

## Organizational Assessment and Reflection

For the organizational assessment, I reviewed the Bowery Mission, my placement for field experience since January 2019. Over the course of the internship, I had the privilege of working alongside the clinical team and receive task supervision from the Associate Director of Clinical Services. I have been able to obtain information based on the research from the Bowery's website and based on the observations I have made in staff meetings as well as obtaining information through interactions with staff. Due to the fact that I have terminated my internship recently, there are some gaps in the information I was able to provide. However, the data collected is from knowledge I have obtained over the last year and a half as well as online research.

Since the 1870s, the Bowery Mission has served the homeless population. The organization has been a pillar of strength for communities and a center for refuge during difficult times. Even in the midst of a global pandemic, the Bowery Mission never closed their doors to the public. The staff and volunteers labored as essential workers and diligently served various communities. This organization has a number of strengths. The major strengths include their access to resources, relationship with funders, and organizational culture. The Bowery Mission has successfully built relationships with organizations, political leaders, and donors to obtain funding and resources needed to run their programs. For example, in the Harlem women shelters, they have a beautiful facility including a fully functional home kitchen, and an amazing outdoor space, both of which look brand new and always photograph ready. One of the women on the community life team shared with me that the Police Commissioner Ray Kelly's wife donations helped renovate the women's center. Additionally, celebrities like Whoopi Goldberg have made large contributions to the Bowery Mission's centers as well.

While the Bowery Mission has many strengths, there is always room for improvements. Recently, I had the opportunity to support the Associate Clinical Services Director in her finalization of the Bowery Mission's drug policy. The Bowery Mission has very strict guidelines for substance use. More specifically, in the short-term program, clients who are found with marijuana in their system receive a warning, are placed on a contract for 30 days, and if marijuana is found in their system again, they are discharged from the program.

For alcohol, the guidelines are slightly different given that alcohol is a legal and over the counter substance. Clients are allowed to be found with the legal alcohol level without receiving any negative consequences. Given that marijuana has been legalized and many people of color (POC) have been criminalized in the past due to recreational usage, the Bowery Mission may need to reevaluate their policy to evolve with the times. Perhaps, instead of receiving negative consequences, the issue can be addressed in a counseling session and the client can be provided with alternative options while ultimately making their own informed decision.

Additionally, during my time at the Bowery and through research, I have observed that the majority of the Bowery Mission's corporate is comprised of non-POC. The Bowery Mission has served over thousands of people for many years. During my time in the Bowery, I have seen many people groups represented from diverse cultural backgrounds. While the Bowery operates in excellence, opens their doors to all regardless of race, and strives for cultural competence, there is an underrepresentation of POC in the higher positions. I believe that people from diverse cultural backgrounds who possess unique worldviews can provide insight into organizational policy and advocate in different ways than their Caucasian counterparts.

## QUICK GUIDE 40 Nonprofit Organizational Assessment

### Chapter 12 (pp. 554-557)

Using an organization with which you are familiar, complete the following assessment:

#### Internal Assessment

##### Legal basis, mission, by-laws, and history:

- The legal basis is clearly stated in appropriate documents.
- The mission statement is current and accurate and specifies reasons for existence and outcomes.
- The by-laws are relevant, current, and accurately portray the needs of the organization.

##### Administrative structure and management style:

- The administrative structure and management style fit the mission and services of the organization.
- Transparent and structural lines/systems for decision-making exist.
- Roles are clearly defined.
- Decision-making involves broad participation as practical and appropriate.
- Clear communication lines exist for dissemination of decisions.
- A comprehensive, integrated system is used for measuring the organization's performance on a continual basis.

##### Program structure, programs, and services:

- Continual monitoring and assessment of the structure, processes, and programs exist.
- Program evaluation data is collected, used, and linked to systemic improvements.
- Programs and services reflect evidence-based practice.
- The need for programs and services is well documented.
- Programs and services are well-defined and fully aligned with mission.
- A system is in place to collect data about gaps in the ability of existing programs to meet recipient and community-wide needs.
- New ideas are continually offered to meet service gaps.
- Programs and services are efficient, effective, and high-quality.

##### Organizational culture (i.e., physical surroundings, public relations, language, procedures, justice/diversity):

- Physical infrastructure is well suited to current and anticipated needs.
- Physical infrastructure enhances effectiveness.
- Informal expectations are clearly articulated and supported by staff.

### **Personnel policy and procedures:**

- Recruitment, selection, orientation, supervision, training and development, performance appraisal, termination, and grievance processes are identified.
- Relationships between and among positions and position qualifications are identified.
- Diversity is characterized as an asset.
- Organizational resources devoted to staff continuing education are sufficient.
- Policies and procedures reflect systems that are culturally competent.

### **Resources (i.e., financial, technological, personnel):**

- Funding is sufficient, comes from diverse sources, fits the mission, and provides insulation from market instabilities.
- Board members embrace fundraising as a core role.
- Board fundraising plans are in place.
- Electronic data systems sufficiently gather and report appropriate data regarding clients, staff, volunteers, program outcomes, and financial information.
- The website is sophisticated, comprehensive, interactive, and regularly maintained.
- Positions are adequately and appropriately staffed, and vacancies are quickly filled.
- Staff are capable, committed, and bring complementary skills and momentum for improvement.
- Technology needs (e.g., computers, phones, etc.) are adequately met.

## **External Assessment**

### **Relationship with funders and potential funders:**

- Fundraising skills and expertise are adequate.
- Sustainable revenue-gathering activities are used.
- A system for regular communication and reporting with current funders is used.
- A system to cultivate potential funders is used and continually updated.
- Ideas for revenue diversification are continually considered.
- Feedback from current funders is sought and considered.

### **Relationship with clients:**

- A system to actively recruit and involve clients in offering feedback is used.
- A system to actively involve clients in making decisions is used.
- When possible, clients work collaboratively with staff in important roles, such as volunteer positions of leadership.

### **Relationship with organizations in network (i.e., referrals and partnerships):**

- Strong, positive relationships with similar and related organizations exist.
- Presence on relevant partnerships is evident, and leadership roles are appropriately taken.
- Reciprocity is sought with relevant organizations.

**Relationships with political figures:**

- Strong, high-impact relationships using regular communication with a variety of potential entities (i.e., local, state, and federal government) and community leaders exist.
- Participates in substantive policy discussions with opinion and political leaders.
- Proactively and effectively influences policy-making at the local, state, and/or national level.

## QUICK GUIDE 41 Organizational Policy Advocacy Activities

### Chapter 12, p. 557

Complete the following tool about organizational policy advocacy activities organization with which you are familiar. Completing this assessment can show the degree to which organizations use opportunities to engage in policy activities for the benefit of their clients and organization. Organizations that engage in few opportunities consider expanding their policy advocacy activities to more opportunities, as listed here.

#### **In the past, our agency has:**

*(Organizational Activities)*

Testified at public hearings held by the city council, state legislature, or other decision-making body.

Participated in legislative or policy working groups with government officials.

Engaged in nonviolent civil disobedience (i.e., deliberately broke a law to draw attention to unjust government policies, programs, or actions).

Sent unique letters, emails, faxes, or texts to the city council, the mayor, government agency directors, or senior staff members regarding legislative or government policies, government programs, or other issues that affect our clients.

Participated in rallies, protests, vigils, and/or demonstrations to draw attention to an issue that affects our clients.

Attempted to engage television, radio, print, or web-based media reporters to draw attention to legislation, government policies, government programs, or other issues that affect our clients.

Submitted letters to the editor or op-ed pieces to the local media regarding legislation, government policies, government programs, or other issues related to our client population.

Helped draft legislation.

Sponsored or co-sponsored forums or other community events to educate the general public about legislation, government policies, government programs, or other issues.

Submitted formal comments on rules, regulations, strategic plans, or other administrative governmental documents.

Met with the city council members, the mayor, and/or local government officials.

Submitted articles in our newsletter about legislation, government policies, government programs, or other issues that affect our clients.

Posted fact sheets, issue briefs, articles, and/or testimony about legislation, government policies, government programs, or other issues that affect our client population on our website.

Invited council members and/or the mayor to visit our program(s) to educate them about the issues that affect our clients.

Actively participated in coalitions related to our area of service or issue of concern. (Actively participated means attended and gave input at coalition meetings, joined and actively participated in coalition committees, attended coalition events, etc.)

*(Activities with Clients and Community Members)*

Met with and/or distributed written information to clients and community members to educate/inform them about legislation, government policies, government programs, or upcoming public policy activities, (e.g., meetings, public hearings).

Solicited input from clients and community members to inform our agency's advocacy priorities.

Included clients and community members when making visits to the city council, state representatives, or other decision-makers.

Provided skill-building workshops to clients and community members to encourage their public policy participation. Skill building may include writing and giving testimony, writing letters, making phone calls, meeting with decision-makers, and other tactics.

Met with clients and community members to help them formulate direct action strategies around issues of their choice.

Conducted voter registration drives.

Facilitated transportation for clients and community members to encourage their participation in public policy activities and/or to vote at the polls.