ADVANCING OUR CAUSE

Strategic Plan 2011–2013
YMCA OF THE USA
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Over the course of the past 165 years, the work of the Y has grown and evolved, but one thing has remained constant: our mission. It is our reason for being as a Movement, and it is a driving force behind our cause of strengthening community.
OUR MISSION
To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

OUR CAUSE
At the Y, strengthening community is our cause. We believe that lasting personal and social change can only come about when we all work together to invest in our kids, our health and our neighbors. That’s why we focus our work in three areas:

• Youth Development—Nurturing the potential of every child and teen
• Healthy Living—Improving the nation’s health and well-being
• Social Responsibility—Giving back and providing support to our neighbors

OUR LEGACY OF IMPACT AND INNOVATION
Since our founding by George Williams in 1844 as a refuge for young men seeking to escape the hazards of life on the streets in industrialized London, the Y has delivered lasting personal and social change by listening and responding to communities.

The Y developed the first known English as a Second Language program in the United States in response to the influx of immigrants in the 1850s. Ys pioneered basketball, volleyball and group swim lessons around the turn of the 20th century, giving a recently industrialized nation new, safe physical activities that could be enjoyed indoors and outside. During World War II the Y partnered with other national organizations to found the United Service Organizations for National Defense, today known as the USO. When the number of working parents exploded in the 1980s, Ys responded by greatly expanding child care programming. More recently, the Y has been a leader in addressing the country’s lifestyle health and chronic disease crisis.

This is the Y’s legacy. Our challenge is to build on this legacy while helping children, families and communities address the complexities of daily life. This work never has been more difficult. Our nation faces unprecedented challenges, and we must respond by maximizing our collective ability to launch innovative, broad-scale solutions. The Y’s impact must be greater today than ever before.
DEAR COLLEAGUES,

How much stronger will communities of all kinds and sizes be when the Y is dedicated to nurturing the development of every child and teen, improving the nation’s health and well-being, and providing opportunities for all to give back and support their neighbors?

What will the Y be, association by association, and as a Movement, when we focus our resources to achieve a common cause?

Advancing Our Cause, YMCA of the USA’s strategic plan for 2011-2013, is a glimpse into the Y’s future—and the future of our communities. It is focused squarely on what Y-USA can do to help YMCAs strengthen community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, and raise the Y’s profile to generate more support for our cause.

For the Y to be the organization our nation needs—and the organization we want to be—we must be unified around our cause and collaborate to address the most pressing issues of the day. Only then will we be universally acknowledged as an essential element of a strong community. More importantly, kids will learn how to compete fairly, prosper in a social environment and make friends while playing soccer. Parents will be able to work to support their families while their children thrive in child care programs. Individuals participating in the YMCA’s Diabetes Prevention Program will be free from the disease and develop healthier and more productive habits. Immigrants will feel safe, welcome and supported in their courageous journeys, while learning English as a second language. People of all ages will take responsibility for making their community a better place. All of this is within our reach. These experiences already are happening in thousands of communities across the country thanks to the Y. Advancing Our Cause is designed to make sure they happen in every community the Y can reach. This is what we can accomplish by focusing on a common cause—strengthening community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

This plan contains 27 initiatives, and they all are important to delivering on our mission and cause. As the Y-USA board’s Strategic Plan Task Force talked with Y volunteer and professional leaders during the plan’s development, a set of initiatives emerged as having the greatest capacity to strengthen YMCAs and, in turn, make the kind of community impact we seek as a Movement. These high-priority initiatives are:

- Enhance public understanding of the Y and increase the Movement’s capacity to speak with a unified voice and act in support of a common cause.
- Create the plan and infrastructure needed to launch a coordinated, nationwide fundraising campaign.
- Develop and launch new Signature Programs in our areas of focus.
- Strengthen Y collaborations at local, regional, national and global levels.
- Enhance career development resources to ensure staff and volunteer leaders of the Y are cause-driven.
- Promote diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the Y.
Y-USA will allocate resources through 2013 according to the goals of this plan, and these six initiatives will be our top priorities. You will notice that these initiatives are highlighted in bold throughout the plan.

This is Y-USA’s first strategic plan since the launch of the revitalized Y brand, and it is fully aligned with the new architecture, messaging and voice. Consequently, some terms and names you are accustomed to seeing will not be featured prominently here or in Y-USA materials going forward.

For example, Activate America has done as much to strengthen YMCAs, influence public policy, attract philanthropic support and position the Y as a champion for healthy living and social responsibility as any YMCA initiative in decades—and yet, it does not appear in the plan by name. However, its work is continuing and, in fact, is woven throughout this plan. Its emphasis on innovation is driving our efforts to create Signature Programs. You will see hallmarks of the Healthier Communities work in our collaboration priority. Activate America’s approach to relationship building informs our vision of a cause-driven leader. In these ways and others, the work of Activate America remains essential to maximizing our potential as a Movement.

We all have reason to be proud of the organization we have helped build. The Y brings people together and nurtures potential and makes lasting, meaningful change possible in thousands of communities across the country. And yet, our nation faces unprecedented challenges, so the Y needs to reach even more people and do even more good. **Advancing Our Cause** is designed to help us do just this. We hope you are as excited as we are to get started on this work.

On behalf of the YMCA of the USA Board of Directors, we wish to thank Gina Boswell and the Strategic Plan Task Force for their outstanding work in developing this plan, as well as the more than 1,200 Y volunteer and professional leaders who participated in the planning process.

Sincerely,

Ulice Payne, Jr.  
Board Chair  
YMCA of the USA

Neil Nicoll  
President and CEO  
YMCA of the USA
DEAR Y LEADERS,

In 2007, YMCA of the USA began implementation of the first of three strategic plans aimed at transforming the lives of people in communities across this country. The Y’s mission—to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all—calls upon us now, as it has throughout our history, to harness our Movement’s considerable power to advance our cause.

As we look at the challenges facing our society, it is clear that the Y is one of only a handful of organizations that is positioned to foster lasting personal and community change on a national and even global scale through our work in youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

Early on we recognized that if we wanted to maximize our collective ability to advance our cause, we would need to enhance capacity at both the national (Y-USA) and local (YMCA) level. As a consequence, we made a commitment to develop a series of strategic plans over a 10-year planning horizon. Each plan builds upon the prior, with the end goal of putting the Y’s mission into action by strengthening community.

- **Our first plan (2007–2010)** was aimed primarily at strengthening Y-USA so that we would be better able to provide support to YMCAs and position the Y on the national stage.
- **The current plan (2011–2013)** is aimed at strengthening YMCAs so that they will be more effective in advancing the Y cause. It is also aimed at strengthening the public image of the Y so that we can more effectively generate support for our cause.
- **Our next strategic plan (2014–2017)** will be tied directly to what the Y must do nationally and locally to make communities stronger, nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation’s health and well-being, and give back and support our neighbors.

This plan, *Advancing Our Cause*, represents the work of hundreds of staff and volunteers. We are indebted to them for its development. In particular I would like to thank the Y-USA board’s Strategic Plan Task Force and the CEO Advisory Council chaired by Michael Haggerty, Board Chair, and Gordon Echtenkamp, President and CEO, YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas.

Gina Boswell
Strategic Plan Task Force Chair
YMCA of the USA Board of Directors
BEHAVIORS OF A CAUSE-DRIVEN YMCA

By defining the promise of the Y as our cause—to strengthen community—we have given birth to new language about being “cause-driven” and even the “cause-driven YMCA.” The research conducted for Advancing Our Cause revealed that there is consensus among Y leaders about what it means to be a cause-driven YMCA. Y-USA used these behaviors as the basis for this plan.

Above all else, cause-driven YMCAs act with great INTENTION. They actively use the Y’s mission, cause and brand to guide, shape and vet their decisions, actions and communications.

As they do so, they also demonstrate the following set of behaviors:

1. PROMOTE AND PROTECT THE Y BRAND
   They present themselves as organizations that strengthen community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility and, in so doing, clearly demonstrate their cause, impact and charitable worth.

2. ADVOCATE TO INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY
   They identify and take a stand on critical community issues in the Y’s areas of focus while proactively engaging community leaders, policymakers, influencers and the general public.

3. PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY AND PHILANTHROPY
   They generate increasing amounts of donated financial support for the Y cause, contributing to a healthy mix of earned revenue, grant support and charitable dollars that are utilized to achieve impact.

4. ADDRESS COMMUNITY NEEDS THROUGH PROGRAMS
   They assess community trends in the areas of youth development, healthy living and social responsibility and respond with replicable programs and services that make an impact.

5. MEASURE IMPACT
   They describe and measure the impact of Y programs and services while constantly adapting and innovating to deepen and broaden impact.

6. COLLABORATE WITH OTHERS
   They leverage the power of collaboration by forming relationships with other Ys, organizations, government and businesses to build greater capacity for nurturing the potential of kids, promoting healthy living and fostering a sense of social responsibility.

7. DEVELOP PASSIONATE, CAUSE-DRIVEN LEADERS
   They engage, develop and empower cause-driven leaders and volunteers at every level who are passionate and dedicated to the Y’s mission, cause and values. These are people who provide enduring leadership and generously support the organization with their time and resources.

8. ENSURE ACCESS, INCLUSION AND ENGAGEMENT
   They ensure that all segments of the community are welcome at the Y and have equal opportunities to become connected to other members, staff and volunteers at all levels of the organization.

9. DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH AND AMONG MEMBERS
   They purposefully strengthen community by taking intentional steps to develop relationships with and among members and by building small, supportive communities around shared interests and activities.
STATEGIC PRIORITIES

Promote and Protect the Y Brand
Influence Public Policy
Promote Philanthropy
Address Community Needs
Measure Impact
Collaborate With Others
Develop Cause-Driven Leaders
Ensure Access, Inclusion and Engagement
Develop Relationships With and Among Members
# PROMOTE AND PROTECT THE Y BRAND

The revitalized Y brand is one of our most valuable assets. It provides a road map to transform the public’s goodwill toward the Y into action and a platform for promoting and protecting our reputation. We all share the responsibility of making the most of the opportunity ahead of us. By speaking in a unified voice and living our cause, we will increase public understanding of the role the Y plays in strengthening community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

## OVERALL MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS

By 2013, the portion of the General Public that views the Y as an organization committed to strengthening community with a focus on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility will increase by 10%.

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<tr>
<th>Key Initiative</th>
<th>Measurement of Success</th>
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<tr>
<td>Raise visibility and enhance public understanding of the nonprofit status and</td>
<td>• By 2013, how the General Public ranks the Y relative to our peers in key attributes impacting the decision to donate time and/or money will improve (at least five attributes for the Y will be rated as “within reach” of our most highly regarded peers).</td>
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<td>local, national and global impact of the Y</td>
<td>Baseline: 2010 = 1 attribute</td>
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<td>Increase the capacity of YMCAs to speak in a unified voice and advocate on</td>
<td>• By 2013, 75% of member associations (689 of 919) will complete steps 1-5 of the brand transition time line:</td>
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<td>behalf of the Y’s work: strengthening community through youth development,</td>
<td>• Educate and engage key stakeholders</td>
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<td>healthy living and social responsibility</td>
<td>• Prepare for transition</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Align architecture</td>
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<td>• Infuse voice and messaging</td>
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<td>• Convert voice and visual system</td>
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<td>Strengthen the capacity of YMCAs to protect our reputation by emphasizing</td>
<td>• Y-USA will develop and execute an annual recovery plan for 100% of member associations found to be out of compliance with membership standard 2j (associations shall not act in a manner that adversely impacts the reputation of other associations, the Y brand or the national Movement).</td>
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<td>the importance of excellence in governance and ethics, safety, and fiscal and</td>
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<td>risk management</td>
<td>Baseline: New measure</td>
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<td>Help YMCAs protect our reputation by meeting membership standards</td>
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<td>• By 2013, 97% of associations (891 of 919) will continue to be members in good standing of the National Council.</td>
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<td>Baseline: 2009 = 97%</td>
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**Target Start Date**

March 2011

**Target Completion Date**

Ongoing

*Bold = high-priority initiative*
The Y is a powerful ally and advocate for communities. Our experience, strong relationships and presence in 10,000 communities across the nation enable us to organize grassroots efforts and influence public policy. The Y needs to engage policymakers and influencers in developing societal norms and governmental actions that promote progress in youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. We also must be a sought-after partner in influencing social change on a local, regional and national level.

**OVERALL MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS**

By 2013, 50% of State Alliances will have a statewide policy initiative in one of the three focus areas, and how Key Influencers rate the Y compared to our peers will improve by 150%.

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<tr>
<th>Key Initiative</th>
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| Implement advocacy efforts at the federal level to influence and promote policies that improve youth development, healthy living and social responsibility | • By 2013, Y-USA will launch a new Grassroots Advocacy Network through YMCAexchange and increase the Y advocates database to 4,000 people.  
Baseline: 2010 = 400 people  
• Y-USA will strengthen relationships with members of Congress on priority committees, leading to 25 member associations strategically engaging a member of Congress in 2011; 35 in 2012; and 50 in 2013.  
Baseline: New measure |
| Strengthen state and local advocacy to influence and promote policies that improve youth development, healthy living and social responsibility | • Every Alliance will target and accomplish one new State Alliance best practice each year in order to increase effectiveness and strengthen impact.  
• The total number of tools and resources (hosted on YMCAexchange) for state and local advocacy will increase by 100% by 2013, driving a 100% increase in YMCAs’ usage from 2011 to 2013.  
Baseline: 2010 = 20 resources  
• Y-USA will fully incorporate the data required to calculate Community Benefit into the Annual Report for associations by 2013.  
• At least 25% of all State Alliances (13 of 50) will testify before their state legislatures by the close of the 2012 legislative session.  
Baseline: 2010 three-year average = 7 Alliances |
| Secure financial and technical resources for national priorities | • Funding granted from the federal government to Y-USA will increase to $10 million by 2013.  
Baseline: 2010 = $6 million |
| Establish nationwide reputation as a leader in youth development, healthy living and social responsibility | • By 2013, how Key Influencers rate the Y relative to our peers on key attributes impacting their decision to engage with an organization will improve (at least five attributes for the Y will be rated as “within reach” of our most highly regarded peers).  
Baseline: 2010 = 2 attributes |

**Target Start Date**  
January 2012  
**Target Completion Date**  
December 2013
PROMOTE PHILANTHROPY

A gift to the Y is a gift for meaningful, enduring impact and stronger communities. We need to generate incremental support for our cause and proven solutions to pressing community needs. We will do so while laying the groundwork for a nationwide fundraising campaign and creating a culture that is built on the highest standards of behavior for developing and using contributed funds.

OVERALL MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS

We will launch a coordinated, nationwide fundraising campaign in 2013, with a long-term (12/31/2016) goal to increase the ratio of contributed revenue (less capital) to total operating revenue to at least 15% for the Y nationally.

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<th>Key Initiative</th>
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| Raise contributed funds nationally, with a particular focus on health strategy, innovation and service to low-income and vulnerable populations | • By 2013, contributed revenue nationally will increase over 2010 level by 20% to $24 million, with 85% of revenue designated for health strategy, innovation and service to low-income and vulnerable populations.  
Baseline: 2010 = $20 million |
| Develop the infrastructure needed to launch a coordinated, nationwide fundraising campaign in 2013 | • In 2013, Y-USA will conduct a nationwide campaign in coordination with at least 70% of member associations (643 of 919); the campaign will reach at least 70 metropolitan YMCA service areas and meet an agreed-upon revenue goal.  
• National tools, templates, promotional materials and training, including case development, will be available to YMCAs by 2012.  
• In 2012, Y-USA will conduct 30 regional campaigns, which will reach at least 60 metropolitan YMCA service areas.  
Baseline: New measure |

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<th>Target Start Date</th>
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<td>March 2011</td>
<td>December 2013</td>
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Bold = high-priority initiative
The Y has listened and responded to communities’ most critical social needs for more than 160 years, and we’re determined to keep doing it. Based on documented community-needs assessments, the Y will design and deliver new programs and services that address critical issues in the areas of youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

### OVERALL MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS

By 2013, 35% of all chartered YMCA branches (945 of 2,700) will launch at least one new Signature Program.

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<th>Key Initiative</th>
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<td>Develop and launch Signature Programs with evidence-based guidelines for the three areas of focus: youth development, healthy living and social responsibility</td>
<td>• By 2013, the Y will develop and launch four Signature Programs with a minimum of one for each area of focus.</td>
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<td>Develop a suite of tools and processes that builds the capacity of YMCAs to assess, understand and respond to community needs in the three focus areas</td>
<td>• The basic community-needs approach, process and tools will be completed by 2011. The complete suite of tools and processes will be available by 2013.</td>
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<td>• By 2013, 30% of YMCA branches (810 of 2,700) will access one or more of the tools and complete the community-needs assessment.</td>
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<td>Develop tools, experiences and processes that help Y-USA and YMCAs use design and innovation skills to create new programs and organizational processes</td>
<td>Baseline: New measure</td>
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<td>• By 2013, 11% of member associations (100 of 919) will participate in the Program Design Institute, and Y-USA will use the design process in the development of Signature Programs.</td>
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<td>Baseline: 2010 = 60 member associations</td>
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**Bold = high-priority initiative**
We know of the lasting personal and social change that the Y makes possible—we see it every day. If we are to reach more people and do more good, we need to bring this to life for people who can’t always be by our side to see the results for themselves. So, the Y will capture and communicate the measurable, positive impact we make in communities in our three areas of focus: youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

**OVERALL MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS**

By 2013, 20% of member associations (184 of 919) will measure program, individual and community impact using a common framework, methodology and tool set, and there will be quantifiable impact in three Signature Programs.

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<tr>
<td>Develop a common measurement framework, methodology and tool set for use by YMCAs to measure program, individual and community impact</td>
<td>• Y-USA will launch the framework, methodology and tool set in 2011.</td>
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<td>• By 2012, 10% of member associations (92 of 919) will adopt the measurement framework.</td>
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<td>• By 2013, 20% of member associations (185 of 919) will adopt the measurement framework.</td>
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<td>• The 20% will be representative of the largest 100 associations (20 Ys), the next 175 largest associations (35 Ys) and small to mid-size associations (130 Ys).</td>
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<td>Develop logic models, program outcomes and measurement support tools to further define the impact of existing national program models in each area of focus</td>
<td>• Measurement tools will be implemented for three existing programs, one in each area of focus, by 2013.</td>
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<td>Develop and implement the program-evaluation framework for each new Signature Program</td>
<td>• The four new Signature Programs will be developed using the program-evaluation framework, so their impact can be measured.</td>
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<tr>
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COLLABORATE WITH OTHERS

The Y has the long-standing track record and on-the-ground presence to address the nation’s most pressing social issues, but we know that collaborating with others can amplify the impact of our work to strengthen community. That is why we value collaboration—both among associations and with external partners—as a means of advancing our cause.

OVERALL MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS

By 2013, 40% of member associations (368 of 919) will report In-Depth Collaborations with other YMCAs or external community partners.

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<th>Key Initiative</th>
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| Strengthen collaborations at local, regional, national and global levels to better address community needs. These will include sharing information, coordinating programs, sharing services and merging operations. | • By 2013, 40% of member associations (368 of 919) will report In-Depth Collaborations with other YMCAs in membership services and programs that respond to diverse community needs; the collaborations will include sharing of resources, risks, responsibilities and rewards.  
Baseline: New measure  
• By 2013, 40% of member associations (368 of 919) will report In-Depth Collaborations with external partners in key program areas that respond to diverse community needs; the collaborations will include sharing of resources, risks, responsibilities and rewards.  
Baseline: New measure |
| Develop and implement a robust knowledge-sharing and collaboration site (YMCAexchange) to enhance collaboration within the Y | • By 2013, 75% of surveyed individuals who use the collaboration pages on YMCAexchange will report high levels of satisfaction with their experience.  
• The new YMCAexchange will be fully operational by the end of 2012.  
Baseline: New measure |

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Bold = high-priority initiative
DEVELOP CAUSE-DRIVEN LEADERS

The Y is fortunate to have leaders at every level with the knowledge, skills, character and passion to deliver on our cause of strengthening community. There is a need for more leaders with these qualities because our communities face increasingly complex challenges. The Y will respond by developing and supporting an enhanced training and leadership development system that builds greater staff and volunteer competency for advancing the Y’s mission and cause.

OVERALL MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS

By 2013, Y-USA’s Leadership Competency Model and related resources will support the development of cause-driven leaders as evidenced by the following: 1) 75% of member associations (689 of 919) will use the Competency Model; 2) self-reported competency strength of staff will increase by 5%; and 3) competency knowledge will increase by 25%, demonstrated through testing before and after select national and regional training courses.

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<td>Design and enhance career development resources to help ensure a diverse team of cause-driven staff and volunteers</td>
<td>Through Y-USA’s new certification system by 2013:</td>
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<td>• 200 new Team Leaders (80% of 250 prospects) will be certified.</td>
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<td>• 300 new Multi-team/Branch Leaders (46% of 650 prospects) will be certified.</td>
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<td>• 100 new Organizational Leaders (44% of 225 prospects) will be certified.</td>
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<td>• 1,000 staff members (25% of 4,022 prospects) will participate in the newly created recertification process by updating their personal development record.</td>
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<td>• Y-USA will develop and launch a Volunteer Competency Model and Training Program.</td>
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<td>• In addition, 700 certifications will be attained through the existing certification system before it is discontinued on 12/31/2011.</td>
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<th>Lead the creation of training and leadership development courses that will enable Ys to strengthen staff and volunteer competencies</th>
<th>• The average course material and trainer quality score will remain 4 or better on a 5-point scale for all National Training Events and select Regional Training Event courses.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen Y staff’s ability to inspire, support and build relationships with and among members and program participants</td>
<td>• By 2013, the number of Y-USA training completions that strengthen Y staff’s relationship-building skills (e.g., Creating the Member Experience; Deepening Relationships and Connections; Keys to Member Engagement; Listen First Institute) will increase by 50%.</td>
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<td>Baseline: 2010 = 6,500 training completions</td>
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<td>Lead and support the YMCA behavior-change process</td>
<td>• By 2013, 75% of the largest 90 member associations (68 associations) and 50% of all other associations (415 of 829) will report having used one or more of the resources in the Living Our Cause toolkits.</td>
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<td>• By 2013, 75% of member associations (362 of 483) that have used one or more of the resources will rate their satisfaction with the resources 4 or more on a 5-point scale.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• By 2013, 75% of member associations (362 of 483) that have used one or more of the resources will report improvements in targeted cause-driven behaviors.</td>
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<td>Baseline: New measures</td>
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<tr>
<th>Target Start Date</th>
<th>Target Completion Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2011</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Bold = high-priority initiative
The Y makes accessible the support and opportunities that empower people of all ages and backgrounds to reach their personal potential and live life to the fullest. To fully realize our mission and cause, we must ensure that all segments of society feel welcome as participants, members, staff and volunteers.

### OVERALL MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS

By 2013, 60% of member associations (551 of 919) will report positive progress in advancing cause-driven behavior through increased access, inclusion and engagement of underserved, diverse populations as measured through a common evaluation tool (to be developed and implemented in 2011).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Initiative</th>
<th>Measurement of Success</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Promote an organizational culture and behavior-change process to advance practices and policies that strengthen inclusion and build global community in the U.S. | • More than 55% of member associations (500 of 919) will report positive performance on the Diversity and Inclusion Balance Scorecard by 2013.  
Baseline: 2010 = 36%                                                                 |
| Increase access and inclusion of diverse, underserved populations, including newcomer immigrants, in the Y | • Y-USA will establish five new or strengthened national-level collaborations (e.g., National Council of LaRaza, National Urban League) by 2013.  
• By 2013, Y-USA will implement a targeted strategic initiative with the Hispanic-Latino community that will serve as a pilot for expansion with additional underserved communities.  
Baseline: New measure                                                                 |
| Strengthen collaboration between the U.S. and global Y Movements to promote understanding and better serve diverse communities at home and abroad | • By 2013, the number of Global Centers of Excellence YMCAs (GCEs) will double (to 40), and Y-USA will increase collaborations with the World Alliance and partners by 160% (to 40) to strengthen international YMCAs.  
Baseline: 2010 GCEs = 20  
Baseline: 2010 international collaborations = 15 |

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<tbody>
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<td>January 2012</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Bold = high-priority initiative
DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH AND AMONG MEMBERS

The Y is a diverse organization of men, women and children joined together by a shared commitment to nurturing the potential of kids, promoting healthy living and supporting our neighbors. All members should feel connected to this cause-driven community of people after they join the Y. We will enhance the Y’s membership model to ensure a focus on engaging members in small, supportive communities.

OVERALL MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS

By 2013, at least 70% of all chartered YMCA branches (1,890 of 2,700) will use the new-member survey, and 40% of new members—within 60 days of joining—will agree or strongly agree with the statement, “I have become connected to a formal or informal group of people at the Y.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Initiative</th>
<th>Measurement of Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop evidence-based, national program models that YMCAs can implement in their communities to build relationships among participants and improve people’s lives</td>
<td>• At least 70% of all chartered YMCA branches (1,890 of 2,700) will offer one or more of the national program models by 2013.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Develop tools, resources and experiential learning opportunities that help YMCAs move members to volunteers and volunteers to donors | • By 2013, 65% of member associations (597 of 919) will use Y-USA-developed tools, resources and experiential learning opportunities to help move members to volunteers and volunteers to donors.  
Baseline: New measure |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Target Start Date</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2012</td>
<td>December 2013</td>
</tr>
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</table>
NOTE ON THE PLANNING PROCESS AND RESEARCH

The Y-USA strategic planning process was designed to maximize the collective knowledge of hundreds of Y leaders. We made a deliberate effort to test assumptions, strategies, initiatives and metrics of the Advancing Our Cause strategic plan with various stakeholder groups on an ongoing basis. This process resulted in a focused set of initiatives aimed at achieving the plan’s two overarching goals: (1) strengthening YMCAs’ efforts in pursuit of our cause, and (2) raising the Y’s profile nationally and locally.

Our previous strategic plan, Mission Impact, was aimed at strengthening Y-USA so that we would be better able to support YMCAs. Our next strategic plan, for 2014-2017, will focus on what the Y must do nationally and locally to make communities stronger, nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation’s health and well-being, and give back and support our neighbors.
February 2010
Commission task force and approve overarching plan goals
Y-USA Board

March 2010
Begin preliminary research and environmental scans on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility
Third-Party Researchers Y-USA

May 2010
Review environmental scan results and finalize CDY preliminary vision to be tested
Y-USA Board Task Force

July 2010
Test preliminary CDY vision with 1,220 YMCA staff and volunteers through focus groups, surveys and interviews
Y-USA Staff Leadership

August 2010
Review stakeholder feedback results and approve strategic framework for plan
Y-USA Board Task Force

September 2010
Test preliminary CDY vision and strategic framework with Y-USA staff
Y-USA Staff Leadership

November 2010
Provide feedback on draft initiatives and metrics
Y-USA Board Task Force
Y-USA Staff
CEO Advisory Council

November 2010
Revise initiatives and metrics based on feedback received
Y-USA Staff Leadership

February 2011
FINAL DRAFT RECOMMENDED AND APPROVED
Y-USA Board
April 2010
Develop preliminary vision of cause-driven YMCA (CDY) based on preliminary research
Y-USA Staff Leadership

May 2010
Form CEO Advisory Council
Y-USA Staff Leadership

July 2010
Provide input on CDY vision and overall plan goals
CEO Advisory Council

August 2010
Conduct additional focus groups and interviews with more than 275 participants on preliminary CDY vision and plan goals
CEO Advisory Council

September 2010
Test framework and strategic priorities with CEO Advisory Council
CEO Advisory Council

October 2010
Develop draft key initiatives and metrics to achieve strategic priorities
Cross-Functional Y-USA Staff Teams

December 2010
Develop draft strategic plan document
Y-USA Staff Leadership

January 2011
Review and revise draft strategic plan
Y-USA Board Task Force

Orange indicates opportunities for stakeholder input.
At the outset of the strategic planning process, the Strategic Plan Task Force determined that in order to achieve the desired outcomes established for the 2011-2013 strategic plan, it would be necessary to develop a common perspective regarding attributes of organizations that most effectively advance their cause.

The task force used this information to determine the most important areas in which Y-USA should provide support to help strengthen YMCAs. Using the term as short-hand, the task force determined that it was necessary to develop a view of the “cause-driven YMCA and Movement.”

As a consequence, the stakeholder input process was designed to answer these specific questions:

1. Is there a set of attributes common to YMCAs that effectively deliver the Y cause?
2. How do these attributes compare to known best practices of cause-driven organizations?
3. Where would YMCAs most like support from Y-USA to help them become more effective drivers of the Y cause?

To answer these questions, the task force solicited input from more than 1,220 individuals (including YMCA CEOs, CVOs, Branch Executives, COOs, and Program, Membership, Financial Development and Marketing Directors), who participated in focus groups, surveys, interviews and large-group work sessions held over the course of three months.

The input gathered from Y stakeholders was used to develop a model of the “cause-driven YMCA.” The task force tested this model with several advisory groups, and the resulting consensus attributes are the basis for the nine strategic priorities and 27 initiatives outlined in this plan.
To establish the current state, stakeholders were asked how effective a cause-driven organization the Y as a whole has been over the past two years. Overall, most stakeholders were “on the fence” about whether the Y has been effective in this domain.

Q: Thinking of the Movement as a whole over the past two years, how effective a cause-driven organization has the Y been? Base: Respondents to survey fielded at General Assembly (356). Results were confirmed in focus group sessions with Y staff and volunteer leaders.
When asked to explain why they don’t believe the Y is an effective cause-driven organization, stakeholders answered: because the Y lacks focus, does not communicate in a consistent fashion, does not always align programs with community needs, and does not sufficiently deliver impact. To rectify this situation, stakeholders believe the Y must: establish a clear vision, change public perceptions and increase awareness of the Y’s cause, better align with community needs, and place greater emphasis on evaluation and impact.

Q: In your own words, please describe why you see the Y as being less than effective as a cause-driven organization.
Base: All respondents who rated the Y 6 or less (on a 10-point scale) as being an effective cause-driven organization (144).
Results were confirmed in focus group sessions with Y staff and volunteer leaders.
WHAT WOULD MAKE THE Y MORE CAUSE-DRIVEN?

Q: If the decision were solely yours, what would you do to move the Y to become a more effective cause-driven organization? Base: Respondents to survey fielded at General Assembly (356).
More than 1,000 participants provided input regarding the characteristics they associate with high-performing, cause-driven YMCAs. In their view these Ys:

- Have a clear mission and focus
- Offer programs and services that address community needs in areas that map to their cause
- Demonstrate impact
- Are collaborative in nature
- Engage staff and volunteers who are committed to the Y’s mission and cause and who model the Y’s values
- Communicate in a clear and consistent fashion
- Advocate for the Y’s cause
- Are open and accessible to all
- Demonstrate their charitable worth while operating from a sound financial platform

The attributes identified by Y stakeholders are consistent with those commonly cited as being characteristics of the best cause-aligned organizations.

The second component of the stakeholder input process was designed to identify where YMCAs most want help and direction from Y-USA. Among the critical areas: fundraising, communications, training, advocacy, and data evaluation and measurement.
WHERE DO YOU NEED HELP FROM Y-USA TO BECOME A CAUSE-DRIVEN Y?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>High Need (5)</th>
<th>Need (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Development</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Evaluation, Measurement</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteerism (Program)</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs and Services</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborations</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-Needs Assessment</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Leadership and Governance</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and Inclusion, Cultural Competencies</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: On a scale of 1–5, to what extent do you need help from Y-USA to be more cause-driven? Base: Respondents to survey fielded at General Assembly (356). Results were confirmed in focus group sessions with Y staff and volunteer leaders.
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Areas of Focus
As defined by the Y’s brand architecture, our three areas of focus are youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. By focusing our work in these primary areas, we seek to strengthen community.

Branch
An operating unit within a corporate member association that is under the control of the association.

CEO Advisory Council
Group comprising 51 YMCA CEOs, board volunteers and staff who assembled for the purpose of providing periodic feedback and advice on the development of the Advancing Our Cause strategic plan.

In-Depth Collaborations
Collaborations between YMCAs or between a Y and an external partner that involve sharing resources, risks, responsibilities and rewards, and respond to community needs.

Key Influencers
Individuals in position to influence public opinion, policy or resource allocation. They include policymakers, elected officials, media elites, and corporate and foundation leaders.

Movement (Y Movement)
Term used to describe a group of people with a common ideology who work together to achieve certain goals. We use it to describe the collective group of individuals who work together to achieve the Y’s mission and cause.

Member Association
The corporate YMCA that has its own board of directors and CEO and has been chartered by YMCA of the USA.

Signature Program
Newly created or enhanced program or service that is designed to positively affect a specific social need over a quantifiable period of time. Because of their promise and potential, these programs are characterized by extraordinary efforts in the areas of resource development, program quality, public awareness and impact measurement.

State Alliance
Collection of the YMCA member associations in a state that acts and works together to achieve common objectives. Many State Alliances are created to focus on matters of public policy at the state level.

YMCAexchange
The extranet site hosted by Y-USA that provides news, knowledge and tools for use by YMCA staff and volunteers.

YMCA of the USA (Y-USA)
The corporate organization to which all YMCAs in the U.S. belong. YMCA of the USA owns and authorizes the use of the YMCA name, trademarks and symbols, and provides leadership, resources and services to the Y movement.

YMCA of the USA Board of Directors
The governing body that carries out the objectives, purposes, powers and functions of Y-USA.
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Randy Brown  
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