



2016-2019

God's Storehouse Strategic Plan



750 Memorial Drive

Danville, VA 24541

www.godsstorehouse.org

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Executive Summary

For 29 years, God's Storehouse has provided boxes of food to those in need in Danville and Pittsylvania County. From humble beginnings, God's Storehouse has transitioned from a handful of volunteers in a small building on Wooding Avenue, to a little larger facility in 1997 on Westover Drive, and then to our present location in 2011 at 750 Memorial Drive. With each year, God's Storehouse has seen an increase of those in need of food and has worked to feed families who are hungry.

Given the level of service God's Storehouse provides to those in need in our area and the amount of monetary and food donations received, the Board of Directors has strategically assessed the scope of operations, the organization's successes and challenges, and the values that drive its work (Appendix A). Equipped with an in-depth understanding of community needs, organizational capacity, and a vision of service, a new strategic plan was designed and adopted by the Board in 2016. The plan will guide the organization as it addresses its five goals:

1. Establish a revenue and expense management plan to ensure long-term sustainability of services and programs.
2. Provide healthy, nutritious food for distribution to God's Storehouse customers.
3. Connect God's Storehouse customers to educational programs provided by collaborating partners that encourage and enable our customers to manage their financial resources, find and maintain employment, and adopt healthy eating habits and lifestyles.
4. Secure volunteers to support programs and services of God's Storehouse.
5. Design an organizational staffing, management structure, and evaluation process to ensure efficient daily operations and a continued focus on fund raising, marketing, and grant writing.

The Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and community champions of God's Storehouse will use the 2016-2018 strategic plan as its call to action. Working as collaborative partners, God's Storehouse will achieve its mission to *work throughout the Danville and Pittsylvania County communities to collect food, distribute food resources to those in need, promote nutrition, and connect customers to local resources with the help of the local faith-based community, businesses, schools, and volunteers.*

Origins and Relationship to our Community

In February 1987, representatives from several churches of different denominations met to consider pooling their individual food pantries into a single area-wide organized facility. A suitable building at 123 Wooding Avenue was acquired, and the project began to take shape.

God's Storehouse, a non-profit, non-membership corporation with the general management vested in a Board of Directors, opened for business just before Thanksgiving in 1987. Through this organization, food was provided to qualified individuals and/or families who met income criteria with the need determined by the number of household members and the total household income. Individuals or families could obtain food every two weeks with periodic review of eligibility required.

In June, 1988, the Storehouse began the distribution of surplus USDA food to persons eligible for food stamps. This program is now known as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and the Storehouse still gets USDA food (commodities) free through Feeding America Southwest Virginia, a food bank in Salem, Virginia. SNAP participants may receive one distribution in a calendar month. These commodities are supplemented by foods donated or purchased by God's Storehouse.

By 1996, the need for our services had grown so much that God's Storehouse began looking for a larger facility. The Storehouse received the annual United Parcel Service Foundation grant of \$100,000 for the building expansion program. This money, together with other donations, enabled the Storehouse to purchase the former Triangle Furniture building on Westover Drive. God's Storehouse opened its doors to the community at this new and improved location on August 11, 1997.

The demand for our services continued to grow and the limitations of the Westover Drive facility reached the point that in 2008 the Board began considering another relocation. The former Blackwell Chrysler Plymouth dealership on Memorial Drive was purchased and renovated to meet the warehouse and delivery needs of the Storehouse. In September 2011, customers began receiving services from this new location. As the number of customers continued to grow, the volunteers have often commented about how impossible it would have been to serve the increased need in the Westover Drive location.

Most of the work of God's Storehouse is performed by volunteers from area faith communities. At present, over 150 faith communities in Danville and Pittsylvania County participate in the mission of God's Storehouse. However, there is need for employed staff. In 2016, there are five staff members on the payroll: Director, Assistant Director, Warehouse Manager, Van Driver, and USDA Clerk. In addition, there are two workers paid by the Southern Area Agency on Aging. From 2013 until 2016, God's Storehouse has been able to fund two AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers assigned to us. These positions focused on capacity building and sustainability for volunteer coordination, a weekend feeding program for school children, marketing, fund raising and grant writing. Also,



in the fall of 2015, God's Storehouse was assigned an AmeriCorps State position. This 27 hour per week position managed the day-to-day operations of the Malcom Huckabee Backpacks Program, a weekend children's feeding program.

The food distributed by God's Storehouse comes from many sources. In addition to the commodities for the SNAP participants, some food is purchased from the Feeding America Southwest Virginia Food Bank in Salem or other sources. Such purchased food can be distributed at the Storehouse's discretion. Much food is provided by donations, the largest of which is the annual U.S. Letter Carriers' *Stamp Out Hunger* food drive. Many faith communities, schools, civic organizations and other groups contribute food and cash throughout the year. Hunters for the Hungry donate venison with local businesses such as Food Lion supermarkets, Sam's Club, Aldi, Chatham Subway, O'Kelly's Deli & Pastry, and Target contributing produce, bread, deli and bakery products, and meats to us weekly. Various individuals as well as organizations (such as the Society of St. Andrew and Gleaning for the World) provide surplus farm products in season. We also have a partnership with God's Pit Crew and receive Gatorade and miscellaneous boxes of food and hygiene products at least twice each month in exchange for a small donation.



In the spring of 2013, we piloted a weekend feeding program with 66 kindergarteners at Woodberry Hills Elementary School. That fall we began the program with 129 kindergarteners and first graders. The board agreed to call the program the Malcom Huckabee Backpacks Program in memory of long time board member and past board president, Malcom Huckabee. Then in March of 2014, with additional funding from the Hughes Memorial Foundation and the Womack Foundation, we were able to offer the program to second and third graders, increasing the number served to 203. Fall 2014, the program again was offered to kindergarten through third grade with 171 children. In the fall of 2015, the Malcom Huckabee Backpacks Program began serving just over 300 children in kindergarten through fifth grade, representing 75 percent of the school. Teachers and the principal report this program has a tremendous impact and greatly aids the children by enhancing their readiness to learn.



Monetary donations are essential to the continuing operation of God's Storehouse. Operational expenses include facility upkeep and maintenance, utilities, insurance, vehicle and other equipment operational costs, as well as personnel. God's Storehouse has (for 2016) an annual operating budget of \$399,550.

The mission of God's Storehouse is to collect and distribute large quantities of food to the poor, the elderly and children in Danville and Pittsylvania County. We have an unwritten agreement with the Northern Pittsylvania County Food Pantry to serve those below Chatham, Virginia. We will refer customers that live north of Chatham to the Northern Pittsylvania County Food Pantry. In addition, we limit our food drives to faith communities and businesses below Chatham and any food collected in Chatham and above during the Postal Worker food drive goes to the Northern Pittsylvania County Food Pantry.

The God's Storehouse motto is, "United to Feed the Hungry". After years of successful operation, the original goal of reaching the needy with food is still being met. God's Storehouse is very grateful for the support of the Danville and Pittsylvania County communities.

Mission, Values, and Vision

Our Mission

God's Storehouse works throughout the Danville and Pittsylvania County communities to collect food, distribute food resources to those in need, promote nutrition, and connect customers to local resources with the help of the local faith-based community, businesses, schools, and volunteers.

Our Values

The staff, board, and volunteers of God's Storehouse believe that all residents of our community that are in need of sustenance should be provided with nutritious and ample provisions. We partner with groups and individuals of all backgrounds who share this commitment and are willing to invest their time and resources in this work.

Our work is guided by these values:

- **Equity:** We serve all qualified residents no matter their age, race, gender and past.
- **Respect:** We serve our customers with respect and compassion recognizing each person as our neighbor and friend, building relationships and an environment of trust.
- **Engagement:** We engage all our partners including volunteers, donors, and community members in achieving our vision and in connecting our customers with vital resources outside of our walls that will support their growth and transformation.
- **Integrity:** We operate with transparency, fairness, kindness, honesty, and commitment to the mission of God's Storehouse.

Our Vision

God's Storehouse envisions a community where those in need of nourishment can be fed and nurtured.

Strengths and Challenges

God's Storehouse functions as the primary nonprofit food pantry serving those in need in Danville and Pittsylvania County. With the support and collaboration of over 150 faith communities and numerous volunteers, we have been able to serve a diverse population while promoting healthy nutrition.

Our customers consist of the elderly, disabled, single parents, low income families and individuals/families receiving SNAP (formerly called Food Stamps). We see all races, ages, males and females, single and married. Hunger knows no color, age, race or gender. On average, God's Storehouse serves 190 families a day and 136 new families each month. Since 2004, the number of boxes of food distributed has increased by 124% in order to meet the need in our community.

Strengths

Faith Communities. Because we were started by various faith groups in the community and receive consistent monetary support, the relationship with the area faith communities is our greatest asset. Whenever we are in need of food donations and/or monetary donations, the faith communities come together to meet the need. Many will commit to one to two weeks each year to send their members to God's Storehouse to volunteer. They host food drives and collect funds at special services or during their regular time of worship. Many have pledged a percentage of their mission budget to be sent to God's Storehouse on a monthly basis.

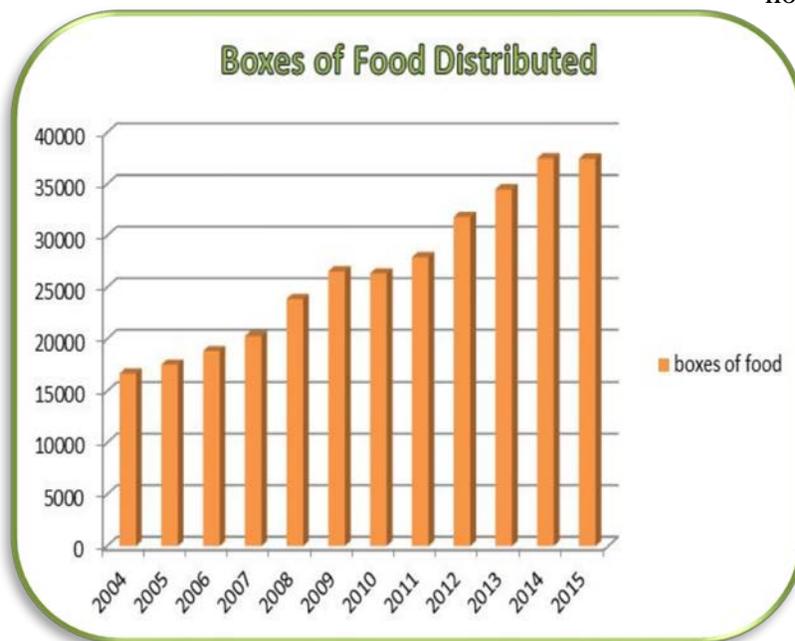
Volunteers. Another vital asset is all our volunteers. Each week we average approximately 80 volunteers. We could not serve the numbers we do without each volunteer. In 2014, we had 881 volunteers who contributed over 21,400 hours of their time to serve at God's Storehouse. They perform a variety of duties: greeting customers, checking customers in, completing paperwork, distributing food, stocking shelves, assembling boxes, processing donations, picking up donations, etc. With only five on staff, it would be impossible for the staff to fill all the positions required during our food distribution

hours. We must have 20-25 volunteers each day in order run efficiently and effectively and be able to distribute food to all who come to God's Storehouse for assistance.

Facility. Our facility on 750 Memorial Drive is another asset. Since moving to our renovated facility in 2011, we have seen a 40 percent increase in the number of customers we serve. This tells us we are reaching the population most in need. At our Westover location, we had extremely limited parking, were not easily

Strengths

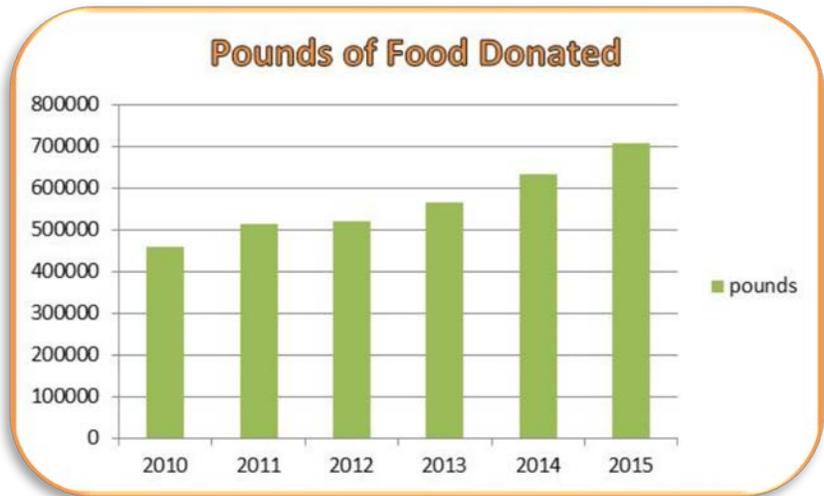
- Multiple Faith Groups**
- 80 Volunteers donating over 21,000 hours**
- 1 Facility**
- Donations**
- Community Support**



accessible to those riding the bus, were not in close proximity to the population in greatest need, had limited storage space, and small office and food distribution areas that could only accommodate 50-75 people at one time. Our current location has ample parking for volunteers and customers. We are located on a main bus route with a bus stop located at our front door and directly across the street. From a mapping that was done of our customers, we learned that a majority of the population we serve lives within a 3-mile radius of our location. Many are able to walk to our location to pick up their food box. Our warehouse has plenty of space for storing and assembling boxes of food. We've been able to add pallet shelving for storage and have one large freezer, a smaller 8ft x10ft freezer and a large walk in refrigerator. Our customer processing and food distribution areas are large and can accommodate a total of 100 people at any one time. In addition, we have an instructional kitchen that is used by Virginia Cooperative Extension's Program Assistant to teach cooking classes to our customers. There is ample space to allow various providers an opportunity to deliver additional services such as flu shots, blood pressure checks, cancer resource information, and other resources to our customers.

Community Support. Danville and Pittsylvania County are very giving communities. Time after time, when God's

Storehouse has been low or out of food to distribute, the community has come forward and filled the gaps. Community support is another asset for God's Storehouse. The community is our source for volunteers, monetary donations, event participants, food drive sponsors, and regular food donations that stock our shelves. In the summer of 2014, we were extremely low on food and our shelves were almost bare. With the support from the Danville Register and Bee, a front page news story was published, and both food and monetary donations from the community poured in.



When turkeys were needed for our 2014 Thanksgiving food boxes, Steve Padgett Honda Dealership sponsored a turkey drive resulting in a donation of over 400 turkeys. In 2015, a former God's Storehouse customer created a "GoFundMe" site and received front page news coverage for his generosity. Because of this one person, \$6,468 was raised and 332 turkeys were purchased. Overall, over \$15,000 was received between November and December for the purchase of meat for the food boxes.

Each year for the last five years, Danville Dental Associates has held its "Give Thanks for Smiles" fund raiser to benefit God's Storehouse. One day a year they offer cleanings, fillings, and extractions for \$50 with proceeds coming to God's Storehouse. Over \$17,500 has been donated because of this effort.

In the summer of 2015, a partnership with the Danville Farmers' Market, United Way, the Health Collaborative, Get Fit Danville and God's Storehouse resulted in a Farmers' Foodshare Donation Station being established at the farmers' market each Saturday from end of June until close of the market October 31. The farmers' market in Chatham also participated. Customers of the market could donate fresh produce or make a monetary donation. The donated money was spent with the farmers. Many times farmers gave extra or donated their leftovers at the end of the market. This resulted in over 5,000 pounds of fresh produce coming to God's Storehouse for distribution to our customers.

Every day, we experience the community's generosity and willingness to help the less fortunate. We could not serve the numbers we do without this support which is vital to our success and our ability to provide food to the hungry in our area.

Challenges

Nutritious, Healthy Food. Access to nutritious, healthy food for our customers continues to be an obstacle to achieving our mission. God's Storehouse is very dependent on donations as a source of food for our customers. However, not all donated food meets the nutritional needs of our customers. We find many donated items are low in nutritional value, high in fat, questionable quality, nearing or at expiration date, and high in sugar. A majority of the food we purchase is canned food; dry goods such as rice, beans or cereal; and long shelf-life items. These foods are typically high in sodium and preservatives and do not represent healthy options.

The Farmers' Foodshare Donation launched in 2015 is a wonderful addition to our customers' food choices providing locally grown, healthy produce. However, the quantity does not meet the demand when we are serving approximately 190 families per day. In addition, we discovered that our customers were not familiar with much of the produce and did not know how to prepare it.

Because of the rising obesity and health issues in our area, God's Storehouse needs to encourage and promote healthy eating to our customers. From an article in the Danville Register & Bee, the following was reported:

- Pittsylvania County's obesity rate was 33 percent, 5 percentage points above the state's 28-percent figure, according to the update. Also, just 34 percent of county residents had access to exercise — such as a park or trail — compared to 81 percent of state residents.
- Pittsylvania County had a 14 percent diabetes rate.
- The county ranked 79 out of 133 jurisdictions in the state for health care indicators.
- In the Dan River Region, just 9 percent of residents reported eating the recommended 5 to 7 servings of fruits and vegetables per day, compared to 27.3 percent across Virginia and 23.5 percent nationwide.



- The region's obesity rate was 37 percent, while Virginia's and the nation's rate were 29 percent and 28 percent, respectively.



Response to Feed Hungry Children. Sustainability of the Malcom Huckabee Backpacks Program is another challenge God's Storehouse faces. In 2012/2013, an AmeriCorps VISTA completed a study for implementing a school children's weekend feeding program with a pilot program conducted in the spring of 2013. At that time, Danville reported 75 percent of its students were on free or reduced lunches. Among Danville's schools, Woodberry Hills Elementary had 90 percent of its students on free or reduced lunches. In cooperation with the Danville Public School superintendent and the principal at Woodberry, God's Storehouse began the Malcom Huckabee Backpacks

Program for the 2013/2014 school year serving kindergarten through first grade. The program is now in its third year with 300 students and was offered to the entire school, kindergarten through fifth grade. The program has been very fortunate to receive substantial funding from local grant funders. Although this program is extremely important, God's Storehouse struggles to balance its fundraising for its primary program of food distribution and its need to fund a \$66,000 feeding program for children.

The coordination and management of the backpacks program requires an extraordinary amount of manpower. The program has been coordinated by an AmeriCorps Vista and an AmeriCorps State position. However, these positions will not be renewed after June 2016.



Volunteers and Part-time Staff. Recruiting and retaining volunteers and staff is a challenge for God's Storehouse. Volunteers are vital to our ability to keep our doors open and serve those in need of food. God's Storehouse is fortunate to have five paid staff, but it is through our 20-25 volunteers a day that we are able to serve the large numbers of hungry people in our area. We are heavily dependent on our volunteers and cannot conduct our daily operations without their support. A big challenge for God's Storehouse is recruiting and retaining a diverse group of individuals to serve in the various volunteer positions on a regular basis or on an ad-hoc basis. We have volunteers who commit to a particular position and to a specific day and time. However, these volunteers go on vacation, have doctor's appointments, family emergencies, or get sick and we must replace them, sometimes at the last minute. Paid staff does not have the capacity to serve the heavy customer demand; therefore, it is vital that we recruit and retain volunteers who can fill regular positions or serve as a substitute when a regular volunteer is out.

Sustainable Funding. Sustainable funding continues to challenge God’s Storehouse and requires innovative efforts to solicit donations, secure grant funding, and raise money from the community through events. The Board has been a good steward of every dollar donated by its champions and has worked to reduce operating costs and increase efficiency. Realizing that the operation of our organization is dependent upon our donors, strategies must be considered for new funding sources and even more efficient operations.

Focus Areas/Goals

In April of 2016, God’s Storehouse Board of Directors and staff invested in a strategic planning discussion where our strengths and challenges were reviewed and discussed and direction for our work was established. During the next three years, God’s Storehouse will focus on the following five goals:

Goal 1: Establish a revenue and expense management plan to ensure long-term sustainability of services and programs.

Enlarge the vision and funding of and access to the Malcom Huckabee Backpacks Program to include establishing partnerships with faith-based organizations, the business community, and the schools.

Expand fundraising events, marketing, and grant writing to generate operating funds.

Develop strategies to address facility maintenance, capital improvement fund development, and management of food and operating costs.

Justification: Funding and cost management planning is vital in order to manage expenses incurred based on operations. Reliance on grant funds, individual donors, and faith communities to fund the on-going food distribution program and operation cost is risky.

Goal 2: Provide healthy, nutritious food for distribution to God’s Storehouse customers.

Identify local sources of fresh fruits and vegetables; procure or arrange for donations.

Coordinate and staff Farmers Foodshare Donation Station at Danville Community Market and Chatham Market as a source of fresh produce.

Justification: To reduce the high obesity rate and health issues related to diet in low income families, God’s Storehouse can help by providing food boxes that are nutritious and healthy.

Goal 3: Connect God’s Storehouse customers to educational programs provided by collaborating partners that encourage and enable our customers to manage their financial resources, find and maintain employment, and adopt healthy eating habits and lifestyles.

Identify and arrange for financial, employment, and nutrition partners to offer workshops at God’s Storehouse; identify a volunteer to coordinate.

Continue to host Virginia Cooperative Extension Program Assistant on site at God’s Storehouse; encourage healthy eating and food budgeting cooking classes.

Justification: God’s Storehouse is centrally located to serve those most in need in our community and has ample space to offer education and training opportunities.

Goal 4: Secure volunteers to support programs and services of God’s Storehouse.

Manage and coordinate the Malcom Huckabee Backpacks Program.

Identify and secure sources of volunteers to fulfill open positions and to be alternates in the absence of regular volunteers.

Cultivate relationships with specific faith communities to identify and secure volunteers; meet with specific faith community leaders to discuss volunteer and donation needs.

Justification: In order to fulfill daily food distribution requirements, 20-25 volunteers are needed each day and alternates are required if the regular volunteer is not available.

Goal 5: Design an organizational staffing, management structure, and process to ensure efficient daily operations and a continued focus on fund raising, marketing, and grant writing.

Plan for staffing positions, train paid employees, conduct a 360 degree evaluation of employee and process, establish a team leader structure, and engage staff in establishing priorities and strategies for which the staff team leader will be held accountable, and prepare policy for the safe and effective delivery of daily operations.

Justification: Staff that is operating at full capacity and efficiently with little daily supervision will enable the executive director to focus on fund raising,

marketing, and grant writing which keeps God's Storehouse in the forefront of donors and emphasizes the on-going needs of the hungry in our community.

Summary

God's Storehouse is well-positioned to serve the families who are struggling to find nutritious food. We realize our challenges and celebrate our strengths. Continually working with our partners and guided by the values of equity, respect, engagement, and integrity, we will achieve our mission and implement the strategies creating a place where

“those in need of nourishment can be fed and nurtured.”

Appendix A

2016 Strategic Planning Process

Given the level of service God's Storehouse provides to those in need in our area, the amount of monetary gifts donated by its supporters, and the food donations received, the Board felt it was important to prepare and implement a three year strategic plan. An overview of the organization's history and work was prepared and shared with the Board early in 2016. At a Board planning meeting held on April 1, 2016, those who attended reviewed and discussed the values, strengths, challenges, and goals outlined in the draft plan. Prior to the planning meeting, surveys were distributed to all board members. The survey asked board members to describe the impact God's Storehouse would have if it achieved its mission, the important successes it has experienced, the most significant challenges the organization faces, the expectations of God's Storehouse from the community, the values that direct our work, and the actions we should take to achieve our mission and values. The results of the survey were discussed and key words identified. This information was used to revise the mission statement and to formulate our vision and values.

Goals were analyzed to ensure the challenges discussed in the strategic plan and the concerns identified from the questionnaire responses were addressed. Revisions were made and the following five goals were developed:

1. Establish a revenue and expense management plan to ensure long-term sustainability of services and programs.
2. Provide healthy, nutritious food for distribution to God's Storehouse customers.
3. Connect God's Storehouse customers to educational programs provided by collaborating partners that encourage and enable our customers to manage their financial resources, find and maintain employment, and adopt healthy eating habits and lifestyles.
4. Secure volunteers to support programs and services of God's Storehouse.
5. Design an organizational staffing, management structure, and evaluation process plan to ensure efficient daily operations and a continued focus on fund raising, marketing, and grant writing.

A summary of the planning meeting was sent to all board members. Various board members and staff agreed to work on the mission statement, vision statement, value statement, and a Plan of Work for each goal. At the board meeting held in May 2016, the board reviewed and unanimously approved the revised mission and vision statement, the new value statements, and the five goals.

In order to achieve these goals within the next three years, implementation of the plan will begin immediately upon approval by the Board. Implementation requires each goal be assigned to the appropriate Board Committees and/or staff person, strategies developed, timelines set, and a Plan of Action document prepared. The Plan of Action will be used for updates at the Board meetings.