

## Creating a Mission Statement

Your mission statement informs your goals and aligns goals to the purpose of your organization. Mission statements quickly outline your purpose to anyone outside the organization which is crucial when recruiting new members, going out into the community or communicating with potential funders. Here are some tips on how to create a mission statement:

1. **Find Your Story:** Why does your organization do what it does? What does your organization do well? Focus on these ideas when creating your mission statement.
2. **So What? Who Cares?** Identify key elements that are important. and consider who your work benefits most. Look for people in the community who care deeply about the issue you intend to address. For example, if you are focusing on finding homes for stray animals research current community solutions and who and how these impact the community. Who are constituencies with a vested interest in the cause? Are there homes where pets have been lost or are willing to foster/adopt strays? Is there an animal shelter nearby where volunteers are needed?
3. **What do you Hope to Achieve?** Brainstorm outcomes. This is critical. Solution focused organizations are key. Many people can point out problems, but few can offer solutions. Do not assume a community is interested in your solution. Do your homework and focus on active, outcome based solutions.
4. **What Makes You Different?** If there are other organizations doing similar work to yours, what makes yours different? Can you develop partnerships with existing organizations? Identify this in your mission statement because it will help set your organization apart.

A mission statement should be clear, powerful, and broad enough to guide your decision-making and help explain your organization's efforts. Develop a list with your members focused on: values, core services, and unique attributes using one or two sentences no more than five-six.

Example Mission Statements from Nonprofits:

**TED:** Spreading Ideas. (2 words)

**The Humane Society:** Celebrating Animals, Confronting Cruelty. (4)

**Public Broadcasting System (PBS):** To create content that educates, informs and inspires. (8)

**National Wildlife Federation:** Inspiring Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future. (9)

**The Nature Conservancy:** To conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. (11)

**Invisible Children:** To bring a permanent end to LRA atrocities. (8)

**Livestrong:** To inspire and empower people affected by cancer. (8)

**New York Public Library:** To inspire lifelong learning, advance knowledge, and strengthen our communities. (10)