**Foundations**

The Foundations are the most important part of your organization. They guide your policies and procedures, hiring and employment practices, organizational culture, and customer service, as well as everything else you do. They even help make sure your organization attracts board, staff, volunteers, donors and customers who share a basic and fundamental common ground – They can help you say yes, and they can help you say no, when it’s necessary, too. Let’s get started!

**Step 1: Mission Statement**

[Insert Here]

What is the mission of your organization? Mission = Ultimate Outcome + For Who + Where + How.

Example

Our mission is to end and prevent and homelessness (outcome) for individuals and families (for who) in Bluegrass, KY (where) by providing housing services, coordinating income programs, providing mental health care, and advocating for systemic change (how).

**Step 2: Vision**

[Insert Here]

What will the world look like once you have completed your mission? Help us visualize it.

Example

We envision a Bluegrass, Kentucky where homelessness has been eliminated for current and future generations, and where all Bluegrassians are thriving at their unique highest and fullest potential, free from housing insecurity or instability.

**Step 3: Core Beliefs**

[Insert Here]

What do you believe about the issue, opportunity or problem your business or organization is trying to address? 3-5 statements are common.

Example

**Housing is a basic human need.** We believe housing is a basic human need and fundamental human right. All Bluegrassians should be afforded the tools and opportunties to secure safe, adequate, stable housing.

**Mental Health is critical to housing security.** We know housing insecurity and instability can both cause and be a result of mental illness and emotional trauma. All people should be afforded no barrier access to mental health services, regardless of housing or income status.

**Economic security is essential to housing security and mental health and wellbeing.** We recognize economic security plays an important role in both housing security and mental health. Securing employment or basic income is essential to ending and preventing homelessness.

**Step 4: Guiding Principles**

[Insert Here]

What philosophies guide your programs, products and services and/or your policies and systems? You might also include philosophies that guide your customer service, employment practices, and/or team or organizational culture. Essentially, how should people be treated at every level and interaction within your organization, as well as externally, and why? 3-5 statements are common.

Example

**Empowerment.** Our programs and services are guided by an empowerment philosphy. We believe that all people can overcome barriers when provided with the right information, tools, resources and opportunities.

**Trauma Informed Care.** We recognize the correlation between victims of trauma, discrimination, poverty, stigma and abuse, and the roles these have in homelnessess, substance use and even criminal conduct. We are committed to creating and fostering an organization culture where all people, including our board, staff, volunteers, donors, clients, customers and community partners, are treated with kindess, compassion, dignity and respect.

**Step 5: Values**

[Insert Here]

Above all else, at any level of the organization, from governance and leadership to policies, fundraising and customer service approaches, what will you *prioritize* the most? 3-5 statements are common.

Example

**Self-Determination.** We value the importance of self-determination, assertive communication and personal boundaries. We aim to create a culture where all people are aware of their own rights and responsibilities and have the tools to assert themselves to meet their basic needs and achieve their goals.

**Innovative Solutions.** We are interested in and committed to exploring new and innovative solutions to end and prevent homelessness. We recognize traditional means have not provided the best results to end homelessness, and we actively seek partnerships with compassionate innovators, problem solvers, and community leaders whose core beliefs and guiding principles align with our own.

**Success.** We are committed to achieving our mission, and celebrating the success of our board, staff, volunteers, customers, clients, community partners and donors at every opportunity.

**Step 6: Complete and Save!**

We’ll add this to your Operations Manual!