

to: YWCA Stakeholders and Interested Community Members

from: Kathy Kniep, Executive Director

re: YWCA Strategic Plan 2007-08 and Beyond

date: June 28, 2007

Thank you for your interest in YWCA Clark County's strategic plan. We appreciate that many of you participated in the process of developing this plan, and we welcome your feedback. The purpose of this memo is to provide some brief background and contextual information.

About the Plan's Purpose, Format, and Ongoing Development

This plan guides YWCA Clark County's strategic direction for the future. The plan itself is succinct and in grid form, with the intention of making it easy to read, track, and evaluate. It is not intended to be a detailed work plan, though we attempted to include enough specifics to give meaning to the stated goals and clearly direct our work for the upcoming year and beyond. We consider it to be a "living document" that we revisit at our annual board-staff retreats and update as needed. We evaluate our progress in meeting our "indicators of accomplishment" and goals at least every six months.

The original plan was developed in the spring of 2006 using input from program participants, volunteers, partner organizations and agencies, financial supporters, staff, and board members, as well as statistics and reports on Clark County. The general direction was set forth at the February 2006 Board-Staff Retreat, and the Strategic Planning Committee subsequently worked with the board and staff to draft and hone this document, which was formally approved by the board at its June 2006 meeting. An updated version was approved at the June 2007 meeting.

Context for Strategic Goals

Our current goals focus our work on shoring up our organization's foundation. In many cases, we have already begun to meet some of our "indicators of success."

Goal 1: Maintain current programs, which offer crisis intervention services that focus on empowering women, children, and youth.

We have a long history of providing programs that offer life-saving and life-changing services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse, as well as unique leadership and development opportunities for women and girls. All of our programs are built on a foundational philosophy of empowerment, and our staff is trained to employ methodologies that help people, especially women, help themselves. We will continue our current social services, which help more than 10,000 people each year, and regularly evaluate how they can best meet the changing needs in our communities.

Current Programs: *Please visit our website for more information – www.ywcaclarkcounty.org.*

- ◆ CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates)
- ◆ Independent Living Skills (For Foster Youth)
- ◆ SafeChoice Domestic Violence Program
- ◆ Sexual Assault Program
- ◆ WORTH (Women Offenders' Rehabilitation through Training and Help)
- ◆ Y's Care Children's Program

Goal 2: Work toward greater financial sustainability for the YWCA.

As with most nonprofits, we expect financial stability to be an ongoing challenge, particularly as the number of nonprofits continues to grow, grant applications become increasingly competitive, and the need for our services persists. We had planned to create a campus plan this past year, to determine how we might utilize a small piece of undeveloped land on our property, but we realized that we must first agree on a longer-term vision for our organization before we know how to make the best use of this asset. As such, and because some of our programs are growing, we are focusing on developing a ten-year vision for the YWCA Clark County.

Goal 3: Establish a staff compensation package that reflects YWCA values and positions the organization as an “employer of choice.”

As is the case with many other nonprofit organizations, we struggle with the challenge of wanting to serve as many people as we can with limited resources. At the same time, we aim to attract and retain a highly qualified workforce and to compensate employees in a way that models our own values of equity and empowerment. We spent considerable time on this goal over the past year, and in December 2006, the board approved a three-year plan for increasing staff salaries. Ultimately, we want to emerge as a local “employer of choice,” an organization known for both the quality of its services *and* for being a great place to work.

Goal 4: Increase activities that work toward the elimination of racism and other forms of oppression.

When you walk in our doors, you see our national motto, “Eliminating Racism / Empowering Women” – in that order. Though many may think of the YWCA as a “women’s organization” or just a social services organization, our mission is in fact much broader. We are proud of the work we are currently doing to eliminate racism and other forms of oppression, but we are challenged by our national office and our own local mission to do more. We gladly accept this challenge and have already made significant strides toward achieving this goal, including holding regular “Eliminating Racism” workshops. Over this next year, we will raise funds to hire a Social Change Director who will lead us in these activities.

Goal 5: Increase prevention work to decrease the number of people who need YWCA services.

Though our programs focus on serving people in crisis, we also house the expertise to do more in the way of prevention work. Staff and volunteers in each of our programs currently do what they can to prevent the problems that bring people through our doors, but we know we can and must expand these efforts. Our Sexual Assault Program is already doing more to achieve this goal, and the Social Change Director (referenced in Goal #4) will help us to increase our organization’s prevention activities as well.

Goal 6: Reconstitute and re-energize the Public Policy Committee to lead the YWCA in effectively advocating for positive change.

Our organization – nationally and locally – has a rich history of advocating for racial justice, civil rights, and support for those in need. Over the past year, this committee developed a set of policies and procedures for operation, as well as a prioritized list of issues to focus on (early childhood education, hate crimes and incidents, mental health services, and women’s economic advancement). Through the leadership of this committee, we will educate ourselves and our community about issues important to our mission and take action to effect positive change.

Goal 7: Make strategic planning an ongoing part of our work.

We’ve included this in our plan to remind ourselves of the importance of keeping the momentum going with strategic planning. We are resolved that this plan will not become a document that collects dust on a shelf, but rather a tool that helps us to continually plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and begin again. (See the diagram on our website that maps out this ongoing process.)

Future Goals

We have a list of potential goals to add to the list for future years. Though we have many projects we would like to take on, we believe it’s important to set out a plan that is feasible and attainable, and to maintain focus on our organization’s top priorities. We invite you to share your ideas with us.

Comments and Questions

Please contact me if you have comments or questions.

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On behalf of the board and staff of YWCA Clark County, thank you for your partnership.
Together, we are empowering women, preventing violence, eliminating oppression,
and helping to change lives for the better every day.