



Both mission and vision statements are vital for nonprofit organizations. The statements should be distinct, yet connected – the mission guides the organization daily while the vision highlights the organization’s long-term impact. Use this guide to help your organization review and revise your mission and vision statements.

### What are mission and vision statements?

**Mission statement:** The reason an organization exists, the need it is meeting in the community.

**Vision statement:** What you see in the future for your community if your organization succeeds at its mission.

### Why have them?

**Mission statement:** It provides the basis for judging the success of the organization and its programs. It helps verify that the organization is on the right track and provides direction when the organization needs to adapt to new demands.

**Vision statement:** The vision statement guides the overall long-term thinking. The organizational vision keeps the mission on the right track. It reminds the staff and the board that even after they are gone, this organization will have a long-term purpose to keep on going.

### What makes good statements?

**Mission statement:** An effective mission statement is concise, realistic, operational, inspirational, motivational, informative, and even emotional. It is not too abstract. The mission reflects the values and clearly states the purpose of the organization.

**Vision statement:** The vision inspires action: planning, fundraising, marketing, good governance, sound management. It stimulates organizational goals.

### Who should be involved?

**Mission statement:** Creating a mission statement is a group effort. Board members, present and past officers, staff, members, donors, and constituents can provide valuable input during the creative process. The final wording should be approved by the entire board.

Board members represent the community and therefore bring vital perspectives that help determine the need to be met by the organization. Staff members, paid and volunteer, bring a valuable internal perspective to the process of creating, revising, or reviewing the mission statement. Additionally, they implement the mission and make daily decisions about programs and services that reflect the mission, and need to play a pivotal part in developing the ideas and statement that will guide their work.

# MISSION STATEMENT VS. VISION STATEMENT

**Vision statement:** The board is ultimately responsible for setting the future path for the organization. It is also beneficial to get feedback from constituents or other stakeholders.

The mere process of creating a statement helps the board get focused. A vision statement has a team-building effect: It is created through a group process, and every board member must share the ideals and values of what lies ahead for their work.

## How often should the statements be revised?

**Mission statement:** The mission statement should be referred to continuously and should be reassessed on a regular basis, at least once every two years. It should be mentioned in the articles of incorporation and the bylaws.

**Vision statement:** It is not necessary to revise the vision statement annually – after all, the statement should be solid enough to weather short-term changes in the environment.

## How do they fit in with strategic planning?

**Mission statement:** Must be reviewed at the beginning of the strategic planning process. The board should consider whether internal or external changes necessitate a revision of the mission statement.

**Vision statement:** If an organization does not already have one, a vision statement will be drafted during strategic planning. During strategic planning, the board and the senior staff together can brainstorm, dream, and share their aspirations.