



Sustainability Brainstorming Exercise

What is Sustainability?

Understanding sustainability requires an awareness of how everything we do, everything we take, everything we make and everything we waste affects nature's balance, and how our actions will ultimately affect future generations and the world around us.

Economic Sustainability

Financial success is critical to achieving sustainability. Bankrupt businesses are not sustainable. Economic sustainability means taking the lead in broadening decision making criteria to include the environment and social costs while remaining viable.

- What products can your department use less to save money? (paper, staples)
- Are there grants available to your department for researching or working towards providing services related to sustainability?
- How can your program measure its impact on society? (# of people served, success rates)
- How can your program measure its impact on the environment?
- How will social and environmental costs get included in decision making?
- Who makes financial decisions for the department?

Environmental Sustainability

Eliminate our contribution to fossil fuel dependency, wasteful use of materials, dependence on chemicals and synthetic substances, and encroachment on nature (land, water, wildlife, forests, soil, and ecosystems).

From the Natural Step Framework

- What items can we purchase differently or stop purchasing that will be less harmful to our environment? (local, toxic, biodegradable)
- How can we use less energy
- How do we control the materials we use to minimize negative environmental impact?
- How do we ensure the materials we use, are used to their fullest?
- What are the environmental costs associated with work at the Regional Planning Commission?



Social Sustainability

Social sustainability is focused on social interaction, cultural enrichment, protecting the vulnerable, and respecting social diversity. What decisions impact employees, suppliers, investors, local and global communities, and clients? Are these decisions positive or negative?

- Do programs actively consult with interested parties or the people affected by the program?
- Do program strategies integrate social and environmental targets with financial ones?
- Do the program's management process, business standards, incentives and targets seek to achieve social and environmental goals?
- Do programs include a report of social and environmental performance?
- What are the social costs associated with work at the Regional Planning Commission?