

Criteria for Strategic Plan Investments

Community Action seeks to ensure that its strategic plan guides agency decision making, particularly as it relates to its investment of resources. This plan document establishes criteria for utilization of financial resources, as well as staff, board, and volunteer time.

A. Program Decision Criteria

Community Action prioritizes program investments which:

1. Are financially sustainable. Sustainable is when the funding sources meet the full cost of the program, including associated overhead and administrative costs, and provides continuing funding over multiple years.
2. Draw upon Community Action's core competencies, which currently include:
Community Action...
 - *has a genuine concern and knowledge regarding the needs of the low income community.*
 - *is recognized, respected, and works collaboratively with funders and other service providers.*
 - *is a community leader in the area of early childhood development.*
 - *is catalyst in community efforts to address homelessness and affordable housing.*
3. Fit well with Community Action's other services and provide opportunities for enhanced effectiveness through the connections that can be built, skills that can be shared, and integration of resources that can be provided to participants.
4. Provide substantial benefit to the community in relation to the cost of the program and fit with best practices.
5. Provide adequate lead-time to prepare program design and provide appropriate infrastructure to support the program.
6. Exceptions to the above can be considered for investment decisions such as start-up funding that requires temporary subsidizing, or one-time, fully funded opportunities of short duration. The decision will be made following a thorough analysis of the risks and benefits.

B. Resource Development Criteria

Community Action will utilize the principles of cost/benefit analysis to make decisions regarding investment in resource development activities. The potential benefit of increasing investment in key fund development strategies may also be considered. Community Action seeks to invest in resource development strategies which:

1. Support Community Action's long-term goals of educating the community and developing sustainable private giving.

2. Clarify and position Community Action's role in the community.
3. Build and sustain relationships with donors.
4. Generate immediate financial benefit or contribute significantly to gaining access to new donors.

C. Infrastructure Investment Criteria

Community Action strives to provide effective and efficient infrastructure support to programs. Because many of its core services are supported through governmental funding, Community Action must develop and maintain sufficient infrastructure capacity to ensure compliance with government funding requirements. Community Action must determine the full cost of delivering the services and negotiate effectively to obtain full funding required.

Criteria for decision-making on infrastructure investments include Community Action prioritizes investment strategies which:

1. Assure adequate record keeping, reporting, and monitoring to maintain compliance.
2. Enhance Community Action's ability to attract and retain highly skilled employees.
3. Enhance Community Action's capacity to achieve employee compensation goals.
4. Enhance management's ability to analyze costs and evaluate alternative service delivery options.
5. Enhance Community Action's ability to build and sustain donor and board support.
6. Assure effective cash management by reducing debt service cost and eliminating deficit, while increasing surpluses when possible.