

Massachusetts Cultural Council

ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

OVERVIEW

We are pleased to offer this MCC Organizational Self-Assessment Tool. It is a good first step in the process of identifying organizational strengths and weaknesses and a keystone project before meeting with a Peer Advisor.

While no single tool is applicable to all organizations or situations, we hope that most cultural groups will find something worthwhile here. At a minimum, regular use of this assessment can strengthen grant applications by suggesting key topics to address in MCC proposals or other competitive applications. For more information on ways to use this assessment, feel free to contact your MCC staff liaison.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS?

- For larger organizations, regular distribution of this evaluation to key staff, board and volunteers is a springboard for internal communication, about problem areas or identify places where you're doing a good job.
- For organizations with limited staffing, this assessment provides a good way to identify the skills needed as you focus on board development and recruitment.
- For newer organizations, this tool can help forecast future staffing, technology or development needs.
- For organizations in leadership or other transition, this evaluation tool may help clarify areas of needed growth and attention before a search begins.

HOW SHOULD WE USE IT?

There are several ways to complete this self-assessment tool and to evaluate the results it brings. Not all organizations will find all sections relevant to their current states of organizational development. Pick and use the sections you feel are most appropriate. Depending on your organization, the number of people participating in the assessment, and your assessment objectives, you might:

- **Complete the assessment as a group.** Whether at an annual board retreat or a weekly staff meeting, completing this form as a group--and coming to consensus on how you rate each item--can open up avenues of discussion in a timely and immediate way.
- **Hand out the assessment to be completed (and analyzed) before a meeting.** This way, you can ask individuals to rank items based on personal opinions. Tallying the responses and presenting the results when the group convenes creates anticipation for the meeting. It also fosters healthy discussion about "snapshot" evaluation and gives a roadmap to future evaluations.
- **Assign sections of the assessment to staff members with direct responsibility.** By allowing program staff to evaluate programming, or IT staff to evaluate information systems, you will get a more clear picture whether you and your colleagues (or subordinates) see eye-to-eye about their department's performance.

As always, we'd like your feedback. If this tool has been helpful to you, or if you want to talk about other ways a self-evaluation process could be useful to your organization, contact your MCC program coordinator at (617) 727-3668.

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	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Mission and Vision					
1. Organization has a clear, concise mission statement that communicates its reason for existence.					
2. Organization has a compelling vision statement that communicates what the organization aspires to accomplish.					
3. Organization regularly tracks its accomplishments in relation to its mission and vision.					
4. Director and staff are able to clearly articulate mission and vision of organization.					
5. Board members are able to clearly articulate mission and vision of organization.					

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Strategic Planning & Evaluation					
1. Organization has a strategic plan that is directly tied to its mission and vision.					
2. Organization conducts formal strategic planning every 3 to 5 years involving both board and staff.					
3. Strategic plan is revisited at least annually and adapted to meet changing circumstances.					
4. Strategic goals and objectives are measurable with well-defined timeframes for meeting them.					
5. Organization recognizes and understands its current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.					
6. Organization has short-term operational plans that are linked to its strategic plan and positioning.					
7. Strategic goals and objectives are understood throughout the organization.					
8. Evaluation is an ongoing process that is incorporated into every program and operation.					
9. Organization uses evaluation results in program planning, financial planning and organizational planning.					
10. Organization uses appropriate mix of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, such as observation, interviews, written surveys, focus groups, etc., to measure the impact of its programs.					

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Programming					
1. Programming is planned far enough in advance to successfully design, staff, and promote events.					
2. Programming plans are inspired by the organization’s mission and are realistic given the organization’s operational needs and capacity.					
3. Organization sets and maintains high standards of quality in all of its programming.					
4. Organization has a clearly defined programming vision that aligns with the needs and interests of its clearly defined target audience(s).					
5. Key personnel involved in cultural programming have appropriate training and experience.					
6. The number of staff involved in cultural programming is appropriate to the level of programming. (Staff is neither overburdened nor underutilized.)					
7. Attendance trends and audience feedback are solicited, analyzed, and taken into account in planning future programs.					
8. Adequate time and space are devoted to rehearsal and/or other program preparation.					
9. Program venues are inviting and accessible to target audience.					
10. Venues for performances have adequate sight lines, acoustics, seating, lighting, sound systems, wing space and dressing rooms.					
11. Venues for exhibitions have adequate lighting, climate control, traffic flow, seating and interpretive signage.					
12. Programs are adapted to enable individuals with mobility and communications disabilities to participate.					
13. When applicable, organization effectively collaborates in the development and implementation of programs that advance the missions of each collaborating organization.					

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In-School and Out-of-School Programming (if applicable)					
1. Education programs take into consideration the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and/or recognized youth development practices and theory.					
2. Curriculum is designed to address the unique needs of the young people served.					
3. Educators are involved in planning education programs; as are parents, students and artists when appropriate.					
4. Organization's education programs are networked with schools, relevant community organizations, and other resources to provide broad support for young people.					
5. Organization is familiar with the school improvement plans of the schools involved in its programs.					
6. Staff has necessary background and training to design, implement and manage education programs.					
7. Education staff receives ongoing professional development through workshops, conferences and other learning formats.					
8. Organization maintains a rigorous selection process for the artists, scholars or scientists that deliver educational programs.					
9. Organization measures student learning through a variety of assessment instruments that have been built into the education programs.					
10. Evaluation and documentation are ongoing and include input from students, teachers and other youth workers, administrators and parents.					

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Community Participation					
1. Organization understands what influences different audiences' decisions to participate - their perceptions and experiences, as well as the benefits and barriers they encounter - and uses this to inform outreach and program planning.					
2. Organization has strategies to deepen its current participants' level of involvement through increased frequency of participation, richer experiences, and more opportunities to take an involved role in the organization. (deepen participation)					
3. Organization has strategies to attract more people similar to those already participating. (broaden participation)					
4. Organization has strategies to reach new audiences, including multi-cultural audiences, low-income populations, youth and elders. (diversify participation)					
5. Organization has identified current and potential audiences that it would like to target, while keeping in context current capacity and that it cannot be all things to all people all at once.					
6. Organization has prioritized among needs to broaden, deepen and diversify audience.					
7. Organization has a broad understanding of diversity and a commitment to inclusion at all levels: board, staff, visiting artists, audience, etc.					
8. Organization is strategic about forming partnerships to increase participation in its programs.					
9. Organization regularly solicits input from its target community about their experiences of and perceived barriers to programming through formal evaluation tools, such as surveys, focus groups, in-depth interviews, etc.					
14. Programming is designed with an eye toward overcoming barriers, including cultural, economic, accessibility, educational opportunity, transportation, time constraints, etc.					
15. Planning for collections, repertoires, performance series, annual and long-term exhibitions takes into consideration changing community demographics and needs.					

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Advocacy/Public Relations					
1. Organization has an updated list of media contacts and regularly forwards press releases to them.					
2. Legislative representatives and local government are included on the organization's mailing list and are regularly invited to events.					
3. Organization has a wide circle of contacts from the community that it can call on for support, including bankers, lawyers, government officials, business community, accountants, other nonprofits, consultants, etc.					
4. Board and membership actively work to advocate for the organization.					
5. Directors and senior staff actively participate in community coalitions, local civic organizations, etc. as advocates for the organization.					

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Marketing					
1. Marketing plan is written annually in coordination with the other departments in the organization and the agency's strategic plan.					
2. Organization maintains detailed database to track membership, ticket-buying trends, customer buying patterns, etc.					
3. Organization tracks actual ticket sales and attendance by event and by fiscal year.					
4. Mailing list is accurate and updated regularly.					
5. Organization is aware of the market and its place within it.					
6. Marketing materials are informative, well designed, and well distributed.					
7. Marketing materials targeting a specific audience are culturally sensitive to that specific audience.					
8. Web site and electronic mailing lists are effectively used as marketing tools.					
9. Adequate budget is designated for marketing.					
10. Size and experience of marketing staff is appropriate to organization's activities.					
11. Marketing and development staff members have good working relationship and complementary goals.					
12. Organization regularly sets short-term and long-term earned income goals and measures its progress towards these goals.					
13. To reach new audiences, organization adapts both marketing <i>and</i> programming to match the audience's specific needs.					

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Benchmarks of Financial Health					
1. Organization has a track record of balanced or surplus operating budgets.					
2. Organization has a sufficiently diverse mix of earned income (e.g., ticket sales, memberships, subscriptions, concessions) and unearned income (grants, gifts, contributions) to support and maintain a balanced annual operation.					
3. Organization has access to necessary working capital (e.g., line of credit, working capital reserve, or other unrestricted net assets) to deal with regular cash flow cycles and unanticipated opportunities or emergencies.					
4. Current assets are greater than current liabilities.					
5. Adequate capital resources are set aside for facility and equipment needs, such as computer equipment updates, deferred maintenance, and leasehold improvements.					
6. In years when a deficit does occur, organization has accumulated surpluses sufficient to cover the current year's deficit.					
7. Organization has sufficient resources to manage debt repayment.					

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Financial Planning, Monitoring and Reporting					
1. Organization uses an accrual basis accounting system, as opposed to cash basis, for all financial record keeping and reporting. (Not a legal requirement, but strongly recommended.)					
2. Organization prepares timely and clearly-stated financial statements, including both a balance sheet and a statement of income and expenses.					
3. Organization develops annual operating budget including all expected revenues and expenses.					
4. Org. uses computer software program for bookkeeping/financial reporting.					
5. Org. prepares periodic financial statements comparing budgeted to actual expenses and revenues, to make mid-course adjustments during fiscal year.					
6. Org. relies on periodic cash flow projections to monitor and plan for cyclical and sporadic cash flow crunches.					
7. All cash accounts are reconciled monthly.					
8. Procedures in place for the regular, timely collection of accounts receivable.					
9. Org. has a policy identifying authorized check-signers and the number of signatures required on checks in excess of specified dollar amounts.					
10. In particular when organization has a box office, organization has a documented set of internal controls that includes the handling of cash and deposits and approval for spending and disbursements.					
11. For organizations that purchase and sell merchandise, periodic inventories are done to monitor the inventory against theft, to reconcile general ledger inventory information, and to maintain adequate inventory.					
12. Payroll is prepared following appropriate state and federal regulations.					
13. Persons employed on a contract basis meet all federal requirements for this form of employment. Disbursement records are kept so 1099's can be issued at the end of the year, as required by IRS depending on amount of contract.					
14. All required forms (Income tax and W-2 wage reports) are filed on time with IRS and Mass DOR. An annual report is submitted to the Secretary of the Commonwealth. An annual financial review is submitted to the Office of the Attorney General, Division of Public Charities. For organizations that own property, Form ABC is filed with their local tax assessor's office.					
15. A review of the organization's financial statements is prepared annually by a certified public accountant. (In Massachusetts, all organizations with annual operating expenses in excess of \$250,000 are required by law to have an independent audit completed.)					
16. Org. reviews capital needs and establishes capital priorities annually at least.					
17. Org. has suitable insurance coverage, periodically reviewed to ensure appropriate levels and types of coverage are in place.					

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Fundraising					
1. A diverse mix of contributed income (public, foundation, corporate, individual) and earned income is in place.					
2. Organization is continuing to prospect for new donors in each category: public, foundation, corporate, individual.					
3. A system is in place for tracking past, current and potential donors.					
4. Challenging yet achievable annual fundraising goals are set and reviewed at the end of the fiscal year.					
5. Revenue generating activities are being explored, considered for appropriateness and pursued.					
6. Size and expertise of development staff is appropriate to organization's activities and fundraising goals.					
7. Board is responsible for making meaningful financial contributions and is actively involved in seeking and securing funds for the organization.					
8. A donor recognition system is in place.					
9. Fundraising activities do not seriously distract the organization and its leaders from programmatic or management work.					

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Governance/Board Management					
1. Roles of the board and executive director are defined and respected, with the executive director delegated as the manager of the organization's operations and the board focused on policy, planning and fiduciary oversight.					
2. Organization has adopted bylaws that state how and when board meetings are convened, how members are elected/appointed by the board, terms of office, how ineffective board members are removed, and the number of board members needed to make a policy decision.					
3. Board has a clear committee structure with defined roles and responsibilities for each member.					
4. New board members are given a thorough orientation to the organization, the board, and their responsibilities.					
5. Attendance at board meetings is consistently high.					
6. Board has diverse skill set and expertise.					
7. Board's nominating process ensures that board remains appropriately diverse with respect to gender, ethnicity, culture, economic status and disabilities.					
8. Board is representative of community and alert to changing community needs and realities.					
9. Board members attend organization's programs and events.					
10. Board members use contacts to drive business and/or opportunities to the organization.					
11. Board knows and understands the industry within which the organization operates.					
12. Board works with executive director to set goals for the executive director that are strategic, and board assists the executive director in achieving them.					
13. Board works outside of board meetings to advance the organization in its achievement of strategic objectives.					
14. All board members give a meaningful financial contribution to the organization annually.					

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Management					
1. Managers set clear and measurable goals and objectives.					
2. Managers are responsible for on-going support and training of their staff.					
3. Managers have appropriate level of managerial skills and receive on-going training.					
4. Managers conduct business in an open and inclusive manner.					
5. Managers work well as a team.					
6. Managers are good role models for other staff members.					
7. Managers reward high performance and/or effectively address poor performance.					
8. There is effective two-way communication between staff and management.					

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Human Resources					
1. Well-defined policies are followed for employee and volunteer recruitment, application and interview processes.					
2. Recruitment process respects and encourages applicants that represent the diversity of the community.					
3. Someone on staff is responsible for human resource management.					
4. Organization has a written personnel policy that is regularly reviewed and updated.					
5. Employees and volunteers receive appropriate orientation and training.					
6. Employees are educated and periodically updated on benefits and resources available to them.					
7. Each employee and volunteer has a job description that accurately reflects their duties and expectations.					
8. Employees and volunteers clearly understand which staff members are responsible for managing them.					
9. Employee performance reviews are conducted and documented at least annually; and pay raises and opportunities for advancement are linked to accomplishment of strategic objectives.					
10. Employees are appropriately compensated: competitive salary, health benefits, leave time, 401(k) or other retirement plan.					
11. Salaries and payment of artists, humanists and scientists is consistent with industry standards.					
12. Organization is respectful of volunteers' abilities and time commitment.					
13. Organization is committed to providing leadership opportunities to staff.					
14. Employee turnover is well managed so that organization's operations do not falter.					

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Information Technology Systems					
1. Information technology (IT) is integrated into all aspects of organizational planning, marketing, fundraising, and program delivery.					
2. Adequate financial resources are set aside on an annual basis to implement technology goals, and/or there is a realistic strategy to secure needed funding.					
3. A point person is assigned to lead the implementation, evaluation, and periodic updating of the IT strategy.					
4. Staff have access to the computer software (i.e. word processing, spreadsheet, database, financial accounting, calendar) and hardware (workstations with adequate memory and speed) they need to do their jobs effectively.					
5. Each staff member has an E-mail account and desktop web access, if applicable, including a reliable connection to the Internet with adequate speed and bandwidth.					
6. Staff has access to ongoing training needed to use their hardware, software, and other technology tools effectively.					
7. Staff members have easy access to technical support for their software and hardware – either on staff or through service agreement(s).					
8. Hardware is updated regularly. Every 3-5 years is one rule of thumb.					
9. Virus protection software is installed on all computers and regularly updated.					
10. Organization has some kind of local area network (LAN) or other mechanism to share files and data among computers and users.					
11. Organization has adequate documentation of its network (i.e. a network diagram, problem logs, and emergency support numbers).					
12. Organization routinely backs-up data stored in its database, network, and/or E-mail server.					
13. Organization has a web site and integrates it into the organization's overall communications and program delivery strategies.					
14. At least one person is assigned to regularly update the web site with timely program information and content changes.					
15. Web site is ADA compliant.					

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Facilities Management					
1. Organization maintains a schedule of inspection and cleaning of all public spaces, restrooms, staff areas, and storage areas.					
2. Exterior and grounds are well maintained.					
3. Entrance is obvious, welcoming, informative and well staffed.					
4. Facilities are fully ADA compliant.					
5. Organization has updated emergency plan addressing policies and procedures in the event of an emergency with attention to buildings, grounds, collections, staff and visitors.					
6. Schedule of all required inspections is followed and tracked: fire extinguishers, elevators, occupancy, food preparation, etc.					
7. Maintenance schedule for all equipment is followed and tracked: heating/ventilation/air conditioning, fire retardation, etc.					
8. Public spaces, hallways, corridors are well lit without glare.					
9. Signage is clearly identifiable and appropriately placed.					
10. Funds are set aside for facility asset depreciation (roofing, heating/ventilation/air conditioning, carpets, parking lots, etc.).					
11. At least one person or outsourced company is assigned to manage facility issues.					