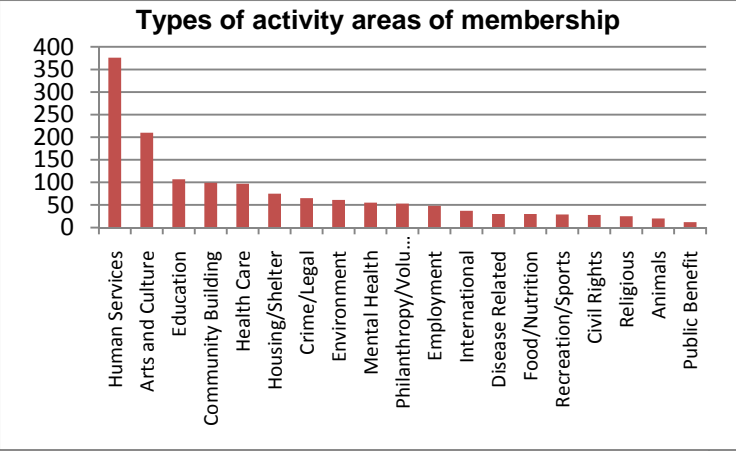
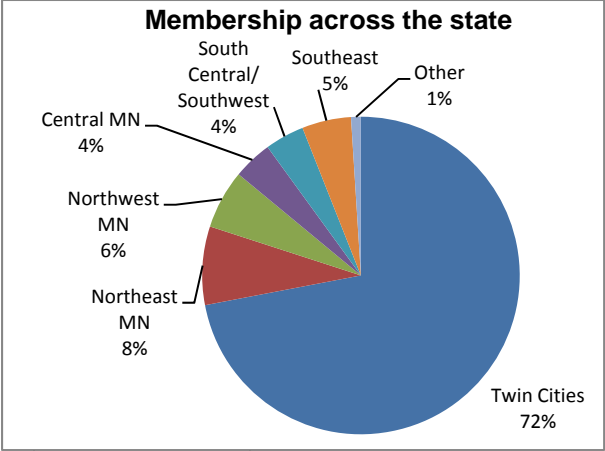




# Minnesota Council of Nonprofits Strategic Plan 2010-2014

Approved by majority vote of the board of directors, November 17, 2009

<b>Our Vision</b>	Nonprofit organizations accomplish their missions for a healthy, cooperative and just society.
<b>Our Mission</b>	MCN informs, promotes, connects and strengthens individual nonprofits and the nonprofit sector.
<b>Who We Serve</b>	<p>MCN is a statewide membership association made up of 2,000 nonprofits and is the largest state association of nonprofits in the U.S. Through MCN, nonprofits join together across interest areas to work on issues of common concern to all.</p> <p><b>MCN's members represent geographic diversity wide range activity areas.</b></p>



<b>Our Programs and Services</b>	<p><b>MCN accomplishes its mission in five ways:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education and professional development for nonprofit managers and leaders;</li> <li>• Public policy education and civic engagement;</li> <li>• Cost saving product partnerships;</li> <li>• Research on nonprofit sector trends and tax and budget issues; and</li> <li>• Advocacy at local, state and federal levels.</li> </ul>
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<b>Our Goals: 2010 – 2014</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Strengthen the economic sustainability of individual nonprofits and the nonprofit sector.</b></li> <li>2. <b>Deepen relationships among member organizations to increase knowledge, effectiveness and capacity for collective action.</b></li> <li>3. <b>Build bridges between nonprofits and key institutions (business, local government, philanthropy, etc.) to increase partnership and cooperation.</b></li> <li>4. <b>Increase opportunities for cost saving programs, shared services and shared spaces.</b></li> <li>5. <b>Strengthen nonprofit community engagement.</b></li> </ol>
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## Background and Context

Nonprofits in Minnesota face many challenges and opportunities. MCN embarked on a strategic planning process as the recession of 2009 – 2010 began to take hold. Both MCN's strategic planning committee and board of directors developed this strategic plan with the understanding that MCN would play a central role to help nonprofits move into this new operating environment.

While several elements of this strategic plan address immediate economic conditions, the overall plan is designed to ensure that Minnesota's nonprofits are well prepared for what comes next.

MCN understands that in today's environment Minnesota's nonprofit boards and managers are under great pressure to make timely, strategic decisions about their own operations – and require up-to-date information as they make plans for staffing, possible mergers or even dissolution and that MCN is uniquely positioned to – deliver critical data and tools so that Minnesota's charitable organizations can be as successful as possible under the circumstances. Throughout this plan, you will see reference to how MCN provides the information, resources and support that nonprofits need to effectively manage and lead.

MCN's organizational competencies are:

- **Provide timely, relevant and accessible education and training** MCN's educational offerings cover topics including financial management, communications, fundraising, communications and leadership MCN provides the resources and support that nonprofits need to effectively manage and lead their organizations.
- **Build the capacity of nonprofits to be their own best voice** MCN builds the capacity of nonprofit leaders to be confident and competent voices on issues that impact their constituents and communities by providing them with workshops, briefings and other resources. MCN is also increases the ability of nonprofits to be involved in nonpartisan civic engagement activities with information, training and resources targeted to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations.
- **Extend access to cost saving opportunities** MCN draws upon the expertise and knowledge of its network of 2,000 nonprofit organizations to develop programs and services. MCN members receive discounts on publications, reduced rates of 25-30% on workshops and conferences, access to member-only workshops and resources, and are able to participate in cost saving programs.
- **Provide targeted information on sector trends and tax and budget issues** MCN studies nonprofit sector trends and also conducts nonpartisan research on state and federal tax and budget issues impacting nonprofits. From the *Minnesota Nonprofit Economy Report* that showcases the impact of nonprofits on the state's economy; to the Nonprofit Salary and Benefit Survey a unique benchmarking study MCN provides nonprofit leaders with timely and relevant information to make sound strategic decisions
- **Keep the world safe for nonprofits** MCN members come together to advocate on behalf of all nonprofits at the state Legislature, with county and city governments and with Minnesota's federal congressional delegation. To ensure that nonprofits are educated and engaged on key issues, MCN hosts information briefings and communicates via its e-newsletters and blog.



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## Our Goals: 2010 – 2014

### **Goal 1: Strengthen the economic sustainability of individual nonprofits and the nonprofit sector.**

MCN's members ask MCN for information, resources and support to help them navigate the economy. MCN is uniquely positioned to play a role as a leader in this area statewide providing thought leadership, resources and tools as well as drive the discussion about sustainable models. Nonprofit leaders specifically need access to information on current conditions facing the sector, how to demonstrate and communicate their impact and to imagine what a redesigned sector will look like.

#### **Strategies:**

- a) Create practical tools and applications to increase the operational capacity of small to mid-sized organizations to deliver effective services.
  - b) Deliver timely fiscal data, revenue trends and projections on Minnesota's nonprofit economy.
  - c) Enhance the public dialogue on nonprofit sustainability by producing practical analyses on the realities of the nonprofit economy and appropriate management strategies.
  - d) Provide strategic guidance to nonprofit employers to enhance affordability and purchasing power in health insurance decision making.
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### **Goal 2: Deepen relationships among member organizations to increase knowledge, effectiveness and capacity for collective action.**

MCN's members turn to MCN as a natural convener for the sector. MCN will intentionally foster connections between members both geographic, within interest areas and between interest areas. MCN members have a great deal to gain by sharing information and working together on issues of common interest.

#### **Strategies:**

- a) Establish and leverage existing collaborative online channels for MCN members to contribute information, exchange goods and services, and evaluate ideas and resources.
  - b) Facilitate opportunities for networks of nonprofits to organize coalitions around issues or constituencies to increase their leverage.
  - c) Convene MCN members in cooperation with other existing infrastructure organizations in critical issue discussions on the nonprofit sector and sub-sectors.
  - d) Expand the number of MCN chapters and strengthen their role in building influence for their communities.
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## **Goal 3: Build bridges between nonprofits and key institutions (business, local government, philanthropy, etc.) to increase partnership and cooperation.**

MCN needs to work effectively and has an interest in ensuring that different sectors understand and act in the best interests of nonprofits and the people that they serve. With this in mind, MCN will work to promote opportunities for education and understanding between and among these groups.

### **Strategies:**

- a) Provide education and improve understanding around key issues of common interest and importance to build healthy organizations a healthy nonprofit sector.
  - b) Strengthen connections and where appropriate promote policy changes with key groups that interface with nonprofits.
  - c) Create venues so that nonprofits have a place at the table on state and federal policy decisions regarding future changes in health care.
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## **Goal 4: Increase opportunities for cost saving programs and shared services and shared spaces.**

During the next several years there will be an increasing need for nonprofits to make the most of what is available – by taking advantage of efficiencies and economies of scale from group purchasing. MCN will provide access to more robust cost savings opportunities. MCN will also provide increased access to expertise on these issues and a framework for better understanding the legal and/or financial implications of sharing services and spaces..

### **Strategies:**

- a) Increase nonprofit familiarity with the advantages and options across the continuum of collective action.
  - b) Make tools and templates available to organizations assessing shared services or shared space arrangements.
  - c) Expand cost-saving programs for nonprofits.
  - d) Explore the feasibility of a “Minnesota nonprofit center” and decide whether or not to take action.
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## **Goal 5: Strengthen nonprofit community engagement.**

Nonprofits are rooted in deep and trusting relationships in their communities, positioning these organizations to educate and mobilize individuals around the issues that matter to them. To effectively do this, nonprofits need to build the skills and experience that will enable them to effectively engage with and adapt to address the changing needs of their constituents and communities. MCN will play a critical role in providing a framework, information and resources, and education and support so these organizations can fully realize their power to affect change.

### **Strategies:**

- a) Increase the capacity of nonprofits to influence issues that impact their constituents and communities.
- b) Increase nonprofit commitment, skills and capacity to be civically engaged leaders in their communities.
- c) Promote network leadership as an effective means for nonprofits to mobilize their communities.



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## About MCN's Strategic Planning Process

MCN's 2010-2014 strategic planning process began in December 2008 and included: four committee meetings; member focus groups in the Twin Cities, Mankato and Saint Cloud; personal interviews with members from the Duluth region; and a member survey. The process was intentional about gathering information from a variety of sources and people that would help provide important insight into MCN's future direction.

## Strategic Planning Committee Members

**Susie Brown, *Chair*, Executive Director**  
Childcare Works

**Kate Barr, Executive Director**  
Nonprofits Assistance Fund

**Candice Harshner, Executive Director**  
Program for the Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault  
(PAVSA)

**Pham Thi Hoa, Executive Director**  
Center for Asians and Pacific Islanders

**Laura Johansson, Executive Director**  
Joyce Bilingual Preschool

**Carla Johnson, Vice President, Partner Relations**  
Second Harvest Heartland

**Mark Lindberg, Director of Operations &  
International**  
Medtronic Foundation

**David Marty, Executive Director**  
Reif Arts Council

**Keith Parker, Senior Manager**  
Twin Cities Public Television

**Jeff Prauer, Executive Director**  
Metropolitan Regional Arts Council

**Shannon Robinson, Executive Director**  
Twin Rivers Center for the Arts

**Marsha Shotley, Vice President, Board and  
Community Relations, BCBSM  
President, Blue Cross Foundation**  
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota  
Foundation

**Craig Luedemann, *Ex-Officio*, Executive Director**  
YouthCARE

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**Leslie Nitabach, Development Manager**  
***Strategic Planning Coordinator***  
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

**Stephanie Haddad, Program Director**  
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

**Nan Madden, Minnesota Budget Project Director**  
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

**Jon Pratt, Executive Director**  
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

**Sondra Reis, Associate Director**  
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits