

## Mission Statement Development

Mission statements describe the work of an organization. The mission statement is typically brief (can it fit on a T-shirt?) and is generated by answering these questions:

- Why do we exist?
- Who do we serve?
- How?
- What is our unique value or core competency?

Good examples of mission statements include:

- We keep the lights on. (public utility company)
- **USO** lifts the spirits of America's troops and their families.
- **American Red Cross** prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.

Some organizations also create vision statements (bigger picture – the world they are working to build) and/or values statements (the way they intend to carry out their work).

One way to develop a mission statement is

- Gather people who represent key perspectives (e.g. board, possibly staff, and constituents)
- Discuss the questions to make sure that there is a shared understanding on each
- Divide into small groups. Ask each small group to come up with their best draft statement
- Read the drafts aloud and ask everyone to name the best parts of each. Those best parts can be combined by one or two people to come up with a single draft.