



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF
2025 – 2029 STRATEGIC PLAN**

Proposal Deadline: September 19 2024

Mission Statement

Second Story Women's Centre supports women and gender-diverse people, provides safer spaces and advocates for social change.

Vision Statement

Gender equity and safe, healthy relationships on the South Shore.

Project Overview

Second Story Women's Centre seeks a qualified individual(s) to facilitate the development of a four-year Strategic Plan. The successful applicant will possess experience in strategic planning and knowledge of the women and gender diverse-serving and non-profit sectors.

1. Project Description

Second Story Women's Centre is due for development of a four-year strategic plan in which we build from our current position to establish new strategic priorities for the future. Project responsibilities encompass stages from information gathering/planning to the facilitation of full-day staff-and-board meetings, through to a final written report.

The strategic plan will inform the Second Story Executive Director and Board of Directors in setting priorities for the coming years and in establishing realistic long-term budgets that support our strategic goals.

2. Project Requirements and Objectives

Audience

The Second Story Board of Directors and Staff will be part of the initial stages of developing the strategic plan. Input and feedback from stakeholders in the broader community will also be included.

Details of Project Completion

- Work with the Strategic Plan Team (Board Chair and one other Board representative, Executive Director and one other staff representative) to develop the facilitation and engagement plan for creating a new strategic plan including engaging community stakeholders and delivery of Strategic Plan meetings.

- Review relevant documents related to existing and emerging priorities for the women-serving sector on the South Shore (including but not limited to our current Strategic Plan, operational plans for the past 3 years, Service Level Agreement, reports and statistics).
- Write and present the Strategic Plan, seeking feedback from the Strategic Plan Team and revising as needed.

Submitted quotes are expected to cover all of the requirements outlined in the section above. Location bookings and catering expenses for an anticipated two days of meetings will be the responsibility of Second Story Women’s Centre.

3. Timeframe and Scheduling Considerations

Late October 2024 - board/staff/stakeholder pre-engagement and information review (completed by facilitator)

November 2024 – in-person sessions with board and staff (led by facilitator)

December 2024 – drafting Strategic Plan (facilitator role, with input from Second Story’s Strategic Plan Team)

January 2024 – sign-off of Strategic Plan for 2025 to 2029, final copy

4. Primary Deliverables

1. Creation of a scheduled plan to guide the strategic planning process
2. Stakeholder engagement notes
3. Delivery of in-person planning session(s) (with full Board and Staff participating)
2. Creation of a four-year strategic plan document, with performance indicators

Strategic Plan: Key Elements

SSWC would like our Strategic Plan to articulate our purpose clearly and provide direction to our organization. It will help us to inform programming and budget decisions. SSWC staff and volunteers will review the plan on a regular basis to guide decision making and to establish annual goals and objectives, and to help ensure that our decision-making aligns with our strategic goals.

The completed Strategic Plan should include the following sections:

Strategic Priorities

Strategic priorities identify broad categories where the organization will invest its resources to achieve its vision and fulfill its mission. Our last four-year Strategic Plan identified the following priorities: Mental Health, Trauma and Violence Support; Strengthen Advocacy; Organizational Effectiveness & Sustainability; Financial Well Being, Housing Security and Poverty Reduction.

Initiatives

Within each Strategic Priority there will be initiatives. The initiatives will provide clear direction on how the strategic priorities will be achieved. What will the organization do within each of the priority areas to ensure its long-term success? The initiatives may describe client groups we want to serve (e.g., specific age groups) or which social issues most urgently need to be addressed.

Performance Indicators

This section outlines how progress and success will be measured by the organization.

Strategic Planning Process

Second Story Women's Centre has a process for strategic planning, outlined below.

- Step 1: The past strategic plan, and organization's performance are reviewed and key learnings are noted for discussion.
- Step 2: Any discussions from the Board meetings, or documents/information from staff, are assembled and key items summarised for potential inclusion into the strategic plan.
- Step 3: A process to refine the strategic plan is put in place by the Strategic Planning Committee and Facilitator and it may include:
- An external scan of our communities to identify emerging needs;
 - A consultation with clients about key issues that impact their core experiences with the Centre;

- A consultation with staff;
- A consultation with the Board of Directors;
- A consultation with key community partners.

Step 4: Gathering Facilitator, Board members and Second Story staff together to review, discuss, and strategize ways to address existing and emerging needs, with discussions leading to the generation of a draft Strategic Plan document.

Step 5: The final draft document is reviewed by Staff and Board of Directors via the Strategic Planning Team.

Step 6: The Board and Staff will either approve the document or direct the Committee to further refine the plan. The final draft and all documents produced are owned by Second Story Women's Centre.

Current Strategic Priorities

1. Mental Health, Trauma & Violence Support
2. Strengthen Advocacy
3. Organizational Effectiveness & Sustainability
4. Financial Well-Being; Housing Security & Poverty Reduction

Performance Indicators

We believe in evidence based decision making and we are accountable to various funders for special projects. We track data related to the work we do and are committed to a feedback process that provides a balanced view of the organization. We are eager to discuss performance indicators with the successful facilitator.

Expressing Interest

Second Story Women's Centre would like to receive a 2-page-maximum letter of intent and the name of (or letter from) a relevant reference, from interested individuals who would be willing to work with us through this process. Please send this letter to Stephanie Balcome at exec@secstory.com by September 19 2024 4pm EST. Any questions or requests for clarification can be directed to Stephanie.

Appendix: About Second Story Women's Centre

Philosophy

Second Story Women's Centre is a feminist organization. It holds a foundational understanding that feminism is a movement which advocates for women's social, economic, and political equality. It is not a single ideology but rather is characterized by a diverse set of perspectives and movements dedicated to promoting gender equity. Equal access to opportunity and the right to freely choose are the foundations of our philosophy.

We believe that power imbalances exist in patriarchal systems and understand the intersectionality of the oppressions that result from them. We acknowledge that women and others may experience multiple oppressions because of gender, race, (dis)ability, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity etc. and that their experiences are connected and compounded by that intersectionality. Our approach, then, is to support those we serve in a manner that models a more equitable, just system. It implies collaboration among staff, board members, committees, volunteers, and the clients/participants who access our services and programs.

Our presentation to the community is of a tolerant and balanced approach on feminist issues.

Who We Serve

In recognizing that the concept of gender identity is fluid, our services are available to women, girls, and other gender-diverse people including, but not limited to, those who are transgender and those who identify as non-binary on the gender spectrum, in accordance with Nova Scotia and Canadian Human Rights legislation.

Inclusion of men and boys may be considered in relation to the benefits that it may have for other genders.

Second Story Women's Centre believes we all have the right to be treated with respect. We attempt to provide services and programs that are responsive to the needs of the community and are delivered in safe(r) spaces in a manner that is inclusive and promotes self-esteem, independence, individual choice, and decision-making.

Information, choices, options, and alternatives are offered in an objective manner that respects diversity and accepts differences.

Mission

Second Story Women's Centre supports women and gender-diverse people, provides safer spaces and advocates for social change.

Vision

Gender equity and safe, healthy relationships on the South Shore.

Values

The following values are the cornerstones of Second Story Women's Centre's culture and operation. Our values are the foundation of our actions and should be evident in everything we do.

We are ethical and moral.

Staff, board members, and volunteers demonstrate personal integrity when engaged in the work of the organization. We are honest and diligent and attempt at all times to act with good judgment, initiative, and efficiency. Decisions are made in the best interests of Second Story using an ethical, moral, legal, and compassionate lens. We are mindful of and take action on possible ethical dilemmas including conflict of interest and issues of confidentiality. We adhere to all signed agreements and act in good faith at all times.

We are accepting, respectful, and holistic in our response.

We recognize it is not possible to fully understand the life of another individual. We realize that not all people live the same lifestyle or make the same choices as we do, and we do not judge them for their choices. We believe that everyone has the right to be treated with respect, kindness, and empathy.

We are inclusive.

Second Story Women's Centre recognizes that social institutions and agencies, including our own, often marginalize people of diverse backgrounds, especially those marginalized because of age, race, colour, religion, creed, sexuality, gender identity, physical or mental disability, ethnic, national or Indigenous status, family status, marital status, source of income, and political belief, affiliation or activity. We respect and aim to respond to the diversity in our community by expanding and changing our processes

and programs accordingly. We recognize that to be inclusive, we must address the experiences of all those with whom we are involved, especially those who are made invisible by mainstream issues and concerns.

We are collaborative, accountable and committed to our work.

We understand that teamwork and collaboration are essential to the work of the organization. We are accountable to each other, the organization, our funders, and the communities we serve. We are involved in solving problems and making decisions, and we demonstrate joint ownership for results and for the culture of the organization. We are committed to achieving the vision and the mission of the organization, and we are clear about how our actions contribute to its success. Appreciation and validation are offered by members of the team.

We work to promote the development of partnerships with governments, agencies, educational institutions, employers, and community organizations for the benefit of those we serve.

Governance

Second Story Women’s Centre operates under a stewardship governance model based on a philosophical framework that embodies the responsible direction and care of an organization. The Board of Directors is a governance Board, feminist in its perspective. It holds a foundational understanding that feminism is a movement which advocates for social, economic, and political equality for all women.

The Board of Directors safeguards the principle that we also work towards the equality, empowerment, security, safety, and wellbeing of those who are transgender and those who identify as non-binary on the gender spectrum.

The Board of Directors acts as the organization’s steward, providing the direction, oversight, and accountability that ensures the fulfilment of our vision, mission, values, and strategic plan. Decisions are based on what is best for the organization as a whole and are made using a consensus decision-making model.

Each director is responsible to act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of the corporation and, in doing so, support SSWC in fulfilling its mission and discharging its duties.