

STATE SOLUTIONS CONCEPT PAPER OCTOBER, 2003

Mission

The mission of State Solutions is to help states and communities build the capacity to address community-based problems or opportunities in a sustainable and collaborative way. State Solutions will help create, support, or expand approaches in states that bring government entities, businesses, community-based organizations and citizens together to take action in implementing sustainable solutions – solutions that incorporate social, environmental and economic objectives simultaneously.

Vision

In a time of decreased revenues and budget shortfalls, it is clear that no one sector on its own can solve the complex and interconnected problems our communities and regions face today. State Solutions envisions a time when public/private/non-profit collaboration is the norm, when decisions are made not just for short-term gain but for long-term sustainability, and community solutions take into account the interconnectedness of social, economic and environmental factors.

Function and Services

State Solutions will assist states and communities in building their capacity to further advance sustainability and foster cross-sector collaboration. State Solutions will focus in three areas:

1. Community-based pilot projects. As a convener, advisor, co-facilitator or trainer, State Solutions will provide assistance to launching or strengthening community-based projects. Suitable projects or issues include (but are not limited to): watershed restorations, sustainable development, social services coordination, and alternative transportation development. Through projects, State Solutions will help states, communities, businesses, and community based organizations build the capacity to collaborate and develop holistic solutions.
2. Education and networking. State Solutions will form a network of practitioners doing sustainable and collaborative work (from the government, business and non-profit sectors), and with network members, develop strategies for enhancing and expanding this work. State Solutions will disseminate best-practices, publish case studies, and host colloquia and workshops to facilitate shared learning.
3. Promoting the use of “solutions approaches” by government, business and nonprofit organizations. State Solutions will work with leaders at all levels and in all sectors to identify potential uses of collaborative approaches in finding sustainable solutions, and implement those approaches where appropriate.

Activities for 2003

1. Assessment of East Coast States. State Solutions staff will first inventory approaches already in place that advance sustainability and do so through collaborations between the public, private and non-profit sectors. The goal in doing so is to identify people and organizations doing this work, and opportunities for partnership.
2. Hosting a Regional or National Colloquium. This colloquium will pull together some groups identified in the assessment, along with established national partners, for information sharing and a discussion of how the network could best serve them.
3. Pilot project implementation. State Solutions will assist interested partners in implementing sustainability projects using a collaborative process that involves state agencies, municipalities, businesses, non-profits and citizens.