



**Development of Strategic Plan
2021 – 2024**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

STRATEGIC PLANNING FACILITATION

Second Story Women's Centre is looking to engage with a qualified consultant to facilitate the development of a three-year Strategic Plan. The consultant must possess proven experience in strategic planning, (possible) virtual facilitation and, ideally, knowledge of the women's serving and non-profit sectors.

1. Project Description

Second Story Women's Centre is embarking on the development of a new strategic plan for the next three years. In the information that follows, our current position is outlined. It is time for the organization's strategic directions to be reviewed and updated.

2. Project requirements and project objectives

Audience

The Board of Directors and Staff will be part of the initial stages of developing the strategic plan. Feedback from stakeholders at large is also expected.

Required Features

- Work with Strategic Plan Team (Board Executive and Executive Director) to develop strategic plan facilitation and engagement plan.
- Imperative that the process work within an inter-sectoral and diverse lens.
- Outline the process to engage key informants (Board, Staff) including any pre-work expectations.
- Review relevant documents that will assist with understanding 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).
- Coordinate and facilitate the planning process in cooperation with the Strategic Plan Team. This will include the delivery of virtual and/or in person engagement sessions with key informants listed above using Zoom or another online platform.
- Write and present all versions of the Strategic Plans, seeking feedback from the Strategic Plan Team on each version.
-

3. Project budget

The total budget available for this project is \$2,000. We would also consider issuing a tax receipt for the difference if your quote is larger than \$2,000 and consider it an in-kind donation. Location and catering expenses are the responsibility of Second Story Women's Centre if in person meetings are held.

4. Timeframe

November 2020 – planning and sessions

December 2020 – drafting Strategic Plan

January 2020 – signing off of final copy

5. Primary Deliverables

1. Creation of a plan that will guide the strategic planning process
2. Creation of a 3-year strategic plan that includes performance indicators that measure progress
3. Adhere to confidentiality practices throughout the process

Introduction

The purpose of a strategic plan is to articulate a clear purpose and direction for an organization. It should be a living document that evolves with the organization and is referenced by staff and volunteers on a regular basis to help guide decision making and establish annual goals and objectives for staff. A good strategic planning process does not bind or hamper an organization but rather provides a framework in which opportunities and challenges can be examined and analyzed. Based on this process, cohesive and supportive decisions can be made that ensure the organization is doing what it should do, when it should, and in the way it should. The plan consists of several components or sections, each with a specific purpose.

Section 1: Mission Statement: Every organization has a role or job to do. A good mission statement answers 3 questions. Who are we as an organization, who do we exist to serve, and what do we do? With these answers, an organization can examine opportunities and ask itself ... is this our job. There can be multiple reasons an opportunity doesn't fit within an organization's mission. The task itself may not be what we exist to do or it may not benefit those who we exist to serve. There are times it may be worthy asking the next question, should it be our role or responsibility. It is important to realize that jobs and roles do change over time but it is unlikely that, without a significant shift in the external environment, an organization's mission would change within the scope of a single strategic plan. If an opportunity presented to the organization is not within its scope it is easy to say no, while perhaps looking within the community to see where it might best fit. If it is the job of the organization, then it is worthy to move to the next step.

Section 2: Vision Statement: What is the dramatic difference the organization is trying to make in the community or for those it exists to serve? What does success specifically look like? These are the questions a vision statement should answer. A vision statement in a not-for-profit community organization should not be self-serving. It should be bigger than the organization itself, be about the transformation we aim to create within our community and is a statement about what the organization wants to become. The vision should resonate with all involved with the organization and help them feel proud, excited, and part of something much bigger than themselves. A vision should stretch the organization's capabilities and image of itself. It gives shape and direction to the organization's future.

When faced with multiple opportunities, a vision statement provides an ultimate purpose that each opportunity must serve. Each opportunity or action can be measured against the vision to help determine priorities. Does this opportunity help us create the changes in our community we want to make? Which opportunities are most likely to have the largest impact? Which ones are most likely to succeed? Who should we look to partner with and who doesn't fit with where we wish to go? Which ones, while good ideas do not really serve our mission.

Section 3: Values: Every organization is built upon a set of values that guide its decision making, processes and actions. Even if they are not articulated they exist and form the foundation of the organization's culture. They are traits or qualities that are considered worthwhile; they represent the highest priorities and deeply held driving forces of the organization. Second Story Women's Centre understands the importance of having a strong and positive culture. We have articulated a set of values and ensure that they are in

the forefront of all our activities and actions, both internally and externally. Our values help define how people will behave with each other, both inside and outside the organization. They are statements about how the organization will value clients, partners, supporters, and the community. Value statements describe actions that are the living enactment of the fundamental values held by most individuals within the organization. Our values should be referenced in meetings and be one of the key components when developing programs, policies and practices. Staff, clients, partners and community members should know them, not from this document or a sign, but as they are self-evident in everything we do.

Section 4: Strategic Priorities: Every organization should have a strategy on how it intends to approach its work. These priorities are where the organization will invest its resources to achieve its vision and fulfil its mission. Work plans and budgets will be evaluated and approved based on their alignment with these priorities and the impact those initiatives will have on their achievement. These priorities will be reviewed on a yearly basis and may be changed occasionally throughout the lifecycle of the planning document, mainly through the yearly operational planning, reporting and review process.

Section 5: Goals, Objectives and Tactics: This section provides clear direction on how the priorities will be achieved. What will the organization do within each of the priority areas to ensure its long-term success? Many of these items will be short term and will change multiple times within the scope of the strategic plan's lifecycle, primarily articulated through the monthly and yearly business reporting and planning process.

Section 6: 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. The Board of Directors has a standing committee to monitor this process.

- Step 1: The Board of Directors directs a Strategic Planning process to be undertaken by the organization.
- Step 2: The past strategic plan, and organization's performance are reviewed and key learnings are noted for discussion.
- Step 3: 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 4: A process to refine the strategic plan is put in place by the Strategic Planning Committee and Consultant and it will include, at a minimum:
- An external scan of our community;
 - A consultation with clients about key issues that impact their core experiences with the Centre;
 - A consultation with staff around the various elements of the plan;
 - A consultation with the Board of Directors;
 - A consultation with key community partners.
- Step 5: The final draft document is reviewed by Staff and Board of Directors.
- Step 6: The Board of Directors will review the final draft and 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.

Preamble

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.

Second Story Women's Centre promotes and advocates for reproductive justice. We support a woman's right to control her own fertility and pregnancy choices. We recognize that reproductive justice is more than access to abortion services – it includes the opportunity for women to freely choose, i.e. without barriers, if and when to have children, the ability to have a healthy pregnancy, safe and healthy family relationships, access to accurate sexual health education, access to safe and legal abortions, support and resources for continuing pregnancies, contraceptive and fertility treatment, and legal protection from forced abortion.

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 systems. 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-oppressed 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.

The Mission, Vision and Values were recently adopted. We would like to review, and only change if completely necessary.

Mission

Second Story Women's Centre supports women and gender-oppressed people within 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 Aboriginal 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.

Commitment to Good Governance

Second Story Women’s Centre is a diverse group of community volunteers and staff who exist to operate on behalf of Lunenburg and Queens Counties. The Board of Directors embraces its leadership role in the community and is committed to excellence in organizational 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. It 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.

The Board of Directors holds the added responsibility of caring for the organization in a manner which reflects its values. The Executive Director shares in the stewardship model in their role as a “leader among leaders.” Staff are stewards within the scope of their individual roles, taking the responsibility for effectively implementing the responsibilities defined within their job descriptions. They support the values and strategic plan and work collaboratively as a stewardship team. Staff, volunteers, and members of Second Story Women’s Centre support the vision and mission of the organization.

Current Strategic Priorities

1. Poverty reduction
2. Services for women and other gender oppressed people who experience violence
3. engage diverse populations in our work
4. enhance organizational effectiveness
5. strengthen advocacy, awareness and events

Performance Indicators

Second Story Women's Centre believes in evidence based decision making and makes decisions based on sound data. We are committed to a feedback process that provides a balanced view of the entire organization. Second Story Women's Centre uses the following measures to monitor performance.

The Service Level Agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia needs to be considered for the Indicators.

Expressing Interest

Second Story Women's Centre would like to receive a 2-page maximum letter of intent and the names (or letters) of two relevant references from interested individuals who would be willing to work with us through this process. Please send this letter to Rhonda Lemire at Exec@SecondStory.ca by October 27, 2020 4pm EST. Any questions or clarification, please contact Rhonda.