in the direction of their missions across multiple programs (Allen et al., 2018; Hess & Bacigalupo, 2013).

The founder of SNPF has an informal dynamic leadership role that focuses on engagement and motivation. The founder explained that his role is that of informal leader of the organization. The founder is not directly responsible for the programs and does not provide overarching leadership or decision making for the organization. SNPF needs a strong executive director who will provide high-level insight, encourage stakeholder collaboration, and lead the process of strategic planning (see Brimhall, 2021; McHatton et al., 2011). This type of leadership may allow the organization to change its focus from handling day-to-day operations to meeting its organizational goals across various programs (Hu et al., 2014; Shier & Handy, 2020).

Recommendation 2

SNPF could benefit by conducting an environmental analysis that should include a survey of internal and external stakeholders, current needs of the community, industry trends, and the political atmosphere (Bennet & Kinney, 2018; Reid et al., 2014; Ryser et al., 2020). This analysis could give the organization's leadership a deeper understanding of areas where to develop additional relationships, expand their understanding of the political environment, and highlight the possibility of revisiting current goals to meet the needs of the people being served (Bennet & Kinney, 2018; Reid et al., 2014; Ryser et al., 2020). Because the economy and government officials are ever changing, SNPF could benefit from having the board of directors and the executive director be vigilant in communicating with internal and external stakeholders to understand the communities' deficits and need for resources and services (see Payne et al., 2019; Van Puyvelde et al., 2015). Payne et al. (2019) also found that an analysis would help organizations to identify potential funding sources.

The information obtained through an analysis would give SNPF's board of directors and leadership targeted data to use during the strategic planning process. The information could help them to develop the organization's short- and long-term goals (see Gratton, 2018). Despite evidence indicating the effectiveness of the process, many leaders of small nonprofits do not participate in strategic planning because they believe that strategic planning is a complicated, time-consuming, and expensive effort (Gratton, 2018; Hu et al., 2014; Kapucu et al., 2011). An organizational development (OD) consultant could help to set up the strategic planning process.

Recommendation 3

SNPF needs to choose a strategic planning model that meets the needs of the organization (see Bryson, 2018; Gratton, 2018; Mara, 2000). There are many models of strategic planning to choose from. SNPF could engage an OD consultant to assist with choosing and implementing the strategic planning process. A lack of funding and time also are considered barriers to using an OD to assist with choosing and developing a strategic planning process (Kuna & Nadiv, 2013). The knowledge and expertise that OD practitioners could provide to the organization could negate these concerns (Hu et al., 2014; McNamara, 2005; Wirttenberg et al., 2007). OD consultants provide organizations with assistance in improving performance through guidance, education, tools, and techniques to promote positive organizational change (McNamara, 2005). OD consultants can be expensive, but funding sources and free facilitation through higher education institutions such as universities often are available (Hu et al., 2014).

Recommendation 4

SNPF could benefit from participating in a strategic planning model that could help the board members to develop not only a shared understanding of short- and long-term goals but also an implementation plan to meet those goals. SNPF board members expressed different opinions about who should be involved in the strategic planning process. One board member stated that only board members who were committee leads or were active members should be included and should report back to the larger board. The board member described an active board member as one who “got their hands dirty,

not just wrote a check.” A different member stated that external stakeholders were needed to provide greater insight into the direction of the organization.

Bryson (2018) developed a model called the strategy change cycle. SNPF leaders could benefit from using Bryson’s model as the strategic planning process. The model has 10 steps to achieve strategic planning. Step 1 of Bryson’s model provides guidance on how to conduct a stakeholder analysis and identify key participants on strategic planning committees. Step 2 directs organizations to review any legislative or contractual requirements as well as policies that the organizations must be mindful of to ensure compliance throughout the strategic planning process. Step 3 involves committees clarifying the organizations’ missions and values. At this step, organizational leaders develop their short- and long-term goals. The use of techniques such as developing specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals helps to ensure that the goals are measurable and realistic. Step 4 has committees completing an analysis of the organizations’ strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Bryson, 2018). Step 5 requires that committees identify any critical issues that are interfering with the organizations’ ability to achieve their missions and values. Step 6 provides several techniques that can be used to problem solve the barriers to the visions and missions identified in Step 5. Organizational leaders draft and redraft strategies to develop consistent processes to achieve goals, actions, and resource allocations (Byson, 2018). Step 7 involves obtaining official sanction from senior leadership to implement strategies. Steps 6 and 7 are merged in small nonprofits because the steps involved in formulating strategies (Step 6) and gaining approval to enact the strategies (Step 7) often are

completed by the same individuals. Because small nonprofits such as SNPF do not have multiple layers of leadership decision making, Steps 6 and 7 become one.

Step 8 of Bryson's (2018) strategic planning model is the key element relevant to SNPF. Step 8 requires organizations to establish their visions. SNPF's board members agreed that they shared a passion for and a commitment to SNPF's mission to address health inequity in rural communities in the southeastern United States. What this single-case study determined was that each board member had a different vision for SNPF. Step 8 may allow the board of directors to align their vision based on what they discovered in Steps 1 to 7.

Step 9 is the development of implementation plans designating ownership of roles and actions and monitoring of the decided courses of action (Bryson, 2018). Step 10 involves the development of reassessment strategies. Revisiting and reassessing strategies and goals may give SNPF a mechanism to gauge progress toward meeting its short- and long-term goals (see McHatton et al., 2011; Strang, 2018).

Recommendation 5

SNPF members can schedule strategic planning board meetings in addition to general board meetings. Zhu et al. (2016) found that nonprofit boards benefit from designating specific board meetings as an opportunity to review strategic plans. The researchers discovered that nonprofit boards tend to be less involved in ongoing strategic planning processes if they are not specifically engaged. Setting meetings that are separate from general board meetings may allow board members to have focused access to programmatic and organizational data and strategic goals and to progress toward meeting

short- and long-term goals. Once engaged through strategic meetings, nonprofit board members will remain more closely engaged with organizational staff and programs (Zhu et al., 2016). Strategic planning board meetings also will provide a means for the board executive leadership and the executive director to collaborate to evaluate and monitor progress toward meeting organizational missions (Bruni-Bossio et al., 2016). In the example of SNPF, the board members are passionate about being actively engaged in the organization's programs and impacting the lives of the people whom the organization serves. Having a team of board members who track and trend the organization's progress toward its mission will provide the members with tangible evidence of the impact that they are having (Bruni-Bossio et al., 2016; Piscitelli et al., 2020).

Recommendation 6

Increasingly, nonprofits of any size are required to develop and report outcome data (Bodem-Schrötgens & Becker, 2020; Faulk & Stewart, 2017; Lee & Clerkin, 2017). Individual program success based on the constraints of a particular grant fail to predict an organization's ability to be sustainable and capable of growth (Bodem-Schrötgens & Becker, 2020; Faulk & Stewart, 2017; Lee & Clerkin, 2017; Mihaltan, 2015). SNPF leadership need to have a systematic process of determining this impact and progression toward the meeting overall goals. This process should be conducted on a scheduled basis and should be overseen by the individual(s) who are assigned ownership of the processes, namely, the board chair and executive director (Matthews, 2019; McHatton et al., 2011; Piscitelli et al., 2020).

This scheduled and purposeful revisiting of the short- and long-term goals, along with a review of data, is an essential aspect of successful strategic plans (Reid et al., 2014). McNamara (2005) recommended monitoring organizational and financial stability, program quality, and organizational growth. Each aspect, that is, stability, quality, and growth, is developed during the strategic planning process and should remain fluid. This fluidity may allow SNPF leaders to adapt and revise processes to realign with their organizational goals, vision, and mission. The data should be collected, and outcomes should be part of the standing agenda for strategic board meetings (Zhu et al., 2016). Outcome data and recommendations made during strategic board meetings should be presented regularly to general board meetings to promote a unified vision and agreed-upon collaboration of the entire board in the organization's progress toward meeting its short- and long-term goals.

Strategic planning and the development of short- and long-term goals may help small nonprofits to meet their stated missions of addressing gaps in care in the communities being served. Further research is needed to develop viable mechanisms for small nonprofits to incorporate population health data on the impact, or social value add, of services on the communities being served. Social value add is a benefit potentially manifested in a decrease in the number of hospitalizations of older adults or an increase in maternal health outcomes for new mothers, both of which are the result of interventions or services provided by small nonprofits (Mannarini et al., 2018). The impact or social value add that small nonprofits have on the communities that they serve is difficult to ascertain.

Small nonprofits do not always have the access or mechanism to collect macrolevel data from the populations whom they serve. These organizations are at greater risk of adapting or redefining their missions to meet the immediate needs of community members rather than attempting to complete the long-term goal of social change, such as SNPF's mission of improving health equity in rural communities (see Lee & Clerkin, 2017). For small nonprofits, quantifying success often is calculated by the number of resources used and the number of people who have received services (i.e., outputs) rather than the impact of the services on the communities (i.e., outcomes; Mihaltan, 2015). Further research is needed to develop mechanisms or partnerships to define and report on population health data regarding the impact or outcomes that small nonprofits, specifically in rural communities, have on the communities that they serve.

Recommendations for Future Studies

To date, research on small nonprofit strategic planning has focused on the importance of and implementation of the process. Further studies need to be conducted to address this process from the cultural perspective of minority-led organizations. Although determining the number of minority-led small nonprofits is difficult to determine based on the Internal Revenue Service's filing status, minority-led organizations exist in the communities that they serve (Gooden et al., 2018).

In reviewing the literature, I found few studies that specifically had addressed the need for culturally competent strategic planning processes or recommendations for small rural community-based nonprofits. Much of the literature has focused on the importance of researcher or OD professionals having self-awareness of their cultural competency

skills or being mindful of organizational culture in general (McNamara, 2005; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Few researchers have focused on the importance of culture or ethnicity to address the need for and implementation of strategic planning in minority-run organizations. In addition, there has been scant research to identify and provide practical suggestions on ways to adapt strategic planning processes to address the culture of minority-run nonprofits.

I designed this single-case study to demonstrate how strategic planning may help one nonprofit organization and with the hope that the study will add to the extant literature on the importance of strategic planning for small nonprofits. SNPF is a minority-led small nonprofit. The limitations of this study are that it generalized the need for strategic planning and failed to address culturally competent strategic planning. As the OD profession evolves and expands, the need for more research and case studies increases to understand and provide culturally competent strategic planning to promote the sustainability of all small nonprofits.

Summary

Rural communities struggle to address food deserts, lower SES conditions, and inaccessibility to mental and physical health care (Erwin et al., 2010; Kapucu et al., 2011; Kim & Peng, 2018; Walters, 2020). These communities rely on nonprofits to provide them with access to services to meet the needs of their citizens (Trzcinski & Sobeck, 2008; Walters, 2020). Strategic planning is an essential element in building the success, capacity, and sustainability of for-profits, large nonprofits, and small nonprofits (Hu et al., 2014; Reid et al., 2020). For small nonprofits like SNPF, strategic planning gives the

organizational leadership the tools to develop goals, build a shared vision, establish performance indicators, and monitor progress toward goal attainment (Hu et al., 2014).

Hu et al. (2014) explained that leaders of small nonprofits are hesitant to participate in the strategic planning process because they view it as being a time-consuming effort that is too expensive and unnecessary. Despite these perceived challenges, strategic planning can be conducted with small nonprofit leadership (Reid et al., 2014).

This single-case study demonstrated how strategic planning may benefit SNPF. Not participating in the strategic planning process resulted in the board of directors of SNPF being disjointed in their understanding of the vision and goals of the organization. This inconsistency in understanding, along with not having defined short- and long-term goals as well as missing performance metrics, put SNPF at risk of losing sustainability. In the case of SNPF, strategic planning may give the organization's leaders the tools and guidance to achieve their mission of reducing health inequity in rural communities.

This study may assist SNPF leaders by providing corroboration and validation of what the board of directors expressed. The study highlighted the value of strategic planning and included recommendations for changes and a model that could be used to provide the structure for participating in strategic planning. I intend to share the results of the study with the organization's leadership and, should they choose to accept it, offer follow-up assistance in conducting a strategic planning session with the board of directors.

References

- Allen, S., Winston, B. E., Tatone, G. R., & Crowson, H. M. (2018). Exploring a model of servant leadership, empowerment, and commitment in nonprofit organizations. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership, 29*(1), 123–140.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21311>
- Andress, L. & Fitch, C. (2016). Rural health inequities and the role of cooperative extension. *Journal of Extension, 54*(3), Article 3FEA4.
https://archives.joe.org/joe/2016june/pdf/JOE_v54_3a4.pdf
- Bennett, C. J., & Kinney, S. K. (2018). Modifying the strategic planning engine: A case study. *Planning for Higher Education, 46*(4), 18–26.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2015.05.003>
- Berraies, S., & El Abidine, S. V. (2019). Do leadership styles promote ambidextrous innovation? Case of knowledge-intensive firms. *Journal of Knowledge Management, 23*(5), 836–859. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-09-2018-0566>
- Bodem-Schrötgens, J., & Becker, A. (2020). Do you like what you see? How nonprofit campaigns with output, outcome, and impact effectiveness indicators influence charitable behavior. *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 49*(2), 316–335.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764019868843>
- Brimhall, K. C. (2021). Are we innovative? Increasing perceptions of nonprofit innovation through leadership, inclusion, and commitment. *Review of Public Personnel Administration, 41*(1), 3–24.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X19857455>

- Brosan, D., & Levin, M. (2017). Strategic planning in the nonprofit world: What does it look like? *OD Practitioner*, 49(4), 67–69.
- Bruni-Bossio, V., Story, D. C., & Garcea, J. (2016). Board governance in the nonprofit sector: Role-performance relationships of directors. *Innovation Journal*, 21(1), Article 3. https://innovation.cc/scholarly-style/2016_21_1_3_bruni-bossio_story_role-performance.pdf
- Bryson, J. M. (2018). *Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations: A guide to strengthening and sustaining organizational achievement* (5th ed.). Wiley.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). *Community, work, and school: Information for where you live, work, learn, and play*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>
- Clark, K. R., & Vealé, B. L. (2018). Strategies to enhance data collection and analysis in qualitative research. *Radiologic Technology*, 89(5), 482CT–485CT. <http://www.radiologictechnology.org/content/89/5/482CT.full.pdf+html>
- Coston, J. M. (1999). Grassroots organizations and influencing public policy processes: Lessons from around the world. *International Journal of Organization Theory & Behavior*, 2(1/2), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOTB-02-01-02-1999-B001>
- Deffenbaugh, J. (2015). Houston, we've had a problem here: Tackling board governance. *British Journal of Healthcare Management*, 21(7), 304–311. <https://doi.org/10.12968/BJHC.2015.21.7.304>

- Erwin, P. C., Fitzhugh, E. C., Brown, K. C., Looney, S., & Forde, T. (2010). Health disparities in rural areas: The interaction of race, socioeconomic status, and geography. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved, 21*(3), 931–945. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hpu.0.0336>
- Farquhar, J., Michels, N., & Robson, J. (2020). Triangulation in industrial qualitative case study research: Widening the scope. *Industrial Marketing Management, 87*, 160–170. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2020.02.001>
- Faulk, L., & Stewart, M. J. (2017). As you sow, so shall you reap? *Nonprofit Management & Leadership, 27*(3), 317–334. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21247>
- Gooden, S., Evans, L., & Pang, Y. (2018). Making the invisible visible in nonprofit courses: A case study of African American-led nonprofits, *Journal of Public Affairs Education, 24*(4), 490–517. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15236803.2018.1488485>
- Gratton, P. C. (2018). Organization development and strategic planning for non-profit organizations. *Organization Development Journal, 36*(2), 27–38.
- Hall, M., & Lawson, J. (2003). Using the Baldrige criteria to assess strategic planning: A case study. *Journal for Quality and Participation, 26*(2), 36–40.
- Henderson, E., & Lambert, V. (2018). Negotiating for survival: Balancing mission and money. *British Accounting Review, 50*(2), 185–198. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bar.2017.12.001>

- Hess, J. D., & Bacigalupo, A. C. (2013). Applying emotional intelligence skills to leadership and decision making in non-profit organizations. *Administrative Sciences*, 3(4), 202–220. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci3040202>
- Hu, Q., Kapucu, N., & O'Byrne, L. (2014). Strategic planning for community-based small nonprofit organizations: Implementation, benefits, and challenges. *Journal of Applied Management & Entrepreneurship*, 19(1), 83–101.
- Inglis, L., & Minahan, S. (2005). Stakeholders and strategic planning in nonprofit organisations: Case studies in complexity and conflict. *Third Sector Review*, 11(2), 17–34.
- Kapucu, N., Healy, B. F., & Arslan, T. (2011). Survival of the fittest: Capacity building for small nonprofit organizations. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 34(3), 236–245. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalproplan.2011.03.005>
- Kim, M., & Peng, S. (2018). The dilemma for small human service nonprofits: Engaging in collaborations with limited human resource capacity. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 29(1), 83–103. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-017-1101-2>
- Kuna, S., & Nadiv, R. (2013). Organizational development dilemmas in nonprofit organizations in difficult economic time. *Organization Development Journal*, 31(2), 62–71.
- Lee, C., & Clerkin, R. M. (2017). Exploring the use of outcome measures in human service nonprofits: Combining agency, institutional, and organizational capacity perspectives. *Public Performance & Management Review*, 40(3), 601–624. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15309576.2017.129872>

- Long, A. S., Hanlon, A. L., & Pellegrin, K. L. (2018). Socioeconomic variables explain rural disparities in US mortality rates: Implications for rural health research and policy. *Population Health, 6*, 72–74. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j-ssmph.2018.08.009>
- Mannarini, T., Talò, C., D'Aprile, G., & Ingusci, E. (2018). A psychosocial measure of social added value in non-profit and voluntary organizations: Findings from a study in the south of Italy. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary & Nonprofit Organizations, 29*(6), 1315–1329.
- Mara, C. M. (2000). A strategic planning process for a small nonprofit organization. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership, 11*(2), 211–223. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.11206>
- Mathews, M. A. (2019). Betwixt and between the board chair and executive director: Dyadic leadership role perceptions within nonprofit organizations. *Journal of Nonprofit Education & Leadership, 9*(3), 281–299. <https://doi.org/10.18666/JNEL-2019-V9-I3-8895>
- McDonald, R., Weerawardena, J., Madhavaram, S., & Sullivan, G. M. (2015). From “virtuous” to “pragmatic” pursuit of social mission: A sustainability-based typology of nonprofit organizations and corresponding strategies. *Management Research Review, 38*(9), 970–991. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-11-2013-0262>
- McHatton, P. A., Bradshaw, W., Gallagher, P. A., & Reeves, R. (2011). Results from a strategic planning process: Benefits for a nonprofit organization. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership, 22*(2), 233–249. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.20051>

- McNamara, C. (2005). *A field guide to consulting and organizational development: A collaborative and systems approach to performance, change, and learning*. Authenticity Consulting.
- Mihaltan, D. C. (2015). The insufficiency of financial analysis for the performance of nonprofit organizations. *Challenges of the Knowledge Society*, 5(1), 687–692.
- National Institute of Standards and Technology. (2017). *Baldrige excellence framework (health care): A systems approach to improve your organization's performance*. U.S. Department of Commerce. <https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/2017-2018-baldrige-excellence-framework>
- Pass, L. E., Kennelty, K., & Carter, B. L. (2019). Self-identified barriers to rural mental health services in Iowa by older adults with multiple comorbidities: Qualitative interview study. *BMJ Open*, 9(11), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2019-029976>
- Payne, H. J., Mize Smith, J., Everson, K. K., & Newman, I. G. L. (2019). Measuring stakeholder identification with nonprofit causes: the development and validation of the identification with social causes scale. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 27(1), 30–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15456870.2019.1540419>
- Peterson, L. E., Newton, W. P., & Bazemore, A. W. (2020). Working to advance the health of rural Americans: An update from the ABFM. *Annals of Family Medicine*, 18(2), 184–185. <https://doi.org/10.1377/afm.2526>

- Piscitelli, A., College, C., & Geobey, S. (2020). Representative board governance: What role do nonprofit board directors have in representing the interest of their constituents? *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit & Social Economy Research / Revue canadienne de recherche sur les OSBL et l'économie sociale*, *11*(1), 76–87. <https://org.doi/10.22230/anserj.2020v11n1a323>
- Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. Sage.
- Reid M. F., Brown, L., McNerney D., & Dominic, J. P. (2014). Time to raise the bar on nonprofit strategic planning and implementation. *Strategy & Leadership*, *42*(3), 31–39. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SL-03-2014-0019>
- Ryser, L., Halseth, G., & Markey, S. (2020). Impact of senior government policies on the renewal of built capital for rural non-profits. *Community Development*, *51*(5), 646–666. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2020.1825505>
- Shier, M. L., & Handy, F. (2020). Leadership in nonprofits: Social innovations and blurring boundaries. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary & Nonprofit Organizations*, *31*(2), 333–344. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-018-00078-0>
- Shumate, M., Cooper, K. R., Pilny, A., & Pena-y□lillo, M. (2017). The nonprofit capacities instrument. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, *28*(2), 155–174. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21276>
- Slatten, L. A., Bendickson, J. S., Diamond, M., & McDowell, W. C. (2020). Staffing of small nonprofit organizations: A model for retaining employees. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, *6*(1), 50–57. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2020.10.03>

- Smith, D. H. (1999). The effective grassroots association, part one. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 9(4), 443–456. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.9409>
- Strang, K. D. (2018). Strategic analysis of CSF's for not-for-profit organizations. *Measuring Business Excellence*, 22(1), 42–63. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MBE-07-2016-0035>
- Trzcinski, E., & Sobeck, J. (2008). The interrelationship between program development capacity and readiness for change among small to mid-sized nonprofits. *Journal of Community Practice*, 16(1), 11–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705420801977866>
- Uzonwanne, F. (2015). Leadership styles and decision-making models among corporate leaders in non-profit organizations in North America. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 15(3), 287–299. <https://doi.org/10.1002/PA.1530>
- Van Puyvelde, S., & Brown, W. (2016). Determinants of nonprofit sector density: A stakeholder approach. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary & Nonprofit Organizations*, 27(3), 1045–1063. <https://org.doi/10.1007/s11266-015-9656-1>
- Walters, J. (2020). Organizational capacity of nonprofit organizations in rural areas of the United States: A scoping review. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership, and Governance*, 44(1), 63–91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2019.1696909>
- Wirtenberg, J., Backer, T. E., Wendy Chang, Lannan, T., Applegate, B., Conway, M., Abrams, L., & Slepian, J. (2007). The future of organization development in the nonprofit sector. *Organization Development Journal*, 25(4), 179–195.

Zhang, X., Kurilla, M., & Austin, C. (2020). The CTSA program's role in improving rural public health: Community engaged disease prevention and health care innovation. *Journal of Clinical and Translation Science*, 4(5), 373–376. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cts.2020.541>

Zhu, H., Wang, P., & Bart, C. (2016). Board processes, board strategic involvement, and organizational performance in for-profit and non-profit organizations. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 136(2), 311–328. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2512-1>