



# Project FINE

Focus on Integrating Newcomers Through Education

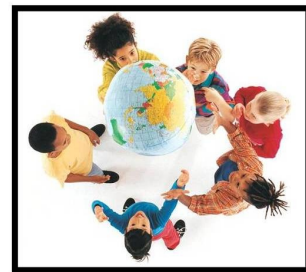
## Strategic Plan 2007-2010 Summary

Prepared by Fatima Said and  
Project FINE Staff

*Today's preparation determines tomorrow's achievement.*

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**Project FINE**

Focus on Integrating Newcomers Through Education

## Planning Areas

In 2006 Fatima, Project FINE staff, and the Board of Directors began creating a Strategic Plan. Five planning areas (illustrated below) were designated based on the identified needs of Project FINE clients, service providers and business partners. Through these five areas, Project FINE is able to fulfill our mission:

“To strengthen and enrich our community by facilitating the integration of people who are ethnically diverse.”

Project FINE would also like to thank the 2006 Board of Directors, partners, and community members for their contribution to the 2007-2010 Strategic Plan.

2006 Board of Directors:

Malia Storovich  
Gail Bradbury  
Mimi Carlson  
Julie Chiasson  
Alan DuCett  
Darline Freeman  
Dr. Justin Green  
Mike Hancy  
Dr. Scott Hannon  
Alexander Hines  
Therese Kulas  
Paul Mundt  
Miriam Potter  
Lilian Ramos  
Neng Vang  
David Vaselaar



## Planning Area 1: Language Services

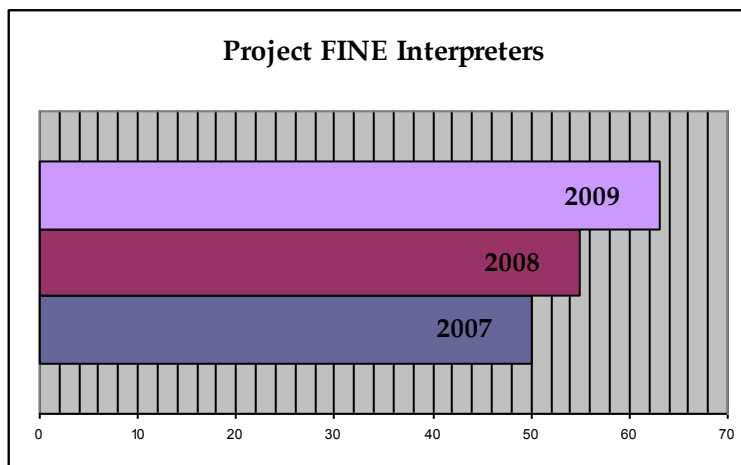
**Goal 1: By 2010, increase the number of Project FINE interpreters in all languages by 10%**

**Strategy:**

The staff and Language Services Committee will develop a recruiting plan designed to attract speakers of languages other than English to begin training for services as a Project FINE interpreter.

**Achievement:**

The creation and use of the recruitment plan has resulted in an increase in the number of interpreters. In 2007, we had 50 trained interpreters and in 2008 we had 55 (10% increase). In 2009 that number has grown to 63, which represents a 14% increase over 2007 and a 26% increase since the creation of the strategic plan.



**Goal 2: Project FINE will identify new substantive markets for language services to complement its current specializations in medical and legal interpretation.**

**Strategy:**

The staff and Language Services Committee will conduct a needs assessment/opportunities inventory to identify potential new markets.

**Achievement:**

Since 2007, Project FINE has taken an intentional and strategic approach to creating new interpreting agreements, as well as expanding previous agreements. Interpreting opportunities have increased in all areas, including business, government, schools and the non-profit sector. As a result of this approach, we now have interpreting contracts with the Department of Corrections, State of Minnesota, Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Three Rivers Community Action and Winona National Bank.

## Planning Area 1: Language Services, Continued

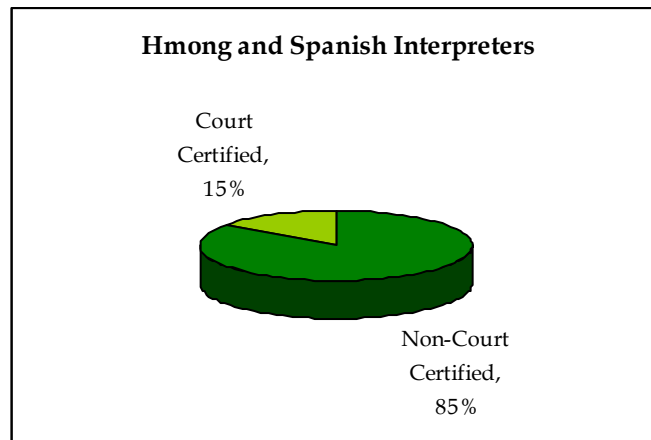
### Goal 3: Project FINE will increase the current standards for recruiting and retaining interpreters.

**Strategy:**

By 2010, 15% of interpreters will be Court Certified.

**Achievement:**

Currently, 15% of our Hmong and Spanish interpreters are court certified. This is a significant achievement, as the certification process is lengthy, rigorous and expensive.



**Strategy:**

By 2009, 50% of volunteer and contract interpreters will have attended an in-service program. By 2010, 100% of volunteer and contract interpreters will have attended an annual in-service program within the past two years. In succeeding years, every volunteer or contract interpreter will attend an in-service program at least every other year.

**Achievement:**

Currently, 100% of our interpreters have attended an in-service program within the past two years. This success is due to providing trainers who are knowledgeable and relevant and the consistent scheduling of quarterly training sessions. In 2008, we also began paying interpreters to attend trainings, which has also increased attendance.

**Strategy:**

Project FINE will utilize local resources including schools, colleges and universities to offer at least annual in-service programs for recruiting interpreters.

**Achievement:**

Project FINE is continually searching for new and different recruiting opportunities at our local institutes of higher education. Since 2007, on-campus recruitment has been conducted in a variety of ways, including volunteer fairs, Diversity Youth Quest mentor training sessions, and the Winona State University Freshman Walking Tour.



## Planning Area 1: Language Services, Continued

**Strategy:**

The staff and the Language Services Committee will develop an evaluation instrument to be used regularly when a Project FINE interpreter or translator is engaged. Results of the evaluation will be reported to the Director of Language Services who will monitor in-service training.

**Achievement:**

Project FINE has developed and implemented a questionnaire which is designed to gain feedback from service providers. The Director of Language Services has also utilized many service providers for in-service training, including SEMCAC Family Planning, Winona Health, Head Start, Department of Human Services, Winona County Courts, Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, and the University of Minnesota Linguistics Program. During in-service training, interpreters have received information about service providers as well as feedback and guidance, which improves the relationship between interpreters and service providers.

**Goal 4: Project FINE will explore offering language classes that can produce net positive revenue for the organization.**

**Strategy:**

The staff and the Language Services Committee will conduct a needs assessment/opportunities inventory to identify potential markets for language classes.

**Achievements:**

A needs assessment was conducted and results indicated that the most successful markets for language classes are area businesses and government institutions. This is due to their frequent contact with non-English speakers and the necessity of such interactions.

**Strategy:**

With assistance of the Advancement Committee, staff will develop a marketing plan for language classes.

**Achievements:**

Based on the findings of the needs assessment, a marketing plan was created and presented to area businesses and government institutions, including the City of Winona, City of St. Charles and Winona Daily News. Project FINE also developed and produced language CD's in Spanish and Hmong to teach businesses common phrases related to the workplace.



## Planning Area 1: Language Services, Continued

**Strategy:**

With the assistance of the Finance Committee, the staff will develop a financial plan that minimizes tuition for language classes but assures that, with reasonable enrollments, the classes will produce an operating surplus.

**Achievements:**

A financial plan was created for the language classes and presented to potential clients. While there was considerable interest in language classes, lack of funding prevented clients from participating.

## Planning Area 2: Navigating Community Systems

**Goal 1: By 2010, Project FINE will have addressed all unmet needs identified in the 2006 needs assessment.**

**Strategy:**

The Executive Director will report to the Board of Directors on the status of programs at the November 2007 meeting of the Board and every three months thereafter until all unmet needs have been discussed.

**Achievement:**

The Executive Director reports the status of programs to the Board of Directors each month, in both a written and verbal summary. As a result of the 2006 needs assessment, many programs and classes have been offered to Project FINE clients, including Banking Classes, Childbirth Classes, Citizenship Classes, Entrepreneurship Classes, Criminal Justice Workshop, College Education Connection, Diversity Education, and Diversity Youth Quest.



## Planning Area 2: Navigating Community Systems, Continued

### **Goal 2: Project FINE will continue the expectant mothers program.**

**Strategy:**

Project FINE staff and volunteers will work with “graduates” of the expectant mothers program and with community leaders to enroll a higher proportion of pregnant immigrants and refugees in the program.

**Achievement:**

The expectant mothers program has been offered several times since the creation of the Strategic Plan. Since 2006, more than 50 individuals have participated and another session is scheduled for November 2009.

### **Goal 3: In collaboration with local partners, Project FINE will open a Welcome Center in St. Charles no later than June 30, 2008.**

**Strategy:**

The Executive Director will continue to meet with prospective partners to move the Welcome Center closer to completion.

**Achievement:**

The Welcome Center opened at 1155 Whitewater Avenue in January 2008. In April 2009, the Welcome Center moved to its current location in St. Charles City Hall.

**Strategy:**

The staff will work with the Advancement Committee to organize appropriate public relations events to call attention to the Welcome Center.

**Achievement:**

Many events have been held at the Welcome Center, both in the previous and current location. The Welcome Center has been utilized for legislature visits, open houses, educational programs, Diversity Youth Quest, Big Brothers and Big Sisters recruitment, Department of Human Services meetings, and many other functions.

## Planning Area 2: Navigating Community Systems, Continued

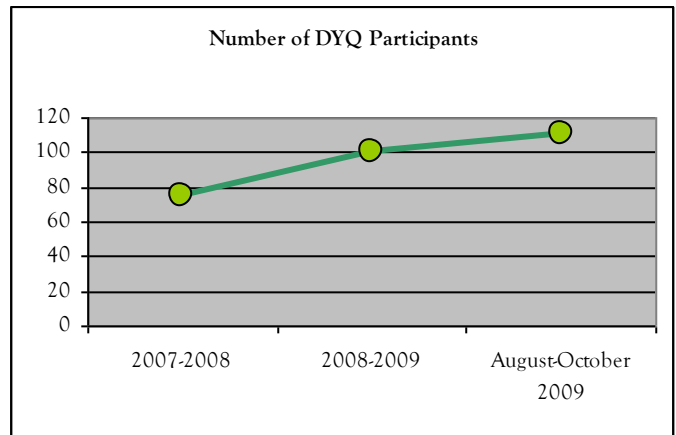
### Goal 4: Project FINE will evaluate, expand and enhance Diversity Youth Quest.

#### Strategy:

The Executive Director will seek the assistance of local professionals to evaluate the program's effectiveness and make recommendations for improvements.

#### Achievement:

Since 2007, Diversity Youth Quest has grown in all areas. Improved partnerships with local professionals and businesses have brought expertise and resources to participants. Through grant support from the Blue Cross Foundation, Winona Community Foundation and Mardag Foundation, the program has expanded and continues to have a significant positive impact on the mental health and well-being of participants. Each year, the program participation numbers have grown, with over 100 unduplicated participants in the 2008-2009 program year.



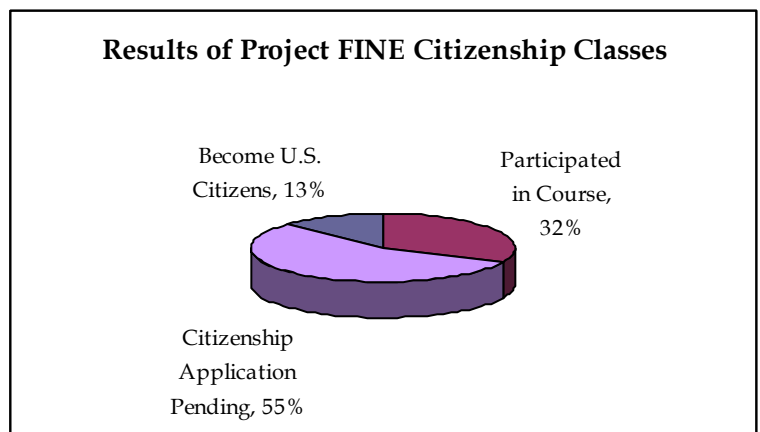
### Goal 5: Project FINE will offer Citizenship Classes.

#### Strategy:

Project FINE will monitor inquiries made to the organization and will make periodic contacts with other organizations to determine when classes will be cost effective.

#### Achievement:

Citizenship Classes were offered in 2007, with 47 individuals participating. Of these 47, 6 have become U.S. Citizens, and another 26 have citizenship applications pending. Project FINE continues to offer individual assistance to clients who are interested in pursuing citizenship.





## Planning Area 3: Advocacy and Information

**Goal 1: Project FINE will develop a comprehensive records system to facilitate prompt, accurate reporting to funding organizations.**

**Strategy:**

Project FINE will work with consultants as necessary to create the system.

**Achievement:**

A comprehensive records system has been created to ensure funding organizations receive the needed information. A complete tracking system is in place to ensure accuracy, and records are verified on a monthly basis.

**Goal 2: Project FINE will establish an Advocacy and Information Service in Trempealeau County, Wisconsin.**

**Strategy:**

The Executive Director will enlist the support of Directors and other stakeholders to identify prospective stakeholders in Trempealeau County. A list of prospects and a plan for contacting each prospect will be completed by January 31, 2008.

**Achievement:**

The Executive Director has identified and developed relationships with key stakeholders in Trempealeau County. While an Advocacy and Information Service has not been formally established, the Executive Director attends monthly SCOOP meetings in Trempealeau County to gain insight and information about their needs.

**Strategy:**

The Executive Director will devise and implement, with the help of volunteers and staff, a needs assessment/opportunities inventory in Trempealeau County by June 30, 2008.

**Achievement:**

A needs assessment/opportunities inventory was conducted in 2008, and while there is significant need in the immigrant and refugee community, Trempealeau County has no interest in creating an Advocacy and Information Service. However, Project FINE continues to offer assistance to individuals living in Trempealeau County.

## Planning Area 3: Advocacy and Information, Continued

**Goal 3: Project FINE will increase the number of clients it serves through its Winona office by 5% each year of the planning cycle.**

**Strategy:**

The staff will work with the Advancement Committee to develop a marketing plan and make more refugees and immigrants aware of the services offered by Project FINE.

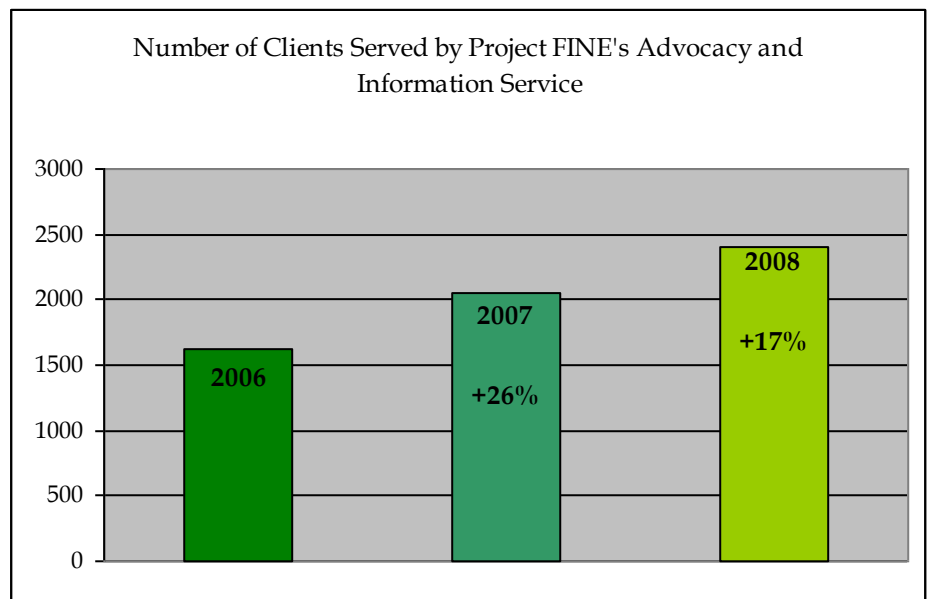
**Achievement:**

The intentional promotion of our services, along with greater visibility in the community has led to a significant increase in the number of clients served. In 2006, Project FINE's Advocacy and Information Services assisted 1,605 clients. In 2007, that number rose to 2,050 and in 2008, the number rose to 2,400. However, these numbers reflect only clients served by Advocacy and Information and do not take into account other Project FINE programs and services, such as Navigating Community Systems, Diversity Youth Quest, Diversity Training, and the many educational classes offered by Project FINE. When all programs and services are taken into account, an estimated 2,800 clients were impacted by Project FINE in 2008.

Project FINE has also given many hours of service for disaster relief. In 2007, a flood and apartment fire left many of our clients in desperate need of assistance. The Northstar Foods fire in 2009 also affected many newcomers. Our St Charles office is still helping clients with assistance, interpreting and education following this fire. In the wake of these disasters, Project

FINE has provided clients with over 600 hours of staff and volunteer time.

Almost all of these hours were given in-kind by Project FINE, to help our clients get back on their feet and live life to the fullest.



## Planning Area 4: Education

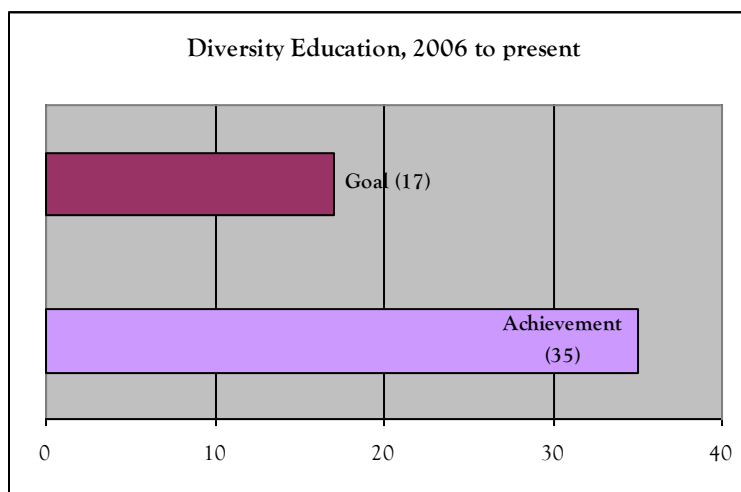
**Goal 1: Project FINE will offer diversity education on a scheduled basis to at least 17 clients.**

**Strategy:**

The staff will continue to contact stakeholders and invite them to enter into a longer term understanding with the organization.

**Achievement:**

Since 2006, Project FINE has conducted diversity education for more than 35 clients in Winona County, Trempealeau County, and Olmstead County, including Winona National Bank, City of Winona, Department of Human Services and Home and Community Options.



**Goal 2: Project FINE will develop diversity education courses or training programs specific to the community needs as identified by assessment/opportunities inventories.**

**Strategy:**

The staff will meet with current clients of the diversity education program to identify the content of the "next" course in diversity education and training. The results of this needs assessment/opportunities inventory will be brought to the Education Committee for review.

**Achievement:**

The content of the diversity education program is constantly updated not only to meet current trends, but also to meet the specific needs of each diversity education client. Examples of specific diversity education programs include Mix Up Day at Cotter High School, Hmong Culture presentations for Winona County, and a presentation on Muslim culture for Home and Community Options.

## Planning Area 5: Organizational Infrastructure

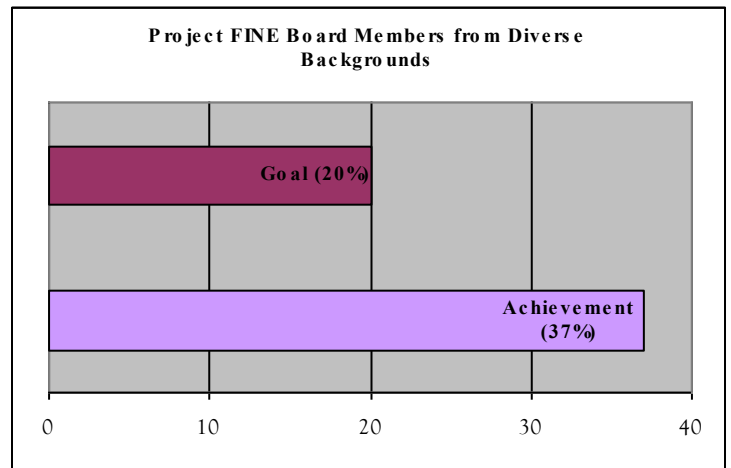
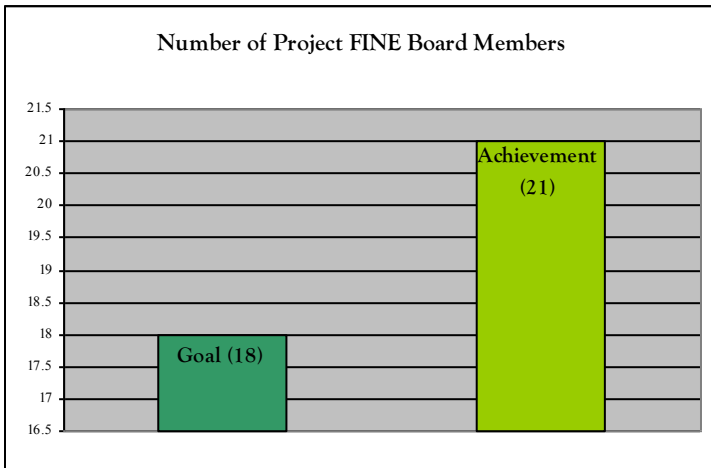
**Goal 1: Project FINE will accomplish the vision set out in its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws by making significant adjustments in the composition of the Board of Directors.**

**Strategy:**

By 2010, Project FINE will fill all 18 authorized positions on its Board of Directors, and have in place the procedures necessary to maintain board membership at that level.

**Achievement:**

Currently, there are 21 members on the Project FINE Board of Directors, and a plan is in place to maintain board membership.



**Strategy:**

By 2010, at least 20% of Directors will be from diverse backgrounds or be refugees or immigrants to the United States.

**Achievement:**

Thirty-seven percent of the Project FINE Board of Directors are either newcomers to the United States or natural-born American citizens who represent the diverse ethnic makeup of Winona County

**Strategy:**

The Executive Committee will function as a Nominating Committee, and will report to the Board at least bi-monthly on its activities to accomplish the vision of the organization.

**Achievement:**

The Executive Committee is highly involved in the organization, committed to the vision of Project FINE, and has exceeded the expectations of this strategy.



## Planning Area 5: Organizational Infrastructure, Continued

**Goal 2: Project FINE will continue to observe generally accepted accounting practices and the principles of good stewardship in its financial activities.**

**Strategy:**

Project FINE will transition from its current policy of requiring an external review of its financial records to an audit by the year 2010. The Finance Committee will draw up the process for accomplishing this goal.

**Achievement:**

Project FINE retained the services of accounting firm Franke, Weisbrod and Turnbull to conduct an external review of the financial records. As planned, the organization is prepared for a full audit in 2010.

Updated Financial Policies and Procedures:

- ✓ Improved process for receiving checks, cash & EFT
- ✓ Policy for paying invoices and reimbursements
- ✓ Create system to record expenses
- ✓ Generate invoices for foundations
- ✓ Improved bank reconciling procedures

**Strategy:**

In accord with the statement of policy approved by the Board of Directors, Project FINE will earn at least 75% of operating revenues through its programs and activities. Development activities other than grant seeking will result in no more than 25% of annual operating revenues.

**Achievement:**

Currently, Project FINE earns over 75% of operating revenues through programs and activities. Since 2007, the organization has diversified funding sources as a way to build the organization and increase stability. The most significant change came through increasing the organization's capacity to create an in-house billing system. Creating this in-house billing system is an incredible asset for Project FINE, and has allowed the organization to secure contracts with insurance companies UCare and Blue Plus for Interpreting and billing. And has also helped build up a significant reserve.

Project FINE Current Funding Sources:

- Earned Revenue
- Private Foundation Grants
- Community Grants
- Contracts
- Individual Donations
- Fundraising Events

## Planning Area 5: Organizational Infrastructure, Continued

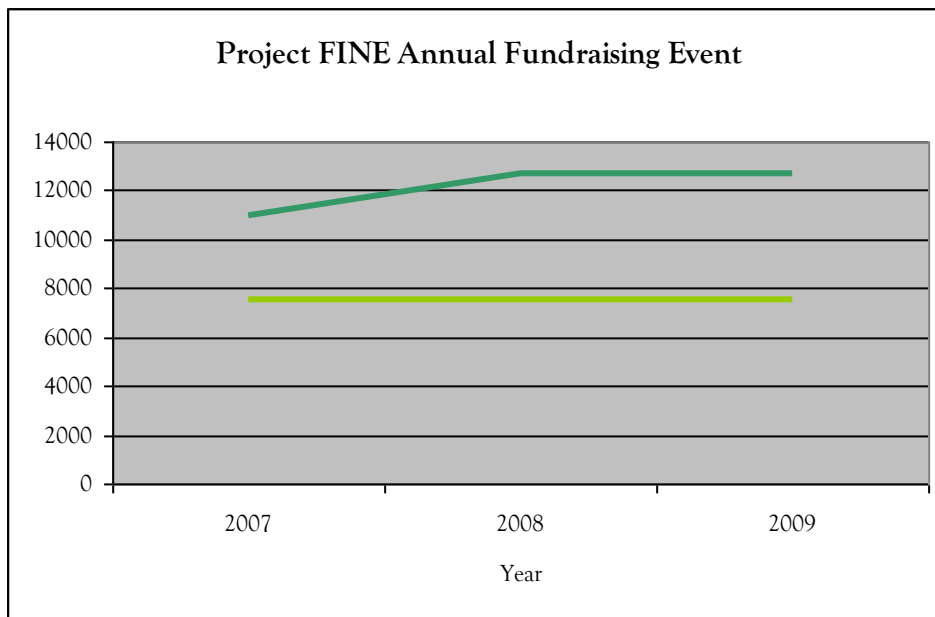
**Goal 3: Project FINE will access the philanthropic community only as necessary to support its activities.**

**Strategy:**

Recognizing its ability to earn significant revenues with which to support programming, Project FINE will hold one fundraising event each year, and set a goal of \$7,500 in net revenues for the event.

**Achievement:**

The Annual Taste of International Cuisine event has exceeded all expectations, with net revenues well over \$7,500 for each of the last three years



**Strategy:**

While not anticipating the need to solicit support from stakeholders, the Advancement Committee will continue to review the Development Plan, and see to it that the data base described elsewhere in this document includes contact information for stakeholders in preparation for an annual appeal-type mailing should it become necessary.

**Achievement:**

The financial stability of Project FINE is reflected in the fact that these mailings have not been necessary. However, the organization's data base includes contact information for key stakeholders, should appeal-type mailings be required in the future.



## Planning Area 5: Organizational Infrastructure, Continued

**Goal 4: Project FINE will expand its office staff as necessary to meet commitments of the organization and to accomplish the mission and vision of the organization.**

**Strategy:**

The Executive Director will report on staffing needs annually as part of the budget preparation process. The Executive Director will present an interim report at the July Board meeting, and assess the status of the office staff. The Executive Director also will raise staffing issues with the Executive Committee of the Board when appropriate.

**Achievement:**

Since 2007, Project FINE has added two grant supported program coordinator positions, and have expanded the staff only when necessary to fulfill the mission of the organization.

**Goal 5: Project FINE reaffirms its commitment to collaboration with government agencies, businesses and not for profit organizations to accomplish its mission and vision.**

**Strategy:**

Project FINE reaffirms its commitment to the United Way of the Greater Winona Area as the principle vehicle for facilitating collaboration in the community.

**Achievement:**

Project FINE is proud of our collaborations in the community. Since 2007, the organization has formed many new collaborations, and have continued to support and collaborate with the United Way. Staff have also recognized United Way through participation in their fundraising campaign. In 2009, 100% of Project FINE staff donated to United Way.

**Goal 6: Project FINE will become more visible in the community as an advocate for immigrants and refugees and as a source of support for them.**

**Strategy:**

The annual Report to the Community will serve as the central component in the public relations plan.

**Achievement:**

Since 2007, Project FINE has hosted an event to share the organization's activities during the preceding year. This event, along with the Annual Report publication, gives Project FINE the opportunity to recognize and thank its partners and benefactors.



## Planning Area 5: Organizational Infrastructure, Continued

### **Strategy:**

The Advancement Committee will be responsible for the drafting of a public relations plan to be implemented by staff and Board members. By 2010, a separate Public Relations Committee will be formed.

### **Achievement:**

Since 2007, the Board Members and staff of Project FINE have worked diligently to increase awareness of the organization through participation in community events, as well as local committees and boards. Along with community involvement, the Board and staff are highly conscientious of the organization's public image. This commitment to excellence has not only increased the awareness of Project FINE, but also its reputation.

### **Committees and Boards:**

- Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
- Winona Area Public Schools Staff Development Committee
- Winona Area Public Schools Diversity Committee
- Matty's Place Board of Directors
- IMAA Board of Directors
- Winona Human Rights Commission

### **Chamber of Commerce:**

- City of St. Charles
- City of Winona

## **Goal 7: Project FINE will anticipate significant changes in immigration law and prepare an appropriate response.**

### **Strategy:**

The Executive Director will collaborate with organizations possessing a similar mission, e.g., the Inter-Cultural Mutual Assistance Association and Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Winona, to assure that changes in the law are promptly and accurately communicated to refugees and immigrants.

### **Achievement:**

Project FINE has developed relationships with many other organizations, including the IMAA and Catholic Charities, in an effort to collaborate and better serve clients. The organization monitors immigration changes and communicates with others to anticipate changes in immigration law, and develop a plan to deal with any changes that arise.



## Other Achievements

### **Annual Report to the Community**

Each year, Project FINE holds this event to report on the organization's activities during the preceding year. The event, as well as the Annual Report publication, give Project FINE the opportunity to recognize and thank the partners and benefactors who help bring the organization closer to achieving its mission.

### **College Education Connection**

Through the generous support of the Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation, Project FINE was able to revive and expand the College Education Connection program. This program is designed to provide academic support, motivation, and access to resources for immigrant families to pursue post-secondary education.

### **Revised H.R. Policies & Employee Manual**

The revisions of the human resources policies and employee manual were completed in 2009. These revisions provide a clear and concise overview of the organization's policies, employee benefits and expectations.

### **Office Space Lease**

In July 2009, Project FINE signed a 5 year lease with Winona County for office space and services. This contract provides the organization with a stable and secure location.

### **Community Involvement**

Project FINE realizes the value of community involvement and is committed to partnering with other organizations, businesses and groups to fulfill our vision of creating a respectful and sensitive community.

Winona State Showcase

State Legislative Visit

New Faces of Winona

Gladiolus Days Parade

Healthy Kids' Club

Toys for Tots

Homes We Left Behind

Human Rights Mediation

Winona Newcomer's Guide

Gifts for Winona

Winona County Fair

HRA Tenant Council Elections

Global Citizenship Symposium

International Education Day, WSU

Gifts for Winona

United Way Concert of Caring

Winona State Freshman Walking Tour

Health Fair - Staying Well During Hard Times

CYFAR (Children, Youth and Families at Risk)

Winona Courthouse Open House

Welcome Dinner for County Administrator

Volunteer Fair, WSU & Saint Mary's