



Center for African American Recovery Development

RCO Toolkit

Resource 2.2

Strategic Planning & Sustainability Framework for RCOs



Strategic Planning & Sustainability Framework for RCOs

From Strategy to Action:

Building a Black-led RCO requires more than passion—it requires a clear path forward. This Strategic Planning & Sustainability Framework turns vision into structure, ensuring that your organization not only survives, but thrives. Use this resource to sharpen your direction, align your team, and grow sustainably.

Why Strategic Planning Matters for RCOs

Strategic planning is a core pillar of organizational health. For Black-led RCOs navigating systemic underinvestment, fragmented recovery infrastructure, and increasing demand, a strong plan isn't optional—it's essential. This framework supports you in building a roadmap that centers your community, reflects your mission, and ensures long-term impact

Key Components of an Effective RCO Strategic Plan

- **Vision & Mission Alignment**
Ensure that all programming reflects the core values and purpose of the RCO.
 - **Community Needs Assessment**
Use data and listening sessions to identify what your Black recovery community truly needs.
 - **S.M.A.R.T Goals**
Set Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound objectives that your board and team can act on.
 - **Sustainability Plan**
Create a funding and operations strategy for long-term health and resilience.
 - **Leadership & Accountability**
Define clear roles, responsibilities, and performance indicators for staff, board, and volunteers.
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Self-Assessment: Is Your Strategic Plan Grounded and Strong?

Ask yourself:

- Does your RCO have a written strategic plan with clear goals?
- Is your plan shaped by direct input from the community you serve?
- Are your goals measurable and time-bound?
- Do you have a funding strategy that aligns with your growth goals?
- Do you have a process for regularly evaluating and refining your plan?

✧ If you answered “No” to any of these, now is the time to strengthen your approach. Keep reading.

Step-by-Step: Building a Resilient Strategic Plan

1. Define Your Priorities

Focus on core areas like funding, partnerships, leadership, and equity.

2. Develop Actionable Steps

Break each goal into concrete tasks, timelines, and milestones.

3. Create a Realistic Timeline

Map out quarterly benchmarks and multi-year goals to track your growth.

4. Assign Roles Clearly

Ensure your board, staff, and volunteers understand their responsibilities.

5. Set Evaluation Measures

Regularly check progress and build in space to pivot as needed.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- **Planning without community**

Your strategy must reflect the people you serve.

- **Getting stuck in perfectionism**

Start small, iterate often.

- **Ignoring long-term sustainability**

Plan for growth by diversifying funding streams and reducing burnout.

Next Steps:

- Conduct an internal strategic plan review or draft a new plan from scratch.
 - Use the S.M.A.R.T. method to rework your goals.
 - Engage stakeholders—especially people in recovery—to inform direction.
 - Build a long-term funding strategy based on your actual community needs.
 - Consider joining CAARD's Strategic Leadership Training Series for guided support.
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Need Help Turning Strategy Into Action?

CAARD offers tailored technical assistance, strategic facilitation, and capacity-building tools for Black-led RCOs.

Let's build your plan—**rooted in justice, backed by strategy, and ready to lead.**

 thecaard@gmail.com |  www.thecaard.org