

CASE STUDY 1 A Not-for-Profit Organization

At a local college, the officers of the student community service organization—which collects and buys food and distributes it to people in need—are having their February meeting. Sitting in the meeting room are Beth Smith, the organization's president, and two officers: Rosemary Olsen, vice president, and Steve Andrews, volunteer coordinator. Beth announces, "Our funds are almost exhausted. The demands on the food bank have been increasing. We need to figure out how to get more funds."

"We need to have a fundraising project," responds Rosemary.

Steve suggests, "Can't we ask the city government if they can increase their allocation of funds to us?"

"They're strained. They may even cut our allocation next year," replies Beth.

"How much do we need to get us through this year?" asks Rosemary.

"About \$10,000," answers Beth, "and we are going to start needing that money in about two months."

"We need a lot of things besides money. We need more volunteers, more space for storage, and more food donations," says Steve.

"Well, I guess we can make that all part of the fund-raising project. This is going to be fun!" says Rosemary excitedly.

"This project is growing. We'll never get it done in time," Beth says.

Rosemary responds, "We'll figure it out and get it done. We always do."

"Is a project what we need? What are we going to do next year—another project?" asks Steve. "Besides, we're having a hard time getting volunteers anyway. Maybe we need to think about how we can operate with less money. For example, how can we get more food donations on a regular basis so we won't have to buy as much food?"

Rosemary jumps in. "Great idea! You can work on that while we also try to raise funds. We can't leave any stone unturned."

"Time out," says Beth. "These are all very good ideas, but we have limited funds and volunteers and a growing demand. We need to do something now to make sure we don't have to close our doors in two months. I think we all agree we need to undertake some type of initiative. But I'm not sure we all agree on the objective."

CASE QUESTIONS

1. What are the needs that have been identified?
2. What is the project objective?
3. What assumptions, if any, should be made regarding the project to be undertaken?
4. What are the risks involved in the project?

GROUP ACTIVITY

Contact a local not-for-profit organization in your community. Tell its officers that you are interested in learning about their operations. Ask them to describe a project that they are currently working on. What are the objectives? The constraints? The resources?

If possible, have your team contribute a few hours to the project. Through this process, you will be helping someone in need and learning about a real-world project at the same time. Prepare a report summarizing the project and what you learned from this experience.