

2014

# Bhutanese Community of New Hampshire (BCNH) 5-year Strategic Plan

Celebrating the Past, Planning for the Future

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## I. Introduction

The Bhutanese Community of New Hampshire (BCNH) is a young and vibrant ethnic community-based organization formed in May of 2009 with the mission, “to create an enduring legacy of Bhutanese heritage for future generations through stewardship of successful integration, and community contributions.”<sup>1</sup> BCNH is aspiring to achieve this mission by consistently and effectively providing excellent, satisfactory and accessible community services to all the resettled Bhutanese for successful integration in the state of New Hampshire. These services help Bhutanese families in New Hampshire to obtain the basic resources, community based services, and dissemination of information related to various jobs, skills, and health trainings to build a productive and self-sufficient Bhutanese community in the state. In its first 4-5 years, the organization has gained 501(c) 3 status, developed a mission statement and objectives that are written into the organization's by-laws, and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to support programs. BCNH currently serves 1700 clients annually with 19 part- or full-time staff members and a wide volunteer base.

However, the organization lacks an overall strategic plan and several factors - with a projected decrease in funding as a key catalyst - indicate that BCNH is facing a critical decision-making period in its near future and will have to make priorities regarding its diversification of services in the next 5 years. At the present time, the majority of BCNH's services are oriented towards refugees. The federal Office of Refugee Resettlement provides a range of assistance to refugees during their first 5 years in the United States, but after 5 years, individuals cease to be eligible for most refugee-focused state and federal funds. Furthermore, New Hampshire is home to a variety of other small ethnic community-based organizations that are often in competition with each other for limited funds. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity that BCNH has evaluated and is responding to as part of its strategic planning process.

The purpose of this 5-year strategic plan is to assure that BCNH remains relevant and responsive to its constituents, to ensure organizational stability and growth, to provide a basis for ongoing monitoring and evaluation, and to provide a clear focus for future program development and implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://bhutanesecommunitynh.org/about/mission/>

## II. 5-year Strategic Plan

### A. BCNH Operating Statement

*BCNH intends to continue providing direct services to refugees and immigrants in New Hampshire while simultaneously growing into a Mutual Assistance Association (MAA) over the next 5 years. To achieve this goal, BCNH commits to reaching across ethnic, institutional and geographical boundaries to create new alliances, developing professional systems and leaders, and fostering social innovation and entrepreneurship to meet the needs of refugee and immigrant communities in New Hampshire and beyond.*

In the context of this strategic plan, the above operating statement is an internal, written statement intended to guide the growth and direction of BCNH over the next 5 years. It is distinct from the mission statement, which is used to explain the work of the organization to external partners and the public. BCNH's mission statement will remain the same for the time being, and the operating statement will guide the organization internally to make the changes it requires to achieve its strategic goals. The Board of Directors has developed and agreed upon the above operating statement.

### B. A View of the Future: Benchmarks and Examples of Success

Many organizations throughout the United States use the term “Mutual Assistance Association” as part of their official name or description. Even a casual review of these organizations reveals a wide range of uses and understandings of the term. For the purpose of this plan, BCNH will use the following definition:

Mutual Assistance Association (MAA) refers to ethnic-based associations that galvanize community support across ethnic lines to provide an array of services required by refugees and other recent immigrants to achieve integration and self-sufficiency in the United States. It is a coalition of refugee and immigrant community organizations that helps newcomers to understand and navigate the systems that are part of everyday life.<sup>2</sup>

Because this understanding of the Mutual Assistance Association envisions a single organization serving the needs of a range of clients from a variety of ethnic communities (and may even include services to the native born population where appropriate), the fundamental operating principles emphasize diversity and inclusion. The goal is ultimately to create a board of directors, professional staff and volunteer cohort that reflects the racial, ethnic and gender diversity of the population that the organization seeks to serve.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from <http://uslegal.com/>

It is the goal of BCNH to bring these principles to bear as it pursues the action steps identified below. There are two benchmarks against which BCNH will measure its success at the end of the five-year period covered by this plan.

**Benchmark 1**

Having strengthened its overall standing as a non-profit social service organization through the completion of Action Steps 1 – 4 (see Section C below), BCNH will provide leadership in the creation of a multi-ethnic Mutual Assistance Association in partnership with at least one other ethnic community organization serving refugees or other newly arrived immigrants in Central and Southern New Hampshire or beyond.

OR

**Benchmark 2**

Having strengthened its overall standing as a non-profit social service organization through the completion of Action Steps 1 – 4 (see Section C below), BCNH will have established itself as a self-sustaining social service non-profit serving the needs of the Bhutanese Community in Central and Southern New Hampshire. Having partnered successfully with a variety of partners through the preceding years, the Bhutanese Community will be in a position to lead the establishment of a Mutual Assistance Association if willing partners can be identified.

**What would success look like?**

- If BCNH achieves benchmark #1 within the five-year time frame covered by the current plan, BCNH, in conjunction with partnering organizations will have established a Mutual Assistance Association providing a range of support services to an increasingly diverse set of clients. The new organization will have written a new mission statement and selected a new name reflective of the services and clientele.
- If BCNH achieves benchmark #2 within the five-year time frame covered by the current plan, BCNH will have become a successful, self-sustaining social services non-profit, pursuing innovative collaborations with area partners to provide services primarily within the Bhutanese community and to a lesser degree to other refugee and immigrant groups. BCNH will be an established player in the social services arena in central New Hampshire and will be positioned to enter its next strategic planning phase to explore the current goal of creating a mutual assistance association or other avenues of growth and development.

## C. Action Steps

The BCNH Strategic Plan calls for specific action steps in five areas to both strengthen the overall organization while simultaneously positioning it to take a leadership role in the establishment of a multi-ethnic mutual assistance association serving the needs of refugees, recent immigrants and other economically disadvantaged people in central New Hampshire. These steps, developed in greater detail below, include:

1. Leadership Development (Board and Staff)
2. Fundraising and Grants Development
3. Program Development and Evaluation
4. Policies and Procedures (HR)
5. Fostering New Types of Partnerships

In considering each of the five Action Steps in this plan, the overarching theme will be the same:

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Throughout its history, BCNH has drawn almost exclusively upon the talents and abilities of members of the Bhutanese community both to staff its programs and to provide its Board leadership. Further, this Board and Staff leadership has tended to be predominantly male and drawn heavily from more educated castes.

As BCNH seeks to transform itself from an ethnic community organization focused on the post-resettlement needs of its own community members to a leader and collaborator in a multi-ethnic mutual assistance association, all of the action steps must be undertaken with the clear intention of creating a diverse and inclusive organization reflective of the communities and clients it intends to serve.

### **Action Step 1: Leadership Development**

#### **1A. Leadership Development—Board**

During the next five years, BCNH will work to increase the capacity of its Board through restructuring, leadership training, recruitment, and expansion, preparing it to oversee the development of a multi-ethnic mutual assistance association.

- Increase the overall size of the board and implement a committee structure to guide key operations within the organization, such as Human Resources, Fundraising, Program and Evaluation.

- Establish a Subcommittee to provide ongoing oversight of the Plan’s implementation that will report back to the entire Board on regular intervals or as the need arises.
- Seek out Leadership Training for current Bhutanese Board members to equip them for Board service.
- Explore lengthening the current term from two to three years to reap greater return from investments in training.
- Seek to retain Board members for a second term to create greater stability and maximize the investment in Board training
- Implement staggered board terms to reduce the potential for large-scale turnover in any given year and create greater Board stability.
- Recruit for diversity from within the Bhutanese community, reaching out to women and other underrepresented constituencies within the community.
- Reach out beyond the Bhutanese community to fill the need for expertise that does not currently exist within the community. Desired skills to add include Human Resources, Fundraising and Development, Program Evaluation, Legal, and Financial/Accounting expertise.

### **1B. Leadership Development—Staff**

The Staff of BCNH is its public face and the frontline of its service delivery in the community. It will also provide a source of talent and expertise for organizational leadership program managers as well as administrative and executive functions. During the next five years, BCNH will pursue the following activities:

- Pursue professional development opportunities and training that will lead to professional certification relevant to job description and responsibilities for all staff members—e.g. Teaching English as a Foreign Language Certification
- Pursue training for all Staff (perhaps in conjunction with Board Development efforts) in areas of Diversity and Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity in preparation for efforts to expand programming beyond the Bhutanese Community
- Initiate a regular process for staff evaluation to facilitate each staff member’s professional growth and development.
- Increase efforts to recruit a more diverse staff including women and non-Bhutanese professionals through a broad outreach with job postings beyond the Bhutanese community.

## Action Step 2: Fundraising and Grants Development

### 2. Fundraising and Grants Development

BCNH has an immediate need to expand its Fundraising, Marketing, and Communications capacity to secure the long-term financial sustainability. The organization has relied heavily on grants from the federal government that are unlikely to continue past the end of the Federal FY15 and must act to replace that lost revenue to continue offering its programming within the community. While it may be desirable in the long term to fill this need through the creation of a full time position, the organization has elected to address these needs during the first several years covered by this plan through a team approach, which will include the following steps:

- Establish a standing Development Committee of the Board to collaborate with the Executive Director and the newly hired Director for Programs and Development to help create an overall fundraising strategy, identify new funding sources, and develop and oversee the organization's marketing and communication activities.
- Train existing Board members and recruit new members with development and fundraising expertise to expand the Board's role in the organization's development and marketing efforts.
- Develop an annual fundraising activity such as a cultural festival to raise the organization's community profile and to augment its primary fundraising strategies of public and private grants.
- Establish and vet several development consultants with native English skills to support the efforts of the BCNH development team, especially with professional writing assistance on a variety of projects including grant proposals, marketing materials and website content.

In the longer term, BCNH may seek to hire a part or full time development professional to meet its fundraising needs. To that end, the organization may:

- Establish a job description for the position including a description of the organization, its current and future needs, duties and responsibilities, and desired required and preferred qualifications.
- Post the position publicly in a variety of places to attract the widest range of candidates
- Establish a hiring protocol potentially involving a written exercise, phone screens, in-person interviews, evaluation of writing samples, reference checking and making the final decision.

## **Action Step 3: Evaluation and Programs**

### **3. Evaluation and Programs**

BCNH currently offers a wide array of social service programs to serve the post resettlement needs of the Bhutanese and other refugee community members living in Central and Southern New Hampshire. Additionally, they have identified several areas for potential growth including mental health and suicide prevention. A full listing of these offerings appears in Appendix D. Over the next five years BCNH will move to streamline their program offerings to a level consistent with their available resources and the needs of both the Bhutanese community and the needs of clients served by other ethnic community organizations with whom they might partner. To ensure the sustainability of these programs, BCNH will create a systematic evaluation system to track and quantify its activities as well as demonstrate their effectiveness through outcome evaluation.

- Identify those programs for which there is the greatest need within the Bhutanese community. (See the chart in Appendix B ranking program priorities identified by the community participants at the Strategic Planning Retreat in July 2014.)
- Identify areas of service duplication that offer the opportunity for inter-organizational cooperation and collaboration.
- Seek to add the skills of a program evaluator to the staff. These may be part of the preferred skills of the Development Professional, part of the skill set of new Board members and / or brought into the organization through a contractor.
- Establish a centralized database to track all activities and clients served.
- Establish and implement program evaluation methodologies (beginning with the organization's highest priority programs) to demonstrate program effectiveness for potential funders. Information gathered through these processes will also aid the organization's on-going efforts to eliminate or refine ineffective programs and to develop new ones.

## **Action Step 4: Policies and Procedures**

### **4. Policies and Procedures**

As BCNH transforms from an ethnic community organization in which all board and staff positions have been held by members of the Bhutanese community to a multi-ethnic mutual assistance association, the models of hiring and supervising staff that have been built largely on personal connections and trust must be formalized so as to treat all employees in the same way regardless of whether they come from within or outside of the Bhutanese Community. BCNH will:

- Explore adding Human Resources expertise to the BCNH Board of Directors to facilitate a complete review and revision of all hiring, training and evaluation procedures for staff members, including the executive leadership team.
- Establish a Personnel Committee within the Board of Directors charged with overseeing all matters related to hiring, firing, supervision and evaluation including evaluation of the Executive Director and Senior Staff.
- Develop hiring a plan that is specifically directed to hiring for diversity to broaden the composition of the organization by racial, ethnic, gender, and social class.
- Establish Standard Operating Procedures to be followed throughout the organization covering day-to-day operations.

### **Action Step 5: Fostering New Types of Partnerships**

#### **5. Fostering New Types of Partnerships**

The success of the mutual assistance association envisioned within this strategic plan is dependent upon BCNH and other organizations becoming genuine partners in the delivery of services. The impetus is to remove the inefficiencies created by multiple smaller organizations duplicating services while competing with each other for the same limited pool of resources.

New partnerships include:

- Program Partnerships involving shared resources and staff.
- Leadership Partnerships involving shared Board membership and sharing leadership in new program initiatives where appropriate.
- Staffing Partnerships involving staff providing services for communities beyond the Bhutanese community and allowing needs of the Bhutanese community to be served by non-Bhutanese staff.
- Organizational Capacity Building Collaboration extending beyond program partnership to include sharing responsibilities for Fundraising and Evaluation for program partnership or sharing the cost of Board training events.

The activities described as part of this action step embody the heart of the strategic plan's vision for BCNH as it nears the end of the five-year plan.

## D. Timeline

The Strategic Plan was developed with a five-year time frame in mind, and the goal is for the organization to complete their organizational capacity building over the next five years. While some of the Action Steps, such as the development of more formalized policies and procedures surrounding employment, human resources and organizational operation might be largely completed in less than the five year window, others, such as the development of a diverse and sustainable revenue stream will be ongoing and is likely to continue beyond the current five year plan. The action steps should not be viewed sequentially and all can be pursued simultaneously. Nevertheless, successful completion of certain steps is dependent upon successes in other areas. For example:

- Successful fundraising will depend upon the organization's ability to demonstrate the effectiveness of its interventions with the clients that it serves, so the development of BCNH's evaluation capacity must be pursued in conjunction with efforts to increase fundraising through public and private grants.
- BCNH does not currently have within its community or on its Board any individuals with substantial expertise in Human Resources. Before the organization can proceed very far with the process of formalizing its employment procedures, it will be necessary to recruit at least one board member with expertise in this area to oversee the process.

Rather than viewing the Action Steps through a rigid timeline, BCNH will view them through the lens of the following *priorities*.

#### Priority 1

Leadership and Board development is the highest priority for the successful completion of the overall plan. Absent strong leadership, the organization will not be able to implement any of the other action steps.

#### Priority 2

Fundraising and Grants Development in combination with developing the capacity to evaluate programs is vital to ensure the revenues necessary to provide the programming required by the community. With federal grants that have been a major source of revenue scheduled to end at the end of September 2015, creating a position and hiring a development/communications professional must occur within the first year of the plan. In conjunction with hiring a permanent staff member in this area, BCNH will work to enhance its Board's capacity to support these efforts through recruitment and training.

#### Priority 3

Policies and procedures, or "standard operating procedures" will be developed throughout the period of this strategic plan, and will become increasingly important as the organization diversifies. Specific areas to be addressed include (but are not limited to) human resources including hiring, training, and evaluating staff members and the executive director as well as the overall structure of the organization and chain of command.

#### Priority 4

Fostering New Types of Partnerships is the overarching goal of the plan and will be pursued throughout the period covered by this plan. The success of these partnerships is dependent upon the strength of the relationships established between BCNH and its potential partners. During the first few years of the plan, energy will be devoted to strengthening relationships with existing partners and establishing new ones. During the second half of this plan, the emphasis will shift to greater degrees of collaboration.

Table 1 illustrates these how the Action Steps will be implemented over the 5-year time frame. While the time frame for each Action Step is indicated, BCNH is not limited to pursuing activity on any given Action Step to the years indicated. This plan and timeline represents a living document for BCNH, one that will be continually revisited and revised throughout the five-year time frame. Short-term goals and strategies will be adjusted based upon the successes and challenges encountered in its implementation.

(Please note: all years indicate the Federal Fiscal Year, which begins October 1 of the preceding calendar year. For example, Federal Fiscal Year 2015 runs from October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2015.)

**Table 1. Time Frame for Implementation of Action Steps**

Action Steps	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Leadership Development					
Development and Fundraising					
Evaluation and Program					
Policies and Procedures					
Fostering New Partnerships					

### III. Conclusion

During the next five years, BCNH will embark on a systematic program to build the crucial elements of organizational capacity to position itself to become a leader and founding member of a new Mutual Assistance Association that builds on the strengths of multiple ethnic community organizations to provide the highest quality social services required by refugees and other recent immigrants as they strive to integrate fully into mainstream New Hampshire society. This strategic plan provides a baseline for ongoing planning and is expected to help BCNH assess whether certain decisions are drawing the organization away from what they are trying to accomplish, or bringing them closer to their goals.

# Appendices

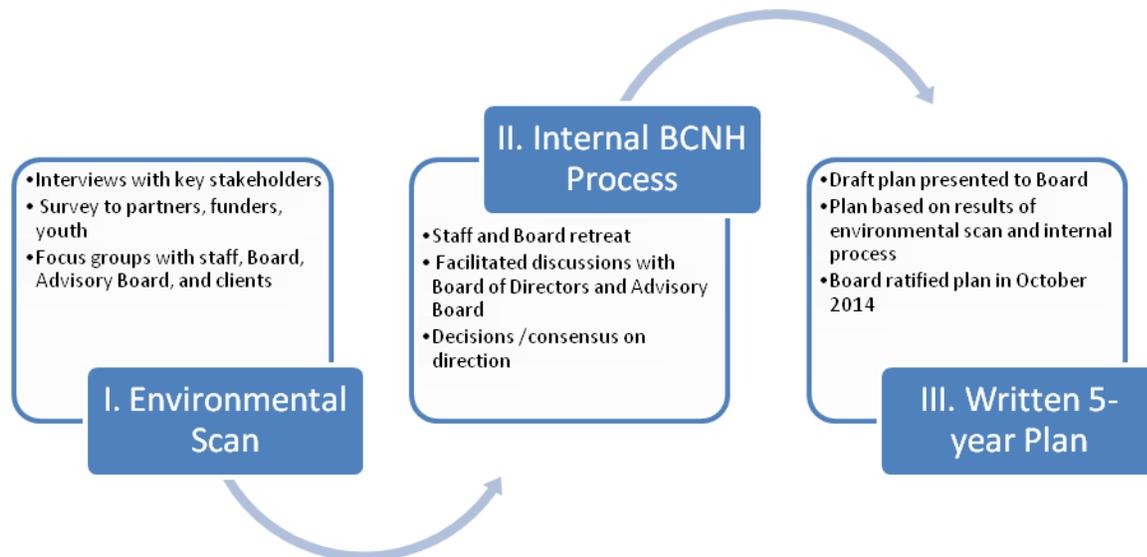
## A. Strategic Planning Methodology

BCNH's strategic planning process was guided by three main process objectives - conducting an environmental scan, engaging BCNH leaders in an internal decision-making process, and writing a plan - as illustrated below. Two external consultants led the process and collected data during the environmental scan through:

- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Surveys to partners, funders, and youth
- Focus groups with staff, Board of Directors, Advisory Board, and clients

After the data collection phase was complete, the consultants summarized key take-away points and presented them to approximately 35 attendees who participated in an evening strategic planning retreat. After establishing common ground with this information, the facilitators led participants through an exercise to practice prioritizing BCNH programs, as well as an exercise to brainstorm the pros and cons of 3 potential scenarios that the organization could follow in the next 5 years. At the conclusion of the retreat, members voted on their preferred direction of the organization. The preferred direction was discussed and refined at subsequent meetings of the Board of Directors and is summarized in this plan.

Figure 1. Strategic Planning Process



## B. Brief History of BCNH

BCNH is a young and vibrant ethnic community-based organization formed in May of 2010 with the mission of creating an enduring legacy of Bhutanese heritage for future generations through stewardship of successful integration, and community contributions. BCNH is guided by a board of directors and advisors with expertise pertaining to all spheres of the development and general welfare to the Bhutanese community resettled in the cities of Manchester, Concord and Laconia.

BCNH aspires to support and educate fellow Bhutanese and other refugees to achieve meaningful integration in all aspects of life. In 2011, BCNH set up an office in Manchester, NH and in 2012 BCNH expanded to a second location in Concord, NH. Since 2010, by partnering with multiple social service organizations, BCNH leaders have effectively built bridges, acted as cultural brokers, and developed a wide range of services to improve the lives of Bhutanese and other refugees in NH. More information on the Bhutanese population and the organization is available on BCNH's website: <http://bhutanesecommunitynh.org/About.aspx>

With a current operating budget of approximately \$560,000, the organization has a successful track record for securing state, federal, and private foundation grants to support its programming. As a result of this increased budget each year, BCNH has grown consistently since 2009 when a small group of volunteers with a large vision sat together to discuss forming an organization. BCNH currently employs 17 paid full- or part-time staff and serves 1700 clients annually.

## C. Overview of BCNH Programs

BCNH's programs have developed organically over time through a formula that combines volunteer effort and interest, constituent needs, available funding, and executive leadership skills and networking. This has resulted in a wide range of social service programming for Bhutanese and other refugees of all ages. See Table 2 below for a description of program areas and highlights from 2010-2014.

In order to develop into a sustainable organization with refined skills in specific service areas, BCNH will move toward a more intentional and strategic program development model in the next 5 years. As part of the strategic planning process, retreat participants were asked to rate their top 3 program areas, which they believe should be sustained into the future. The results are illustrated in Figure 2 Service Priorities Exercise below. The top 3 program areas identified were citizenship classes, mental health and suicide prevention, and job placement. In many ways this is consistent with the overall goals of BCNH, in that these programs will assist newly arrived refugees to become healthy, productive, and integrated members of New Hampshire society.

**Table 2. BCNH Programs and Highlights 2010-2014**

<b>Program Area</b>	<b>Select Highlights</b>
<b>Youth programs</b>	
Orientation and partnerships	Facilitated youth awareness activities on legal issues and drug use in partnership with Manchester Police Department
Leadership	10 scholarships from UMass Dartmouth - Center of Indic Studies and 3R Foundation for Youth Leadership Camp
Education excellence at high school level	20 scholarships for high school children to attend American Vivekanada Academy in Hudson NH, an accelerated private 2-yr high school
Preserving culture	38 students participating in the after-school Nepali Learning Project
Parent/child orientations	Collaborated with Women for Women in the Manchester Parenting Education Project
Education excellence at elementary/middle/high school level	In 2010, received funding from Manchester school district for 20 children aged 12-18 to receive after-school homework help and Nepali learning taught by 4 Bhutanese teachers
<b>Adult employment and professional development</b>	
Rapid response and job placement	Placed 80 Bhutanese individuals in jobs statewide in 7 months after Unemployed Parent funding was cut from state TANF program
Partnership with TANF program	Host site for the Work Experience Program (WEP) – job readiness intern placement for TANF participants
Business development	Continuous outreach and business development to raise profile of Bhutanese as potential job candidates and facilitate interviews
Leadership training (local)	8 scholarships from the Office of Minority Health and Refugee Affairs for leadership and skill development for emerging ethnic leaders.
Leadership training (national)	Community leaders attended 1-week international spiritual leadership conference at UMASS Dartmouth; BCNH staff attended national training to prevent violence against women
<b>Higher Education</b>	
High School to College Pipeline	Excellent High School graduation rates for Bhutanese youth - over 80% of all seniors graduating in 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014.
Partnership with VOLAGs	Liaised with NH resettlement agencies on the School Impact Grant, Childcare Microenterprise program, and other initiatives.
Positive Community Relations	Hosted annual community forums honoring and celebrating High School graduates
<b>Assistance for Low-Income Families</b>	
Liaise with social service agencies	Provide ongoing referrals and act as a liaison between Bhutanese families and social service programs in 3 communities
Rapid response and case management	Counseled families affected by the funding cut to Unemployed Parent state TANF program and assisted families to secure resources
<b>Spirituality</b>	
Space to worship	Opened a Hindu temple in 2011
Increasing strength of community	Over 300 community members participate in religious/ethnic festivals or ongoing activities and gather to celebrate important life events

Program Area	Select Highlights
<b>Integration Efforts into Manchester systems</b>	
Partnerships with City	Participated in the Manchester City Taskforce to design a welcoming system for newcomers
Civic engagement	Community members volunteered for a city-wide civic improvement project to improve the visibility and climate of the city
Orientation and integration	Hosted community orientations with invited professionals for Bhutanese families to increase ability to navigate the system
<b>Legal Assistance</b>	
Partnership with legal assistance	Placed intern at Catholic Charities to assist community members in processing applications for Permanent Residency
Permanent Residency	Assisted 443 refugees to apply for Permanent Residency including Bhutanese, Sudanese, Iraqis, Rohingya, and Somalis
<b>Health</b>	
Suicide prevention	Partnered with NAMI and other mental health agencies to develop appropriate responses, education, and prevention strategies to address high suicide rate among Bhutanese
Increase community health knowledge	Ongoing health education sessions and in-home health assessments for 60 families
<b>Advocacy</b>	
National level	Participated in UNHCR's Refugee Congress to raise the refugee voice for preparing preamble of UNHCR's policy making
National level	BCNH Executive Director participates in the Steering Committee of the UNHCR Refugee Congress
State level	Testified to NH Governor and legislators on resettlement issues
State level	Met with NH Governor about the challenges facing the Bhutanese, asking how the community can contribute to the welfare of the state
City level	Advocated against a moratorium against refugee resettlement suggested by the City of Manchester
Ongoing general advocacy	Community members act as public advocates to present accurate views about the Bhutanese in NH in the face of challenging events
<b>Women's Empowerment</b>	
Planning process	Engaged in year-long planning process to enhance leadership and empowerment opportunities for Bhutanese women
Women's groups	Established and supported regular meetings for women in Concord and Manchester for mutual support and to reduce social isolation
Cultural celebrations	Supported the planning and implementation of women-led cultural festivals honoring the contributions of women in the community
<b>Services for Elders</b>	
Community event	Honored 92 elderly members of community at event in January 2013
Case management	Provide assistance to elderly community members through case management
Day program	In partnership with a local businessman, developing a day program for Bhutanese elderly to reduce social isolation

Figure 2. Service Priorities Exercise

