TOOL

Organizational Scan

Before meeting with your community partner, gather and synthesize as much information as you can. This work ensures that you are fully prepared for the work. With your research, you'll save your partner time, and you can ask deeper, more meaningful questions when you meet.

Completing an organizational scan is also a useful practice for preparing for job interviews. The results may clarify whether you want to work for the organization and may give you ideas for questions to ask interviewers and prospective coworkers.

Study all available sources to gather relevant information.

Sources of Information

- Website
- Social media
- Interviews with organization leaders
- Published news stories and blogs
- Annual report or other organizational documentation
- [Other]

Aspects to Study	Notes
• **Programs and services:** what is provided, who is served (clients/customers/participants/community member), what is the impact, what is reported and how • **Strategy:** the philosophy/approach, history, future goals • **Funding:** sources and types (e.g., government, private, sales) • **Governance:** leadership, board of directors • **Structure:** employees, positions, reporting relationships • **Environment:** culture, relationships, decision-making	

Synthesize Information

Consider a creative way to synthesize and report on what you learned. Here are a few ideas, and your instructor may assign one to you or your team:

- Write and deliver an "elevator pitch." Imagine that you run into someone, and they ask what the organization is about. Within 30 seconds, focus on the most relevant aspects of the organization to each of the following (three separate pitches): a potential donor, a job applicant, and a potential client/participant/community member.
- Create a slide deck to brief the rest of the class on the organization. Choose mostly images, including screenshots from the organization's materials, to tell a compelling story.
- Complete a "SWOT" analysis to identify the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Sample

	Positive	Negative
Internal	**Strengths** • Language programs • Culture, teamwork • Local reputation • Volunteer management program	**Weaknesses** • Waitlist for immigration support • Lack of legal aid • Employee burnout
External	**Opportunities** • Increasing numbers of refugees • Partnerships with international organizations • Increasing private funding	**Threats** • Reduced government funding • Loss of experienced staff

Fill out your organization scan on the following page.

	Positive	**Negative**
Internal	**Strengths** What does the organization do well? What makes the organization unique? Consider its most valued resources and what successes other organizations could learn from.	**Weaknesses** How could the organization improve? What internal issues, for example, management, culture, or resource constraints prevent the organization from reaching its full potential?
External	**Opportunities** How could the organization use its strengths to capitalize on trends, for example, stakeholder needs, new legislation or technologies, or growing social movements?	**Threats** What external issues could threaten the organization's impact, growth, or existence, for example, changing social context or political environment, reduced funding, staffing shortages, climate change, etc.?