

Abbreviated Strategic Plan

of the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA)
for the period January 2017 - December 2021

Approved by the NESEA Board of Directors on February 3, 2017



NESEA

NORTHEAST SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ASSOCIATION

Executive Summary

This five year strategic plan reflects eight months of intensive work by the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association's (NESEA's) Board of Directors and Staff to identify strategic goals and actions toward fulfilling NESEA's mission. We are proud to report that this process involved an unprecedented degree of collaboration between the Board and Staff. It is the first time the organization has developed a strategic plan with such extensive feedback from Board, Staff, and Stakeholders. We are optimistic that the inclusive and transparent process will lead to greater success in implementing the plan.

NESEA's strategic planning process, facilitated by organizational development consultant Jeanette Millard, started at the annual Board retreat in May 2016, and culminated with Board approval of the plan in February 2017.

At the May 2016 retreat, after the Board articulated aspirations for NESEA and completed an environmental scan, they identified 10 stakeholder groups, with 72 individual stakeholders, from whom data about NESEA's strengths and needs could be garnered. The Board, guided by a steering committee and Ms. Millard, then identified seven strategic goals. Board members worked with Staff to outline actions necessary to achieve these goals, and plotted them along a 5-year timeline.

To better communicate our aspirations and purpose as an organization, the Board adopted a vision statement and updated the mission statement. Along with these statements, a list of core values, and a list of operating principles, NESEA Staff are well equipped to move forward with clear direction.

The NESEA Board of Directors approved this plan, by a vote of 9-0 at the February 3, 2017 meeting in New Haven, Connecticut. In the spirit of collaboration, this plan will be used to frame Staff reports to the Board prior to regularly scheduled meetings. The Executive Director will report back to Staff with clarifying questions or feedback from the Board. Updates, as needed, will be made during the annual Board retreat.

NESEA's Roadmap

Our Vision

We envision a built environment in the Northeast that is climate neutral, adaptive and resilient, energy independent, architecturally inspiring, and supportive of connection and community.

Our Mission

NESEA advances the adoption of sustainable energy practices in the built environment by cultivating a community where practitioners share, collaborate and learn.

To view the full strategic plan & provide feedback, visit nesea.org/2017-strategic-plan.

Our Core Values

- We share our mistakes so that others can avoid them
- We welcome your passion and your action, and appreciate your diverse viewpoints
- We value real world performance, and approach models with healthy skepticism
- We believe our involvement with NESEA helps our businesses
- We have fun together
- We value our relationships with one another
- We create a safe space to nurture new technologies and approaches
- We innovate
- We challenge ourselves and each other to grow
- We combine ambitious aspirations with deep humility

Our Operating Principles

- Whole Systems Thinking
- Collaboration
- Cross Disciplinary
- Peer-to-Peer Learning and Teaching
- Nonpartisan
- Transparency
- Inclusiveness

Overview of Goals & Strategies

The Board acknowledged the Staff's excellent work over the past two years to strengthen existing programs. The Board adopted the following seven strategic goals to build on that progress and to offer Staff guidance for growth without compromising organizational stability.

1. Review all existing and developing programs through the lens of a clear and transparent content curation process, giving priority to developing an online platform as a place to share and discuss generated content.
2. Continue to deepen NESEA's programmatic focus to include Commercial and Institutional.
3. With an initial focus on Emerging Professionals, broaden the demographic diversity of NESEA membership to better reflect the constituency NESEA serves.
4. Provide an outstanding volunteer program by developing onboarding, engagement and recognition processes to attract new members, and keep current members working toward NESEA's mission.
5. Identify ways to offer NESEA programming in underserved portions of the Northeast.

The Board decided to explore a sixth goal related to NESEA's role in the policy/advocacy arena, and determine the implications of adding it to the Strategic Plan. This goal reads:

6. Leverage the expertise of NESEA members to better inform the legislative process, the executive branch policy-making process, and the advocacy efforts of like-minded organizations.

Finally, the Board incorporated a strategic goal related to building its own capacity, focusing initially on the Board's role with respect to fundraising and NESEA's financial health.

7. Continue to develop the Board to effectively lead a growing and increasingly influential NESEA organization.

After these goals were identified, NESEA’s Directors worked to contextualize the plan, by providing information on how these goals fit into what already exists, and which goals will require the biggest “leaps” in terms of staffing, money, and other resources. The Board recommended a timeline with respect to each goal, which the Staff “sanity checked” and adjusted after considering other current operational priorities and Staff bandwidth.

Conclusion

This plan represents a milestone in NESEA’s history, based on the unprecedented level of collaboration and goodwill between the Board and Staff in developing it. But in many ways, adopting the plan is just the first step.

We recognize that:

- The plan needs to be dynamic – not sit on a shelf – it will change over time.
- The plan should inform the agenda for every Board meeting.
- We will need to identify responsible parties, target dates, and timeframes for each activity. The plan will be operationalized primarily by the Staff, with assistance from the Board.
- These parties will work with Staff to develop SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound).
- Staff will then develop more detailed implementation timelines to address the “How,” and will budget for the resources needed to meet each strategic goal.

We are grateful to the 72 stakeholders who provided valuable feedback to inform this plan, and look forward to working with them to make these strategic goals a reality. We believe that the collaborative process used to develop the plan, and the striking alignment among Board, Staff, and Members with respect to our strategic priorities all bode well for our success. We look forward to sharing our progress along the way.

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