



Cambridge  
Nonprofit  
Coalition

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2018-2021

## Executive Summary

Made possible by Cambridge Community Foundation  
and Cambridge Agassiz Harvard Fund

## Table of Contents

Overview	2
Background	2
Data Collection	3
Foundational Components	4
Goals & Objectives	5
Key Indicators	6
Conclusion	7
Thank You	7

## OVERVIEW

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We are proud to present the Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition's Strategic Plan for 2018-2021. Since we hosted our first convening in 2013, we have strengthened our resolve and efforts to facilitate communication and collaboration towards the betterment of Cambridge residents. With our Steering Committee and other committees firmly established, our Managing Director solidly in place, and through the support of our dedicated funders, we have undertaken a comprehensive effort to hone our strategic focus and develop a blueprint for our continued growth and impact through the year 2020. The following document represents the collective wisdom of the Steering Committee, our Managing Director, and the stakeholders of the Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition.

## BACKGROUND

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Cambridge is a city with tremendous wealth, both financially and in its array of programs and services. However, even with this level of resources, there are still significant disparities and many residents in great need. Two recently released publications, the citywide Community Needs Assessment and Cambridge Community Foundation's Boomtown/Hometown, affirm these pervasive realities. It is the Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition's belief that by increasing the connection and communication between nonprofit organizations and with committed partners in other sectors, that service delivery and coordination, and, ultimately, quality of life for Cambridge residents most impacted by systemic inequity and injustice, will improve. By fostering an ecology that advances communications and collaboration, we aim to create space for nonprofit leaders and staff to learn about and support one another's work, create partnerships that enable resource sharing, capacity building and better coordination of services, as well as rally around public policy issues of mutual concern.

In November 2016, the Strategic Planning Subcommittee of the Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition commenced its strategic planning effort, which included developing the planning framework, data collection and synthesis – including a Summit in January 2017, goal-setting, and articulation of the path forward. The CNC Steering Committee approved this plan in September 2017.

## DATA COLLECTION

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A significant amount of data was collected as part of this strategic planning process in order to fully inform deliberations and decisions. This data collection process included assessment from approximately 100 individuals through the following methods:

- Key Informant Interviews – Twelve interviews were conducted with a range of individuals, including leaders from the city, universities, and Chamber of Commerce, funders, and thought partner
- Peer Organization Interviews – Nine interviews were conducted with leaders of peer and comparable organizations locally and nationally to gain guidance about lessons learned, strategic decisions, and ways to think about organizational structure, financing, and operations
- Surveys – Surveys were collected from 50 current leaders of Cambridge nonprofits about the needs and priorities of the nonprofit sector and people living in Cambridge
- Winter 2017 Summit – An in-person convening of more than 50 leaders of Cambridge nonprofits elicited their responses to the survey data, and helped identify key opportunities and future accomplishments of the CNC

Additionally, CNC staff and dmw360 consulting gathered data from numerous sources, including research, articles, reports, and previous CNC convenings. Members of the Steering Committee provided their insights, guidance, and feedback throughout the 7-month process, and updates and invitations for reactions and input were provided to the broader nonprofit sector at different intervals.

## FOUNDATIONAL COMPONENTS

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Through the course of our planning process, we revised the following foundational components to better reflect why CNC exists and what we do, our aspirations for our future community, and the guiding principles that articulate how we fulfill our mission through the culture we exemplify both internally and in our collaborative and outward facing efforts.

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition advances equity and justice in the community by strengthening the Cambridge nonprofit sector, building collective voice, and promoting collaboration.\*

\* We define equity as recognizing that as a result of root causes that are historical, environmental, systemic, cultural, and political, everyone does not start at the same place – so some people will need different resources or supports to achieve the same outcome. We have a collective responsibility to work to eliminate disparities and create greater racial and economic equality.

### VISION STATEMENT

The Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition envisions a city where all community members have equitable access to opportunities and resources, and where the nonprofit sector is a valued partner in leading social change that addresses historical injustice, levels the playing field, and improves our community.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. **Collaboration:** We advance inter- and intra- sector partnerships that benefit the community.
2. **Inclusion:** We value residents' perspectives and elicit and elevate resident voice in all of our efforts. ^
3. **Transparency:** We are open and honest, and we seek similar accountability from our partners.
4. **Strategy:** We strive to be efficient and effective, and base our work on in-depth research.
5. **Leadership:** We strengthen the sector with knowledge sharing, network building and innovation.

^ We define resident as a person living in Cambridge, regardless of any legal status, with a particular focus on residents that are part of underrepresented groups.

## STRATEGIC FOCUS, GOALS, & OBJECTIVES

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The Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition has identified three strategic focus areas:

1. **CNC organizational capacity**
2. **Benefits for and impact on the nonprofit sector and its collaborators**
3. **Benefits for and impact on residents and the community**

Each focus area has a related 3-year goal, objectives to enable it to meet the goals, and activities to realize the objectives. The goals and objectives are as follows; the activities can be found in the complete Strategic Plan:

### **Goal 1: CNC is a stable organization with healthy governance, sustainable capacity, and engaged membership.**

- A. Define membership criteria and benefits. Increase the number of new and returning members each year.
- B. Establish and consistently employ operating practices aligned with CNC's Guiding Principles to guide committee participation, processes, structures, and decision-making.
- C. Develop plan for organizational sustainability. Identify and secure diverse financial and in-kind resources.
- D. Define CNC's organizational structure (e.g., continue with fiscal sponsorship, become an independent 501c3, etc.).
- E. Articulate and increase awareness across sectors (public, private, and social) of CNC's unique value proposition and statement of intended impact.

**Goal 2: CNC has increased the influence and leadership of the nonprofit sector and level of engagement with other sectors (public, private, and social).**

- A. Articulate and meet goals of CNC-initiated convenings and offerings. Increase participation in and satisfaction with CNC-initiated offerings.
- B. Increased visibility and awareness of CNC, its efficacy as an advocate for policies that increase equity, and members' collective efforts and impact.
- C. Increase strategic cross-sector engagement.
- D. Advance CNC's advocacy and policy positions and enhance the advocacy and policy capacity of CNC and its members.

**Goal 3. CNC collectively accelerates progress toward a more equitable city.**

- A. Significantly increase awareness of community-level needs and disparities.
- B. Develop collective strategies to address priority community needs in a way that clearly and strategically leverages the CNC and its members.
- C. Launch and track collective actions to create community change.

## KEY INDICATORS TO ASSESS PROGRESS

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**Membership and recruitment**

**Effectiveness of and satisfaction with CNC**

**Financing**

**Capacity**

**Awareness**

**Outreach and communications**

**CNC-initiated convenings and offerings**

**Advocacy**

**Resident inclusion and engagement**

**Collective action efforts**

## CONCLUSION

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This Strategic Plan is intended to guide the coordinated efforts of the Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition's leadership committee/ group, committees/ subcommittees, and staff as we work in collaboration with our stakeholders. This will be a living document to guide every decision and action over the course of the period from 2017 to 2020. As the world shifts and our context changes, the Steering Committee, Managing Director, and stakeholders will return to this Strategic Plan to refine as necessary. To this end, the Steering Committee and the Managing Director intend to make a thorough assessment of this Strategic Plan at least once annually.

## THANK YOU

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To the people and organizations who made this possible with their generous financial and/or pro bono support, including the Cambridge Community Foundation and Cambridge Agassiz Harvard Fund.

To the Managing Director and Steering Committee of the Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition, who understand the value of intentional planning and committed themselves to this process, and to Daniel Michaud Weinstock, dmw360 consulting, for guiding us throughout.

To the Strategic Planning Subcommittee for their hard work and dedication to developing this three-year plan that will guide CNC's future work in our efforts to advance equity and justice by strengthening the Cambridge nonprofit sector, building collective voice, and promoting collaboration:

- Ben Clark, Enroot
- Elena Sokolow-Kaufman, Managing Director, Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition
- Elissa Spelman, Breakthrough Greater Boston
- Maisha Moses, Young People's Project
- Michael Delia, East End House

And lastly, to everyone who took time to participate in this process and gave their valued input. We could not have developed the plan without you!

## CNC STEERING COMMITTEE

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**Christina Alexis** Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House

**Eva Martin Blythe** YWCA Cambridge

**Ben Clark** Enroot (formerly Cambridge Community Services)

**Michael Delia** East End House

**Elaine DeRosa** Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee

**Kathryn Fenneman** Tutoring Plus of Cambridge, Inc.

**John Froio** Community Legal Services and Counseling Center

**Bob Gittens** Cambridge Family and Children's Service

**Jane Hirschi** CitySprouts

**Eryn Johnson** Community Art Center, Inc.

**Darrin Korte** Cambridge Community Center

**Maria LaPage** Agassiz Baldwin Community

**Risa Mednick** Transition House

**Maisha Moses** Young People's Project

**Gail S. Packer** Community Dispute Settlement Center

**Sasha Purpura** Food for Free Committee, Inc.

**Elaine Schear** Friends of Cambridge Rindge and Latin School

**Elissa Spelman** Breakthrough Greater Boston

**Joan Squeri** The Union Partnership For a Whole Community

## CNC STAFF

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**Elena Sokolow-Kaufman**, Managing Director

And special recognition to an integral part of CNC's inception and development:

**J. David Gibbs**, Community Action Agency of Somerville