GOPB GUIDE TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

How to develop and use strategic plans to drive the best use of Utah’s resources

Updated July 2022

GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF Planning & Budget
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Cox-Henderson administration prioritizes strategic planning and improving agency strategic plans to drive effective investments and best use of Utah’s resources. These plans should include efforts to improve efficiency, productivity, and customer service.

This strategic planning booklet is meant to establish philosophy, structure, and best practices for creating an agency strategic plan, and help agencies align priorities for statewide coordination. GOPB’s mission is to drive the best investment and use of Utah’s resources-- we’re here to help!

Expectations

Currently, agency strategic plans are in various stages of completion. To the extent they are available, GOPB expects agency strategic plans to be used to complete budget requests during the FY 24 budget cycle. By the FY 25 budget cycle, all agencies are required to maintain strategic plans which will:

- Guide performance measure development
- Contain specific equity goals
- Drive budget development

Why develop a strategic plan?

While it takes time and focused attention to produce, strategic planning is one of the most valuable exercises that an organization can do. Developing and regularly referring to a strategic plan promotes effective work, facilitates performance measurement, and improves strategic budgeting.

How are strategic plans used?

Strategic plans are only useful when they are reviewed often, integrated into daily operations, and actively guiding decision making. The planning process is beneficial to highlight agency vision, mission, goals, and strategies, but real progress will only take place when the plan is put into action.

Strategic plans should be significantly refreshed and reviewed at least every four years. Agencies should perform an in-depth evaluation using observations from monitoring at least once a year. It may be helpful to do this in-depth review at the beginning of the fiscal year before determining budget requests.

What is included in a strategic plan?

Strategic planning is a long-term and future-oriented process of assessment, goal setting, and decision making. It includes a multi-year view of objectives and strategies for accomplishing agency goals. The strategic planning process requires each agency to clearly define the results it seeks to achieve. These desired results drive program performance and influence future planning, resource allocation, and operating decisions.

This guidebook will help your agency draft a strategic plan that effectively guides and empowers your organization. The completed document should be shared widely and used by all employees to understand how their work fits into the larger mission of your organization.
8 Elements of a STRATEGIC PLAN

- Mission Statement
- Core Values
- Vision Statement
- Key Themes
- Annual Work Plans
- Goals
- Strategies and Tactics
- Objectives

**SOURCE:** Governor's Office of Planning and Budget
The Cox-Henderson administration prioritizes strategic planning and improving agency strategic plans to drive effective investments and best use of Utah’s resources. These plans should include efforts to improve efficiency, productivity, and customer service. If needed, the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget (GOPB) will provide professional and technical assistance as agencies develop their strategic plans.

**Expectations**

Currently, agency strategic plans are in various stages of completion. To the extent they are available, they should be used to complete budget requests during the FY 2024 budget cycle. By the FY 2025 budget cycle, all agencies are required to maintain strategic plans which will:

- Guide performance measure development
- Contain specific equity goals
- Drive budget development

In addition, agency strategic plans should tie into Cox-Henderson administration priorities including:

- Economic advancement
- Education innovation and investment
- Rural matters
- Health security
- Equality and opportunity
- Streamline and modernize state government

This strategic planning booklet is meant to establish philosophy, structure, and best practices for creating an agency strategic plan, and help agencies align priorities for statewide coordination. It is a reference guide to assist in the strategic plan creation process.

This guidebook contains four parts:
**PART 1: WHY DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN?**

*Promotes effective work*

A strategic plan sets the direction, establishes priorities, and clearly defines the best route for agency efforts in day to day practices as well as future endeavors. It is backed by clear reasoning and good data. The efficacy of employee work increases with clear direction and coordinated efforts.

The planning process itself benefits agencies by simplifying decision making, improving self-awareness, and investigating agency strengths and weaknesses. Planning processes require conversations among employees and stakeholders, and promote a synergized effort to make the best use of resources and provide customer-focused services and products.

A successful strategic plan is a powerful communication tool. As a written document, it clearly communicates what the agency is doing, what it hopes to do, what employees are working on, and in what order goals are being pursued.

When employees understand the agency plan and their part in it, there is a shared sense of purpose, motivation, and desire for success. Members of the public, decision makers, stakeholder groups, and staff use the plan to learn about the agency’s statute, mission, vision, activities, goals, and performance measures. Likewise, agency leadership use the plan to inform major decisions, updating the plan when necessary, so employees easily understand the direction their work is moving.

*Facilitates performance measurement*

A strategic plan helps an agency regularly review goals and assess progress. Agencies can evaluate what strategies are effective and make adjustments to the overall plan. As employees work on specific strategies, progress should be tracked to help plan future efforts.

Agency strategic plans should demonstrate the link between agency strategies and performance measures required by HB 326, Performance Reporting and Efficiency Requirements (M. Ballard) from the 2021 General Session. GOPB and the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst (LFA) have created a Performance Measures Playbook to guide agency compliance with these requirements. It states:

“...Utah has moved to align the performance measures set by the legislative and executive branches. These measures are meant to tell the story of investments of taxpayer dollars. Performance measures help stakeholders navigate and understand state government and facilitate data-driven decision making within agencies.”

Through strategic planning, agencies can establish meaningful measures that fulfill statutory requirements, demonstrate good stewardship of state resources, and show progress toward the agency’s mission.

*Improves strategic budgeting*

Strategic plans should determine an agency’s budget priorities and performance measures, so that the needs, goals, and accountability of an agency are effectively communicated. Strategic plans should demonstrate which performance measures have the most value, and provide supporting justification for budget requests.

**PART 2: HOW ARE STRATEGIC PLANS USED?**

Strategic plans are only useful when they are reviewed often, integrated into daily operations, and actively guiding decision making. As the plan is being developed, agencies should consider how the plan will be used. The planning process is beneficial to highlight agency vision, mission,
goals, and strategies, but real progress will only take place when the plan is put into action.

Agencies should review strategies and action plans at each staff meeting, or at least monthly. Some agencies may have advisory boards review strategies and action plans at board meetings as well. This review should have a permanent spot on meeting agendas, and can help ensure that agency leaders are focused on strategic priorities.

Agencies are strongly encouraged to develop annual work plans that map out how the agency will implement strategies identified in its plan. A champion (one or more employees who are responsible for tracking and advocating individual strategies to ensure accountability) should be assigned to each strategy. These champions should be specified by position or title, such as commissioner, division director, public information officer, etc., rather than by name. When the strategic plan is reviewed in a staff meeting, champions should be asked to report on the status of the strategy efforts, current trends pertaining to that strategy, and any metrics being tracked.

New initiatives, projects, or efforts should be evaluated using the agency strategic plan. Every new activity should relate back to the strategic plan, be deliberate, and advance agency goals.

Budget request forms will include a requirement to connect the request to the agency’s goals as outlined in their strategic plan. Agencies should review their strategic plans before making budget requests to ensure that budget requests are actively advancing implementation of the plan.

Budget request forms will include a requirement to link the request to the strategic plan. Agencies should review their strategic plans before making budget requests.

💡

While developing the strategic plan, agencies should include metrics for monitoring progress. The strategic planning team determines who will monitor progress and how often monitoring will take place. At these predetermined regular intervals, evaluate the following:

- How is the plan being used?
- What goals, objectives, and strategies have progressed or been accomplished?
- What annual work plans have progressed or been accomplished?

Progress can be monitored in a variety of ways, such as shared dashboards or stocktake reports. No matter what system is chosen, agencies should be able to illustrate action plan status, and progress on goals over a period of time.

**Updating the plan**

Strategic plans should be significantly refreshed and reviewed at least every four years. Agencies should perform an in-depth evaluation using observations from monitoring at least once a year. It is helpful to do this in-depth review at the beginning of the fiscal year before determining budget requests. This review should include:

- Progress toward goals, objectives, strategies, and work plans
- Needed modifications for goals, objectives, strategies, and work plans
- Additional funding or resources needed
- Timing adjustments
- Discussion on potential modifications
PART 3: WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A STRATEGIC PLAN?

Strategic planning is a long-term and future-oriented process of assessment, goal setting, and decision making. It includes a multi-year view of objectives and strategies for accomplishing agency goals. The strategic planning process requires each agency to clearly define the results it seeks to achieve. These desired results drive program performance and influence future planning, resource allocation, and operating decisions.

A strategic plan is typically organized into standard sections including:

- Agency overview
- Vision statement
- Mission statement
- Core values
- Major findings and key themes
- Goals
- Objectives
- Strategies or tactics
- Annual work plan
- Performance measures

Each of these key elements should nest within one another, beginning with long-term desired outcomes, breaking down into actionable implementation steps, and then evaluating agency progress to determine effectiveness.

A traditional strategic plan includes several levels of organization: vision, mission, core values, goals, objectives, and strategies. However, agencies may choose to condense the organization of their plan. For example a mission and vision may be combined into a single statement, or the objectives and strategies may be combined.

FIGURE 2: Elements of a strategic plan and why they matter

Source: Adapted from a graphic by the Utah State Board of Education
Agency description

Strategic plans often begin with an introduction of the agency. This can include a letter from the director about the agency, planning process, agency involvement in current events, or a brief history of the agency and why it is relevant. The introduction should include an overview of what the agency does and a description of divisions within the agency. It is an opportunity to tell the agency’s story.

Mission statement

A mission statement is a broad, comprehensive statement of the agency’s purpose. Agencies should review their statutory functions when creating a mission statement.

- Why does the agency exist?
- Who does the agency serve?
- How are those services provided?

Vision statement

A vision statement briefly describes the agency at its most effective level. The vision statement should be appealing, descriptive of future service levels, and focus on how the agency would like to be known to its customers. It is enduring, inspiring, aspirational, and challenging, but should also be relatable to daily work:

- What should the agency look like in five years? Ten years?
- What are the desired goals and outcomes for the agency in five years? Ten years?

Core Values

Core values are the deeply ingrained principles, beliefs, and behaviors that guide all of a company’s actions; they serve as its cultural cornerstones. Core values can be practiced daily through all agency interactions.

Safeguarding and improving Utah’s air, land, and water through balanced regulation.

Source: Division of Environmental Quality

The vision of the Division of Technology is to be a technology leader that delivers value and simplifies the lives of Utah residents.

Source: Division of Technology

FIGURE 3: Vision example

FIGURE 4: Mission example
Major findings

As part of the strategic planning process, information is gathered from internal and external sources. Agencies may choose to include a section in the strategic plan detailing major findings from this information gathering phase. Sharing key themes and findings gives context to why particular goals and strategies were chosen as areas of focus. In the report, major findings should focus on:

- Analysis of past and current performance
- Gaps in service or data needed to make decisions
- Assessment of external challenges and opportunities
- Assessment of internal capabilities and financial health
- Identification of equity needs

Source: Division of Arts and Museums
FIGURE 7: Major findings, gaps in services example

Gap 1: Affordable Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing and Emergency Beds

- UTAH NEEDSAFFORDABLE HOUSING TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT A HOUSING FIRST APPROACH

Research and practice strongly support a Housing First approach to addressing homelessness. This means providing stable housing as a first step and following up with an appropriate continuum of supportive services. Utah’s Housing First approach is challenged by the lack of housing that is affordable for individuals and families currently facing homelessness, particularly in urban areas where jobs are available. With increased pressure on the housing market, landlords prefer to rent to individuals who can pay a higher rate instead of accepting housing vouchers. Landlords are also less likely to rent to individuals and families with poor credit, an unfavorable renting history (i.e., eviction), a criminal history or have limited income. Lack of affordable housing increases the length of time that individuals spend homeless, which continues to increase the number of people who qualify as chronically homeless.

- URBAN AND RURAL UTAH NEED PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is an effective way to stabilize and house individuals experiencing homelessness who are in the most need and who subsequently are our highest priority. PSH offers chronically homeless individuals housing and supportive services that help build independent living. The lack of available PSH seriously undermines efforts to minimize the number of chronically homeless. This gap diverts housing resources needed for less vulnerable individuals experiencing homelessness and sets the high-need/high-priority individuals up for failure.

- RURAL COMMUNITIES NEED INCREASED EMERGENCY BEDS AND SHELTER CAPACITY

The lack of available shelter beds contributes to the rising number of transient homeless populations, or those that move from their home community to another in search of shelter. Utah communities share how individuals experiencing homelessness lose their network of social support (i.e., relatives and friends) in their transition, which further challenges their ability to step out of homelessness.

Gap 2: Mental Health Services, Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Healthcare

- UTAH NEEDS GREATER ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT

According to the 2018 Point in Time Count (PTI), one in three individuals experiencing homelessness in Utah is severely mentally ill, and one in four have a substance use disorder. LHCCs identify the lack of specialized substance use services and mental health services for individuals experiencing homelessness as a direct obstacle to reducing the number of homeless. Additionally, individuals who experience homelessness are less likely to access healthcare systems and to suffer from preventable diseases. The service gap is particularly pronounced in Utah’s rural areas.

Gap 3: Case Management

- THE UTAH HOMELESS SERVICE SYSTEM NEEDS TO FUND AND RETAIN CASE MANAGERS

Case management is an essential service and component of health and human service organizations. In homeless services, case management focuses on assessing the individual needs of a client, developing treatment or service goals and plans, monitoring those services and compliance, connecting clients to the homeless service system and providing emotional support to those experiencing homelessness.

Source: State Homeless Coordinating Committee
Goals

Goals are broad, high-level statements of outcomes that the agency strives to achieve over a long planning horizon. These should be high-level, aspirational targets that are critical components to achieving the agency's vision. Long-term goals may reflect projections of trends, technologies, opportunities, and demographics related to the agency five to ten years into the future.

FIGURE 8: Goals example

Source: Utah State Board of Education

Required equity goal

Agency strategic plans should support and actively work toward Gov. Cox’s vision of opportunity for all, no matter their gender, ethnicity, identity, religion, or zip code.

“History teaches us that progress doesn’t just happen. It requires forethought, commitment and deliberate action. These principles reflect a firm resolve toward racial justice, a direction toward equity and inclusion that will continue during my administration. This isn’t about political correctness, it’s about human correctness. It’s about kindness, decency and love for our fellow travelers. Indeed, it is about striving to deliver on the self-evident truths recognized from our founding: ‘That all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights’.”
All agencies are required to include equity, diversity, inclusion, and access (EDIA) efforts in their strategic plans. At a minimum, agencies should include at least one equity-related goal, with corresponding objectives and performance measures. Agencies should use the Toolkit for Equity & Opportunity-Minded Decisions & Policies created by the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs and the One Utah Council on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Access as a resource for making assessments about gaps and disparities, and creating goals, objectives, and performance measures.

The governor’s senior advisor for equity and opportunity and the One Utah Council released the Equity and Opportunity Framework in June 2022. This framework guides agencies to develop an Equity and Opportunity State Action Plan to effectively address disparate outcomes, improve service delivery and organizational culture, attract and retain diverse talent, and create practices for equitable resource distribution to increase opportunities for all Utahns to thrive. The development of equity and opportunity state action plans should be coordinated with the development of the agency’s strategic plan to embed EDIA principles within agency priorities, funding decisions, workplace culture, and service delivery models.

**FIGURE 9:** Equity focused goal example

**Goal 2: Create an equitable and accessible insurance market for all Utahns.**

**Objective:** Increase communication and education with underrepresented groups. Examples may include language learners, racially and ethnically diverse populations, rural communities, people with disabilities, lower socioeconomic levels, and those simply unaware of how to access insurance.

**Strategy:** Review existing data, literature, and qualitative input from community, industry, associations, and/or community organizations, to understand the barriers underrepresented Utahns experience from becoming insured.

**Strategy:** Reach out to the community, in partnership with industry, associations, and/or community organizations, to identify culturally responsive and inclusive strategies to better assist underrepresented Utahns with insurance needs. This can include policy and practice reform.

**Strategy:** Develop, invest in, and implement strategies to extend Department resources to underrepresented groups in order to increase equitable access, outcomes, and service delivery to underserved Utahns.

**Source:** Department of Insurance

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*When our organizations become truly equity-minded, they become like a swinging door, understanding the need to consider both internal and external efforts. We value asking how we can improve and better serve those who belong to our organization, our brand ambassadors (internal), and those who we have*
**Objectives**

Objectives describe a measurable result within a certain goal and cover three to five years. Each goal should have several objectives detailing how a goal will be achieved. A good objective statement provides a standard by which agencies can measure their progress toward the targeted goal. In order to create a quantifiable measurement of progress, begin each objective statement with a verb, ideally one that can be measured, such as increase, decrease, or maintain.

**Strategies**

After the strategic planning committee determines the goals and objectives of the agency, the next step is to develop strategies. Strategies are methods that will be used to accomplish agency goals and objectives. Strategies should be connected to a specific objective and guide agency work in the short term (annual plan) and medium term (included on multiple annual plans). Strategies should be reviewed at least every two years.

- How will the agency achieve a given objective?
- Who, what, when, why, and how to implement each of the strategies?
- What budget is needed to succeed? Future budget requests should link back to strategies.
- Who will be the champion, or leader, for the goal?
- What FTE or other resources are needed to succeed for short-term objectives?
- What big budget requests are anticipated in future years?
- What are the other big initiatives that will take time to plan or prepare?

**SMART framework**

Great strategies are based on elements of the SMART framework: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, timebound.

- **Specific:**
  - What do we want to accomplish?
  - Why is this strategy important?
  - Who is involved?
  - Where is it located?
  - Which resources or limits are involved?

- **Measurable:**
  - How much?
  - How many?
  - How will we know when it is accomplished?

- **Attainable:**
  - How can we accomplish this strategy?
  - Does the strategy reflect an appropriate balance between being ambitious and realistic?
  - How achievable is the strategy, based on constraints such as statutory and budgetary factors?

- **Relevant:**
  - Is the strategy worthwhile?
  - Is this the right time?
  - Does it match our other efforts?
  - Is this the right agency to accomplish this strategy?
  - Does it fit in with the One Utah vision?

- **Timebound:**
  - When will the strategy be accomplished?
  - What are the short, medium, and long time steps to accomplish this strategy?
  - What is the starting point?

**Performance measures**

A performance measure is, “...a program objective, effectiveness measure, program size indicator, or other related measure” (Utah Code 63J-1-902). A good performance measure evaluates the desired outcomes of the agency, how effectively the agency produces
FIGURE 10: Objectives example

Source: Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

FIGURE 11: Measuring what matters

Source: Utah State Board of Education
Operational measures are then instituted to measure how the supporting systems, processes, or strategies are contributing to the desired outcomes. These measures are to be used as an internal tool to evaluate the agency’s progress towards implementation of the specific objectives and strategies of the strategic plan.

Individual performance measures should be clearly tied to these goals. Operational and individual measures are not always included in strategic plans but, in best practice, would be deployed in daily operations.

GOPB, in conjunction with the LFA, has produced a Performance Measures Playbook to guide agencies in the development of effective performance measures. Please refer to the playbook for more information about the philosophy, structure, and best practices for establishing state performance measures.
**Annual work plans**

The final section of the agency strategic plan is the annual work plan. Work plans may be included in the body of the strategic plan, attached as an annual update, or developed within the agency’s existing project management system or software program. The purpose of the annual work plan is to map out how the agency will put the strategic plan into action. Every strategy will be assigned to a fiscal year work plan to aid in the budget process.

An action plan, or annual work plan, has several components, including:

- Strategy to be accomplished
- Budget and resources needed
- Timeline
- Champion for the strategy

The champion is the main contact for the strategy and tracks the progress of the strategy. Champions are responsible for agency work and coordinating efforts to accomplish the strategy.

**FIGURE 13: Annual work plan example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal #</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Champion</th>
<th>Budget &amp; Resource Needs</th>
<th>Completion Timeline</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Twice every year, each division will give a presentation to another division on a topic that supports the other division’s work.</td>
<td>Division Directors</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>June 2024</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Identify senior level employees, and assign them as mentors to newer employees.</td>
<td>Division Directors, Supervisors</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>July 2023</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Each Division will seek commissioner approval to financially incentivize employees to complete the top priority certification from the list.</td>
<td>Division Directors</td>
<td>Existing budget, seek additional budget allocation</td>
<td>September 2023</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Internally elevate the Department’s rules review process to ensure that rules meet statutory scope and facilitate fair regulation.</td>
<td>PO</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>June 2024</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Circulate a survey to the NAIC Western Zone about recent methods of enhancing access to the Department’s services and innovations.</td>
<td>Deputy Commissioner, PO</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>January 2024</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Utilize fraud investigators to mentor analysts and examiners on how to investigate alleged violations of applicable law.</td>
<td>Deputy Commissioner, Fraud Director</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
<td>June 2024</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Budget and resource needs are a key component of annual work plans. As agencies determine strategies and tactics, they should evaluate budget elements needed to successfully accomplish each strategy. These budget items will link to the budget requests agencies submit to GOPB each year.

Regular updates on action plan progress should be reported through the agency’s monitoring framework to inform agency leadership and staff, facilitate regular review, and focus employee efforts on strategic plan implementation. Status updates are also marked on the work plans in the strategic planning document.

Action plans are regularly updated to show the status and progress made for each strategy. Updated plans facilitate review in staff meetings to keep users informed and focused on strategic plan implementation.

**Source:** Department of Insurance
PART 4: STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic planning process can be broken down into four steps: organize, inform, analyze & prioritize, and write.

Organize

A successful strategic planning effort requires the commitment of agency leadership and employees. The organization and structure of a strategic planning team will depend on the size, complexity, and organization of the agency. Agencies with advisory boards should evaluate whether a board member needs to be part of the planning team. Smaller agencies, divisions, or bureaus may be able to involve every employee in more hands-on planning work than a large department with thousands of employees.

Agency directors should begin with discussions with other relevant agency leaders and map out a process for the strategic planning effort. The core strategic planning team should include a representative of each team within the agency that will be responsible for carrying out the plan. The core strategic planning team may involve additional employees as part of a larger planning team for some parts of the planning process.

Some agencies may choose to develop their strategic plan with internal resources, while others may choose to work with an outside consulting firm to gather information or create the final product.

Regardless of the size or resources of the agency, any strategic planning process should include opportunities for all employees to provide input at key milestones:

- Initiation of planning process
- Review of draft mission, vision, and goals
- Review of a complete draft plan

Inform

The process for developing the strategic plan should be adapted to the unique needs, capacity, and resources of each agency. Many strategic planning processes begin with a full or half-day retreat at an off-site location to allow participants to focus on strategic planning discussions without the distractions of day-to-day responsibilities. An alternative approach could be a series of shorter meetings.

Internal conversations

Conversations should begin with discussing critical questions:

- What are the statutory requirements for our agency?
- What do we do and for whom?
- What work are we doing that is not in our statutory requirements, or does not add value to our customer?
- What is the desired social outcome or public good we want to achieve?
- What are our main products and services?
- Who are the customers of those products and services?
- What communities aren’t currently being served? Who needs to be reached?
- What are we currently achieving? What do we want to achieve in the future?
- How do we close the gap between where we are today and where we want to be?
- What resources will we need to implement these short term strategies?
- How will we know if we are succeeding? What data is needed to measure success? Are we currently collecting that data?
- What are the agency’s federal funds obligations? Do stipulations of optional federal grants match up with agency goals and priorities?
- What large technology, capital, or other expenses do we anticipate in the next five to ten years?
If the agency has an existing plan, questions should also include:

- Are the mission and business processes still relevant?
- Is there a clear relationship between the goals and outcomes?
- What do we want to increase, decrease, or maintain, and by how much? Have we met those targets?
- What process element did we focus on to make changes? Do we have a hypothesis about why it did or didn’t work?
- What does our process element evaluation mean for strategies we should now pursue to achieve current performance targets?
- Has our statute changed since this plan was written?

Information collection

Strategic plan development begins with gathering information from involved parties inside and outside of the agency, such as employees, end users, internal customers, and advocates. Agency leaders should think about who the agency serves, reach out to groups associated with the agency, facilitate open communication, and ask for input about what is or is not working within the organization. As information is collected, the strategic planning team should meet regularly to assess incoming data. Information can be gathered in a variety of ways, including:

- Stakeholder interviews: to gain an outside perspective of agency work, environmental factors, and opportunities
- Employee interviews or surveys: to allow employees to contribute ideas and feedback on agency operations
- Customer or public surveys, meetings, or open houses: to gather information or opinions on current agency work and future areas of focus
- Areas of particular focus

Performance analysis

Performance analysis describes gaps between the agency’s current and future desired operational capacity. Ask:

- What, if any, disparities exist between the mission statement and the vision statement?
- How well do we understand and measure our own performance?
- Is actual agency performance different from expected performance? Why?
- How do performance results compare to similar organizations or recognized industry standards?
- Which performance gaps are the most important to close?
- How will we close these performance gaps?

Assessment of external challenges and opportunities

Agencies should complete an assessment of external challenges and opportunities. This assessment describes external factors that affect the agency’s ability to achieve goals and performance targets. These factors can include:

- Current economy
- Client populations
- Client demographics
- Underserved communities
- Existing data and data gaps
- Related markets or industries
- Regulatory environment
- Natural environment
- Client needs, preferences, or expectations
- Supplier and partner needs, preferences, or expectations
- Federal funds and grants opportunities and restrictions
- Costs of doing business

Special attention should be given to how these factors might impede or facilitate actions taken to accomplish agency mission, goals, and objectives.
It is impossible to predict the future, but reasonable efforts should be made to identify how these factors might change in the coming months and years. Such analysis might include trend data and carefully chosen anecdotal information.

**Assessment of internal capacity and financial health**

Each agency should complete an assessment of internal capacity and financial health. This assessment describes strengths and weaknesses of internal operations that impact the agency’s ability to accomplish plans. In particular, agencies must plan for large future budgetary needs. Other assessment questions might include:

- What workforce issues affect our performance?
- What work could we pause or stop to create additional capacity for more important goals and objectives?
- Do we have sufficient resources (staff, workspace, technology, transportation, etc.) to accomplish our mission, goals, and objectives?
- What future major software updates, technology purchases, or other budget items do we anticipate?
- Are there labor force trends that might affect our workforce in the future?
- Are there supply chain trends that might affect us in the future?
- Do we have sufficient funding to accomplish our mission, goals, and objectives?
- Are there revenue trends that might affect our funding in the future?

**Opportunity for all**

The Cox-Henderson administration prioritizes equality and opportunity. As a state, we are committed to improving life outcomes for people with historically and systemically less access to opportunity, including women, people of color, people with disabilities, and LGBTQIA+ individuals.

As agencies conduct an internal assessment and consider how best to identify gaps and incorporate an equity focus in their strategic plan, these initial questions should be addressed:

- How can we incorporate equity and opportunity awareness in our strategic planning process?
- What existing data do we use to inform our efforts to improve life outcomes and opportunities for Utahns?
- What data is missing that could help provide information about existing gaps?
- What data tracking should be done to create new data sets?

**Health equity**

As we promote equitable practices in state government in general, we also encourage agencies that deliver or engage with health-related services as part of their mission to do so with an intentionality to improve health equity. Health equity helps ensure no one in Utah is denied the possibility to be healthy for belonging to a group that has historically been economically or socially disadvantaged.

The **Strategic Practices Framework**, developed by the Office of Health Equity in the Department of Health and Human Services, should be used by state agencies involved in public health or healthcare services. These agencies should incorporate strategies in planning to build the agency’s internal capacity to advance health equity. The framework is organized around four foundational practices for evaluating and implementing strategies that promote health equity.

**Analyze & prioritize**

After input has been gathered from employees, the public, customers, and major stakeholders, the strategic planning team analyzes and compiles the feedback. This compilation should include areas of responsibility needing more attention, opportunities for growth, areas where the agency excels, areas where improvement
FIGURE 14: Existing gaps data example

COLLEGE READINESS COURSEWORK
BY STUDENT GROUP, 2019

Source: Utah State Board of Education

FIGURE 15: Foundational practices for promoting health equity

Source: Department of Health and Human Services
efforts are working, and recommendations for improvement. Agencies may need to follow up with additional information gathering or internal analysis.

Using information collected, the core strategic planning team determines priorities and selects areas of focus. A plan that lists every task every unit would like to accomplish is unlikely to be implemented successfully.

Write

The strategic planning team creates the outline of the plan based on the components detailed in Part 3 of this guidebook. The team also discusses building out the details from the outline, refines elements of the plan, decides on the format of the plan, and determines the timing of implementing each strategy.

Formatting

Agency strategic plans should be organized for ease of use, including a table of contents or executive summary if beneficial. Agency strategic plans should be brief, clear, avoid jargon, and define acronyms.

Strategic plans are often in paragraph form. Bullet lists, pictures, charts, tables, flowcharts, diagrams, and graphs may help provide information. It is helpful to nest objectives and strategies under each goal to show how efforts are coordinated to accomplish that goal.

Draft plan

Before publication, a draft plan should be released for review by a larger circle of employees and stakeholders, including advisory boards. The draft plan must also be submitted to GOPB.

Final release

While the direct audience for a strategic plan is internal, transparency with other state agencies, external stakeholders, members of the public, and the legislature is key to building trust. Making the plan easily accessible to the public allows the agency to promote its mission and communicate to taxpayers how the agency is working to fulfill its mission.

The completed plan should be shared widely within the agency so that all employees understand the strategic direction and goals of the agency, and see how their individual work fits within a larger mission. Plans should be published on the agency website, but agencies may decide how to make the plan public.

Agencies must also share their strategic plan with GOPB for use during the budgeting process. Agency strategic plans will be kept in a GOPB inventory. Budget requests must link to goals, objectives, strategies, and performance measures outlined in the strategic plan.

RESOURCES

**GOPB contacts**

Laura Hanson  State Planning Coordinator
Jeff Mottishaw  Director of Operational Efficiencies
Evan Curtis  Senior Budget & Policy Analyst and Strategic Planner
Terrah Anderson  Budget & Policy Analyst

**State resources**

- The [STEPS-UT guide](#), while tailored to cultural institutions, this resource provides helpful examples for agencies initiating a strategic planning process
- The [Performance Measures Playbook](#) guides agency performance measurement development and reporting
- The [Toolkit for Equity & Opportunity-Minded Decisions & Policies](#) helps state decision makers assess gaps and disparities in current and future program