

# Critical Sectors Sustainability Planning Checklist



## Sustainability Planning Checklist

Sustainability planning entails safeguarding the effectiveness of a project's goals, principles, and efforts over time. While sustainability is most effective when integrated early, and at every stage of program development, a sustainability plan can enhance the long-term success of a program, regardless of when it is developed. This checklist serves as a valuable resource when strategizing with staff and stakeholders to sustain the successful aspects of your Critical Sectors (CS) program.

This checklist encompasses five critical areas of sustainability planning:

1. **Program Assessment:** Evaluate the effectiveness of your CS grant, identifying elements worth replicating and those to avoid.
2. **Sustainability and Succession Planning:** Develop strategies to maintain successful program components and ensure a seamless transition of responsibilities within your organization.
3. **Defining the Program Vision:** Clearly articulate the program's future direction and objectives.
4. **Assessing Partnerships:** Evaluate current partnerships and explore opportunities for establishing new relationships that support program sustainability.
5. **Resource Allocation and Funding Stability:** Identify the resources needed to sustain the program and establish financial stability through methods like braided funding or other incentives.

We recommend that you and your team utilize this checklist as a practical tool when developing and updating your sustainability plan. The checklist provides examples and procedures to effectively guide you through each aspect of sustainability. Additionally, this checklist includes an appendix for your team to compile the key elements of success for sustaining your grant program.

### Section 1. Program Assessment

Begin by identifying the activities undertaken because of this grant. Assess which of these activities have yielded successful outcomes or are currently producing desired results, while identifying and acknowledging project shortcomings. Recognize that not all activities are sustainable and prioritize those with the greatest impact or significant contributions to your goals. Here are strategies to guide this process:

1. **Review project outcomes:** Evaluate the outcomes of your project (such as the number of individuals trained, placed in apprenticeship programs, or employed) to identify successful aspects that should be maintained. Ensure alignment with project goals and desired outcomes.
2. **Develop benchmarks:** Compare your program's performance to that of your CS peers to pinpoint areas where your program excels or falls short compared to peers.

3. **Document promising practices:** Compile a list of promising practices within your grant, particularly any new practices or protocols implemented due to grant funding.
4. **Obtain stakeholder feedback:** Gather input from various stakeholders, including staff, partners, funders, current and past participants, and community members. Their perspectives offer valuable insights into program strengths and areas needing attention. Consider conducting focus groups, interviews, or regular meetings to collect feedback.
5. **Identify program shortcomings:** Review project outcomes alongside project goals, as well as other project challenges (such as staffing, recruitment, and partnerships).
6. **Update program goals:** Assess whether your program goals need revision to align better with your sustainability vision. This may involve adjusting or fine-tuning objectives for ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

By following these strategies, grantees can systematically assess and prioritize the activities and practices crucial for the program's long-term success and take steps to revise or replace underperforming tactics. Please complete this to align with your organization's strategic plan.

Program Assessment Worksheet Example:

| Goals/Activities/Objectives                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Assessment Criteria         | Program Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Vision for Success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Tier 1:</b><br>Create a plan to implement initiatives to integrate community support, worker voices, educational on-ramps to skills building, and barrier removal for underserved, low-income, rural populations.                           | Over 18-month grant period. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Worker Champion Group activities (ongoing)</li><li>▪ Employer roundtables (second round)</li><li>▪ Individual consulting sessions (consultant/employers)</li><li>▪ Set of 3-5 Coastal Resiliency career pathways-curriculum and course improvements</li><li>▪ New employer-sponsored, short-term credentials</li><li>▪ 5+ employers offering new internship programs</li><li>▪ Worker outreach and awareness plan for Coastal Resiliency pathways</li><li>▪ Final Coastal Resiliency Job Quality Report</li></ul> | <p>This Tier 1 planning grant will support a strategic assessment of Virginia's emerging coastal climate resiliency sector in the Eastern Shore and Northern Neck regions. The project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ implement evidence-based sector partnership strategies to understand the landscape of Coastal Resiliency employment and identify barriers to entry and upward mobility,</li><li>▪ assess employer supports needed to improve job quality, including small business and entrepreneurship supports, and</li><li>▪ create a plan to implement initiatives to integrate community support, worker voices, educational on-ramps to skills building, and barrier removal for underserved, low-income, rural populations.</li></ul> |
| <b>Tier 2:</b><br>Improvements will include the availability of no cost training for motivated individuals, no matter their barriers to employment, which will provide them with access to good jobs and opportunities for career advancement. | Over three-year period      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 85% Participant-level measures will include the percentage of RAP enrollees from identified target groups</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>Participation of 273 individuals in culinary RAP training that has been vetted with partner employers, and, in connection with CBAs, access to skill advancement and specialty training.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

## Section 2. Workforce and Succession Planning

Ensuring continuity of service(s) for participants is crucial, especially in the event of staff turnover. Workforce and succession planning are important because they can help prepare for unexpected events, identify future leaders, create structure for training and development, maintain company culture and values, reduce financial risks, promote loyalty, foster improvement, and reduce churn through better preparedness.

### Strategies for Workforce and Succession Planning:

1. **Define job duties:** Begin by clearly identifying the duties and tasks associated with each staff position, which should already be outlined in existing job descriptions.
2. **Appoint and train backup personnel:** Designate and train staff members who can perform each function when needed.
3. **Plan a knowledge transfer:** Encourage departing staff to document their processes, contacts, and critical information. This knowledge transfer can be in the form of written documents, online access points, training sessions, or mentoring.
4. **Implement succession planning:** Develop a succession plan for key positions. This involves identifying potential internal candidates who could fill vacant roles and investing in their training and development to ensure preparedness for new responsibilities.
5. **Maintain consistent communication:** Foster open and transparent communication with both departing and incoming staff, providing updates to the team about changes and expectations.
6. **Establish a resource repository:** Create, and regularly update, a comprehensive resource repository, whether physical or digital. This repository should include essential documents such as strategic and operational plans, job descriptions, and organizational activity calendars.

By proactively implementing these strategies to address staff transitions and maintain service continuity, participants are more likely to receive uninterrupted support throughout the grant lifecycle.

**Workforce and Succession Worksheet Example:**

| <b>Action Steps</b><br><i>What will be done?</i>                                              | <b>Importance</b><br><i>High, medium, low</i> | <b>Staff Assigned</b><br><i>First and last name, title, and contact information</i> | <b>Resources</b><br><i>A. Resource available</i><br><i>B. Resources needed (financial, human, other)</i>                                      | <b>Timeline for Completion</b> | <b>Basis for Decision</b><br><i>What will this action step achieve, why is it needed?</i>                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Step 1:</b><br>Identify the strengths and challenges of current team.                      | High                                          | Alan D. James, Program Manager                                                      | A. Quarterly staff reviews<br>B. None at this time                                                                                            | One month                      | Will determine what members of the staff should continue with the team moving forward.                       |
| <b>Step 2:</b><br>Assess individual and organizational gaps to determine developmental needs. | High                                          | Alan D. James, Program Manager                                                      | A. Human Resource<br>B. Financial                                                                                                             | Ongoing                        | Decrease staff turnover                                                                                      |
| <b>Step 3:</b><br>Identify and train a backup person for each staff function.                 | Medium                                        | Christina Stocks, Performance Lead                                                  | A.                                                                                                                                            | One Month                      | Ensure compliance by having a second individual review the quarterly reports in WIPS prior to certification. |
| <b>Step 4:</b><br>What additional training does staff need to perform their current roles?    | High                                          | Christina Stocks, Performance Lead                                                  | A. Resources on <a href="#">Critical Sectors Job Quality Grant Program Performance Reporting Technical Assistance</a><br>B. None at this time | Two weeks                      | Will determine how to submit quarterly reports to ETA.                                                       |

## Section 3. Clarify the Vision for Your Program Moving Forward

Understanding both the short- and long-term goals of the program is crucial for sustainability efforts. This vision not only guides workforce planning and partnership development, but it also serves as a roadmap for accessing critical funding.

### Strategies for Clarifying your Program's Vision:

1. **Define long-term goals:** Clearly articulate the program's long-term goals and desired outcomes beyond the grant period. Specify success metrics and align them with the organization's mission and community needs.
2. **Craft a vision statement:** Create a concise and compelling vision statement summarizing the program's purpose, values, and aspirations. Ensure it is easily understood and resonates with stakeholders.
3. **Develop a roadmap:** Create a strategic plan outlining the steps and milestones necessary for sustainability. Include timelines, responsible parties, and key performance indicators (KPIs) to track progress.
4. **Prioritize sustainability factors:** Identify the specific factors critical to the program's sustainability, such as financial stability, community support, partnership longevity, and staff continuity. Rank these factors based on their importance and feasibility.
5. **Alignment with organizational mission:** Ensure that the sustainability vision aligns with your organization's overall mission, values, and strategic plan. Highlight how sustainability contributes to fulfilling the organization's broader purpose.
6. **Communicate the vision:** Effectively communicate the program's sustainability vision to all stakeholders, ensuring clarity and understanding. Utilize various communication channels and storytelling to convey the vision's importance.

By implementing these strategies, your grant program can develop a clear and actionable vision for sustainability, increasing the likelihood of achieving lasting impact, and accomplishing identified goals.

Developing Your Vision Worksheet Entry Example:

| Long-Term Program Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Partners Needed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Resources Needed<br>(human, financial, other)                                                                                                                                                                                      | Potential Barriers<br><i>Are there any potential barriers from the partners listed?</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Tier 1:</b><br>The project will create a plan to implement initiatives to integrate community supports, worker voices, educational on-ramps to skills building, and barrier removal for underserved, low income, rural populations.           | Unions and their Labor-Management Training Trusts; Local Workforce Development Boards; Climate Resiliency Industry Employers; Community-Based Organizations and Other Partners in Eastern Shore and the Northern Neck of Virginia                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Human capital – Consulting Firm to conduct surveys, roundtables and interviews</li><li>Financial – \$500,000</li><li>Other – connections to new service providers in the community</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>None</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Tier 2:</b><br>Will replicate its signature Cook/Chef de Partie Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) model with training trust organizations in four major metropolitan areas experiencing significant growth in the hospitality industry. | Unions and their Labor-Management Training Trusts; Local Workforce Development Boards; Hospitality Industry Employers; Community-Based Organizations and Other Partners in City of Baltimore and Baltimore County, Maryland; City of Chicago and Cook County, Illinois; City of Philadelphia and Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania; and City of Phoenix and Maricopa County, Arizona. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Human capital – mentors, support service providers, instructors</li><li>Financial – \$3,000,000</li><li>Other – connections to new service providers in the community</li></ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Lack of sustainable funds.</li><li>Subrecipients in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Baltimore must adopt and modify their program to meet the national standards</li><li>Establishing and maintained relationships with the AJC’s, faith-based organizations, and employer partners</li></ul> |

## Section 4. Building and Maintaining Partnerships

Partners play a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of your program. They can connect you with additional resources, offer support when funds are limited, and advocate on your behalf. Ensuring that your existing partnerships align strategically with your program's goals is essential.

### Strategies for Partner Engagement:

1. **Conduct a partnership analysis:** Begin by clearly defining the objectives of each partnership. Assess whether your partners share an interest in sustaining the project and whether they are willing to actively participate in the planning process. Identify partners who may require considerable time and effort to remain engaged and those with influential roles in the community. Utilize this analysis to create a stakeholder management plan.
2. **Identify partners to continue working with:** Through your analysis, identify partners who have contributed to the grant's success. Recognize with whom you have collaborated effectively and request their commitment to ongoing program collaboration.
3. **Develop Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with these partners:** Once you have identified partners to continue working with, develop MOUs to formalize and ensure a sustained working relationship.
4. **Consider removing partners who misalign with goals (as necessary):** Based on your analysis, identify partners who do not contribute to your organization's sustainability plan or have underperformed in their role. Notify them of this decision in advance.
5. **Engage with employer and training partners:** Meet with your employer and training partners to assess the relevance of the employment and training provided through your program to their current needs. Ensure that your program remains aligned with their evolving requirements.
6. **Expand your network:** Identify organizations and individuals not currently involved in your program efforts who may be impacted by your work. Explore how they could contribute to, or benefit from, your program. Present evidence of the positive impact your project has on the community, beneficiaries, or the specific issue you aim to address. Utilize data, success stories, metrics, and testimonials to illustrate your program's effectiveness. Engage them in discussions and seek ways to involve them in your program's activities.

By implementing these strategies, you can effectively leverage partnerships to sustain and enhance your program's impact.

Building and Maintaining Partnerships Worksheet Example:

| Partner(s)                       | New or Old?<br><br><i>Are they a new partner or a preexisting one?</i> | Responsibilities<br><br><i>What will each partner be responsible for?</i> | Resources<br><br><i>What will each partner contribute?</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Potential Barriers<br><br><i>Are there any potential barriers from the partners listed?</i> | Basis for Partner Assessment<br><br><i>Why or why not is engagement important?</i>                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rappahannock Goodwill Industries | New                                                                    | Gathering data                                                            | This partnership aims to conduct surveys to gain further insights into issues facing workers in the Eastern Shore and Northern Neck communities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Subrecipient contract in progress                                                           | This effort includes understanding variations and identifying barriers based on geographic location. Staff interviews from community-serving organizations will broaden the understanding of the worker perspective and prospects for long-term labor force attachment. |
| UNITE HERE                       | Old                                                                    | Funding training                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Continue to work with employers to identify necessary skills and competencies among culinary workers and assist with the modification of culinary training curricula developed.</li><li>▪ Recruit incumbent workers to establish peer mentorship support for graduates of the Registered Apprenticeship Program.</li><li>▪ Act as a trusted liaison and collaborate with community partners, public officials, and other organizations in the sector to recruit students and trainees.</li><li>▪ Provide access to staff to support the development of training programs in the hospitality sector.</li></ul> | Lack of training funding                                                                    | To cover the funding gaps that the CS funding source cannot support, such as additional necessary support service, e.g. temporary housing, and permanent transportation.                                                                                                |

## Section 5. Developing Funding Stability

Planning for stable funding is a strategic process that should address the long-term needs of your program, while adapting to changing economic trends and funding allocations. Diversifying funding sources is critical to achieving sustainability. Discussing and developing funding strategies to preserve the activities you wish to continue is crucial.

### Strategies for Securing Funding:

1. **Create a comprehensive funding plan:** Develop a funding plan that safeguards key infrastructure components, including maintaining qualified staff.
2. **Identify potential additions requiring extra funds:** Outline any activities you wish to add to your program that may require additional funding beyond your current projections.
3. **Promote cost efficiency:** Implement cost-effective strategies to manage program expenses without compromising service quality. Regularly review your budget to identify areas for cost savings.
4. **Strengthen fundraising and donor relations:** Create a comprehensive fundraising strategy that encompasses donor cultivation, grant writing, and fundraising events. Build and nurture relationships with donors and grantors to secure ongoing support.
5. **Investigate alternative financial support:** Explore alternative sources of financial support, such as local and state government funding, industry contributions, and foundation grants. Diversifying your funding sources enhances sustainability efforts and helps mitigate financial risk.
6. **Explore alternative financial support:** Investigate the availability of alternative sources of financial support, such as local and state government funding, industry contributions, and foundation grants. Diversifying your funding sources can enhance sustainability.

Implementing these strategies for securing sustainable funding will ensure the long-term success of your program.

**Funding Stability Worksheet Example:**

| Funding Sources                                             | Potential Amount | Potential Duration | Expected Application Date | Which Partner Can Support                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Community College Funds                                     | \$750,000        | 2 years            | 1/25/2024                 | Blue Star Airlines (They can provide OJT to leverage the community college RTI funds.) |
| River Counties Community Foundation Community Impact Grants | \$115,000        | 1 year             | 1/25/2024                 | To provide support services while participants are enrolled in training.               |

Appendix

Program Assessment Worksheet:

Use the worksheet to describe your organization’s promising practice(s). Next, share evidence that demonstrates success, and then provide a vision to move each promising practice forward.

| #  | Goals/Activities/Objectives | Assessment Criteria | Program Outcomes | Vision for Success |
|----|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. |                             | ▪                   | ▪                | ▪                  |
| 2. |                             | ▪                   | ▪                | ▪                  |
| 3. |                             | ▪                   | ▪                | ▪                  |
| 4. |                             | ▪                   | ▪                | ▪                  |

Workforce and Succession Planning Worksheet:

Use the worksheet to identify the necessary action steps to address your succession plan. Each action step should have an assigned staff, due date, and related resources required to ensure success.

| #  | Action Steps<br><i>What will be done?</i> | Importance<br><i>High, medium, low</i> | Staff Assigned<br><i>First and last name, title, and contact information</i> | Resources<br><i>A. Resource available<br/>B. Resources needed (financial, human, other)</i> | Timeline for Completion | Basis for Decision<br><i>What will this action step achieve, why is it needed?</i> |
|----|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. |                                           |                                        |                                                                              | A.                                                                                          |                         |                                                                                    |
| 2. |                                           |                                        |                                                                              | A.                                                                                          |                         |                                                                                    |
| 3. |                                           |                                        |                                                                              | A.                                                                                          |                         |                                                                                    |
| 4. |                                           |                                        |                                                                              | A.                                                                                          |                         |                                                                                    |

Developing Your Vision Worksheet:

Use the worksheet to identify the necessary long-term goals for your program. Identify any partners and resources needed as well as any potential barriers to completion of these goals.

| #  | Long-Term Program Goals | Partners Needed | Resources Needed<br>(human, financial, other)                                                                | Potential Barriers<br><i>Are there any potential barriers from the partners listed?</i> |
|----|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. |                         |                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Human capital –</li><li>▪ Financial – \$</li><li>▪ Other –</li></ul> |                                                                                         |
| 2. |                         |                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Human capital –</li><li>▪ Financial – \$</li><li>▪ Other –</li></ul> |                                                                                         |
| 3. |                         |                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Human capital –</li><li>▪ Financial – \$</li><li>▪ Other –</li></ul> |                                                                                         |
| 4. |                         |                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Human capital –</li><li>▪ Financial – \$</li><li>▪ Other –</li></ul> |                                                                                         |

Building and Maintaining Partnerships Worksheet:

Use the below partnership template to conduct a regional partnership or stakeholder analysis.

| #  | Partner(s) | New or Old?<br><i>Are they a new partner or a preexisting one?</i> | Responsibilities<br><i>What will each partner be responsible for?</i> | Resources<br><i>What will each partner contribute?</i> | Potential Barriers<br><i>Are there any potential barriers from the partners listed?</i> | Basis for Partner Assessment<br><i>Why or why not is engagement important?</i> |
|----|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. |            |                                                                    |                                                                       |                                                        |                                                                                         |                                                                                |
| 2. |            |                                                                    |                                                                       |                                                        |                                                                                         |                                                                                |
| 3. |            |                                                                    |                                                                       |                                                        |                                                                                         |                                                                                |
| 4. |            |                                                                    |                                                                       |                                                        |                                                                                         |                                                                                |

**Funding Stability Worksheet:**

With your staff and stakeholders, look at each activity listed in your Program Assessment Worksheet and develop funding strategies for each activity to be sustained.

| #  | Funding Sources | Potential Amount | Potential Duration | Expected Application Date | Which Partner Can Support |
|----|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. |                 |                  |                    |                           |                           |
| 2. |                 |                  |                    |                           |                           |
| 3. |                 |                  |                    |                           |                           |
| 4. |                 |                  |                    |                           |                           |
| 5. |                 |                  |                    |                           |                           |