

Social Entrepreneur Project

Business Plan Assignment & Questions by Section

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SECTION 2: Market Analysis, Priorities, Data

Description & Overview: Starting a nonprofit requires doing your homework, study and research. In this section you will discuss the research you performed and the conditions and trends in the needs you want to meet. Write about the need for your service and the demand for it; how is it unique? Know what is happening in your community.

Describe the priorities of the service or product and show how you developed the priorities. Describe how many other major competitors you have, both for-profit and nonprofit organizations, how much of the need your competitors meet and control, and your strategy for gaining a place meeting that need or developing a new niche. Describe how you are going to communicate with the community you intend to assist, to potential partners and funders.

You need to be able to explain any barriers that you will have to face at the beginning, how you will maintain and sustain your activities as a nonprofit organization and how you plan to overcome those barriers. You may have discovered a gap in services; describe that gap, why you believe it exists and how you will close that gap. Are there other organizations that are willing to help you close that gap (list them and include letters of support in the Appendix)? How many people or other needs will you serve and what are those needs? What are the priorities and how do you know they are the priorities? Describe briefly the methods used to develop the priorities.

Place the demographics about the need for this service in this section. Detailed surveys, tables and charts can be placed in the Appendix. You may need statistical information or data from the US census, for instance. Who will be your collaborators or partnering organizations? Do not name them unless you ask them and they agree to be included. Are there community leaders, both public and private, who support this effort? Have they written supporting letters? Put such letters in the Appendix. Is there anecdotal information that can support your plan?

Questions to Guide Discussion, Research, and Writing:

1. Write about the need for your service and the demand for it; how is it unique?
2. What are the priorities of the service or product and how were they developed?
3. Describe the demographics of your target market.
4. How many competitors do you have (for-profits and nonprofits)? And how much of the need do your competitors meet and control?
5. Describe a strategy for gaining a place meeting that need.
6. What are the methods used to develop priorities?
7. What other organizations are willing to help you?