

# How to Create an Adaptive Plan

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Sample plan and template



# How to create an adaptive plan

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When creating an **adaptive strategic plan**, leaders balance the [long and short view](#). They recognize that a vision of the organization's **long-term destination** acts as a north star to guide the team's decision making over time, while using **near-term priorities** to pull up on what is most important to achieve right now.

Adaptive planning is also characterized by a willingness to consider what might go wrong. Adaptive planners explicitly aim to **identify risks and opportunities**, so they are prepared to pivot quickly as circumstances require.

You and your team can use this document to think through critical strategic priorities for your organization to pursue over **the next 12 to 24 months (your two-year destination) and plan for the unexpected**.

Please see the example on each page and then fill out the following blank page for your own organization.

*Thank you to [Fresh Lifelines for Youth](#) for making their sample adaptive plan, created during their participation in [Bridgespan's Leadership Accelerator](#), available in this document.*

# Sample: Our destination in two years

## Two-year impact destination

In two years, we will have adaptively weathered the storm of COVID-19 and seized the increased momentum for racial justice to lay the foundation for key wins in Phase 2 [of our 10-year strategic vision].

This progress will be demonstrated by targeted expansion of FLY's presence in California, through direct service work and likely field-building.

## Two-year organization destination

We will have built the infrastructure and credibility to establish FLY as a statewide leader, and made progress toward a sustainable business model for Lifeline Institute and systems change work.

# Our destination in two years

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## Two-year impact destination

In two years, we will:

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This progress will be demonstrated by:

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*This section focuses on the impact your organization seeks in the world*

## Two-year organization destination

We will have ...

*This section focuses on how your organization may need to change to get there*

# Sample: Our priorities

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## The critical priorities we need to pursue in order to reach our destination

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- **Evidence building:** FLY will develop the organizational muscle needed to adopt a rapid-cycle testing approach to evidence-building, continuous quality improvement, and strategic growth initiatives.
- **Expansion of services:** FLY will be deeply present in its current three counties through direct service and systems change work that responds to community needs. We will also expand our services to two more counties.
- **Systems change:** FLY will support juvenile justice reform statewide. We will be both responsive and preemptive in our support of good policy, good practice, and elevating youth voice.
- **Elevating the field:** To increase the capacity of our field, FLY will explore opportunities to launch the Lifeline Institute, a training and technical assistance arm of FLY's direct services and system change work.

# Our priorities

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The critical priorities we need to pursue in order to reach our destination

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# Sample: What activities should we plan to pursue in the next 6 months?



**Priority:** FLY will support juvenile justice reform statewide. We will be both responsive and preemptive in our support of good policy, good practice, and elevating youth voice.

## What accomplishments and activities should we plan to pursue in the next 6 months?

- Attend trainings, webinars, and town halls to learn what’s going on in the field
- Develop an internal systems change team to help field and vet opportunities
- Pursue funding opportunities specifically focused on systems change
- Engage current funders as thought partners on systems change work

### What hurdles do we expect to face in the next six months?

### How could we take action in the next 6 months, either to mitigate the effect of something happening outside of your control, or to test and learn?

We are ineffective from lack of know-how or we miss opportunities given pace of change

Once we have systems change team capacity, experiment with vetting opportunities in real-time; build a network of experts and thought leaders to advise us as we vet initial opportunities

We don’t have the capacity to do the work to its full potential

Experiment with using volunteers and Board members to pursue opportunities

Brainstorm with FLY staff and youth on what opportunities we should pursue.

Systems change work may negatively impact our partner relationships

Communicate our plans for systems change early and often with our key partners

Build in opportunities to discuss our approach to systems change in our upcoming conversations with different partners

# What activities should we plan to pursue in the next 6 months?

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Priority:

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