Community Development Network of Maryland, Inc.

Strategic Plan

2018 - 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community Development Network is a well-respected voice for Maryland's community development sector. During and after its first strategic planning process (2013), its leaders worked to better align the organization with its core mission. This involved a name change, acquiring tax-exempt (501c3) status, establishing regional coalitions, and other changes. All this while continuing its robust legislative agenda.

Those changes have helped establish CDN's reputation as a membership entity that represents every type of community development organization. In the past, community development was often seen as synonymous with affordable housing development, but CDN uses a broader definition that welcomes other types of organizations.

CDN represents organizations throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities, making CDN the only statewide nonprofit serving the complete array of community development nonprofits and working in virtually every type of community in Maryland.

CDN's first strategic plan covered the years 2014 through 2017. In September 2018, CDN's leaders began their second strategic planning process. The organization was in the enviable position of having *no* internal or external crises or troubles to tackle. And the situation analysis did not revealed any unusual challenges for the organization. So this planning process has given CDN's leader the chance to reflect on the work, its results, and the strength of the operation and to plan for the next five years.

As a result of that reflection, CDN will not alter its strategic direction but will instead work to deepen member services, grow its membership, address issues of racial equity, and work to ensure CDN's long-term sustainability.

Five specific issues surfaced a during the planning process: The need to **(1)** enhance member services, **(2)** build upon CDN's legacy of effective advocacy, **(3)** continue strengthening the community development sector, **(4)** continue promoting the impact of the community development sector, and **(5)** strengthen CDN's internal operations. This plan offers strategies that address those issues.

This strategic plan document discusses CDN's history, its current operations, the planning process, and the results of the planning activity. What follows this summary is a strategic plan narrative and an action plan matrix. The action plan is intended to be an implementation tool that breaks down each component of the plan into related goals, objectives, and timeframes.

The Governance Committee will monitor ongoing progress against CDN's goals, and the board will formally review the organization's progress and make needed course corrections each year.

Conclusion

CDN's leaders and members are deeply committed to the success of Maryland's community development sector. And they will work working together as a network to strengthen CDN's ability to support the sector in the coming years.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

A. About the Community Development Network

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 200 member organizations. CDN—a tax-exempt organization- focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies, and community-based nonprofits located in Maryland's urban, rural and suburban communities.

The Mission

CDN revised its mission during this strategic planning process, and it now reads as follows: The mission of the Community Development Network of Maryland is to promote, strengthen, and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban, and rural communities.

The Vision

CDN envisions a state in which all neighborhoods are thriving and where people of all incomes have abundant opportunities for themselves and their families.

Guiding Principles

CDN's Guiding principles form our fundamental values and articulate the ideals we hold ourselves to, and guide the board and staff as we carry out our work. Our guiding values are as follows:

- CDN looks to be the voice for and of Maryland's community development sector
- CDN values our role as convener, community builder, collaborator, and advocate
- CDN's training, advocacy and activities are driven by its members and an active Board of Directors
- CDN is proactive and strategic. Our programs are designed deliberately according to strategic priorities and analysis of our members
- CDN commits to pursuing racial equity in its leadership, its membership, and its work.

The Operation

CDN operates with a full-time executive director and four consultants. It has a Baltimore, Maryland address but no set office. Staff and consultants work virtually.

While the executive director carries out most of CDN's aggressive agenda—especially its robust legislative agenda—CDN members are also active and engaged.

The Regional Coalitions

CDN had established regional coalitions throughout Maryland. Their four-fold purpose is to (1) touch all the organizations involved with community development in Maryland, (2) understand and meet member capacity-building and training needs, (3) work to resolve the issues that affect each region, and (4) review the CDN legislative agenda and understand what's happening in the area that might need a legislative fix.

The regional coalitions are as follows: Southern Maryland, Eastern Shore, Western Maryland, DC Region, Central Maryland (minus Baltimore City), and Baltimore City.

CDN's History

CDN is the re-creation of the Maryland Asset Building and Community Development (ABCD) Network, which was founded in 2006 to fill the void left after the Maryland Center for Community Development closed.

ABCD was created to be a network of community development organizations that would work together to build capacity within the community development sector and to advocate for the sector with one voice.

Name Change

As a result of ABCD's 2013 strategic planning process, the board opted to change the organization's name to Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN), which became a tax-exempt (501c3) nonprofit.

The name and mission were changed to reflect the decision to make "community development" all inclusive. While community development has sometimes been viewed as only affordable housing development, CDN views community development as improving the quality of life for individuals and families, transforming neighborhoods with blighted conditions, providing housing counseling to prospective home buyers, asset development, and more.

The Addition of Housing Counseling

Consistent with CDN's mission and values, in 2015 the Maryland Housing Counselors Network merged with CDN, transferring the former's assets and responsibilities for training Maryland's housing counselors to the Community Development Network.

B. About CDN's Work

1. Advocacy

CDN's Advocacy work has been the core of the organization and its greatest service it its members since its inception. CDN's Policy Committee meets regularly to formulate an agenda and approve legislation that CDN will support. Then the executive director and CDN members advocate on behalf of CDN in Annapolis during each year's General Assembly.

CDN's recent legislative accomplishments include the following:

- FY2018 budget: CDN successfully advocated for increases in capital funding for Community Legacy, Strategic Demolition and Smart Growth Investment Fund, Rental Housing Works, and Baltimore Regional Neighborhood Initiative. Other funding was left at level funding as requested by CDN.

- Tax Sale Reform: During the 2017 General Assembly CDN proposed legislation to create a task force to reform Maryland's antiquated and predatory tax sale system. The Task Force was created and penned seven pieces of legislation, five of which were passed during the General Assembly. CDN worked with a coalition of groups, including Maryland Association of Counties and Maryland Municipal League, and also worked with landlords and others to address these complex pieces of legislation.

- Community Development Fund: The Maryland General Assembly passed legislation to create the Community Development fund, but without a funding source. The Fund would provide operating dollars to community development organizations across the state, and CDN is working to create a funding source.

2. Strengthening The Community Development Sector

In 2013, CDN launched a one-on-one consulting program. Member organizations interested in strategic planning, coaching, housing finance, program evaluation and more applied for help from CDN staff or one of its vetted consultants.

That program proved more costly than anticipated. So while this program will continue in Baltimore City, CDN has suspended the program elsewhere, pending an evaluation of the program and CDN's ability to find resources to support it.

CDN continues to strengthen its members by providing trainings and scholarships to trainings when available. One example is the coaching and training program that CDN designed for housing counselors. The organization is working to ensure that all the state's Housing Counselors are ready to pass the HUD Certification Exam, since that certification is required by 2020.

3. Promoting The Community Development Sector

CDN launched the "Leading the Way to Stronger Communities" campaign in 2014 to promote the social and economic impact of community development in Maryland. As a result, CDN released its annual *Impact Fact Sheet* and had several letters to the editors and an Op-Ed published in the Baltimore Sun.

Maryland Community Development Week is the featured initiative in this campaign. It is a series of events advertised and held throughout the state that highlights specific aspects of community development. The goal is to celebrate our success in a way that increases the sector's visibility and educate policymakers about its benefits.

Also launched in 2014, Maryland Community Development Week activities have been well-attended and have received much-needed media coverage. During this annual campaign CDN celebrates the winners of its **Award of Excellence** and promotes local events that shine the spotlight on the work of CDN members.

PART 2: ABOUT THIS STRATEGIC PLANNING EFFORT

CDN began work on this, its second strategic plan, in September 2018. The process and results follow:

A. Strategic Planning Rationale

CDN is the successor to the Maryland Asset Building and Community Development (ABCD) Network, which was founded in 2006. As was mentioned earlier, ABCD was founded to fill the void left by the closing of the Maryland Center for Community Development.This new network of community development organizations was formed to work together to build the sector's capacity and to advocate with one voice.

ABCD's founding executive director left the organization in 2012, and a new executive director was hired in 2013. The board and the new executive director took that opportunity to engage in CDN's first strategic planning effort.

That planning process resulted in several changes, the most significant of which was a name. ABCD became Community Development Network of Maryland to better align the name with the organization's mission. The new organization was incorporated and acquired 501c3 tax-exempt status.

The new executive director and CDN members pursued the strategic goals identified in that 2014 -2017 strategic plan and completed most of those goals. Then in 2018, CDN's leaders were ready to look back at their progress, assess the current situation, and again plan for CDN's future.

B. The Planning Process

CDN engaged a consultant LaCharla Figgs to facilitate the planning process and draft the final plan.

The consultant gathered input for the situation analysis through (1) document review, (2) three focus groups made up of CDN members, (3) interviews with several external stakeholders, and (4) researching local associations that might be considered CDN competitors.

CDN members and the executive director met with the consultant in September for a facilitated strategic planning retreat to begin crafting strategic goals for the next 3 years. The consultant distributed the results of the retreat for review, and the executive director followed up with an action plan matrix containing draft objectives and timelines related to the strategic issues and goals.

Two more member group meetings followed to allow CDN members to comment on the proposed goals, objectives, and timeframes.Their responses were factored into the final strategic plan.

PART 3: SITUATION ANALYSIS

A. The Current Situation

CDN's Current Mission

CDN's mission is to engage and strengthen Maryland's community development industry and promote comprehensive community development through advocacy, partnerships, and capacity building. The organization serves community development organizations in urban, rural and suburban communities.

CDN's Priorities

• To enhance and sustain a strong community development industry in Maryland

• To promote the economic and social impact of the community development industry in Maryland, and

• To be the voice for the community development industry in Maryland

Personnel

The Staff

Executive director Odette Ramos works full time, and CDN's office is in her home. CDN relies on participation from Board members and members at large to enhance its work. The executive director's role is to implement CDN's strategic priorities, ensure participation from board members and others on priority issues, provide leadership and expertise, use her skills in advocacy and organizational development, and to raise funds.

<u>Contractors</u>
· CDN uses is a part-time contractor who helps with organizing in Baltimore City. Her expertise in community development—particularly in these networks—has been critical to CDN's essential work in Baltimore City.

· CDN also uses a part-time contractor who works on event planning and coordination, sponsorship fundraising, and membership engagement.

· Hagerstown Neighborhood Revitalization Partnership works under contract to carry out CDN's housing counseling work.

The Board
The Board of Directors represents each region of the state. CDN ensures that board member organizations represent each aspect of community development, including affordable housing, neighborhood revitalization, Main Street/business development, housing counseling, and more.

The Board is not only active as a governing body but, members also volunteer on committees and working groups as needed. The standing committees are the Executive, Governance, and Finance Committees. And CDN uses Membership, Fundraising, and Events Committees, along with working groups for each initiative.

<u>CDN's Executive Committee</u>
Stephanie Prange Proestel, Housing Initiative Partnership – President
Glenn Irwin, Ocean City Development Corporation – Vice President
Ilana Branda, Montgomery Housing Partnership – Secretary
Dana Johnson, The Redevelopment Fund – Treasurer
Janice William, BB&T – At-Large Executive Committee member
Erin Shearman Karpewicz, Arundel Community Development Services – Immediate Past President

Activities

<u>Statewide Advocacy</u>
The core of CDN's work is to represent the community development industry in Annapolis during the General Assembly each year. Through the regional coalitions and involvement with several statewide coalitions, CDN establishes its Policy Agenda each year. Work gets done on legislation throughout the year to prepare for the General Assembly Session which lasts from January through April.

<u>Social and Economic Impact</u>
CDN launched the *Leading the Way to Stronger Communities* campaign, an ongoing effort to educate the public, legislators and funders about the important social and economic impact of Maryland's community development sector.

The most important part of the campaign is getting people to understand what community development is, and how it improves the quality of life in Maryland's neighborhoods. CDN uses its website, social media, and its annual *Maryland Community Development Week* to spread its message.

Capacity Building
CDN participates in NeighborWorks and other trainings and offers scholarships that allow members to attend trainings. CDN is also offering limited one-on-one expertise in board and organizational development.

B. CDN's Strengths and Weaknesses

The strategic planning consultant conducted 3 focus groups with CDN members to learn their perceptions of the organization's strengths and weaknesses. The results are as follows.

1. What are CDNs greatest strengths in the area of Advocacy?

    · The focus groups all cited the same key organizational strength: executive director Odette Ramos. They pointed out that her wealth of knowledge, skill, influence, and connections make CDN's advocacy work impressive. Members appreciate Ms. Ramos' efforts to keep the members—who are scattered around the state—connected and up-to-date. They are pleased with the way she helps educate coalitions who are not skilled in advocacy. And they are amazed by her energy, since she works as the lone CDN staff member and is exceptionally productive.

    · CDN is a true network that gathers input from all over the state in order to set its advocacy agenda.

    · CDN builds partnerships among organizations that might not have otherwise come together in order to pursue common agendas. Urban, suburban, and rural organizations unite at CDN and find common ground.

    · Organizations are connected to policymakers through CDN in ways that would not have happened without the organization.

    · CDN has staying power. It has been involved with state advocacy over several administrations.

    · CDN is a smart collaborator and works with other regional associations to both support common legislative agendas and avoid contradictory agendas and unnecessary overlap.

    · CDN is a strong advocate for the nonprofit sector. (Some similar associations also represent for-profits.)

2. What are CDNs greatest strengths in the area of Member Capacity Building?

    · CDN consistently convenes organizations from all over the state and provides important industry updates and peer learning opportunities. Gathering peers in the same room has the added benefit of fostering productive connections between them.

    · The Baltimore City Committee is very active. It has monthly meetings that provide helpful resources like funding opportunity updates, connections to city leaders, and the opportunity for peer connection and learning.

3. What are CDNs greatest strengths in Promoting Community Development?

· CDN's Community Development Week has raised the profile of the community development industry and continues to do so.

· CDN was successful in getting community development Tax Credits increased.

· CDN supports other organizations—like affordable housing groups—in their push for support from the State by showing up at hearings, even outside the legislative calendar.

· The executive director shares ideas on ways to energize localities around community development when the localities' primary focus is economic development

· CDN continues working to increase the visibility of community development as an industry.

4. What would you most like to see CDN improve?

· CDN's greatest strength is also its greatest potential weakness. CDN's success and accomplishments are largely due to the executive director, who is working without staff support. Members want to see CDN provide staff support to the executive director and determine how the work will continue in the event of her absence or exit.

· Raise more funds to hire additional staff. Several agreed that raising additional funds from CDN's nonprofit members would not be practical. Members offered two possible ways to address this: an annual fundraising appeal to for-profits and pursuing partnerships or fee-for-service opportunities with universities.

· Provide additional guidance to help organizations better prepare to engage with their legislators. One way would be to create what one member calls "action toolkits," which might contain action alerts, copies of relevant testimony, and other resources.

· Create a regular method of communicating news, funding opportunities, etc., such as through a regular newsletter.

· Address only top member legislative priorities so that CDN's agenda is more focused and the staff is not overtaxed. One suggestion was to focus on the needs expressed by each region and tie CDN's legislative agenda to those needs. Also, harness more of the members' capacity in carrying out CDN's agenda.

· Members expressed uncertainty about CDN's role in housing counseling and an interest in having CDN offer these organizations capacity building support. One member suggested that CDN become a housing counseling intermediary.

· Provide more peer-led topic-specific trainings in lunch-and-learn or webinar formats.

· Many community development nonprofits in the state don't have the support of an intermediary, and they work in a vacuum. CDN could serve as their convener.

· Update the community development indicators. These will help members tell the story of community development.

· Help members develop common language about community development that is easily understood by those unfamiliar with the field. (A member gave an example of a Virginia organization that drafted the kind of language they'd use to describe community development to their mothers. The press and later government officials, embraced that language and started using it.)

· Update the website and CDN's social media channels. Use advice from a communications expert on ways to make the website more visually appealing and to better communicate CDN's value.

5. How does CDN compare to similar organizations?

Some members see Maryland Nonprofits, Maryland Affordable Housing Coalition, and the Housing Association of Nonprofit Developers as similar organizations. Others pointed out that CDN has key differences that make it unique:

Members noted that CDN convenes all types of community development organizations under one umbrella. And CDN is dedicated to addressing the needs of urban, suburban, and rural organizations.

Still members did offer comments when asked how CDN compares to perceived competitors and how CDN could improve:

· Generally, members see CDN as one of the best state-wide conveners, and they want to see this continue.

· Members acknowledge that some organizations, like Maryland Nonprofits and HAND particularly, have strong capacity building programs. But except for an interest in lunch-and-learn sessions and webinars, members showed little interest in expanding CDN's capacity building work—except as it relates to advocacy.

· Again, some members want to see CDN streamline its legislative agenda in order to realize greater success. They mentioned that some other organizations pursue a more limited agenda with deeper focus, which leads to a larger number of successes. Several members suggested that CDN focus on its branding to boost its image and attract more members.

· Some members want to see even better communication within CDN so that members know about one another's programs and activities, such as workshops. A newsletter was again suggested as a potential solution.

C. Implications

Two things were made abundantly clear during the interviews: CDN is meeting a critical need for its members, and the members attribute the organization's success primarily to its executive director.

Members would like to see a more focused approach in advocacy, continued convening of their peers, improved communication among CDN members, ongoing peer-led capacity building, and help educating officials and others about the community development field.

If the three focus groups are representative of CDN's membership, the organization is serving its members well.

D. Strategic Direction

CDN has a strong track record and a solid operation. Rather than alter is direction, the CDN will build on its strengths. So over the next 5 years, the organization will work to deepen member services, increase its membership, become a change agent for racial equity, and ensure CDN's long-term sustainability.

Deepen Member Services

CDN serves an important role and unique role for its members. Its chief benefit is in advocacy, and CDN's leaders will work over the next 5 years to increase the capacity of its members to successfully engage state and local policy makers. In addition, CDN will continue to publicly showcase the work of CDN members, facilitate member communications and peer-to-peer learning, and will help educate public officials about community development issues.

Increase Membership

CDN will work over the next 5 years to attract an array of community development organizations and local government representatives. Our goal is expand the number voices advocating on behalf of people and communities in need in the State of Maryland. We want CDN to be THE place for these advocates to learn and grow.

Address Racial Equity

Racial equity is an ongoing challenge in the U.S. and in the community development sector, especially as it relates to minority communities and minority representation within the sector. CDN recognizes that these ongoing issues defy simple or quick solutions and is committed to addressing these issues on an ongoing basis. Specifically, CDN will employ a Racial Equity lens in its own board recruitment, in helping to attract people of color to the sector, and in carrying out its ongoing activities.

Ensure Organizational Sustainability

CDN's work has been critical in obtaining and preserving funds that serve low-income communities in Maryland. Through CDN, its members advocate on behalf of those who voices are seldom heard in the political arena. And that must continue. So during this planning process, CDN has committed to strengthening the organization by increasing its membership, securing additional funding, and developing a succession plan to ensure strong long-term leadership.

E. Decisions Made During the Strategic Planning Process

The CDN Board of Directors made the following key decisions during this planning process. Details appear in the the goals and objectives that follow:

· Continue CDN's work around Strengthening, Promoting and Advocating for Maryland's community development industry.

· Revise Mission statement to more accurately reflect the work of CDN.

· Increase CDN's engagement with current members, raise more membership dollars, work to increase the number of new members, and add more activities that strengthening CDN members.

· Continue the Advocacy work and ensure that more CDN members have relationships with delegates and senators in the event that CDN's executive director leaves.

· Craft a Succession Plan to ensure that the legacy and capacity of the organization does not lapse if the executive director leaves.

· Hire a staff person to assist with CDN's work, including administrative duties, improving on the membership and communications work that is lacking without someone's full attention, and to ensure that the internal workings of the organization rest with more than one person.

· Intentionally address and remain conscious of the issue of racial equity. The Community Development field is lead primarily by white leaders. It is important to attract leaders of color to CDN's board and to ensure that people of color know that their contributions are important to the community development sector.

F. Items for Immediate Action

During this planning process, CDN's board agreed to make the following important changes right way:

The Mission Statement

The mission statement was amended to read as follows: "The mission of the Community Development of Maryland is to promote, strengthen, and advocate for Maryland's community development sector throughout the state's urban, suburban, and rural communities."

Racial Equity

CDN recognizes that systemic bias and discriminatory practices have had a lasting effect in the US and here in Maryland. Redlining and mortgage denials are just two of the practices that have contributed to segregation and community disinvestment over the years. These and other practices have had lasting effects—both for people of color and for predominantly minority communities. Therefore, CDN will incorporate issues related to racial equality throughout its plans and its operations.

PART 4: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives are the result of CDN member conversations during the strategic planning retreat and follow-up conversations about the draft goals and objectives. The

Component 1:   Enhance Membership and Communications

RESULT: *Within the next four years we will see…*

The Community Development Network of Maryland increases its membership base of primarily nonprofit community development organizations, but also towns and counties. The regional coalitions are thriving. CDN's communications are enhanced to ensure that members are informed frequently throughout the year.

Goal 1:   **Continue regional meetings as a recruitment tool**

Objective	Action Item	Start Date	Implement Date	By Whom (Committee, Staff, Board)	Notes
A. Continue regional coalition meetings at least 2 times per year (increase to 3 if possible)	With the exception of Baltimore City, the regional coalitions meet 2 times per year to review the CDN legislative agenda and report and provide feedback on work to be done. (Baltimore City and possibly MoCo will meet more often)	Spring 2019	Ongoing	Executive Director, events coordinator (contractor)	
B. Continue housing counseling regional roundtables meetings	These meet every quarter or so regarding housing counseling specific work. staffed by Civil Justice and CDN housing counseling staff	Spring 2019	Ongoing	Housing counseling staff	
C. Follow up with regional coalition/roundtable attendees to gain membership	Ensure that people who attend regional meetings get follow up to ensure they are on our email list, and that they become members. A personal touch here is really important.	Spring 2019	Ongoing	Membership coordinator	
D. Continue staffing the Baltimore City Committee for ongoing capacity building	Continue staffing for Baltimore City Committee The City Committee is involved with developing an Equitable Development plan for the city with several stakeholders to ensure that everyone's voice is heard and for capacity building of the sector.	Spring 2019	Ongoing	Baltimore City Consultant	
E. Determine the number and type of staff needed to support additional regional coalitions and secure the resources to attract them	Organizers in the regions are critical to keep momentum. There is interest in Prince George's to recreate the homeownership preservation coalition there, and in Montgomery County for their affordable housing group. Frederick also has interest. CDN could be fiscal agent for these coalitions.	Spring 2019	On going	Executive Director	

Goal 2:   **Clearly articulate member benefits to promote the value of membership**

Objective	Action Item	Start Date	Implement Date	By whom (Committee, Staff, Board)	Notes
A. Consider additional member benefits to promote	CDN clearly offers the advocacy work as a major benefit of membership. If not for CDN, there would not be several items including money, for member's work. what other items can be offered for membership?	Spring 2019	On going	Executive Director and Membership Committee	
B. Implement Peer learning webinars as another benefit	Provide quarterly webinars where members can learn from another member doing innovative work. Feature this organization on the Member Spotlight page of the website	Spring 2019	Ongoing	Membership coordinator	
C. Build a CDN Membership Directory	Publish directory online so all members can access it and network with each other across regions.	Fall 2020	ongoing	Membership and communications	
D. Clearly articulate the benefits on CDN website and renewal letters	Provide a case statement and talking points on website, for the Board members, and for the renewal letters.	Spring 2019	ongoing	Communications and membership person	
E. Continue to conduct a survey of members each year to understand their perceptions of benefits of membership and needs.	Design a survey to be administered at the end of the fiscal year. The survey will be emailed to current paid members.	2019	ongoing	Membership coordinator	

Goal 3.   **Enhance CDN communications to its members and potential members**

Objective	Action Item	Start Date	Implement Date	By whom (Committee, Staff, Board)	Notes
A. Refresh the CDN email communications	Utilize a more professional layout for the emails and e-news.	Summer/fall 2019	Ongoing	Executive Director Communications Person and PR Firm	
B. Ensure CDN email communications occur regularly	In addition to action alerts sent almost weekly during the General Assembly and notification of CD Week, schedule 4 or 5 messages to the email list featuring member activities and informing them about opportunities, etc.	Fall 2019	ongoing	Communications(New Personnel)	
C. Refresh the CDN Website and keep it updated	Determine new website design, functionality, etc.	Fall 2019	Launch new site in 2020?	Executive Director and Communications	
D. Consider list serves for CDN members, including regional and statewide	Determine how these would work, who would subscribe, who would monitor this and the amount of staff time needed to manage this.	Spring 2021	ongoing	Executive Director and Communications	
E. Continue to use social media to market CDN successes	Social media right now being monitored by the Hatcher Group, consider taking that in house.	Fall 2020	Ongoing	Communications(New Personnel)	

Component 2:   Continue CDN's Legacy of Effective Advocacy

RESULT: *Within the next four years we will see…*

The Community Development Network of Maryland is the voice for Maryland's community development sector. CDN's advocacy efforts strengthen the community development sector, and work toward policies that positively impact people served by the sector.

Goal 1:   Continue CDN's important presence in the State Legislature.

Objective	Action Item	Start Date	Implement Date	By Whom (Committee, Staff, Board)	Notes
A. Continue meeting with the Maryland DHCD secretary at least 2-3 times per year	These meetings will cover topics such as: • Budget allocation requests • Any issues the community development sector is having with any of the DHCD programs, and solutions • Preparation for the legislative session.	ongoing	Ongoing	Members of the Policy Committee who are CDN board members and CDN staff	
B. Create policy agenda each year prior to start of General Assembly	Set policy goals throughout the year hearing from regional coalitions and other issues that come up in other legislative sessions. Ensure input on legislative agenda during the fall Regional Meetings Integrate partner's legislative agendas in ours. Build coalitions around the legislation as much as possible.	ongoing	Ongoing	Policy Committee and Board members	
C. Ensure a plan for Implementation of legislation	While planning the legislation, there should be a plan for implementation, ensuring that members will use the opportunity and/or governments will comply.	Spring 2019	ongoing	Exec Director and policy committee	
D. Plan and execute Community Development Day in Annapolis	The Legislative Lunch occurs in January of each year to unveil our policy agenda to the legislators and to our members. This occurs in Annapolis each year.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Policy Committee and Events Committee	

	The relationships CDN has with the legislators are build through the ED's relationships. Members should be in meetings with their own legislators as much as possible	Spring 2019	ongoing	Communications(New Personnel)	
E. Ensure members are building relationships with legislators	Use Community Development Day in Annapolis for relationship building.				
	Develop an Advocacy 101 course to build member capacity for advocacy	Summer 2019			

Component 3:   Strengthen the Community Development Sector

RESULT: *Within the next four years we will see…*

Community development organizations are thriving and efficient. The state's housing counselors are HUD certified. CDN is involved in statewide initiatives that further the sector.

Goal 1:   Provide opportunities for community development organizations to learn from each other

Objective	Action Item	Start Date	Implement Date	By whom (Committee, Staff, Board)	Notes
A. Provide quarterly peer to peer webinars	Develop a process to determine which orgs will be featured each year, topics, etc.	Spring 2019	On going	staff	
B. Provide opportunities for networking during regional meetings/regional roundtables	Take some time each regional meeting (CD) and regional roundtable (HC) to let groups talk about what they are doing, and potential partnership.	Ongoing	ongoing	Executive Director	
C. Allow for networking time during the Annual Meeting	Allow for time for networking and connecting groups	Annually	Annually	Events committee	

Goal 2: Build capacity of the sector through statewide initiatives

Objective	Action Item	Start Date	Implement Date	By whom (Committee, Staff, Board)	Notes
A. Continue Own Your Future Campaign	Designed to ensure that people go to homebuyer education earlier in the process, prior to signing a contract.	Ongoing	Ends Dec 2019 unless more funding	Housing counseling staff	
B. Continue work to build the Fair Housing Action Center of MD	This is the work to revive the only fair housing group in MD, and also make it much better than it was. This will build capacity of the sector through better understanding and enforcement of fair housing. Its capacity building because CDN is building the capacity and building up this organization (once the org is done, it's likely in the advocacy category).	Ongoing	ongoing	Executive Director	
C. Explore diving into Health and Housing field, particularly as a way to creatively fund the work	Continue to think about how CDN can build capacity for the health and housing work, even if its just providing guidance as to how to talk about how CD work intersects with health. Continue exploring connecting Medicaid dollars to housing	ongoing	ongoing	Executive Director	
D. Develop a disciplined approach to CDN's participation in new statewide initiatives	Craft a way to analyze (1) how well a new initiative fits CDN's mission and priority and (2) whether we have the personnel to get involved.	Winter 2018	ongoing	Executive Director with the Board	

Goal 3. Build capacity at the local level

Objective	Action Item	Start Date	Imple-ment Date	By whom (Committee, Staff, Board)	Notes
A. Continue the equitable development and capacity building work in Baltimore City	There is a working group thinking through on-on-one consulting and workshops for community development orgs in Baltimore. More importantly, they are also wanting to be the clearing house for orgs that want to provide technical assistance. There is also thinking about spinning off a community development network in Baltimore City only.	Spring 2019	On going	staff	
B. Through regional meetings, determine other capacity building needs	Groups may want workshops on topics specific to their areas.	Ongoing	ongoing	Executive Director	

Goal 4: Develop strategies to groom younger community development professionals

Objective	Action Item	Start Date	Implement Date	By whom (Committee, Staff, Board)	Notes
A. Create methods and tools for attracting and developing young talent in the community development sector	Define "young" practitioners. Determine several methods for attracting young practitioners. Learn what they want and need in order to remain and thrive in the sector and either provide support or direct them to the right support.	June 2019	Dec. 2019	The Board	

Component 4:   Promote the Economic and Social Impact of Maryland's Community Development Sector

RESULT: *Within the next four years we will see…*

Maryland's community development sector is well respected and well-resourced in Maryland. Legislators, community members, funders, and the public at large understand the important social and economic impact of community development in Maryland, and support the sector through opportunities, funding, better policy initiatives, and more.

Goal 1:   Continue Maryland Community Development Week each fall

Objective	Action Item	Start Date	Implement Date	By whom (Committee, Staff, Board)	Notes
A. Determine projects to be highlighted in each region	Projects could include affordable housing, mainstreet/main corridor, arts districts as related to community development, etc.	Ongoing	Annually	Executive Director and regional coalitions	
B. Invite legislators, community development professionals, potential funders and investors, public at large, and more to Maryland Community Development Week events	Ensure all interested parties in the region are invited to events, including legislators, public officials, funders and investors, the public at large and anyone else the working group wants to invite.	ongoing	Annually	Executive Director with regional coalitions and working group	
C. Integrate the past Awardees as events for CD Week	Review the past awardees to determine future CD Week events	Summer 2019	ongoing		
D. Evaluate success of Maryland Community Development Week	Determine what success would mean in the short term and in the long term. Evaluate using surveys of members, legislators, and participants.	Ongoing	ongoing	Working group and Executive Director	
E. Continue to obtain sponsors for CD Week, goal of $50,000 per year	The week has become lucrative for us, continue that work.	Ongoing	Annually	Executive Director	

Goal 2: Think about and encourage other events or programs that promote the social and economic impact of our sector

Objective	Action Item	Start Date	Implement Date	By whom (Committee, Staff, Board)	Notes
A. With working group, brainstorm other events/programs that could be ongoing.	Understanding the success of the campaign, determine other activities that can be done. Ensure there is consideration for urban, rural, suburban events/activities	Summer/fall 2021	ongoing	Executive Director and working group	
B. Partner with other statewide organizations and other partner organizations such as the Job Opportunity Task Force, Rural Health Association, the Mid Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers on innovative programs and projects	Leverage partnerships with statewide organizations (like Maryland Affordable Housing Coalition, Maryland Community Action Partnership, and others) to promote the campaign, provide support for each other, gain membership, etc.	ongoing	ongoing	Executive Director and board	
C. Create a Community Development 101 talk	Take this on the road to organizations, public agencies and funders The content should include what Community Development is, it's impact, why it matters.	Summer 2021	ongoing	Communications and ED	
D. Develop a clearinghouse for best practices	Provide links to best practices in the field on the website. Utilize NACEDA as a way to build this up	Summer 2021	ongoing		

Goal 3. Utilize CDN's communications to promote impact of the sector

Objective	Action Item	Start Date	Implement Date	By whom (Committee, Staff, Board)	Notes
A. Utilize website to highlight and feature members	Ensure the Member Spotlight is updated	Summer/fall 2019	ongoing	Executive Director and working group	
B. Utilize social media to share member successes	Use twitter and FB to share the successes of members	ongoing	ongoing	communications	

Component 5:   Organizational and Operational Excellence

RESULT: *Within the next four years we will see…*

The Community Development Network of Maryland continues as a financially strong and stable 501c3 organization. Added staff will allow the organization to meet the demands of its members.

Goal 1: Add staff to help meet CDN member's demands and increase membership

Objective	Action Item	Start Date	Imple-ment Date	By Whom (Committee, Staff, Board)	Notes
A. Add capacity to help with membership and communications	Add a full-time staff person who will become an expert on all things CDN. Ideally, this person will manage membership and communications.	Spring 2019	Spring 2019	Finance Committee HR Subcommittee	
B. Consider additional staff or consultants as needed	Explore whether a with housing counseling staff member is needed, whether the duties can be handled by the person described above, and whether any new position would be full-time or part-time.	Spring 2019	Spring 2019	Finance Committee HR Subcommittee	
C. Consider office infrastructure	In conjunction with Objectives A and B above, consider whether working virtually is the right answer. If not, determine specific space and location needs.	Summer 2021	completed	CDN Board and staff	
D. Create a succession plan for staff and ED	Ensure that the organization is stable and sound by having transition plan and succession plan	Summer 2019	ongoing	CDN Board	

Goal 2: **Deepen CDN's Financial Stability**

Objective	Action Item	Start Date	Implement Date	By Whom (Committee, Staff, Board)	Notes
A. Approve balanced budget each year with funding sources identified	Budget designed by ED and approved by Finance Committee with the assistance of board members interested in Fundraising. Ensure all sources where funds are needed have a funding source identified in the budget. (i.e. the fundraising plan). Ensure diverse funding sources including: --membership --grants - foundation --grants – government --Corporate sponsorships --CITC	Annually	Annually	Executive Director, Finance Committee	
B. Develop a fundraising plan that will support the goals in this strategic plan	Ensure that there is a plan to fund each initiative in this strategic plan. Explore the possibility of hiring or contracting with a resource developer.	Annually	Annually	Executive Director Board and Fundraising Committee	
C. Continue "Reserve Fund" to ensure a cushion to only be used for a rainy day	Continue to build reserve fund by allocating $10,000 per year at the end of the fiscal year.	annually	Annually	Board and Executive Director	
D. Plan for and execute a financial review or audit each year to ensure accountability and transparency.	Retain accounting firm for financial review Conduct financial review each year	Annually	Annually	Executive Director	