# Guide to writing a strong mission statement

Sandy Rees on her ‘Get *Fully* Funded’ website gives the following advice on writing very practical mission and vision statements. She says the purpose of a mission statement is to capture the very essence, the very core of the work that your organisation does. It should reflect your very soul and should have **an action verb along with a few deliberately and very carefully chosen words.** It needs to be **short and easily understandable**.

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A mission statement must:

* Keep you **focused and moving forward**, engaging in programmes that fulfil your mission while avoiding mission creep.
* **Motivate and inspire** the governing/advisory board, colleagues, and volunteers.
* Tell everyone **clearly and succinctly** what your organisation does and how you are making the community better.

A strong mission statement is:

* **Short.** With enough brainstorming, most organisations can create a single-sentence mission statement.
* **Clear.** State what you do without over-explaining.
* **Direct.** Name the problem your organisation works to solve, the reason your organisation exists, and the people or animals you help.

When a mission statement is a long, word-packed, compound-complex sentence or goes on for three or four sentences, the problem is often a lack of clarity around the mission.

ASK: What problem are we here to solve? Why do we exist? Who are we here to help?

Here are some examples of **strong mission statements**:

* We thoughtfully guide and fiercely support wonderful students to and through school/college/ university.
* We work to end the cycle of homelessness for families in our community.
* We feed the hungry today while building a healthy, hunger-free tomorrow.
* We unite our community to nourish our neighbours in need.
* We empower young adults to overcome poverty and build a brighter future for ….. .
* We distribute donated furniture to families and individuals, turning their houses into homes.
* We advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in …. .

A **mission statement** is what you are doing now, in the present, to reach the goal in your vision statement. A **vision statement** articulates your future, the target in the distance that you are aiming for in everything that you do. The vision statement expresses the overall goal of your organisation.

A vision statement is critical, even if it seems brazenly ambitious, because the words keep you focused on your end goal. It is easy to get mired in the day-to-day work of programmes and campaigns and lose sight of the ultimate goal.

Your mission statement is as vital, even if it seems simplistic, because the words guide you as you go about your work, keeping you from wandering off course and trying to do too much.