



**COMMON GROUND CENTER**

# Strategic Plan 2023-2026



**COPE**  
& ASSOCIATES, INC.

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## Executive Summary

Strategic planning allows people at many levels to learn about their organization in new ways and think about the many contributions they could make to forming a foundation of knowledge and advancing new ideas. The Environmental Scan Report was the first step to understanding the health of the Common Ground Center of Vermont (CGCVT) and the world that surrounds the organization so that CGCVT can better adapt to meet the demands of the social, economic and natural landscape.

The process included the following activities:

- Document Review
- Staff and Board Research
- Stakeholders Survey
- SWOT Analysis
- Internal Assessment

The main themes that were discovered by this environmental scan are as follows:

1. The mission needs to be clear and defensible;
2. Targeted marketing in specific regions with clear messaging is vital;
3. Diversity in our staff, on our board, and among our stakeholders is an essential ingredient in our recipe for success;
4. Our understanding and reverence for the environment is part of our legacy and our future;  
and
5. Achieving financial stability and security will unlock our potential.



## SWOT Analysis

These are our combined strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats based on our findings. Think of this like a summary of our research.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location</li> <li>• Quality of staff</li> <li>• Retention of core staff</li> <li>• Reputation</li> <li>• Facilities</li> <li>• Practice what they preach</li> <li>• Specialty camps</li> <li>• Committed founders</li> <li>• Volunteer support for Camp K</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Board empowerment</li> <li>• Strong alumni network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unclear mission</li> <li>• No espoused values or vision</li> <li>• Facilities</li> <li>• Lodging</li> <li>• Lack of indoor plumbing</li> <li>• For some: no alcohol</li> <li>• Staff is underpaid</li> <li>• Mid-winter capacity</li> <li>• Strong reliance on founders</li> <li>• Not enough indoor comfy spaces with bathrooms</li> <li>• Not all shifts related to the pandemic are known</li> <li>• Cabins not usable after mid-October</li> <li>• Dining Hall is not winterized</li> <li>• Location not ideal for corporate retreats</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships with organizations serving specific populations, colleges, some high schools, Road Scholars &amp; more embeddedness with partners</li> <li>• Market more to larger employers looking for retreat facilities</li> <li>• Market to consultants &amp; facilitators of retreats</li> <li>• Specialty camps for teens &amp; adults</li> <li>• Camp reunions or off-season activities</li> <li>• More nature programming</li> <li>• Improve staff training &amp; retention</li> <li>• Market to new Americans or other specific, growing populations</li> <li>• Consider different payment plans</li> <li>• Increase diversity of staff</li> <li>• Offer more catered food for wedding parties &amp; guests</li> <li>• Consider more programming for families with ASD members</li> <li>• Consider business-leisure combined programming</li> <li>• Helping more marginalized people by opening our community more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for facilities and scholarship support</li> <li>• Not being able to clearly or easily say who we are and what we do</li> <li>• Slow rebound from pandemic</li> <li>• Calendar constraints due to school schedule and seasonality</li> </ul>

## Common Ground Center Vision, Mission, & Values

### Vision

Camp for everyone.

### Mission

Common Ground Center is a nonprofit, multi-age arts and outdoor education center. We are dedicated to environmental sustainability and strengthening diverse families, organizations, and communities.

### Core Values

1. Connection to the natural world nourishes a sense of wonder.
2. Arts, music and movement feeds the human spirit.
3. A sense of community gives us strength and joy.
4. True inclusivity will only be achieved through an active and ongoing learning process.
5. Environmental stewardship is a commitment we take seriously.
6. The spirit of gratitude empowers us to make the world a better place.



## Goals, Objectives & Strategies 2023-2026

***Objective 1. Become financially sustainable for current and future needs.***

**Goal 1: Develop a business plan that secures the Common Ground Center for the future by June 2023.**

**Strategy 1:** Clarify CGC lease/land for Board and staff by December 2022.

**Strategy 2:** Develop clear and articulated financial plans for CGC now and in the future by June 2023.

**Strategy 3:** Become financially independent from the Founders' donor network by December 2026.

**Goal 2: Grow a variety of revenue streams including partnerships, programs, fees, fundraising, grants, and other sources by April 2024.**

**Strategy 1:** Engage the Board in taking more responsibility for raising revenue by September 2023.

**Strategy 2:** Increase grant revenue by December 2023.

**Strategy 3:** Optimize current or add new programming and partnerships.

**Strategy 4:** Maximize use of the facilities.

**Objective 2. Raise the local profile of Common Ground Center to become the crown jewel, not the hidden gem by January 2026.**

**Goal 1: Evaluate current partnerships and communications channels by December 2022.**

**Strategy 1:** Determine which media channels are most effective in getting the word out and make changes accordingly.

**Strategy 2:** Explore strengthening the relationship with the Town of Starksboro specifically and the local region in general.

**Goal 2: Establish partnerships with organizations already aligned with CGC by March 2023.**

**Strategy 1:** Develop relationships with organizations serving traditionally marginalized populations.

**Strategy 2:** Establish connections with organizations that are aligned with our core values.

**Goal 3: Expand all effective marketing and communications strategies by May 2023.**

**Strategy 1:** Strengthen and build on the identity of the CGC alumni relationship.

**Strategy 2:** Increase local participation with CGC's social media messaging

**Strategy 3:** Create an infrastructure for community events to get people onsite.

***Objective 3. Build and strengthen the Board by 2025.***

**Goal 1: Improve overall governance of the Board by December 2023.**

**Strategy 1:** Develop a board training calendar.

**Strategy 2:** Develop a strong and committed group of officers.

**Goal 2: Develop better board tools for governance by December 2022.**

**Strategy 1:** Examine the current bylaws and amend as needed to better align with the organization's mission and expand the board to a ceiling of 21 members.

**Strategy 2:** Assess the competencies of the board in order to target recruitment.

**Strategy 3:** Develop a robust onboarding process for board members so expectations are clear and they are prepared to lead.

**Goal 3: Examine the current committee structure of the Board and revise for greater efficiency and effectiveness by June 2023.**

**Strategy 1:** Improve the effectiveness of the board committees by clarifying their roles and responsibilities and developing charters for each committee.

**Strategy 2:** Develop a recruitment strategy for engaging new talent on the committees.

**Strategy 3:** Develop a succession plan for all officers and committee chairs.



**Objective 4. Create a long-term plan for our site and facilities by December 2024.**

**Goal 1: Improve our ability to care for the property and facilities by June 2024.**

**Strategy 1:** Align our finances with the needs of our facilities by December 2023

**Strategy 2:** Complete a reserve study of our physical plant by June 2023.

**Strategy 3:** Create a Site Master Plan (include pictures of site, proposed projects, reserve study data, etc.) by May 2024.

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## Organizational Key Performance Indicators

A Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is a measurable value that demonstrates how effectively a company is achieving key business objectives. Organizations use KPIs to evaluate their success at reaching targets and to tell the board and staff how well the organization is performing.

High-level KPIs may focus on the overall performance of the organization, while low-level KPIs may focus on goals set by a particular committee.

Simply put, they tell us how well we are doing at achieving our strategic goals.

CGC Key Performance Indicators			
Financial	Site Maximization	Development	Site Maintenance
%over/under budget (revenue and expense)	Day usage by category	# of donations	% of expenses
Income % by category (ubi, prog, rental, gifts)	Local group rental usage	Average gift amount	