Rancho Santa Fe Foundation (RSFF) Plan-to-Plan Report

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Rancho Santa Fe Foundation (RSFF) Plan-to-Plan Report

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I. Executive Summary

Over the past two months, a USD project team conducted extensive research to inform the strategic planning process of the Rancho Santa Fe Foundation (RSFF). The team identified three key questions that will be important for the RSFF to address as it positions itself for growth. Those questions are: 1) What is the identity of the RSFF, both internally and externally; 2) How should the RSFF define community; and 3) How should the RSFF define growth?

The project team aimed to gather insight from a variety of stakeholders using the following strategic data-gathering tools: 1) six focus groups, 2) two online market surveys, 3) an internal management audit, 4) nine individual key informant interviews, and 5) two position maps. After analyzing the information collected through the research process, the USD project team identified findings and developed recommendations related to the three key areas of the RSFF strategic planning process: identity, community and growth.

1. Identity. There is a lack of clarity among the RSFF board and staff regarding what the organization seeks to accomplish with regard to programmatic impact. The project team encourages the RSFF to be intentional in determining its purpose, and to develop a new mission statement and core messaging that reflect the Foundation’s purpose and passion.

Across stakeholders, the name “Rancho Santa Fe” is highly charged in both positive and negative ways. The RSFF name has also caused confusion about the Foundation’s focus given that it goes against community foundation convention of linking the organization name with the grantee region served. The project team believes that the RSFF board should recognize the sensitivity of its name and work to leverage its positive aspects and mitigate its negative ones.

Many people commented positively about the RSFF executive director’s presence in the community. However, the fact that she is the only person consistently identified with the RSFF is a
potential threat. The project team recommends increasing the visibility of RSFF board members and staff in order to present the RSFF as an organization rather than a single individual.

2. **Community.** The RSFF currently supports nonprofit organizations throughout San Diego County; however, the organization has not clearly defined this regional focus. The project team recommends the RSFF be intentional about its grantee region of focus and clearly communicate it.

   The donor community that the RSFF serves is primarily Rancho Santa Fe, and nonprofit respondents see this positively as they believe the RSFF is a powerful “relationship bridge” between nonprofits and the Rancho Santa Fe community. The project team recommends that the RSFF find ways to build upon this positioning by bringing donors and nonprofits together.

3. **Growth.** Growth was perceived as a positive by nonprofit interviewees because they equate growth with more money available to address needs in the San Diego community. The project team recommends that the RSFF equate growth with increased impact, as well as increased assets under management, and that it incorporate this theme into its core messaging.

   Key informant interviews indicate that there is still a significant opportunity to grow the Rancho Santa Fe donor base. The project team recommends that the RSFF board undertake additional data collection to validate this finding and further explore enhancing perception, awareness and growth opportunities within the Rancho Santa Fe community.

   The following strengths were identified across stakeholder groups as key RSFF differentiators: personalized service and accessibility; connection to wealthy donor community; high level of trust with the RSFF; unique niche in San Diego County in that it is large and well-established but still personal and smaller than other large foundations; it is independent and local.
The project team recommends that as the RSFF grows, it put measures in place that will ensure the continuity of these competitive advantages.

The report that follows further describes the research methodology process and more deeply explores the project team findings and recommendations.

II. Introduction

The Rancho Santa Fe Foundation (RSFF) is currently undergoing a strategic planning process. The first stage involves gathering data from a variety of stakeholder perspectives regarding the work of the Foundation, the needs of the community it serves, and its position in relation to other community foundations in the region. This report details the primary research collected by the USD project team to inform the RSFF board and staff as they move forward in the strategic planning process for the organization.

The Rancho Santa Fe Foundation is a community foundation founded in October 1981 and located in North San Diego County. Community foundations are “nonprofit, publicly supported, philanthropic institutions with a long-term goal of building permanent funds established by many separate donors to carry out their charitable interests toward the broad-based benefit of residents of a defined geographic area” (Council on Foundations, 2008, p. 1). The RSFF generally serves a local population of affluent residents as a vehicle to receive and manage charitable funds that address the needs of those within the San Diego County region and beyond. More specifically, the mission of the RSFF is to: 1) assist donors to build assets for their chosen charitable purposes, 2) enhance the awareness of ways to give purposefully, 3) explore and evaluate local and regional charitable needs, and 4) build endowments for charitable organizations.
The story of the RSFF is one of steady growth. Beginning as a small, modest community foundation solely serving the needs of Ranch Santa Fe without staff or an office, it has since become a well-respected institution of leadership in the community, contributing to causes benefiting the entire San Diego region and beyond. The RSFF currently has 30 volunteer board members, 10 advisors to standing board committees, one full-time executive director, and three part-time staff. Together, they manage assets upwards of $45 million made up of endowment funds, donor advised funds (DAF), and discretionary funds. The RSFF distributes an average of $4 million - $6 million annually, or about 15% of total assets annually through grants.

Through a variety of donor directed and discretionary grant programs, the Foundation has been successful in directing more than $38 million into the San Diego County region in the last 12 years. In addition, more than $3 million has been granted through donor advised funds (DAF) outside of the region. The RSFF is at a strategic crossroads, spurred by its 30th anniversary celebration in October 2011. Preparations for the anniversary included a retrospective examination of the Foundation’s history and accomplishments.

This reflective process provided the impetus for looking ahead to plan the next phase of work and goals for the Foundation. Author Larry Greiner has noted how critical it is for leadership to recognize exactly where an organization is “in the developmental sequence”. New solutions may be required at different stages of development, depending on where the organization is in its life cycle (Greiner, 1998). To that end, the RSFF is now engaged in a strategic planning process that will explore three fundamental questions, the answers to which will help set the direction for a three-year strategic plan and inspire organizational growth for the future. The three key questions are: 1) What is the identity of the RSFF, both internally and externally; 2) How should the RSFF define community; and 3) How should the RSFF define growth?
This Plan-to-Plan report provides the preliminary data and information required to help the RSFF answer these three fundamental questions. It lays the groundwork for the board and staff to understand the work of the Foundation in the context of a changing environment so that it maintains relevance, both in its programming and in the services it provides. It includes the findings gathered from a number of different strategic tools as applied to various stakeholders, both internal and external, in reference to the RSFF and its work. Although this report provides a number of recommendations based on the findings from the tools, the recommendations should not be construed as the final measures to be adopted in the strategic plan. These recommendations should be regarded as important considerations and points of discussion for the board and staff to deliberate as they move through the process of developing the strategic plan.

III. Methodology

Preliminary steps in the strategic planning process require data gathering from primary and secondary sources to assess the current state of the organization and the environment within which it operates. The project team determined that they would obtain much of this data for the RSFF from the organization’s stakeholders. This category of people includes anyone who has or should have a strong interest in the organization; “anyone who has a stake in the success of its mission,” according to Allison and Kaye (2005, p. 40). In the data gathering process, the team spoke with the internal stakeholders at the very core of the organization and then moved outward to engage external stakeholders within the community.

The internal stakeholders include members of the Board of Directors, the executive director and staff. External stakeholders include people and organizations that the RSFF serves (Allison and Kaye, 2005, p. 43): donors, fund-holders, Rancho Santa Fe community members who have a
connection to the organization, and nonprofits in San Diego County who are beneficiaries of the Foundation’s grants. The external stakeholders also includes a group who have no affiliation with the RSFF: Rancho Santa Fe and nearby community members who currently do not have a connection to the Foundation, but who are part of a demographic with potential to develop a connection through greater awareness of the organization’s mission and accomplishments.

The project team’s first step in the data gathering process was to meet with the executive director of the RSFF, who was also a project team member, to obtain background information about the RSFF and to develop a plan for gathering information from stakeholders. The executive director spoke about the history and operations of the organization and introduced the team to the complexity of the community foundation model. As a community foundation, the RSFF serves three primary functions: to be a vehicle for philanthropy, to provide asset management, and to be a grantmaker and community leader. This description of the organization was significant in helping the team to assess the challenges the RSFF faces in communicating its multi-dimensional mission and purpose. As a result of this meeting, the team completed planning documents that would guide their data gathering process (see attached, Allison & Kaye planning worksheets 1-4, 8 in Appendices A - E).

In order to perform a thorough organizational assessment with both internal and external stakeholders, the project team elected to use five strategic tools to gather the necessary data: 1) focus group interviews, 2) Elements of an Effectively Managed Organization (EEMO) internal management audit instrument, 3) market surveys of community residents and grantees, 4) key informant interviews, and 5) position maps.

The team also addressed the executive director’s role in the data collection process. They determined that she would provide access to the organization’s documents for the team to review;
handle scheduling of staff, board and other stakeholder focus groups; and provide access to the RSFF database for email addresses and to the RSFF SurveyMonkey account for sending out the surveys. The executive director was not involved in any internal focus groups (and only one external focus group) or key informant interviews with external stakeholders.

Focus group interviews. The USD project team used focus groups as a means of eliciting the ideas and perspectives of a number of important RSFF stakeholder groups. The team conducted a total of six focus groups: one with RSFF staff (not including the executive director); one with seven RSFF board members; two with RSFF grantees and nonprofit community leaders totaling seven people; one with four Rancho Santa Fe community members; and one with four advisors to the RSFF board.

The USD project team first engaged collaboratively with the RSFF board focus group and separately with the staff in order to identify the major questions that the organization was seeking to address. The key questions that came out of these meetings related to the Foundation’s identity, community and growth. The team used these three main areas to focus their data collection and sought information from stakeholders that would address these issues.

The team then used focus groups to gain input from additional constituents who were external to the RSFF, but who also had direct interaction with the Foundation. The questions for these groups centered on perceptions of the RSFF and its work, the community it serves, the meaning of growth for the RSFF, and how the Foundation could increase its visibility within the community.

Elements of an Effectively Managed Organization (EEMO). This internal management audit instrument, developed by Allison and Kay (2005), was administered to all four staff of the RSFF (including the executive director) in order to obtain information regarding the Foundation’s
current organizational capacity. The EEMO was used to evaluate the strengths and challenges of the organization’s operations as perceived and understood by its four employees. The EEMO covered the areas of mission, planning, HR and learning, culture and communications, technology and facilities, board governance, fund development, and financial management. Members of the project team tallied and analyzed the results of the multiple-choice questionnaire to produce a number of findings that pinpointed perceived organizational strengths and weaknesses.

**Market Surveys.** The USD project team developed surveys targeted at primary and secondary markets to gather data about the level of brand awareness and perception of the RSFF as a vehicle for community philanthropy and as a regional grantmaker. The team sought perspectives from external groups with some awareness and interaction with the RSFF, but not staff, board members, or donors to the RSFF.

Two different surveys were developed and directed toward two groups: 1) local residents, as defined by the 92067 zip code (Community Survey) and 2) nonprofit organizations in San Diego County that were grantees of the RSFF (Grantee Survey). Community survey respondents were drawn randomly from the RSFF database of email addresses, and they were individuals with whom the Foundation had some record of interaction over the past twelve years. Likewise, grantees were randomly selected from a RSFF database. These grantees were nonprofits that either had been funded, or that had applied for funding but had not received it as part of the IMPACT grantmaking of the RSFF. Because there have been thousands of grants made over the last twelve years, it was important to take a random sample of all in order to derive the final survey list. The randomization process was generated by using the web site Randomization.com (http://www.randomization.com).
Both surveys were conducted using SurveyMonkey, an online market research survey platform (http://surveymonkey.com). Responses were automatically collected and aggregated electronically, rendering a detailed report by question and survey group.

**Key informant interviews.** This tool is a method for obtaining information through individual one-on-one interviews, conducted either in person or over the phone. The USD project team used key informant interviews to reach out to community members who live in Rancho Santa Fe or neighboring North County communities, who had neither a direct relationship with the RSFF nor with its executive director. The project team members used their personal and professional contacts to identify individuals who met the criteria for these stakeholder interviews. A total of ten people were contacted to participate, and nine interviews were conducted.

These interviews allowed the team to collect data about the awareness and perception of the Foundation by people who are not already involved with it. Interviews with these constituents addressed a question that board members had raised with the project team in the collaborative phase of the data collection process. Several board members suggested that the RSFF has not thoroughly saturated the Rancho Santa Fe community, specifically the 92067 zip code, with awareness of the Foundation. They wanted the team to test this assumption. The team asked the interviewees about their awareness and perception of the RSFF, the community that it serves, what differentiates it from other community foundations in San Diego, what the growth of the RSFF would mean, and suggestions for ways that the RSFF could increase its visibility or improve its image.

**Position map.** Project team members also created two position maps: 1) to describe the landscape of local foundations, and 2) to inform the RSFF about similar foundations around the country. This tool will assist the RSFF in defining their competitive advantage relative to other regional community foundations. The instrument includes research on programs offered, market
positioning, organization size, operating budget, and more. The goals were to identify unique characteristics of the RSFF, assess potential opportunities for the Foundation and to discover the best practices of similar organizations.

The USD project team also researched community foundations nationwide and identified the five foundations that were most similar to the RSFF in terms of foundation size and community profile. The RSFF executive director, on behalf of the team, contacted the five organizations and conducted telephone interviews with four of them. The objective of the one-on-one telephone interviews with the executive directors of the four community foundations was to address three questions posed by the RSFF board members during the collaborative phase of the project. The board members requested that the team research best practices for community foundations regarding: how organizations determine their grantmaking focus, their strategies for connecting with potential donors, and examples of elevator speeches.

The data, findings and recommendations developed for each of the five strategic tools were reviewed and determined independently. However, the findings and recommendations within the body of this Rancho Santa Fe Plan-to-Plan Report in the sections that follow are synthesized from the data gathered from across all five of the strategic tools.

IV. Findings

The USD project team’s primary and secondary research revealed a number of findings that will be important for the RSFF board and staff to consider as they undertake the strategic planning process. These findings represent the most important themes that surfaced repeatedly across stakeholder groups including the RSFF board and staff, Rancho Santa Fe community members who
have a relationship with the RSFF, San Diego nonprofit senior managers, and Rancho Santa Fe and North County residents who do not have a relationship with the RSFF.

As noted earlier, in the collaborative phase of the data gathering process with the RSFF board and the staff, the three key issues of identity, community, and growth emerged. These issues served three critical functions: 1) to orient the USD project team in gathering additional data from other stakeholders external to the RSFF, 2) to test and prove the validity of these issues, and 3) to determine if there were others of greater or lesser importance. These key issues led to the formulation of three fundamental questions for which the project team set out to provide data:

1) What is the identity of RSFF, both internally and externally?
2) How should RSFF define community?
3) How should RSFF define growth?

The findings from the data collection are listed below and grouped within the three issues. It is important to note that while each finding has been presented as attached to one theme, there is some crossover between the categories. These findings served as the basis for developing recommendations presented in the section that follows.

1. **Identity**

Four themes related to identity emerged from the various stakeholder groups using the five strategic tools.

a. **Mission, purpose, vision, impact.** There is a lack of clarity among the RSFF board and staff on what the organization seeks to accomplish with regard to mission, purpose, vision, and programmatic impact. The board and staff know what the organization does, but cannot consistently articulate why it does what it does to effect positive change in the community. The current mission statement reflects this lack of clarity in that it is an operational statement, rather than a statement of passion and purpose.
Many of the comments from the board focused on growing the assets under management, but there was little discussion about translating those increased dollars to addressing needs within the community. The project team’s conversations with the board and staff revealed that the Foundation has been intentional in its effort to increase its asset portfolio in order to provide more funding to the community. Financial records prove that the RSFF has been successful in this regard, demonstrating that once the organization sets objectives, it is capable of realizing them.

The community stakeholders and former board members also mentioned the issues of brand identity, messaging and visibility as areas of weakness, but also of opportunity for the Foundation. There was a sense that the RSFF has never been particularly thoughtful or consistent about brand identity, or proactive about promoting its services and work.

b. Stakeholder perception of the RSFF. Those who have a relationship with the RSFF generally understand what it does and the region it serves. For example, focus group discussions with executives and program staff of the nonprofit organizations that receive funding from the RSFF had a clear perception of the Foundation’s work and what they expected the RSFF to accomplish. Their perceptions and expectations included the hope that the Foundation would attract funds from wealthy Rancho Santa Fe donors to support more needs within San Diego County, and act as a connector, or “bridge,” between those with money and those who address the region’s most important needs. However, it seems that this perception of the RSFF is based on each organization’s individual experience with the Foundation rather than as a result of clear messaging from the RSFF board and staff.

The project team then interviewed people who live in Rancho Santa Fe or neighboring North County communities, but who have no direct relationship with the RSFF, in order to account for community perceptions about the RSFF more broadly. Findings revealed that there is confusion
about what the RSFF does and what grantee community it serves. Six respondents out of nine (67%) stated that RSFF serves the Rancho Santa Fe community. Of the three who indicated that it serves San Diego County, all had a slightly greater previous connection to the Foundation than the other participants.

Most interview respondents, both those who live in Rancho Santa Fe and those who live in nearby communities, have a perception that Rancho Santa Fe is an exclusive, wealthy community. This meant that an organization by that name or that primarily serves that community is not relevant to them. Several respondents reported that they do not understand what community foundations do. The consulting team found that this lack of understanding contributes to the external stakeholders’ limited awareness of the Foundation’s impact.

Across stakeholder groups, the majority of people knew of the RSFF through word of mouth. Specific comments within the focus groups and key informant interviews identified the importance of the RSFF board members talking about their experience with the Foundation in order to build upon personal relationships and increase awareness of the organization. In addition to word-of-mouth marketing, the RSFF has many opportunities to educate the community about the organization and to raise awareness and visibility.

c. The RSFF name. Much of the confusion and misperception about the RSFF stemmed from the organization’s name. Local and nationwide research revealed the naming convention for community foundations is that the name reflects the grantee, not the donor, community. In fact, one foundation in Georgia changed its name to reflect a wider geographic area when the organization broadened its grantmaking region. The RSFF goes against this convention in that its name reflects the community where most of the donors live, not the region where the grants are distributed.
This situation may lead to the perception that the RSFF serves only nonprofit organizations in the Rancho Santa Fe community, rather than throughout San Diego County. This misperception could deter potential donors from engagement with the Foundation, particularly those who are currently unfamiliar with the RSFF’s work. However, some of the RSFF stakeholders see the Foundation’s name as a positive because of what Rancho Santa Fe represents: wealth, intelligence, leadership, and prudent financial management. Other stakeholders saw the name as a negative because Rancho Santa Fe represents exclusivity.

**d. Identification of the RSFF with the executive director.** Many people referenced their impression that Christy Wilson, the executive director, is the face of the Foundation. Her presence in the community is an asset for the Foundation, but the fact that she is the only person consistently identified with the Foundation is a potential threat.

Wilson is the primary person they meet with, talk to on the phone, and identify with the success and personal customer service of the organization. This presents a challenge (and potential opportunity) for the RSFF, as the executive director plans to retire in five years. The Foundation will need to be strategic about considering how and when to re-position her role within the organization. In addition, the Foundation should be mindful that with such a small staff, it risks losing the “personal, high touch customer service” it offers if there is considerable donor growth without additional back office support.

**2. Community**

One of the key questions the RSFF board posed in the initial focus group was, “How should we define community?” The board members spoke about community both in terms of the grantee community and the donor community. Should the RSFF focus on supporting organizations in North County, San Diego County or throughout the world? Should the Foundation focus on cultivating
new donors only from the Rancho Santa Fe Covenant, the 92067 zip code, neighboring North County communities, or all of San Diego County?

The RSFF currently supports nonprofit organizations throughout San Diego County with both donor advised funds and discretionary funds. This broad regional work is generally clear across stakeholder groups who know the Foundation well and is generally perceived as the right focus area for the RSFF.

There is still, however, a significant opportunity for education among all stakeholder groups regarding the region that the RSFF serves. Within the grantee community, for example, only two-thirds of the nonprofit respondents are aware that the RSFF makes grants throughout San Diego County. The community survey revealed that approximately 80% of residents believe the Foundation funds organizations throughout San Diego County; although the open-ended comments revealed a variety of views as to where the organization should focus its funding – from Rancho Santa Fe exclusively, to a North County focus, to all of San Diego County. Interviews with Rancho Santa Fe and North County residents who have no relationship with the RSFF revealed that many of them assume that the Foundation only serves the Rancho Santa Fe community.

While there seems to be some confusion regarding the RSFF’s region of focus within the nonprofit community, the respondents portrayed the Foundation as an important player within San Diego County. Ninety-five percent of respondents indicated that the Foundation is actively involved in the San Diego region. Nearly 90% of respondents said that the Foundation is aware of San Diego County’s needs and 83% said that the RSFF is responsive to those needs.

On the other hand, the Rancho Santa Fe community members, who revealed that they are much more aware than the nonprofit community regarding the RSFF’s regional focus, were less convinced of the active role that the RSFF is actually playing in San Diego than the nonprofits
were. Approximately 75% of residents believe the RSFF is aware of the needs of San Diego County, yet only two-thirds feel that the Foundation is responsive to those needs.

The donor community that the RSFF serves is primarily Rancho Santa Fe, and nonprofit respondents see this positively as they believe the RSFF is a powerful connector and “relationship bridge” between nonprofits and an important donor community. There was encouragement to continue growing the Rancho Santa Fe donor base. Those in neighboring communities initially expressed negative comments about the perception of Rancho Santa Fe’s exclusivity, but also believed there is opportunity for the Foundation to expand its donor base beyond Rancho Santa Fe if it were clear that people from other communities were welcome.

3. Growth

Growth was perceived as a positive by nonprofit interviewees because they equate growth with more money available to address needs in the San Diego community. There was encouragement to continue growing the Rancho Santa Fe donor base (“tap the Rancho Santa Fe market first”), and strong support for expanding assets and outreach, as long as the RSFF does not lose its image of accessibility and “personal touch”, as supported by one stakeholder who commented that it would be important for the Foundation to grow “in a RSFF way”.

Additionally, growth was perceived in terms of programmatic impact. This aspect of growth is related to a community foundation’s role of researching and vetting worthy organizations for funding, either through RSFF discretionary funding or donor advised funds (DAF), for more effective philanthropy. Interviewees mentioned the importance of due diligence in the research and referral process for more programmatically impactful growth.

The following organizational strengths were articulated across stakeholder groups as key RSFF differentiators: personalized service and accessibility; connection to wealthy donor
community; high level of trust with the RSFF; the organization has a unique niche in San Diego County in that it is large and well-established but still personal and smaller than other large foundations; it is independent and local. There was strong agreement about these positive differentiators, and consistent advice to recognize, protect, and retain them. The nonprofit focus group participants supported the notion that RSFF should leverage these differentiators for competitive positioning as it grows.

The former board members and community leaders also felt that RSFF scored high on personal service and responsiveness. It is important to note that the word “trust” was repeatedly used to describe the Foundation. One participant described the best possible outcome for the RSFF this way: “if it grew as big as The San Diego Foundation and kept the intimacy.” This group also placed a high premium on the Foundation’s knowledge of the local community, and the fact that it is independent and “local.”

V. Recommendations

The over-arching theme that emerged from the data was that the RSFF has not established an organizational identity, in its own community nor within the greater San Diego County region. Rewriting the mission statement, which currently reads as operational without mention of impact or aspiration, is the essential starting point. From there, the next step is crafting key messages for dissemination across all communications. Once these steps are taken, over time, a clear and consistent identity will build, one that informs the answers to the questions about what the RSFF “community” is, and how the RSFF will evolve in response to growth.

Based on its research, detailed above and in the Appendices that follow, the USD project team makes the following recommendations grouped by the three key themes of identity,
community and growth for the RSFF board to consider as it continues with the strategic planning process.

1. Identity

**Recommendation 1:** Be intentional in determining the purpose of the organization. What does the RSFF hope to accomplish? How would it measure its impact? Once this is defined, develop mission, vision and values statements that incorporate impact goals and the region served accordingly. Tools for developing these statements are available in Appendices F-H.

**Recommendation 2:** Revise core messaging. The themes of mission, purpose, region of focus, and impact, drawn from its mission and vision statements, should be addressed within the RSFF’s core messaging and communicated in conversations, marketing materials, and PR outreach. This would include formulation of an engaging tagline for the RSFF Web site and marketing materials and development of an ‘elevator speech’ for all board members and staff to deliver to various RSFF stakeholders. Taken together, these become a compelling and consistent message.

**Recommendation 3:** Utilize board members and staff as ambassadors. Word of mouth and personal connections are the most important tools for increasing awareness of the organization. Board members should be coached on how to act as ambassadors and be given talking points developed in recommendation two, which can be used along with personal testimony, in order to communicate consistent messaging.

**Recommendation 4:** Evaluate the Rancho Santa Fe Foundation name to explicitly address name confusion. Although the convention for community foundations is that the organization name reflects the grantee community served, the USD project team recommends the RSFF keep its name and leverage the positive attributes that it conveys (wealth, intelligent board, excellent financial management). The RSFF must address the name confusion by consistently communicating that the
organization supports the broader San Diego community (should the board agree on this regional focus), the impact the organization has had, and its role as a connector between the San Diego community and Rancho Santa Fe.

**Recommendation 5:** Prioritize succession planning. The RSFF board and executive director should develop a succession plan that takes into account organizational capacity and sustainability in the event of the departure of the executive director. As part of this plan, the RSFF should consider increasing the community presence of the board and other staff members so that the RSFF is recognized as an organization, and not solely personified in the identity of the current executive director.

2. Community

**Recommendation 6:** Be intentional in determining and communicating the region of focus for grants. Is San Diego County where the RSFF wants to focus its discretionary funds? If not, what is? The USD project team recommends that San Diego County be the Foundation’s focus, as the organization has already begun to establish recognition for its work throughout the region. As stated above, the RSFF should be specific in communicating this regional focus in all marketing and education efforts.

**Recommendation 7:** Nurture the RSFF’s role within the donor community. The project team also heard from many residents of Rancho Santa Fe who see the Foundation as a part of the fabric of life in their community. These residents see the Foundation’s local roots in a positive light. The project team recommends that the RSFF balance its profile as a regional grantmaker with a local and independent sensibility within the Rancho Santa Fe community.

**Recommendation 8:** Leverage connector role between Rancho Santa Fe donors and San Diego nonprofits. Find ways to be the “bridge” that brings donors to the nonprofits and nonprofits
to the donors through the RSFF for enhanced engagement that would serve to heighten programmatic impact and expand the donor base in Rancho Santa Fe.

3. Growth

Ultimately, increased awareness of the brand identity and more comprehensive outreach into the community will further support the organization’s growth. Managing this growth “the RSFF way” will be the challenge.

**Recommendation 9:** Leverage competitive advantage as the RSFF grows. The RSFF should continue to leverage its current strengths and incorporate them into communications and messaging. As the organization grows, it needs to put measures in place that will ensure the continuity of its reputation for personal service, accessibility, and excellent financial management. Most importantly, the RSFF has the opportunity to expand its reputation for philanthropy by equating growth with increased impact as well as increased assets under management.

**Recommendation 10:** Focus on Rancho Santa Fe first, then neighboring communities. Undertake further data collection with people who live in Rancho Santa Fe but do not have a relationship with the Foundation in order to determine the extent to which Rancho Santa Fe, as the primary donor base, is aware of the RSFF and the services it offers. The USD project team believes there is still a significant opportunity to increase donor participation among Rancho Santa Fe residents.
VI. References


Appendix A

Worksheet 1

Identify Planning Process Issues and Outcomes

What would success look like at the completion of the planning process? What do you wish to achieve from a planning process?

Success is a completed plan for planning. Data gathering, focused on perception of the community foundation within the community (RSF and San Diego), and brand awareness. We are not focusing on building assets we are focusing on building capacity (grant making out in the community). This is step 1 in RSFF’s future growth. (RSF Executive Director)

Many of the strategic issues discussed during a strategic planning process address some or all of following four questions:

Mission. How well are we achieving our mission and how could we have a greater impact?

Per board focus group discussion:

- Promote effective philanthropy: educated philanthropy
  - Support donors to function more effectively by helping them to understand their focus, better identify organizations to donate to, ensure those organizations are doing effective work
- Marry resources to passion
- We should migrate away from geography and focus on excellence
- Provide community leadership
- Hard to make a compelling case; we struggle to articulate it
- We need to determine if it is about: 1) what we (RSFF) do in the community, or 2) what we enable you (donors) to do (i.e., donor advise funds)
- We do not have a definitive programmatic guide and are susceptible to mission drift

1. Financial. Are our operations financially viable, and how can we ensure the long-term financial stability of our organization? Do we have effective financial management systems in place to monitor our finances?

Right now our operations are financially viable but we need to put plans in place to make sure that continues. We want to increase assets to have more asset management dollars to cover operating costs. Want a minimum of 50% of total assets to be endowed. (Alternate futures that we might suggest.) Currently board director’s fees are $3,000/year. We want to be prepared in case one day they do not want to pay that. In addition, rent is free and
want to be prepared in case that were to change. There could be significant, sudden and unexpected increases in assets because of pending bequests and also significant donor-advised fund grants recommendations. Either could be cause for concern.

2. **Administrative capacity.** Do we have the administrative capacity to effectively and efficiently support our programs and services? What would it take to maximize our organizational capabilities in terms of planning, human resources and leadership, organization culture and communication, and our technology and facilities infrastructure?

   *Right now we are at capacity administratively. Growth is limited because of staff capacity limitations and infrastructure (space). We need to do succession planning to prepare for the transition that will take place in five years. We hope the strategic planning conversation will help move this conversation along.*

3. **Governance.** How effective is the board at protecting the public’s interest,—ensuring that charitable dollars are used effectively and efficiently and that the organization is fulfilling its mission? What can we do to ensure that our board is able to fulfill its governance role now and for the future?

   *Our governance is A+. A number of board members used to work in consulting re: governance, so the organization has worked hard to make sure that governance is well planned and executed. Bylaws are in good shape, abide by bylaws and articles, meeting minutes are always taken and are transparent. Spend time at board meetings talking about governance.*
What specific strategic questions or choices does your organization need to address during the planning process? (Note: not every strategic issue will have a short-term focus question).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic (longer-term) issues to be addressed—framed as a question:</th>
<th>Short-term focus? Are there some operational questions that need to be addressed in the near future? If yes, list below:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - We are not in a position of needing to build trust, we are in a position of needing to build awareness.  
- We know who we are but we don’t know who knows about us, have we saturated RSF, we don’t know what their perceptions are of us.  
- Tell the story of the philanthropy that goes out of RSF into the community.  
- Who are we? (we know what we do)  
- What are our top three priorities?  
- Where do we want to be? RSF only or broader?  
- What do we want our role to be in the RSF community? In broader San Diego? | - Role to mobilize/facilitating assets in disaster relief?  
- Clearinghouse of information: what the needs are and who could respond to those needs?  
- Impact and measurement of that impact? Feedback/communication of results.  
- What is the relationship (i.e., trust, service) that RSF wants to have with the community, donors, grantees, etc.?  
- Old marketing materials focus on RSF; new marketing material focuses outside of RSF (why? To get donors? To distribute money?) |
| What is people’s perception of the Foundation and its work? Is our hunch true that many people simply are not aware of what we do?  
- What do people think we do with the funds we receive? Is it for RSF alone?  
- What do people think we should be doing with the funds (program areas)? | - Understanding the market would help us understand “where to fish” and with “what kind of bait”  
- Board wants USD team to do a survey of the RSF community to benchmark where they are and to be able to measure again in five years  
- Need to think through the organizational chart and succession planning  
- What is a best practice for a community foundation regarding mission and program sectors?  
- What should be our elevator speech about the Foundation and its work? |
| How is RSFF positioned relative to other community foundations in the area and how does it compare nationwide? | |
How do we define “community”? Are we a local or regional foundation?

Should we be focusing on the 92067 zip code or moving beyond it? Do people in the zip code know who we are about and what we do?

Are there any issues that are non-negotiable (not open for discussion)? Any constraints regarding the planning process?

- *Not hiring additional staff*
Appendix B

Worksheet 2

Set up Your Planning Process for Success

Are the conditions and criteria for successful planning in place at the current time? Can certain pitfalls be avoided?

*Yes, good leadership commitment.*

Is this the appropriate time for your organization to initiate a planning process? Yes or no? If no, where do you go from here?

*RSF recently had its 30th anniversary and see that as a re-launch moment. The organization has 10 years of strong growth and infrastructure to begin reflective and generative phase. Leadership at ED and Board level is eager to engage in this project.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The following conditions for successful planning are in place:</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Unsure or N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Commitment, support, and involvement from top leadership, especially the executive director and board president, throughout the entire process</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Commitment to clarifying roles and expectations for all participants in the planning process, including clarity as to who will have input into the plan and who will be decision makers</td>
<td>X – 5 people will be on committee and will update board</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Willingness to gather information regarding the organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; the effectiveness of current programs; needs in the community, both current and future; and information regarding</td>
<td>X – do SOAR analysis too</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following conditions for successful planning are in place:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The following conditions for successful planning are in place:</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Unsure or N/A</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>competitors and (potential) collaborators</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The right mix of individuals on the planning committee—strategic thinkers and actionaries (individuals who are in a position to see things through to completion), as well as big-picture (conceptual) thinkers and detail-oriented (perceptual) thinkers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Willingness to be inclusive and encourage broad participation, so that people feel ownership of and are energized by the process</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. An adequate commitment of organizational resources to complete the planning process as designed (e.g., staff time, board time, dollars spent on the process for market research, consultants, etc.)</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. A board and staff that understand the purpose of planning, recognize what it is and is not able to accomplish, and have clarity about the desired outcomes of the process and issues to be addressed</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. A willingness to question the status quo, to look at new ways of doing things; a willingness to ask the hard questions, face difficult choices, and make decisions that are best for the organization’s current and future constituencies as well as a willingness to support organizational change as a result of the planning efforts.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. The organization has the “financial capacity” to sustain itself for the immediate future without a financial “crisis” appearing to detract from strategic planning</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Top management’s commitment to carefully considering recommendations made during the planning process rather than disregarding decisions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The following conditions for successful planning are in place:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unsure or N/A</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>in favor of his or her intuitive decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. There is no serious conflict between key players within the organization (although a healthy dosage of disagreement and perhaps some heated discussions can be expected during a strategic planning process)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. There are no high-impact decisions to be made in the next six months by an external source.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. No merger or other major strategic partnership effort is under way (separate strategic planning conversations are not taking place while strategic restructuring negotiations are taking place).</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Board and top management should be willing to articulate constraints and non-negotiables upfront.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15. A commitment to tie the strategic planning process to the organization’s annual planning and budgeting process—to create a detailed annual operating plan for the upcoming year, and monitor/revise the strategic plan as needed</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. A commitment to allocating sufficient resources to support the implementation of core strategies</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Is this the appropriate time for your organization to initiate a planning process? Yes or no? If no, what steps need to be put in place to ensure a successful planning process—where do you go from here? Or, should the organization consider doing something other than a formal strategic planning process?

RSF recently had its 30th anniversary and see that as a re-launch moment. The organization has 10 years of strong growth and infrastructure to begin reflective and generative phase. Leadership at ED and Board level is eager to engage in this project.
**Appendix C**

**Worksheet 3**

**Develop a Plan for Gathering Information from Internal and External Stakeholders**

Using the strategic issues you identified in Worksheet 1, develop a plan for gathering information—from internal and external sources—to inform those questions.

**DATA COLLECTION FROM INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS—BOARD AND STAFF**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal &amp; External Stakeholders</th>
<th>Outcome of contact with them? Questions they can answer? What information do you want to gather from this stakeholder?</th>
<th>How best to involve them (such as surveys, discussions at regularly scheduled meetings, retreats, in-depth program evaluation worksheets, etc.)</th>
<th>Details (this column may be filled out when starting to implement data collection phase: time frame and who is responsible for implementation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff</strong></td>
<td>Sense of mission, place in the community, SWOT questions, dreams for the organization</td>
<td>3 staff people as a small group discussion</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All of the staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Management team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Board of directors</strong></td>
<td>Sense of mission, place in the community, SWOT questions, vision for growth</td>
<td>1 discussion group of 6-7 people; potential for survey to rest of</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of marketing and strategic planning committees, past and current</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>president</td>
<td>help in defining “community”, discussion of name/non-negotiables</td>
<td>board</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foundation donors, advisory board members, RSF community leaders</strong></td>
<td>Community opinion of Foundation, sense of mission, identity, service</td>
<td>Key interviews or small focus groups, at least 10 people</td>
<td>Scheduling in progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foundation Grant Recipients</strong></td>
<td>Community opinion of Foundation, grantee experience, identity, service</td>
<td>Online survey, key interviews with select nonprofit staff in the community</td>
<td>Survey in draft form out to 100 organizations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which of the following documents would help provide important background information and/or inform your strategic issue decisions? (Check appropriate documents to assemble.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Mission-related documents</strong></th>
<th><strong>Administrative capacity documents</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Program descriptions/workplans</td>
<td>- Mission, vision, values statements; strategic plan; annual plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Needs assessments</td>
<td>- Program descriptions/workplans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Client satisfaction surveys</td>
<td>- Organizational chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Previous evaluation designs and results</td>
<td>- Internal newsletters or other communication vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Evidence of innovation/reputation in the field</td>
<td>- Personnel policies and performance appraisal forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other data (such as government reports, etc.)</td>
<td>- Previous organizational effectiveness surveys and/or “climate surveys” (or other formal review of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>staff satisfaction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Volunteer management plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Information technology plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Visual survey of facilities and equipment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Financial-related documents</strong></th>
<th><strong>Governance documents</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Fund-raising materials</td>
<td>- Board minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fund-raising plans</td>
<td>- Board roaster and committee structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Budget reports</td>
<td>- Previous board self-evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Audit</td>
<td>- Board manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sample financial reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Internal controls procedures manuals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Worksheet 4

Design a Strategic Planning Process to Meet Your Organizational Needs

What has been your previous experience with strategic planning—what has worked or not worked in the past that might inform the design of your strategic planning process? The last Strategic Plan that was done for RSFF was in 2007. It was done by the Strategic Planning Committee at the time and was approved by the board. There were several previous plans but none as thorough as this one. Although the plan was not inaccurate in its focus, it was never used as an on-going strategy or used as a strategic screen for the activities of RSFF since then. We did not dig deep in asking the “Big Questions” and I think we were satisfied to remain focused on the donor experience rather than moving into the grantmaking focus of a community foundation.

The following is a list of some of the choices to be made when designing a strategic planning process:

- Who makes what decisions—who decides the strategic direction for the organization, and what degree of input is sought from the board and the staff The Planning Committee will be the primary group involved in the process and because they have representatives from the Strategic Planning and Marketing Committees, they will report back to their respective committees and the Board of Directors. Likewise, the Chairman and the Executive Director will have direct input in the process.
- Whether to involve external stakeholders in addition to internal stakeholders (board and staff) External Stakeholders will be key in determining the awareness and perception of the greater community about RSFF.
- How long a process to have (abbreviated, moderate, or extensive) I believe that RSFF views this as a first phase of a more extensive strategic planning process. As Executive Director, I hope that each committee and each of the initiatives (RSFWF, AFIG and BetterTogether) will also do some sort of strategic planning on their own and integrate this with the overall RSFF plan.
- Whether to use an existing committee or a strategic planning committee for such activities as coordinating the work and assisting with some of the planning activities (such as external stakeholder interviews, research, etc.) The Strategic Planning and Marketing Committees work closely together. They will coordinate the work with the Executive Director/staff and the Board of Directors after the USD team is gone!
• Whether to have a strategic planning committee—and/or ad hoc issue-focused task forces—charged with the responsibility for discussing future program or administrative options and making recommendations to the board See above
• If using a strategic planning committee, deciding who should be on that committee. If using ad hoc task forces, deciding membership of those committees (including the decision as to whether nonboard members might be on those committees) I believe that nonboard members on this committee in the future would be very beneficial. This would probably be at the discretion of the Board and Executive Director.
• Who will lead the process See above
• Who will be the primary writer of the plan (with guidance from a consultant if necessary) Un-decided
• The sequencing of discussions (i.e., “do data collection first and then have a retreat” or “kick off the planning process with a board/staff retreat and then create issue-focused board/staff task forces to collect and analyze data and make recommendations to the board of directors”) As a result of the USD team beginning the data collection and formulating the “Big Questions” I would assume that the Board will take this (with perhaps even more data collection done independently after the team has gone) and use it to re-visit the mission of RSFF, perhaps create vision and values statements at a board retreat. I like the idea of board/staff task forces.
• Whether to use a consultant and, if yes, how best to use a consultant/expectations regarding the consultant’s role We have discussed using a consultant but I think this decision will wait until we see what evolves and what new “Big Questions” arise from the ones that we are beginning with.

Other considerations for the strategic planning process:

Planning committee membership:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Representing what key stakeholder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kate Williams</td>
<td>Chairman, S-P Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig Dado</td>
<td>Chairman, Marketing Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron McMahon</td>
<td>Chairman, Board of Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuck Yash</td>
<td>Immediate Past Chairman, Board of Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil Hokanson</td>
<td>Chairman, Investment Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Holmlund</td>
<td>New Director</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Milestones and deadlines: We have successfully interviewed staff and Board of Directors and are prepared to send surveys to people in the RSF community (some of whom have an awareness of RSFF and some who do not have much of one), to randomly selected grantees from three areas; RSFWF, AFIG and Impact Grantees(those who have received discretionary grants). We will make a preliminary report to the Board of Directors at their Board Meeting on March 14, 2012 and the final plan for planning is due to the Planning Committee/Board on April 20, 2012.

Planning principles and values (e.g., we are committed to being inclusive of all key stakeholders; we are willing to look at new and different ways of doing things and face the hard choices regarding how to best use our resources; client input is critical to creating a plan that will meet client needs): We are committed to listening to the client articulate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to RSFF, and to listen equally to those interviewed through surveys, focus groups and key stakeholder sessions about their perception of RSFF and the work that the organizations does, both in RSF and throughout San Diego County. Because the client is committed to thinking in a new way about its image in the community and doing its work in new and innovative and impactful ways, we will strive to determine how they can best go about this by helping them understand how RSFF is perceived in the community and who their “community” is.

Meeting agreements (e.g., when offering a dissenting opinion, be willing to offer a solution that meets your needs and the needs of others; show up at meetings and be prepared; seek first to understand, then to be understood; respect differences): The first meetings have gone very well and we as a team were prepared with background information about RSFF and we had pertinent materials to share with the Planning Committee. Both the USD team and the committee members had received brief bios of each other so we could respect the personal and professional experiences of everyone as well. The client has expressed their desire to do the hard work and ask the hard questions that this process demands.
How will board and staff be kept informed about the strategic planning discussions? Because the Executive Director is a member of the USD team, communication will be clear and easy. She will assume the responsibility of informing staff and board of the strategic planning discussions on an on-going basis; at least weekly with staff and with the Board Chairman. The Executive Committee will receive a more detailed pre-completion update at their meeting on April 11, 2012. There may be one more planning committee meeting after the survey responses are received and after the completion of the focus group and key stakeholder interviews.
Worksheet 8: Summary of RSF Foundation’s History and Accomplishments

Strategic Planning Process, February, 2012

SUMMARY OF PROGRAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of program: Rancho Santa Fe Women’s Fund</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program purpose: Initiative of the RSFF; mission “to educate, inspire and increase the number of women committed to philanthropy in order to strengthen the community and impact lives through informed, focused collective giving.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of current scope and scale of activities: Nearly 140 members; has made grants exceeding $1.6M and will be near $2M by end of 2012 grant cycle; different area of grant focus each year; this year’s grant focus is arts &amp; culture and education &amp; research; grants given to orgs outside the RSF community; 1 part-time staff member and volunteer advisory board; regular informational meetings with outside speakers; periodic volunteer opportunities outside of grant-making activities; follow-up evaluation and on-site follow-up within 1 year of the grant being made.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of program: AFIG (Armed Forces Interest Group)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program purpose: Initiative of the RSFF to increase the awareness of the needs of the military personnel, families and veterans in San Diego, and to raise funds in support of those needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of current scope and scale of activities: Includes four funds: 1) The Wounded and Fallen Warriors Fund, 2) The Armed Services Family Support Fund-San Diego, 3) The AFIG Fund for the USO, 4) The AFIG Discretionary Fund. 1 part-time staff member and 20 volunteers support the mission of AFIG.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Name of program: *BetterTogether*

Program purpose: *New initiative of RSFF for the purpose of bringing together local family foundations to learn more about collaborative grant-making and addressing issues common to family foundations, such as succession, legacy and back office.*

Description of current scope and scale of activities: *1 part-time staff member.*

Name of program: *Discretionary grantmaking: Impact Grants*

Program purpose: *Respond to needs in the community using discretionary funds of the RSFF*

Description of current scope and scale of activities: *$180,000 available for Discretionary Impact grantmaking; Grants and Projects committee identifies a focus area each year; solicit requests for proposals from orgs that fall into the focus area; 6-8 grants are made annually, ranging from $15,000-$25,000. 1 part-time staff and standing committee of board of directors.*

**SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS**

Number of staff and board: *30 volunteer board members*

*1 FTE staff member*

*3 part-time staff members*

*10 advisors to standing board committees*

Financial data: (sources of revenue, budget, etc.)

*See attached balance sheet (year ending 2011)*
Worksheet 5

Create a Mission Statement

Draft a mission statement for your organization.

What is the focus problem(s) that our organization exists to solve? (In considering the focus problem or need, you might want to consider the following questions: What need or opportunity does our organization exist to resolve? Who is affected by the problem? How are they affected? If we were successful, what impact would we have regarding this problem?)

What are the assumptions on which our organization does its work?

What is the purpose of our organization? (A purpose sentence answers the question of why an organization exists; it does not describe what an organization does. The sentence should be a short, succinct statement that describes the ultimate result an organization is hoping to achieve. When writing a purpose sentence, make sure to indicate outcomes and results [e.g., to eliminate homelessness], not the methods of achieving those results, which is what you do [e.g., by constructing houses].)

What are the methods that our organization uses to accomplish its purpose? Describe our business or businesses—our primary services or programs:

Combine your purpose sentence and description of primary services/activities in a compelling mission statement.
Appendix G

Worksheet 6

Create a Vision Statement

Dare to dream the possible. What is your organization’s realistic but challenging guiding vision of success?

External vision: Describe how the world would be improved, changed, or different if our organization was successful in achieving its purpose.

Internal vision: Envisioning our organization’s future

Programmatic vision:

Administrative vision:
Appendix H

Worksheet 7

Articulate Your Organization’s Values, Beliefs, and Guiding Principles

Clarify your organization’s belief systems: What are some of the values, beliefs, and/or guiding principles that do (or should) guide your board and staff’s interactions with each other and with constituencies?

Practical impact: What behaviors should you commit to doing in everyday practice to support your values and beliefs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clarify your organization’s belief systems: What are some of the values, beliefs, and/or guiding principles that do (or should) guide your board and staff’s interactions with each other and with constituencies?</th>
<th>Practical impact: What are the behaviors we should commit to doing in everyday practice in support of our values, beliefs, and guiding principles?</th>
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