



WRRRC Strategic Plan

2020-2023




WOMEN'S RURAL
RESOURCE CENTRE



Executive Summary

2019 was a time of transition for the Women's Rural Resource Centre (WRRC). With a fresh Board of Directors, a new complement of Shelter staff and changes in the political climate, a road-map is needed to guide WRRC through the upcoming years as we ensure continued organizational growth, programming to match the needs of the community, and sustainability. The following plan presents the strategic goals and actions for the next three years.

The 2020 – 2023 Strategic Plan was developed co-actively with input from the Board of Directors, the leadership team, direct shelter staff, stakeholders of the organization and clients of the shelter. The goal is to provide clear and attainable strategic goals that maximize our strengths and opportunities, while mitigating our risks and meeting external challenges.





Vision for 2023

By 2023, WRRRC will be an innovative centre for rural women and their families. We will be advancing social change by fostering leadership development in women and girls. As a prominent, connected, positive force we will have increased our visibility in our rural community through consistent, meaningful relationships. We will be continuing our strong focus on the delivery of essential services to address and prevent violence against women and children. Offering learning opportunities in service of community we will invite our community to join us as leaders in social change. The WRRRC of 2023 will be equipped to embark on a facility expansion project and will be well-positioned both financially and socially for long-term sustainability.



HERSTORY OF THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

Organized responses to violence against women in Canada began in 1960 with feminist activism protesting the prevailing belief that violence against women was a private matter. Throughout the 1970's, grass-root feminists involved in the women's movement gathered in consciousness-raising groups and women's drop-in centres. There was growing recognition that many women leaving abusive relationships needed support and lacked access to housing and financial resources. As an immediate response, women's centres began opening their doors to women overnight and volunteers opened their homes as refuge. This was the onset of an underground emergency response system known as Safe Houses.

The first shelter in Canada opened in 1973 followed by 75 more by 1979. Typically, shelters offered a holistic and empowering approach to support women to escape violence, while also taking on the collective effort to challenge institutional and structural barriers that reinforce cultural beliefs that condone violence against women.

It was the women's movement that put domestic violence on the political radar and eventually it was recognized as a criminal issue. During the 1980's increased public awareness and multi-sector interest led to more coordinated efforts to end violence against women, ultimately securing provincial, territorial and federal government funding for shelters. By 1990 there were 400 emergency shelters across Canada and violence against women was a legitimate social issue. The 1990's brought increased demand for accountability in a constrained funding environment. As we moved into the new millennium, agencies focused on developing best practice responses while the complexity of serving women who had long histories of trauma, poverty, addiction and mental health emerged as a challenging context for shelter work.

Pressures to professionalize the shelter sector, as we sit in the shadows of our health and education sectors, have been resisted by feminist organizations who desire to protect grassroots values. The women's sector holds a unique and important space in our historical progression towards social transformation; it was consciousness-raising that gave us our collective voice as women who share a human experience, and this may still be our most valuable tool in our struggle for equality.

Our Herstory



In 1988 two women explored the need for services for women after struggling to find help for a friend fleeing an abusive relationship. A feasibility study led to the incorporation of the Women's Rural Resource Centre Strathroy and Area (WRRC) as a registered charity and doors opened to a counseling centre in Strathroy. Soon after, construction began on a safe and secure emergency shelter that opened in 1992. WRRC had expanded to provide outreach in Newbury, Parkhill and Glencoe, and in 1998 began building an addition to the shelter to house counseling and administration all in one building. In 1999, the agency purchased the adjacent duplex as a Second Stage House for women moving out of shelter who required continued security and support. WRRC also received new funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services to provide support for women who were starting over, and from United Way to focus on supporting the unique needs of children impacted by abuse.






Our Present



WRRRC supports women in crisis through risk assessment, safety planning, advocacy, and complex system navigation such as family and criminal court, schools, social assistance, social housing and child protection. WRRRC has further expanded to incorporate a holistic healing program that builds upon the traditional counselling services to incorporate a range of healing modalities that encompass diverse practices and are inclusive of cultural traditions. The children's program is working with children and caregivers in both shelter and community. Individual and group programs are offered to children and youth using play-based therapies grounded in attachment theory and focused on engaging in healthy relationships. Recognizing that some women want to engage their whole circle of people in their healing, WRRRC began to support men, engaging in services through enhanced referrals to community partners who support perpetrators of violence through groups and individual work with male caregivers in parenting roles, and through early interventions with whole families who are at risk of experience abuse. Our primary focus is to serve women in leading within their own life and family, so when she would like to include folks not traditionally served in violence against women organizations, we support that to the extent that services are safe and encompass accountability, healing and growth. Gendered language is emerging as a tension and we have made a commitment to review our language to ensure alignment with values and clarity/support among stakeholders.






WRRC Leading Community



At WRRC, our goal is to raise collective consciousness by speaking truth to power when cultural beliefs normalize, promote and facilitate violence. We work toward non-violent relationships as the norm in society. As such, we not only continue to respond to violence after it occurs, we also address violence before it happens. We will continue to support families in crisis, while we also recognize our obligation to serve our community in a much larger capacity; to facilitate relationships across socio-economic and identity divides so that women can build a rich and diverse circle of support, and moreover, so that community can understand how violence permeates culture, systems, communities and families. As we continue to learn and grow ourselves, we educate and mobilize others to change the story for the entire community.





Mission & Vision



Mission: Using a feminist, anti-oppressive analysis, we provide education, prevention and support services for women and families impacted by violence against women in Middlesex County.

Vision: A vibrant, connected community where women and families thrive in healthy relationships.



WRRC



Values



FEMINISM

As a feminist organization, WRRC leads our community in embracing equity through activism and education.



LEARNING

At WRRC we believe education is the path to liberation. We honour lived-experience and understand that lived-experience is knowledge. Our responsibility is to educate, learn and grow



LEADERSHIP

At WRRC, leadership means taking responsibility for your world. At WRRC everyone is a leader.



RELATIONSHIPS

At WRRC we believe everyone is creative, resourceful and whole. We foster relationships that are courageous, authentic and inclusive.



HOLISTIC HEALING

At WRRC we believe healing and wellness is the foundation for healthy minds, bodies, spirits and relationships.





The Women's Rural Resource Centre is a progressive, bold, feminist organization offering education, prevention and support to women and families affected by gender-based violence. From the first conversation together, we help women explore their options, plan for their future and the next right steps. We recognize that violence against women does not happen in a vacuum, but rather stems from a culture perpetuating violence against women and children. As such, activism and advocacy are key parts of our mission.

Organizational Overview

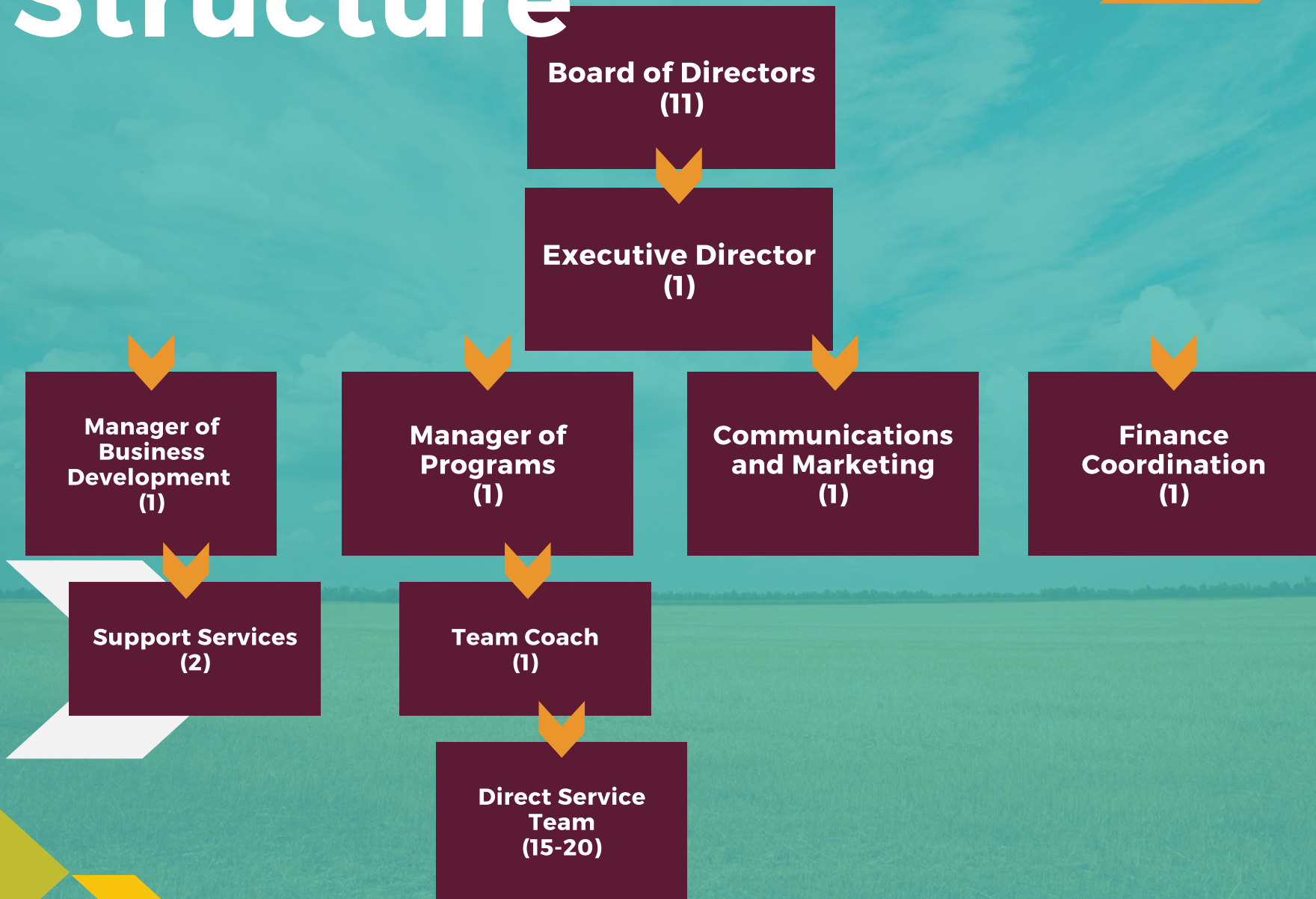




Our Services

- Emergency Shelter
- 24/7 Crisis Phone Line
- Risk Assessment
- Safety Planning
- Counselling and Group Therapy
- Holistic Healing Program
- Transition Support (system navigation, advocacy, resources)
- Child and Youth Programs
- Second Stage Housing
- Community Outreach and Education

Organizational Structure



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SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Strengths

- Alignment with vision by Leadership, Board of Directors and staff
- Strong leadership team, staff, board and volunteers
- Feminism
- Education/Learning
- Fund development and diversity
- Good fund development talent
- 30-year history with strong community support
- Alliances with women and families
- Unique, progressive, creative, disruptive programming
- Wrap around (comprehensive) care
- Grassroots

Weaknesses

- Aging building
- Capacity for growth not aligned with service model
- Communication
- Assumptions
- On-boarding new board and team
- Staff recruitment and turnover
- Clarity of process and roles
- Board recruitment and retention
- Weakened relationships with community partners
- Understanding of statistics
- WISH Training incomplete

Opportunities

- New space for WRRC
- Social Enterprise
- Partnerships
- Expand volunteer program
- Diversify Programs (e.g. Coffee Prog)
- Changing program deliveries
- Personal and corporate donations
- New ways of engaging with board
- Expand community engagement and acceptance
- Public education
- Expand staff professional development

Threats

- Government attitudes and funding
- Staff burnout and retention
- Space -physical
- External relations
- Legal action
- Poor communication (gossip, rumours)
- Patriarchy
- Personal and organizational saboteurs
- Amalgamations and urban take-over
- Negative connotations of feminism
- Lack of affordable housing (challenges SSH)



Strategic Goal

#1

By the end of 2022, WRRC will have established a Leadership program in service of our stakeholders (women, team, community). In preparation, we will increase leadership programming and grow community support by increasing our visibility through public education and activism.

Focus 1

Programming

- Create platform for women's leadership
- Create a variety of leadership training opportunities for WRRC stakeholders
- Demonstrate the impact of investment in leadership for women and girls

Focus 2

Public Education & Activism

- Offer learning opportunities in service of community
- Invite our community to join us as leaders in social change

OPERATIONS PLAN: To meet our Leadership Program strategic goal we will prioritize the following actions:

Outcome: Increase leadership capacity at WRRC and in community, increase visibility, strengthen community relationships.

Outcome: Strengthen partnerships, increase number of WRRC stakeholders participating in local social change initiatives.



Strategic Goal

#1 Continued

Focus 1

CONTINUE

- Developing internal CTI training
- Developing volunteer infrastructure
- Creating and celebrating leadership opportunities
- Developing personal growth opportunities for women
- Building women's circles
- Connecting with community holistic practitioners

PURSUE

- Developing leadership plan for organizational roles
- Developing curriculum and add leadership program to service delivery model
- Increasing inclusion and inclusive programming
- Engaging women in personal growth
- Measuring successes of programs
- Attracting folks with shared values and vision to partner

Outcome: Increase leadership capacity at WRRRC and in community, increase visibility, strengthen community relationships.

Focus 2

CONTINUE

- Intentional building and strengthening of educational partnerships
- Developing sense of trust and accountability within community
- Using social media and web platforms to bring awareness

PURSUE

- Developing public education strategy
- Growing activism in service of eliminating gender-based violence

Outcome: Strengthen partnerships, increase number of WRRRC stakeholders participating in local social change initiatives.



Strategic Goal

#2

By the end of 2022, WRRC will be positioned to embark on a capital campaign for a new facility. In preparation, we will increase programming and grow community support by increasing our visibility through consistent and meaningful relationships.

Focus 1

Programming

- Offer programming aligned with the WRRC vision and mission
- Develop holistic, healing program
- Identify gaps in programming and accessibility

Focus 2

Infrastructure

- Develop and commit to Capital Plan
- Create Fund Development strategy
- Maintain current facility
- Explore property options
- Create infrastructure for managing a robust fundraising campaign

Focus 3

Awareness & Relationship

- Restore priority partnerships
- Strategically engage new partners
- Build awareness in our community

OPERATIONS PLAN: To meet our three-year capital campaign strategic goal we will prioritize the following:





Strategic Goal

#2 Continued

Focus 1

Programming CONTINUE

- Building relationships with community
- Strengthening relationships with Indigenous community

PURSUE

- Women's Circles
- Engaging holistic practitioners
- Program evaluation

Outcome: Increase program variety, quality, engagement and generate income.

Focus 2

Infrastructure CONTINUE

- Strengthening financial management within WRRRC
- Strengthening and resourcing existing annual fund development
- Formalizing and growing an annual fund development plan

PURSUE

- Needs assessment of current facility
- Identifying capacity - research and prospecting
- Proactive planning for building maintenance
- Attracting board/volunteer leadership for fund development

Outcome: Increase operational efficiency and sustainability, and generate income.

Focus 3

Awareness & Relationship CONTINUE

- Repairing and rebuilding relationships with priority partners
- Seeking opportunities to educate
- Seeking new connections and partnerships
- Deepening our understanding of the needs of Indigenous women
- Listening

PURSUE

- Specific, targeted, intentional public education awareness campaigns
- Broadening opportunities for women to engage with WRRRC beyond service
- Working co-actively with Indigenous community
- Pursuing co-active relationship with 2SLGBTQQIA

Outcome: Increase visibility, strengthen relationships and generate income.