



Survive & Thrive Plan

The Water Conservation Garden's Survive & Thrive Program has been developed to address a financial deficit in The Garden's operating budget. Despite surviving the pandemic, The Garden faces residual challenges including loan repayments and other decreasing funds. The Survive & Thrive Program aims to develop a recovery plan and keep The Garden moving forward and growing.

Phase I: Survive

The Garden has been operating in "survival mode". Each day is a firefight requiring attention to short-term, immediate needs. Phase I of the Survive & Thrive Program is to ensure The Garden can continue operating over the next six-months.

Goals:

- Generate short-term revenue to continue garden operations.
- Identify short-term bridge funding opportunities.
- Identify people, entities, and strategies that can help increase revenue.
- Assess ways to decrease expenses.

Steps:

- **Look at accounts payable and receivable:** follow-up on late payments and evaluate expenses over the next 30 to 90 days. Partial payments to vendors might be necessary.
- **Evaluate staffing options:** Assess current staffing levels, including full-time and part-time staff. While layoffs/furloughs are not desirable, The Garden will assess the impact of reducing by 10%-70% over the next 30, 60, 90, and 120 days.
- **Create a Survival Plan:** determine how staff will be utilized and possible short-term pay cuts. Give staff, board and advisory board members the opportunity to submit suggestions.
- **Develop creative revenue solutions:** Look at ways to increase revenue from donations, memberships, events, program contracts, admissions, and other revenue sources.
- **Bank Loans:** Approach banks to draw a line of credit. If unsuccessful, try to negotiate with existing loan repayment officers on repayment schedule or late fees.
- **Joint Powers of Authority (JPA) Assistance:** Approach the JPA for survival funds and escalate conversations to investigate business model and renegotiate JPA contract.
- **Ask community for help:** Turn to the community for help. Approach major donors, annual fund donors, grantors, sponsors, and other community members to help The Garden keep its doors open.

Phase II: Thrive

The thrive paradigm focuses on growth mode. The Garden will start turning attention away from metaphorical firefighting and crisis management. The thrive era will include having a clear vision and taking powerful action based on this vision.

Goals:

- Raise awareness of The Garden and our mission.
- Increase support from donors, volunteers, and other stakeholders.
- Align resources and growth strategies with Strategic Plan goals.
- Increase financial stability in a realistic and feasible way.
- Create a positive work environment.

Steps:

- **Generate purpose-driven communication:** create a Marketing and Communications Plan utilizing The Garden's annual Marketing and Communications Calendar. Encourage open communication including sharing updates, addressing concerns, and actively listening to feedback.
- **Update strategic plan:** stay current and realign short-term and long-term goals to reflect current operating conditions. Led by the Strategic Planning Committee, meetings are held twice a year and include community consultation, moderated by a third-party consultant.
- **Set business strategy:** Evaluate current business model and possible other frameworks to support organizational growth.
- **Make financial improvements:** Assess accounting, bookkeeping, and auditing services. Look at in-house and outsourced accounting options in conjunction with The Garden's Strategic Plan.
- **Investment Policy:** Utilize board approved Investment Policy, including fundraising for The Garden's reserve fund. This fund will allow The Garden stability during times where revenue fluctuates but expenses are constant.
- **Invest in staff:** Assess areas where staff training is needed to reinvest in existing staff. Training could help improve satisfaction, productivity, engagement, and retention.
- **Reduce staff burnout:** employees are the backbone of any nonprofit. Prioritizing employee wellbeing could help foster a positive work environment and promote resilience.
- **Build strong relationships:** cultivating and stewarding a strong support network is important to building trust, confidence, and motivation to help The Garden grow.
- **Collect and analyze data:** data analytics help nonprofits track changes, spot opportunities for growth, and provide evidence of our nonprofit's impact.
- **Diversify revenue streams:** explore new opportunities to diversify revenue streams. Overtime diversification can allow The Garden to create a sustainable path for stability and growth.

Phase III: Transform

Nonprofit transformation is more than a strategy for growth and improvement. It's about completely reinventing who we are. The Garden's transformation will be designed to boost overall performance, increase revenue, and adjust to changing community needs.

Goals:

- Create a proactive rather than reactive operating model.
- Mitigate risks that lie ahead and seek new opportunities.
- Increase visibility and reach new audiences.
- Recognize and partner with community leaders who believe in The Garden's potential.

Steps:

- **Develop a new financial model:** Evaluate revenue and expenses, capital improvements needed, and program opportunities. Agree on a sustainable financial model that will grow and transform The Garden. The business model should create value for the community and sustain operations.
- **Assess organizational structure:** Assess gaps in the organizational structure and align staff resources to meet Strategic Plan goals.
- **Develop a Master Plan:** Complete Master Plan and devise funding plan for various capital improvement projects.
- **Rebrand:** refreshing our nonprofit's brand identity could increase its visibility, connect with new stakeholders, and clarify the organization's mission. Create a thoughtful re-brand strategy, inclusive of community involvement and feedback as well as financial investment.
- **Encourage naming opportunities:** Prominent, highly visible naming opportunities are a public opportunity to recognize philanthropic support and secure much-needed funds to provide important programs to the community.
- **Generate new programs:** Continue to meet changing community needs by designing, implementing, and marketing new programs.