

Revised February 2024



Strategic Planning Guidebook

State of Iowa
Department of Management



Table of Contents

- The Need for Strategic Planning..... 3
- Creating the Strategic Plan..... 4
 - Mission Statement..... 6
 - Vision Statement..... 7
 - Assessment..... 8
 - Strategic Initiatives..... 9
 - Goals with KPIs..... 9-10
- Resources..... 11

The Need for Strategic Planning

Chapter 8E of the Iowa Code, known as the Accountable Government Act or AGA, requires departments to develop strategic plans and to annually review those plans and make updates as needed. Each department should submit one strategic plan for their aligned organization.

What is it?

Strategic planning describes the future a department wants to create. It is a representation of vision; generated to drive organizational change and performance while determining how to allocate resources and measure results.

Strategic planning makes it possible to align goals and strategies with customer needs in the face of an ever-changing environment; targeting resources to most efficiently achieve desired results.

What are the benefits?

An effective strategic planning process provides the framework for reviewing customer and stakeholder needs, identifying key organizational challenges, and considering what opportunities might be leveraged to better achieve the department mission and vision.

When done well, strategic planning helps department leaders organize, direct, and support the achievement of goals, strategies, and actions leading to results.

Creating the Strategic Plan

When creating a strategic plan, an organization analyzes current and historical trends and other key factors to try and anticipate the future. The State of Iowa's strategic planning process requires each department to look three to five years into the future to lay out essential goals with key performance indicators to ensure that departments remain focused on achieving their vision and mission. Departments are required to review their plan annually and update operational goals for each fiscal year. To the extent possible, departments should align their plans to help to contribute to achieving the governor's priorities for Iowa. You can find more details for each of the governor's priorities at <https://governor.iowa.gov/>.

Governor's priorities for 2024:

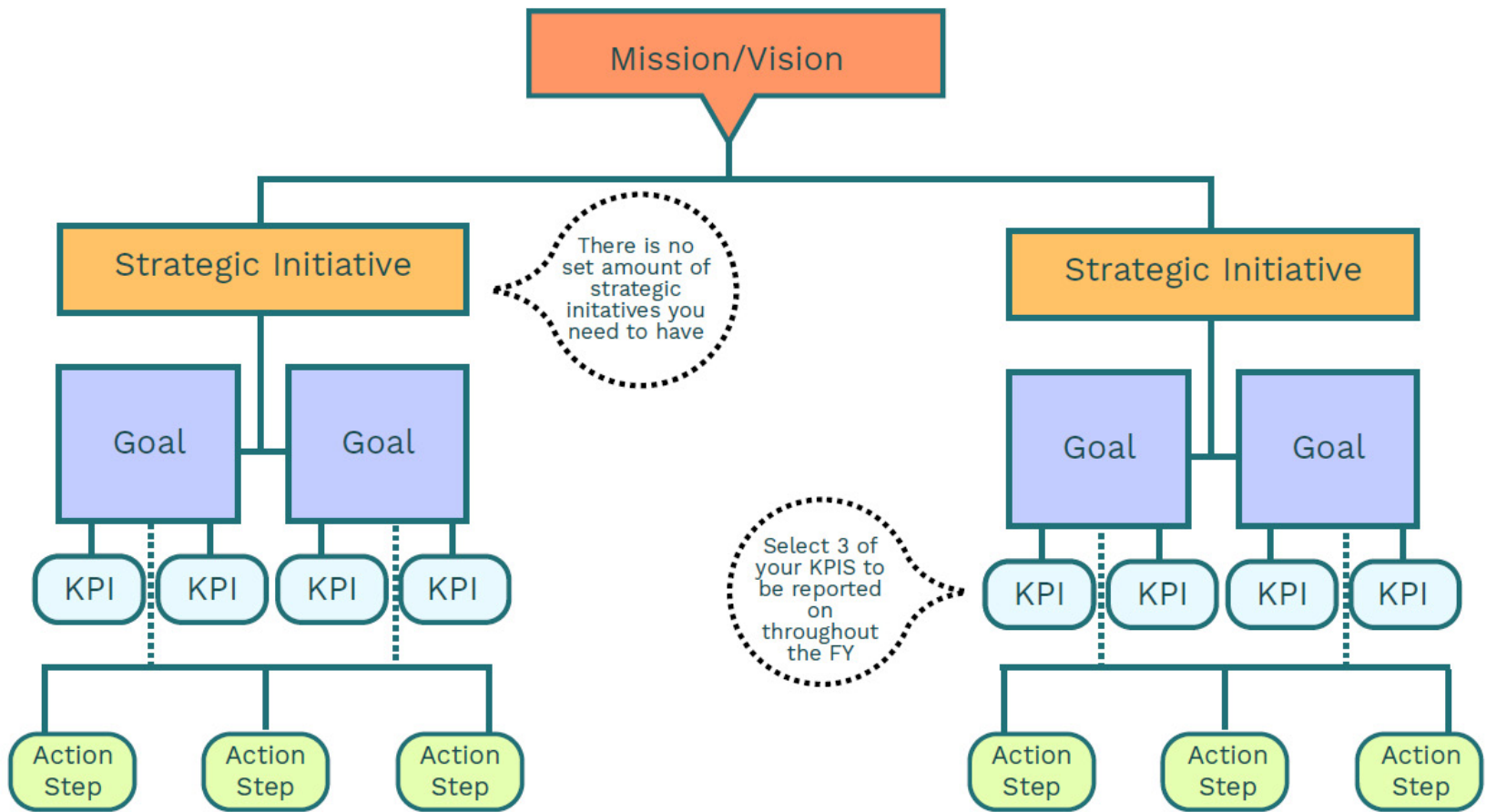
1. Elevating Education for Every Student
2. Preparing the Next-Gen Workforce
3. Cutting Taxes
4. Supporting Health and Well-Being
5. Holding Government Accountable
6. Protecting Iowa's Farmland

A successful strategic planning effort includes the commitment of department leadership and input from employees, the public, customers, and major stakeholders who have an interest and investment in the department and its success. The planning effort looks at current state, future state, and the routes that can be taken to achieve goals.

Elements of Department Strategic Plans

1. Mission Statement
2. Vision Statement
3. Assessment
4. Strategic Initiatives with Operational Goals and KPIs

Strategic Planning Structure



1. Mission Statement

A mission statement is a broad, comprehensive statement of the department's purpose. It defines what the department does and why it exists.

Developing a Mission Statement

Development of a mission statement is often done through a team approach and should reflect the benefits your stakeholders care about while supporting key organizational functions. The Iowa Code language that identifies the powers and duties of a department provides an excellent starting point to begin to think about the mission.

Mission Statement Criteria

- Tells what the department does
- Tells who the department serves
- Tells how the department provides services

The Mission Development Template (see p. 13) can be a helpful tool in guiding an organization to establishing its mission statement.

Mission Statement Examples

Iowa Workforce Development:

We power Iowa's possibilities by connecting workers to opportunities and employers to workforce solutions.

Iowa Department of Natural Resources:

To conserve and enhance our natural resources in cooperation with individuals and organizations to improve the quality of life in Iowa and ensure a legacy for future generations.

2. Vision Statement

A vision statement describes the department in the future. A great vision statement is one that will inspire and be meaningful enough that employees will be able to relate it to their jobs. There is a balance with a vision statement to not make it too generic but also not too lofty. If it's too generic, it will not resonate within the organization. If it's too lofty, it may not be achievable or believable.

Developing a Vision Statement

Vision statements can be developed by the organization's leaders or crafted through a more collaborative, team approach.

Vision Statement Criteria

- Descriptive of the future
- Brief
- Inspiring
- Believable

Vision Statement Examples

Iowa Workforce Development:

To create, enable, and sustain the most future ready workforce in the nation.

Iowa Department of Natural Resources:

Leading Iowa in caring for our natural resources.

3. Assessment

An assessment is used to determine strengths and limitations within a department, as well as external threats and opportunities. It evaluates a department's capacity to respond to identified issues and should include a review of resources, department structure, services, products, activities, demographics, mandates, and policies that impact the achievement of goals. The assessment process analyzes major factors that are likely to influence how a vision and mission are carried out and anticipates barriers to achieving results during the time period addressed in the strategic plan.

Here are some criteria that could be relevant to the design of assessments for different departments:

- A description of the population served by the department, and major trends affecting that population
- Public opinion survey data, customer satisfaction survey data, employee engagement survey results
- Information on national or state trends in areas directly relevant to the mission of the department (data on crime, traffic incidents, poverty rates, unemployment and labor market trends, etc.)

A SWOT analysis can prove to be a useful tool in guiding an assessment for departments. See page 14 for a SWOT analysis guide.

4. Strategic Initiatives

A strategic initiative is broad in scope and is a longer term outcome needed in order to accomplish the department mission and achieve its vision. Consideration of the governor's priorities and opportunities to build on strengths, or address challenges, identified during the assessment should be a part of the discussion as strategic initiatives are developed. Strategic initiatives are typically phrased in broad, general language and may start with verbs such as: strengthen, serve, become, and improve.

Each strategic initiative should have correlating operational goals with key performance indicators to be achieved within the fiscal year. Operational goals are narrow in scope, easily measured, and describe a specific action or direction. Strategic initiatives may have more than one operational goal with several key performance indicators.

The work towards strategic initiatives and goals may extend past the fiscal year; however, the key performance indicators for those goals should be measured in one year increments.

For example:

Goal: Decrease call wait times from 5 minutes to 2 minutes by FY27.

KPI: Decrease call wait times from 5 minutes to 4 minutes in FY25.

Departments need to select three of their key performance indicators that will be tracked throughout the fiscal year; these three selected KPIs should be noted when the strategic plan is submitted to the Department of Management. If data on the selected KPI is not being collected at least monthly, the goal is too high level and you should choose something more operational. These KPIs will likely be the same measures that your department introduced in the budget proposal meeting in the fall; if you choose a measure different from what was previously proposed, please explain why.

Operational Goals with Key Performance Indicators

Operational goals are the directions of how to achieve your strategic initiatives. Strategic initiatives are where you want to go; operational goals are how you are going to get there.

Operational goals are action items, often with start and end dates, and they frequently begin with the words increase or decrease because they are quantifiable and measurable.

Think of the acronym SMART when writing objectives: Make them specific, measurable, achievable, realistic/relevant, and time-bound.

Writing key performance indicators

In order to know if you are reaching the goals you outline in your strategic plan, you need performance indicators. These indicators describe what success looks like and ensure accountability.

Key performance indicators can help you chart your progress and take corrective measures if actions are not unfolding as they should. Other terms similar to KPIs include performance measures and performance indicators.

Performance indicators must be quantifiable. For example, tracking visitors to a website, customers completing an appeal form online, or the number of proposals that close within a set amount of days are all performance indicators that keep you on track toward achieving operational goals.

Reporting key performance indicators

IA Advantage (formally I/3) Performance Budgeting is designed to assist departments in reporting performance indicators. There are two different functions supported in IA Advantage—the recording of actual values for measures at the end of the fiscal year and reporting values during the year. Departments should utilize both reporting functions to track work towards operational goals throughout the fiscal year. For more information on how to utilize both reporting functions, refer to the Performance Budgeting Manual.

Resources

How to Use a Strategic Plan

A strategic plan can be used to:

- Guide decisions on resource allocation (annual budget)
- Help to align enterprise and employee goals (provide context and connectivity)
- Guide human resource decisions, especially recruitment and hiring
- Be used as the foundation for reviewing organizational and staff progress and performance and continually soliciting input
- Be used for employee orientation
- Be used as a driver for ongoing planning and changes

Mission Development Template

Who we are:

What we do:

Who we do it for:

How we do it:

Why we do it:

MISSION STATEMENT:

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a simple, yet affective, tool that can support a department's needs assessment.

Questions to be answered as part of a SWOT analysis include the following:

What are the department's key strengths?

- What are our advantages?
- What do we do well?

What are the department's key weaknesses? (key needs are not being met to sustain success):

- Where do we struggle and need to improve?
- Are we lacking skills, knowledges, technology?
- What are the unmet expectations?

What are the department's key opportunities?

- Where can we expand or improve?
- What are internal or external trends we're aware of that offer the chance for us to improve our products or services?

What are the department's key threats?

- What are internal or external trends we're aware of that may hinder our success?
- What obstacles do we face?

The answers to these questions can help drive the organization's development of strategic initiatives, goals, and key performance indicators.