



Clackamas Women's Services

Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021

Our mission is to break the isolation of domestic and sexual violence

History

Incorporated in 1985 as Clackamas County's only shelter for women and children escaping family violence, Clackamas Women's Services (CWS) is still Clackamas County's primary provider of services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. CWS' service delivery framework is built on trauma-informed best practices that promote self-determination. Clients receive no-cost services by highly-trained staff and volunteers with advanced expertise. Further, since its establishment in late 2013, A Safe Place Family Justice Center for Clackamas County (ASP-FJC) has served as the headquarters for CWS. ASP-FJC is a collaboration of several partners working together to provide comprehensive services to victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, elder abuse, stalking, and dating violence. CWS is the lead nonprofit agency at ASP-FJC, providing approximately 75% of all intake, crisis intervention, and on-going supportive services. Other ASP-FJC partners include community-based and non-profit organizations, public safety personnel, and criminal justice and protective services system professionals.

Organizational Values

A core tenet of CWS' organizational vision is the desire to innovate, lead, serve, engage, and collaborate. The inherent organizational values of CWS include:

- Clear and open communication with participants, staff, donors and other key stakeholders.
- Trauma-informed support for all survivors.
- Sustainable practices and programs based on fiscally responsible and intentional decisions.
- The self-determination of all to choose their own path.
- Accountability to the needs of survivors and their families.
- Respect for all by honoring personal choice, diversity, best practices and promoting culturally responsive practices and competencies.

The Issue and Solution

Domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse, and stalking number among the most pernicious and prevalent social problems — threatening the safety, independence, and dignity of all victims. CWS has been working to meet the pressing and complex needs of survivors for over 30 years through the delivery of trauma-informed, wraparound services. These services were improved and became significantly more comprehensive when A Safe Place opened its doors in 2013. Prior to this, survivors were required to travel to multiple locations to access support services scattered throughout our community. They had to tell their story repeatedly (often with their children listening), to officials representing numerous agencies, such as law enforcement, courts, legal aid, medical institutions, transportation entities, housing programs, social services, mental health facilities, rehabilitation resources, financial assistance programs, and many more. With services now centralized at ASP-FJC, survivors in Clackamas County can access an advocate, plan for their safety, and connect to comprehensive services—all in one location. While we have made significant strides in supporting survivors and addressing violence in our communities, there is still much work to be done to ensure that services are victim-driven, children are protected, violence ends, families heal and thrive, and hope is realized.

To better identify and pursue these growth opportunities, a Strategic Planning Committee comprised of CWS' executive director, Board members, and representatives from the agency's leadership team began meeting regularly in the summer of 2017. In performing an analysis of trends affecting Clackamas Women's Services and its delivery of services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual, assault, elder abuse, and stalking, the Strategic Planning Committee identified several overarching themes. These have served to inform the strategic direction focus areas.



Increased Capacity for Underserved Populations

Children and Youth

We will interrupt the generational cycle of family violence by offering hope and healing to children and youth who have witnessed violence through the expansion of our Children's Program, which uses evidence-based initiatives to foster empowerment, provide direct services and counseling, and create societal change. CWS has been addressing the needs of children since its inception, but there is much more to be done for the roughly 850 children who visit ASP-FJC with their parents each year, the 74 served each summer at Camp Hope, and the 90 who reside each year at our emergency shelter.

The need in our community reflects national numbers. For instance, research by the Office of Juvenile Justice finds that 30 million children in the United States will be exposed to some type of family violence before the age of 17, and that there is an estimated 10-30% overlap of child maltreatment and domestic violence. In order to better tailor our services to these young survivors, CWS must expand its Children's Program at both the Village and A Safe Place. This includes providing one-on-one advocacy for youth; supervised childcare and play time with children; developmentally appropriate children's support and play groups; field trip activities; parent consultation, education and support regarding domestic violence, parenting skills, and developmentally appropriate parenting strategies; and family-based case management. In addition, CWS must expand Camp Hope Oregon — which we have piloted for the last 3 years — into a permanent program. Camp HOPE Oregon, a summer camp and year-long mentoring program for children ages 6-15 who have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence, is intended to help children heal from trauma and have the fun, playful experiences that they deserve. Camp HOPE is structured around Dr. Chan Hellman's "HOPE Theory" and built on the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACES) research and is a natural extension of the Family Justice Center model.





Sexual Violence

We will create a cohesive sexual violence response system in Clackamas County that includes access to community-based services, as well as responsive and trauma-informed treatment in the criminal justice system for all sexual violence survivors.

According to the Centers for Disease and Control, approximately 1.3 million women are sexually assaulted each year, though the vast majority of assaults are not reported and even fewer end in a conviction. As an estimated one in five women are assaulted while in college, supports for survivors on college campuses are especially critical. Striving to better meet this need, CWS recently partnered with Clackamas Community College (CCC) to station a Campus Sexual Assault Advocate on campus. This new position provides advocacy services to survivors of sexual violence, including safety planning, court accompaniment, assistance with Title IX and Law Enforcement reporting processes, and offering support groups to students at CCC, including those of any gender or immigration status. CCC is now the first community college in Oregon to offer on-site confidential sexual assault advocacy services for students via an agreement with a community partner. We are working with CCC to continue to strengthen this partnership, expand and improve services for survivors, and, ultimately, to create a sexual violence advocacy model that can be replicated on other college campuses.

Elder Abuse

We will improve the system of care for adult maltreatment by establishing a fully integrated, multidisciplinary coordinated response to elder abuse based out of A Safe Place Family Justice Center that will serve as a model for other family justice centers throughout the country.

According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, approximately 1 in 10 — or roughly 5 million — Americans aged 60 and older experience some form of elder abuse a year. Despite its high prevalence, elder abuse is vastly underreported. The Oregon Public Health Division points out that because elder abuse is not systematically tracked, the exact number of persons affected is unknown. However, it is estimated that only one in 24 cases of elder abuse is ever reported. There is a significant gap in our elder abuse system as existing training and educational programs for providers and responders do not meet the multifaceted and often complex needs of older survivors, who may also be grappling with physical or cognitive disabilities. In order to address these gaps and make our community's elder abuse response system more cohesive, CWS is working with partners to establish a fully integrated, multidisciplinary coordinated response to elder abuse based out of ASP-FJC. These key services will include a designated elder abuse advocate, law enforcement and first responder training, direct service provider training, judicial institute training, client assistance funds, and a weekly elder abuse support group.

Cultivate Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Policies and Procedures

We will work to reduce barriers faced by survivors from marginalized communities and improve access to shelter and other social services by intentionally increasing representation of these demographics on our staff and board, as well as partnering closely with culturally-specific agencies to make prioritized referrals into our services.

Historically, survivors from marginalized communities have experienced barriers to accessing shelter and other social services. These include language barriers and lack of translation/interpretation, cultural stereotyping and misunderstanding, both overt and unconscious bias in screening, and a lack of representation of marginalized communities among providers. In addition, cultural communication styles may explain violence differently and be screened out by some other providers. Over the past ten years, we have sought to reduce these barriers by intentionally increasing representation of marginalized communities on our staff and board (over 38% of staff are bilingual/bicultural) and by partnering closely with culturally-specific agencies to support the survivors with whom they are working by making prioritized referrals into our services, which has greatly increased access for communities of color and immigrant communities in shelter and housing services. Further, as we are committed to building a diverse organization by implementing a more equitable hiring process, furthering the recruitment process to increase the racial and cultural diversity within the applicant pool, and adapt application and interview process to maximize diversity.

Latina Services

We will work to increase the accessibility of domestic and sexual violence services to the Latinx community and others that historically have been denied adequate and equitable access through the implementation of *Promotoras*, a program that trains members of the Latinx community to become para-professionals, as well as other innovative and culturally responsive initiatives spearheaded by our Latina Leadership Team.

Promotoras is a key project of our Latina Services Team. Led by the Latina Services Coordinator, the team includes representation from all service areas of our agency and strives to develop leadership skills and raise the voices of Latina staff and participants. By developing leaders in the Latina community who serve as liaisons to local service providers and resources, the *Promotoras* program provides the opportunity for local women to emerge from their communities as leaders and equips them with training and tools to build upon the skill set and knowledge they already possess.



Advance the Field

Innovative Program Models

We will develop new innovative models and continue to improve existing programs — such as the Village, the Legal Empowerment Accelerator Program, and the agency-wide Shared Advocacy Model — that meet the complex needs of survivors with comprehensive and individualized service delivery.

The Village Model, the historic core program of Clackamas Women’s Services, is designed to break the isolation of domestic violence by helping survivors reconnect to a social fabric in which they feel valued, supported, and to which they contribute meaningfully. The Village Model provides a supportive environment where survivors can step away from abusive households, regain their strength, and individually shape the ways they want to move forward in the world. As domestic violence is the third leading cause of homelessness among families and survivors frequently experience unique economic challenges, often exacerbated by financial abuse — a common tactic keeps the survivor dependent on their abuser—the confidential, safe, and supportive nature of shelter makes it one of our most essential services. The Village is a place where participants are considered unconditionally as experts in their own self-determination. It creates a much needed community where participants can find their strength and regain hope.

Another innovative program model that CWS is working to implement is the Legal Empowerment Accelerator Program (LEAP). According to findings by the National Network to End Domestic Violence, after housing, legal services is the most requested service by domestic and sexual violence survivors. Despite this overwhelming need, only 11% of DVSA programs across the country are able to provide survivors with legal representation. This problem is reflected locally, where according to data from Legal Aid Services of Oregon (LASO), the state is currently meeting only 18% of civil legal needs for low-income individuals. With over 45,000 Clackamas County residents living at or below the poverty line, the lack of pro bono and affordable legal services is especially stark and deeply felt in the region. Further illustrating this need is that of the approximately 300 victims who request civil legal services at ASP-FJC each year, only 26% receive legal consultation or representation.

The establishment of LEAP in early 2018 will serve to address this gap in the provision of holistic and comprehensive civil legal services to ASP-FJC service users who have low to moderate income. Further, through this program the proportion of survivors seeking civil legal assistance through ASP-FJC who receive consultation/representation, including protective orders, child support, custody, divorce, immigration status, wrongful termination, landlord-tenant matters, and bankruptcy cases, will increase from 26% to 75%.

**CWS
Programs**

Shelter and Housing
Community Based Program
Children’s Program
Counseling Program
Community Education Program

Foster CWS as a Learning Organization

We will continue to incorporate participant feedback in the design and evaluation of all programs and services, and enhance our capacities to innovate and meet the needs of survivors.

A key element of CWS' service delivery to participants is its commitment to establishing itself as a learning organization. To further foster this, as well as engender staff collaboration, CWS has adopted a shared advocacy model across all agency teams. This model is representative of our agency values of collaboration, community, and sustainability for participants and staff. While the core aspects of this model are already practiced by each team, they have only recently been formally articulated. It is our hope that the improved understanding and application of the shared advocacy model by staff will help ensure greater consistency and enhanced collaboration in services across all CWS programs. These features include, but are not limited to, shared work space, shared work load, daily check in and check outs, and backup systems in place so that even when working independently, all staff members have access to needed assistance.

Inform Policy and Best Practice

We will continue to serve as a leader in the trauma-informed care service model within the field of domestic and sexual violence, and will work to increase the depth and frequency of trainings in best-practice prevention strategies, social change initiatives, and trauma-informed approaches to our community partners and members.

CWS has a reputation as an agency that embraces and implements innovative strategies and has successfully changed public policy to create more resources for victims and systemic changes in the response for victims. For example, after engaging in a series of trainings and dialog with the Washington Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, CWS was the first shelter in Oregon to devote to a full paradigm shift changing the way the shelter program was structured and how services are offered. CWS adopted the Rights and Responsibilities (R&R) model, which is a voluntary services model and works from a team-based services model. The model has been incredibly successful and shelter programs from across the country now seek consultation from CWS on the model. CWS is also currently working with an external evaluator to look at the effectiveness of its efforts to provide inclusive, culturally responsive shelter services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Specifically, the evaluation will assess the effectiveness of CWS's practices to give priority admission to people of color and to immigrants to its emergency shelter as well as to provide services that respond to their culturally specific needs.



Up to 15 adults and 25 children at a time are served at the Village.

Champion Social Change

Prevention

We will build a community that stands against domestic and sexual violence by developing young role models who disrupt social and cultural norms that currently perpetuate gender-based violence. One strategy we will use to accomplish this is to increase the number of Clackamas County schools in which we present the lessons of our Violence Prevention Program.

Domestic violence is now largely considered both a social issue and a key public health priority. The growing awareness of domestic violence is evidenced by the fact that over 60% of Americans report knowing someone affected by domestic violence. Despite greater awareness and public conversations around domestic violence and sexual assault, they still occur at epidemic levels. This is in large part due to victim blaming and rape culture, situations in which sexual assault, rape, and general violence are ignored, trivialized, normalized, or made into jokes. CWS, along with domestic and sexual violence advocates across the country, have recognized that we must not only provide the best practices in intervention services, but also address gender-based violence before it begins. This requires attention “upstream” to address the root causes of gender-based violence before they germinate in the minds of young people and are acted upon.

CWS is the only agency specifically offering sexual and dating violence prevention programming to schools across Clackamas County. The team is working to increase their scope from 16 middle schools and high schools to 22. Beginning in fall 2017, CWS embarked on a capacity expansion project in support of a 5-year strategic vision for its Violence Prevention Program. Our strategy is four-fold, and includes expanding the existing “See It. End It.” curriculum for middle and high school students; piloting the Social Emotional Learning programming for parents in order to help them model healthy relationships with their children; expanding staff capacity to fulfill Erin’s Law requirements for Kindergarten through 7th Grade in Clackamas County schools — which mandates that every child in Oregon receive four sessions each year about child sex abuse prevention; and piloting the Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) strategy with two different high school sport teams and 45 male athletes.





Public Policy

We will expand our efforts in shaping public policy work, collaborating with numerous community partners and coalitions to secure critical resources, and advocate for legislation that helps survivors achieve safety and stability.

As an agency, we are actively engaged in public policy work, collaborating with organizations like Oregon Alliance to End Domestic and Sexual Violence; Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence (OCADSV); Stable Homes Coalition, Coalition of Communities of Colors; United for Kids, American Association of University Women (AAUW); Restore Justice for Survivors; the Oregon Women's Equity Coalition, and the Oregon Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women to shape public policy that better addresses the complex needs of survivors. This includes advocating for an increased funding for life saving programs—such as the Emergency Housing Account and the State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP) and advocating for women and family friendly policies such as paid parental leave. During the 2018 Oregon Legislative Session, CWS also led the effort to pass SB 1562 A, which updates and expands the definition of strangulation and increases the crime to a felony within the context of domestic violence cases. This legislation is critical to protecting survivors and the larger community from further harm and lifelong impacts of the inevitable terror they experience after being strangled.

Community Accountability Model

We will strengthen the community accountability model to create positive and long-lasting change. This will provide our community members with the tools to identify and respond to relationship violence when it occurs.

Our work in strengthening the community accountability model includes the goal of engendering public engagement and holding offenders accountable, while acknowledging that the community ultimately has the greatest role to play. In addition to providing safety and support to our community members who are victimized, CWS is working to expand its bystander intervention programming in the community so that members are better equipped to identify and respond to relationship violence when it occurs. It is imperative that we look to other solutions for addressing this rampant violence. As we work to dismantle rape culture and create processes of justice and accountability for sexual violence, examining other responses can be a helpful tool for visualizing alternatives to the criminal legal system which properly support survivors and also hold those who harm accountable.

Increase Resources for Sustained Growth and New Initiatives

Improve and Expand Site Capacity

We will strengthen the continuum of care for survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Clackamas County by opening the largest domestic violence shelter in the state of Oregon, as well as collaborating with our A Safe Place partners to expand our collective services into a Family Justice Center campus model.

Since opening in December 2013, the demand for services at A Safe Place Family Justice Center for Clackamas County has grown each year. For instance, the second full year of operation saw an astronomical increase of 21 percent in survivors served from the previous. Most recently, the FJC experienced an additional increase of over 24 percent for visits for services by the end of 2017. Further, since opening the doors at A Safe Place, we have learned that the greater need is depth and breadth of individualized services among all our staff rather than specializations. Participants in our program have consistently said that they want to work with our staff over a longer period of time and need more services. This realization, coupled with the growing utilization of services, has informed the goal of expanding CWS' capacity at the FJC so that survivors leave feeling as though their unique needs were met. Fortunately, CWS has numerous champions from all levels of local and state government who are helping us realize these aims. For instance, the Board of Clackamas County Commissioners is vociferously supportive of CWS and its mission, and was instrumental in the establishment of the FJC in 2013. Their focus is now on expanding FJC and supporting the maintenance and expansion of critical domestic violence and sexual assault services in the community.





Increase the Pipeline of Private Funders

We will increase private fundraising by 50% through appeals to foundations, corporations, individuals, and through special events. This will allow CWS to build an operating reserve, keep pace with service capacity expansion, and maintain flexible funding for initiatives such as community engagement and violence prevention. The development team has a strategy for increasing major donor retention rates and recruiting new major funders at every giving level.

Currently, approximately 15% of CWS' budget comes from private sources. While the number of households and businesses that give \$2,000 or more annually has fluctuated since 2010, last year was our best year to date with nearly \$250,000 from 48 donors. This success aside, it has been apparent for the last three years that we are lacking a pipeline of major donors. While we have had a few new donors, we need many more at higher levels if we are to be able to truly meet the need by supplementing recent and current government funding levels.

In order to increase the pipeline of private funders, the CWS Development Team is working to enhance its cultivation and acquisition, retention, and fundraising strategies. For cultivation and acquisition, this includes identifying and building relationships with current or potential donors with the capacity to award gifts of at least \$1,000 through tours, one-on-one meetings, presentations, and small events. To retain these donors, the Development Team will host wine hours, an annual gala, provide monthly updates on the agency and its programming, and write regular "love notes" to donors to thank them for their generosity. In addition, to bolster its fundraising efforts, the Development Team will continue to send out regular direct mail, including the quarterly appeal letters, as well as further engage in prospect research and grant writing.

Investment in Human Capital

We will build upon our inclusive recruitment and hiring processes to attract and maintain a diverse and talented workforce. We will invest in a strong administrative infrastructure to better support programs and staff, and expand our employee benefits and wellness packages. In addition, we will provide ongoing professional development opportunities to equip staff with the skills and support in order to meet the needs of our organization and service users.

The growth that CWS has already undertaken and continues to seek out has required an investment in our administrative infrastructure. This has included the hiring of more coordinator and manager level positions, the establishment of a designated human resources department, and the development of a leadership team, comprised from the heads of all departments, which meets weekly to provide updates on their respective programs and to discuss the issues that are most pressing to the agency. Though still relatively recent, these initiatives have already served to enhance the communication and coordination between CWS' departments and their delivery of services, and will serve as the building blocks for continued investment in the agency's administrative infrastructure.