





## Strategic Thinking and Planning: Dos and Don'ts

(Source: PRAXIS Consulting, Inc. / Dr. Brenda Wagenknecht-Ivey)

### Dos and Don'ts!

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<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Plan for the long-term (not the short-term)</li><li>2. Be inclusive &amp; open to many perspectives and experiences</li><li>3. Use data &amp; information to inform and drive the planning process (not anecdotal information or hunches)</li><li>4. Create an open and trusting process where leaders transcend organizational (or parochial) interests; each steps up and does their part</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Jump to “fixes, solutions, or actions” too quickly</li><li>2. Focus only on a SINGLE number or issue or only on a part of the process</li><li>3. Allow current constraints to impede long-term or strategic thinking</li><li>4. Miss the opportunity to have the tough conversations among local leaders</li></ol>

Leading Justice System Change: Video Series & Tool Kit

### Dos:

1. Plan for the Long-Term (not the short-term). If you are striving for a strategic plan that serves as a 3–5-year roadmap, it's important for your planning committee to develop a strategic mindset (move away from focusing on day-to-day operations or tactics) and focus on the long term – what could be in 3-5 years. Asking “what if,” “so what,” and “what could be” questions help make the shift. But, shifting to a strategic mindset and focus can be difficult for some people. Thus, it's essential to push (and pull) people out of their comfort zones and establish long range goals and strategies that will move you in a desired direction over several years.
2. Be inclusive and open to perspectives and experience – A planning process is an opportunity to have the right leaders at the table. We encourage you to invite county commissioners, county leadership, judges and court executives, and justice system and community leaders, including people with lived experiences, to the table to help understand the problem or opportunity and seek innovative solutions.

3. Use reliable data/information, such as trends information and survey results, to inform the planning process. We encourage you to design a data-informed and data-driven process and avoid planning based on anecdotal information and/or hunches. Planning groups can miss the mark entirely if quality information and data are not used.
4. Albeit difficult and time consuming, strive to create an open and trusting process where leaders transcend organizational or parochial interests. Achieving true collaboration means that each leader and organization sets their individual/organizational interests aside and instead considers the collective needs and interests of the justice system. See the Collaboration Framework and checklist around success factors for more information.

### Don'ts:

1. Don't Jump to Solutions Too Quickly: When involved in a strategic planning process, avoid jumping to fixes, solutions, or actions too quickly. This is a common tendency in my experience. Leaders want to identify a fix too quickly. Instead, spend a majority of time understanding the situation – the nature of the problem or opportunity and exploring possibilities – and only then move on to deciding the best response or fix in your situation.
2. Don't focus on a single number or issue or only part of the process if you want a 3–5-year justice system plan. Instead, it's essential to have a system-wide view recognizing the up and down stream effects (intentional and unintentional) when any step of the process is changed. Agree on a vision for the future, identify multiple big strategic areas or pillars, and develop comprehensive strategies for making improvements. Focusing on just one area or only one part of the process may result in tunnel vision, missed opportunities, and unintentional consequences.
3. Don't Allow Current Constraints to Impede Long-Term Thinking and Planning. It's easy to allow current constraints to impede long-term strategic thinking and planning. Be sure to set the current constraints aside initially in the planning process. We encourage you to hold current constraints in abeyance until the end of the process, after ambitious goals have been defined and the path forward is clear and agreed upon. Local leaders are usually very creative in addressing constraints once they are committed to a future direction. They are seemingly unstoppable.
4. Don't miss the opportunity to have the tough conversations. Be sure to create an environment where leaders have the difficult conversations: they discuss the “elephant in the room.” Promote, and model the way for, open, honest, and difficult / courageous conversations among local leaders.