

**Women In Safe Homes Strategic Plan
2016-2019
Approved by WISH Board September 28, 2016**

Vision: Together we can end domestic violence and sexual assault in Alaska

Mission: Our primary mission is to provide a safe place, advocacy and education for people impacted by domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault and abuse, and to assist and empower them as they explore their options in Southern SE Alaska. We also promote the elimination of violence through primary prevention and education programs, and engaging community members throughout Southern SE Alaska.

Values:

- Safety
- Dignity & Respect
- Recognition, Honor and Affirmation for All Cultures
- Strength & Healing
- Honesty, Integrity and Transparency
- Compassion

Background

WISH is one of 20 domestic violence and sexual assault victim service programs funded by the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA). WISH was incorporated as a 501(c)3 organization in 1978 to provide women and child victims of intra-family violence with emergency and ongoing assistance in a benign and supportive atmosphere. It currently provides shelter, advocacy, prevention and educational services, primarily to the Ketchikan Gateway Borough region, with support to Metlakatla and Prince of Wales Island.

CDVSA is a state agency that is statutorily mandated to coordinate services for Alaskans affected by domestic violence and sexual assault. They do this through a variety of methods including funding programs for victims and perpetrators. They establish standards by which program will operate through regulations and grant award conditions. Based on best practice, CDVSA follows the guiding principles of trauma-informed care for this work. These principles are¹:

- Safety for staff and people throughout the organization.
- Trustworthiness and transparency with the goal of building and maintaining trust among participants, staff, and the community at large.
- Peer support and mutual self-help are understood to be a key vehicle for building trust, establishing safety and empowering participants and staff.
- Collaboration and mutuality are essential to leveling the power and control issues that are a part of these relationships. A trauma-informed organization recognized that everyone has a role to play, knowledge to contribute, and healing to occur.
- Empowerment, voice and choice are built throughout the organization, recognizing that individuals' strengths are built upon and validated as new skills are developed. This includes a belief on one's inherent resilience, and in the ability of individuals, organizations, and communities to heal and promote recovery from trauma.

¹ http://www.samhsa.gov/samhsaNewsLetter/Volume_22_Number_2/trauma_tip/guiding_principles.html

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- Cultural, historical and gender issues are recognized and addressed in order to move past stereotypes and biases. This leverages the healing value of traditional cultural connections, and recognizes and addresses historical trauma.

Issues related to WISH's operations were brought to light in the summer of 2015 when CDVSA received a variety of concerned phone calls from former and current WISH staff, participants and community members. Issues that were consistently raised throughout these calls were shelter practices and philosophies no longer aligned with safe shelter standards and trauma-informed care. CDVSA conducted an onsite in late July 2015, and found WISH to be out of compliance with a significant portion of Alaska's Administrative Code relating to program participant policies, procedures and records, and personnel policies and procedures. CDVSA placed WISH on a probationary status at their public meeting on September 9, 2015, with instructions to WISH to address 9 specific areas of concern. WISH made minimal progress on addressing these concerns, and the probationary status came to the public's attention in January 2016. Since that time, WISH has been inundated with negative public relations media coverage. The majority of Board members resigned between February and July, with the Executive Director tendering her resignation effective the beginning of July. An interim director was hired effective the first part of August, and is dedicating her time to meeting the remaining probation conditions.

The Board recognized the need to develop a thorough assessment of organizational needs to better inform the selection of a new administrator. WISH issued a contract for assistance in conducting the assessment and development of a strategic plan to serve as the basis of the leadership transition process. This process is intended to serve as a way to move the organization out of the current crisis, as well as provide a vision of the future that realistically addresses the underlying root causes that have brought WISH to this point.

Assessment Scope and Methodologies.

A transition team consisting of WISH Board members and volunteers assisted in the development of the assessment. The assessment design incorporated 4 areas of data collection.

- Compilation of existing demographic, victimization and service utilization data.
- Input from the organization's members
- Input from the organization's community partners
- Input from the organization's staff

Three online surveys were developed to capture people's perception of WISH's effectiveness, services, and structure. The surveys targeted organizational members, community partners, and the staff. In addition to the online survey, the contractor conducted interviews with key contacts, as well as offered 3 staff group discussions. People completing the membership or community partner surveys were given the option of requesting follow-up with the contractor. All told, 25 people participated in the interviews and group discussions including community partners, members, current and past staff, and current and past Board members. All responses and analysis of the data has been conducted to ensure the confidentiality of the responders.

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A report of the findings was presented to the Board. This strategic plan is in response to the assessment results

SWOT

- Internal
 - Strengths:
 - Community recognition of strong prevention and family services programs
 - Recommitment to Trauma Informed Care
 - Recognized progress toward addressing CDVSA probationary period
 - Committed staff and new Board
 - Statewide support for WISH succeeding
 - Interim Executive Director
 - Commitment to a thoughtful and intentional transition effort
 - Weaknesses
 - Significant decrease (68-70%) in number of participants accessing services between 2014 to 2016
 - New/untrained staff
 - Predominantly new Board
 - Low staffing, length of time for transitioning, no permanent ED
 - Lack of a cohesive, empowered staff
 - Shelter safety concerns
 - Lack of rural outreach program
- External
 - Opportunities
 - Long-standing recognition of need for services and support for WISH returning to core values
 - Community partners looking to WISH for leadership on domestic violence and sexual assault
 - Ability to use the existing crisis to correct and redirect the organization
 - Requests to re-establish networking and interagency partnerships
 - Community partners and local governments are beginning to look at how to collectively address chronic issues of alcoholism, substance abuse, homelessness and mental health issues
 - Threats
 - Public nature of the conflict
 - CDVSA probationary status
 - Severed/damaged community partner relationships
 - Disenfranchised former participants and staff
 - Loss of Patty Bland, a statewide trainer and mentor

Strategic Plan

Strategic Goal: WISH will ensure optimal safety and advocacy opportunities for people impacted by domestic and sexual violence.

1. **Re—establish trauma-informed practices through services provision**

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- a. Solicit mentoring and networking opportunities with other programs across Alaska
- b. Update/revise participant policies, procedures and protocols, including:
 - i. Intake and screening
 - ii. Maintaining shelter safety
 - iii. Referral
 - iv. Confidentiality
- c. Expand the children and youth program components (# of children served, # of youth)
- d. Identify and develop non-shelter service component
- e. Develop support program for participants who transition from shelter to independent living

Evaluation	Data source/frequency
Process:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of policies procedures and protocols revised/developed • Increased number of participants and services provided to shelter, children and youth, non-shelter and transitioned participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative and program records, reported monthly in Executive Director report to the Board
Outcomes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding and confidence of trauma-informed care by staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey of staff position understanding, conducted semi-annually, results reported to the Board • Annual staff evaluations/Number of evaluations completed reported monthly in Executive Director report to the Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of safety options and available resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant confidential survey to CDVSA, reported quarterly to the Board in Executive Director report to the Board • Participant exit survey, compiled and reported quarterly to staff and the Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased number of client grievances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative records, reported monthly in the Executive Director report to the Board

2. Develop and sustain competent staff, volunteers, and Board

- a. Develop and implement a needs-based transition plan
- b. Paid staff
 - i. Assess and revise organizational structure and position descriptions including identification of minimum qualifications, skills, and experience

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- ii. Establish and implement an orientation and training program with annually updated individual training plans
- c. Board
 - i. Establish and implement a comprehensive plan to address timely orientation and ongoing training for the Board of Directors (Board calendar
 - ii. Establish and implement an ongoing agency monitoring and evaluation plan
 - iii. Revise and align Board policies and procedures and bylaws
- d. Volunteers
 - i. Assess potential volunteer opportunities
 - ii. Revise standard position descriptions, qualifications, orientation and training standards, and the volunteer handbook

Evaluation	Data source/frequency
Process:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition plan progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative records and weekly meeting notes, monthly Executive Director reports to the Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of revised organizational structure and revised position descriptions • Number of orientations and trainings • Number of completed training plans. • Implementation of monthly monitoring and evaluation. • Initiation of volunteer program/number of volunteers/number of hours donated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative records, monthly Executive Director reports to the Board
Outcomes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of organizational needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative and Board records, annual report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director hired • Successful ED evaluation 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of TIC • Better understanding of position specific functions 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased rating of Board functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board evaluation, conducted annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent, stable workforce – turnover rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative records, monthly Executive Director reports to the Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of CDVSA probation status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDVSA Meeting Minutes

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding source evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDVSA on-site evaluation, conducted annually (or less, eventually) • OCS feedback/intermittent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful audit and 990 filings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual audit report, form 990

3. Strengthen administrative systems

- a. Revise and align administrative, personnel and financial policies and procedures
- b. Revise and implement recordkeeping systems
- c. Incorporate transparency
 - i. Train Board and staff on differentiating confidential versus public information
 - ii. Maintain an ongoing communication plan

Evaluation	Data source/frequency
Process:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and procedure revision completions • Trainings completed • Development of communication plan • Number of communication activities completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative and program records, reported monthly in Executive Director report to the Board
Outcomes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of role responsibilities and policies and procedures • Increased understanding of where to find things. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff evaluations, conducted annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding/differentiating of what can be and needs to be shared with the public and membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board and staff evaluations, conducted annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of WISH services and functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partner and membership survey, annual organizational evaluation report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased administrative efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely report filing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased community and membership support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-kind and financial donations, monthly financial reports

4. Strengthen community partnerships and support through collegiality and mutual respect

- a. Assume leadership roles with DV/SA work groups and task forces

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- b. Reinstitute and expand joint agency, in-shelter services trainings, and presentations
- c. Develop and implement a plan for continual, consistent communications

Evaluation	Data source/frequency
Process:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of workgroup task forces and meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative and program records, reported monthly in Executive Director report to the Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of co-lead/joint service provision, trainings and services • Development of communication plan 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of communication releases (web, email, newsletters, press releases, media coverage) 	
Outcomes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of WISH services and functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partner and membership survey, annual organizational evaluation report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant confidential survey to CDVSA, reported quarterly to the Board in Executive Director report to the Board • Participant exit survey/Compiled and reported to staff and the Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of partnerships • Increased number of interagency agreements • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative and program records, reported monthly in Executive Director report to the Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of referrals to WISH... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partner survey, annual organizational evaluation report

5. Develop and sustain necessary resources

- a. Strengthen engagement with WISH membership
 - i. Increase communications to membership
- b. Continue to advance the new shelter development
 - i. Re-engage with Forakers
- c. Identify and implement annual fundraising plan

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Process	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of membership specific communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative records, reported monthly in Executive Director report to the Board
Outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced transparency and trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partner and membership ratings, annual organizational evaluation report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased membership roll 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative and program records, reported monthly in Executive Director report to the Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital campaign plan ready for launch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital campaign records, semi-annually to the Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased financial support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative program records, reported monthly in Executive Director report to the Board