

# WHAT IS A MISSION STATEMENT?

## The Benefits of a Well-Defined Mission Statement

It focuses your energy and clarifies your purpose—

Be careful to keep your mission narrowly focused to ensure that you don't bite off more than you can chew.

It will be your best public relations tool—

It is a beacon that will attract people and resources to your cause. Make it compelling as well as clear.

A mission statement is a succinct statement that conveys your organization's reason for being.

Coming up with an effective mission statement is worth the time and effort.

## Three Questions to Ask:

1. What are the opportunities or needs that we exist to address? (the purpose of the organization)
2. What are we doing to address these needs? (the business of the organization)
3. What principles or beliefs guide our work? (the values of the organization)

## Three Tests to Pass:

1. **Fluency Test:** a mission statement should be concise and state the obvious; if your members cannot recite it easily and fluently, start again
2. **Ignition Test:** a mission statement should be self-igniting; it should inspire and motivate the passions of a targeted audience; use proactive verbs
3. **Value Test:** a meaningful mission statement goes beyond the daily operating procedures; focus your mission statement on larger values that can be translated into short and long term goals

## Humane Society of the United States

"To create a humane and sustainable world for all animals, including people, through education, advocacy, and the promotion of respect and compassion."

## Other things to keep in mind:

**A group effort:** an organization must be responsive to the entire group's motivations, not just one individual's; this should be reflected in the mission statement through collaboration in the crafting of the statement

**Be selective and succinct:** focus on ideas that represent your organization's core values and services; ex: fundraising and publicity are critical to most group's survival, but they do not necessarily belong in a mission statement

**Free of jargon:** do not use words that individuals outside of the organization may be unfamiliar with

## **Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream**

“To make, distribute, and sell the finest quality all natural ice cream and euphoric concoctions with a continued commitment to incorporating wholesome, natural ingredients and promoting business practices that respect the Earth and the Environment.”

## **Regular (Annual) Reviews**

It's important for RSOs that see a lot of turnover to adopt a regular review of the mission statement. By regularly reviewing an organization's mission statement you can ensure it remains relevant, inspiring, and responsive to the members' motivations.

**ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND:**

**WHAT MOTIVATES ME?**

**WHAT MOTIVATES OTHERS?**