



# STRATEGIC PLAN



**January 2018 - December 2020**





## Table of Contents

- 4:** Mission, Vision, Values
- 5:** Executive Summary
- 6:** Recent Background
- 7:** Methodology
- 8:** SWOT Analysis
- 10:** Strategic Goals
- 14:** Implementation & Evaluation
- 15:** Conclusion

“I really like these activities we do.  
Thank you... You guys saved my life.”

— Windows Participant, Age 8



## Mission

To empower individuals and communities impacted by violence and trauma through a transformative healing arts program.

## Vision

A Window Between Worlds views art as a catalyst to release trauma, build resilience and ignite social change. When individuals create art in a safe community they can be heard and respected, replacing violence and shame with safety, hope and healing.

## Values

### Safety

We intentionally create a respectful space free from judgement and harm.

### Creativity

We believe in the right to artistic expression and the freedom to innovate.

### Inclusion

We honor the diversity and complexity of identities, perspectives, circumstances and experiences.

### Collaboration

We recognize that working collectively deepens our knowledge and fosters community change.

### Empowerment

We build a framework supportive of claiming voice, strength and resiliency.

## Executive Summary

In 2016, A Window Between Worlds (AWBW) celebrated 25 years of creativity and healing. This momentous time in AWWB's history marked a period of significant growth and change. The organization continued its work to build a strong foundation for another 25 years of expanded impact using the creative process of art to transform trauma across a variety of service fields related to AWWB's historic core of domestic violence.

From 2018 through 2020, AWWB will further engage its partner agencies, board, staff and key stakeholders both to establish systems that more effectively support the organization and to implement its strategic goals across the areas of program, fundraising, finance, administration, human resources, marketing, volunteers, and board development.

During this period of time, AWWB will focus on the following goals:

- Evolve to make our program, as well as our workplace, more trauma-informed. Develop the technology and partnership opportunities needed to realize a stronger Community of Practice\* by 2020.
- Diversify our fund development efforts and increase yields across foundation and corporate giving, individual contributions and events. These efforts will focus on stabilizing fluctuating revenue streams over time to create true sustainability.
- Strengthen cross-departmental communication tools and encourage greater collaboration to better utilize the talents and energy of all associated with facilitating growth and addressing emerging challenges. We seek balance of quality, effectiveness, efficiency and collaboration to ensure staff and board well-being.
- Increase diversity, inclusion and equity efforts across the organization. This approach will be integrated into our organizational culture and our Community of Practice, as well as in our hiring and board development processes. Seeking to better understand and represent the communities we now support is a crucial part of our trauma-informed philosophy and our growth as an organization.

\*Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn through consistent collaboration how to do it better. For more details about this within the context of AWWB see page 7.



# Recent Background

For the first 23 years, AWBW focused primarily on supporting domestic violence survivors and their children in shelters, transitional homes and outreach centers. A survey of our Program Partner Agencies in 2014 showed that 35% were using the AWBW workshops to treat multiple types of trauma along with domestic violence. AWBW had also been receiving inquiries from human service agencies working with individuals and populations beyond domestic violence — sexual assault agencies, schools and universities, services for veterans and their families, prisons, mental health and substance abuse treatment centers, marginalized communities, and others — who were eager to learn how to utilize our program with their clients.

In response, in 2014 AWBW launched a two-year Strategic Repositioning Initiative (SRI) to address the call to adapt our program design and curricula to additional service fields. This resulted in piloting partnerships and attracting new funder interest.

During this time, AWBW further embraced the trauma-informed model, which understands and honors each survivor as the expert in their own experience and supports healing in a client-directed atmosphere of safety and creativity. Through this learning, we have more richly incorporated these principles as central to our program and service delivery model.

In many ways the extension of our service populations and model was a natural progression of AWBW's work. In other ways it was an ambitious endeavor, and the magnitude of the work and the complexity of addressing trauma in new service fields was underestimated in the SRI process. There

were also challenges related to our rapid growth as we transitioned from a small to a medium-sized organization. Systems and processes that worked well in the past were now inefficient and caused strain on staff.

AWBW management, staff, and the Board of Directors have been systematically addressing these multiple challenges since early 2016. Succession planning became a particularly strong area of focus to help clarify roles, divide responsibilities, build organizational strength and ensure long-term sustainability. Audrey Salzburg was promoted to the newly created position of Chief Executive Officer with Cathy Salser remaining as Executive Director and Founder.

AWBW is conceptualizing its work as a dedicated Community of Practice, building upon our founding model and history of supporting the grassroots innovations of our network of Program Partner Agencies. Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn through consistent collaboration how to do it better. As we grow we recognize the need to build new systems and strengthen the linkages of our network of program partners — to each other and to AWBW. Together, AWBW and its network of partners assist in the evolution of the curriculum and service model, and its application to additional populations related to domestic violence. By sharing innovations and best approaches to addressing trauma through the art process, we are able to maximize the talents and experience of all, deepening and expanding our collective expertise.

## Methodology

This strategic planning process included:

- Document review (e.g., consulting work with Leap & Associates and The Oertel Group)
- Analysis of department and staff roles and responsibilities
- Planning sessions, including two staff retreats and one board planning session
- Participation in organizational SWOT analysis
- Development of extensive operating plans to implement strategic goals for seven key organization functions

This process was significant and included engagement of staff, board and stakeholders across all functions over a two-year period.



# SWOT Analysis

As part of the strategic planning process AWBW staff and board performed a SWOT (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats) analysis. Below are highlights from our findings.

## STRENGTHS

### UNDERLYING MODEL

The core model of collaborative innovation to use art to transform trauma as created by Cathy Salser more than 25 years ago is strong. Trained Windows Program Facilitators and Program Partner Agencies can see the impact on workshop participants and are empowered to develop and share adaptations that meet the unique needs of their communities.

### NETWORK OF PROGRAM PARTNER AGENCIES

AWBW has an extensive network of facilitators within California and across the country, as well as across a variety of settings. In 2016, there were 241 Program Partner Agencies, 1,284 Windows Program Facilitators, with 32,394 participants reached.

### CALIBER OF STAFF

Staff members have significant skills and a high level of passion for, and dedication to, the organization's work. Staff members and the organization as a whole value excellence, and there is a high level of creativity and innovation.

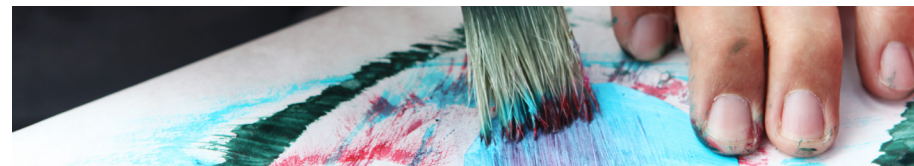
## OPPORTUNITIES

### INTEREST IN AWBW'S PROGRAM

The AWBW art program is an effective means to address trauma. As knowledge about the effects of trauma increases, the demand for AWBW's program from prospective Program Partner Agencies (currently through word of mouth alone) is growing.

### PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT

AWBW's increased focus on program partner engagement and collaboration as a Community of Practice will result in increased direct involvement of facilitators in advancing the work (e.g., curriculum development, lending expertise at trainings, applying the curricula to populations beyond our historic core). This also creates a shared energy and common purpose amongst AWBW program staff and facilitators that utilizes people's talents, experiences and interests in ways that are mutually beneficial.



## WEAKNESSES

### DIVERSITY

Staff and board members are not significantly representative of the constituencies served by AWBW and/or of the Southern California community, limiting the array of voices influencing AWBW's work and impacting how the organization is viewed by external stakeholders.

### TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS

Our current database, as well as our website, are not functioning at a high enough level to accommodate our program and fund development needs.

### STAFFING LEVEL

AWBW continues to be understaffed in relation to workload and several positions will need to be added in future years.

### FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

While AWBW has built healthy reserves, with its current growth it has become necessary to examine both the true cost of doing business and the expansion of revenue streams in order to develop a more sustainable financial model.

## THREATS

### EFFICIENCY AND WELL-BEING VS. QUALITY AND INNOVATION

The organization's cultural emphasis on high quality and rapid growth and innovation has sometimes come at the expense of efficiency and well-being in an atmosphere with limited systems and lean staffing. AWBW is working to find the "sweet spot" between quality, effectiveness, well-being and efficiency.

### LIMITATIONS IN FUNDING SOURCES

There are a finite number of foundations serving Southern California whose focus aligns with AWBW's mission. There is also concern we may be exhausting our individual donor base and need to identify new prospects in the pipeline. Corporate partner engagement has also been challenging given that the nature of our work and privacy concerns limit the number and type of engagement opportunities we can offer to large groups of volunteers.

# Strategic Goals

The following four interrelated strategic goals build AWBW's organizational capacity to realize our mission. The board and staff of AWBW look forward to working closely together to implement these goals.

## GOAL 1

Refine and develop AWBW's model to establish a stronger Community of Practice by 2020.

- Evolve the model and its application in service fields related to domestic violence and sexual assault through dialogue, engagement and shared work amongst AWBW and its Program Partner Agencies. Identify thought partners to further illuminate the underlying issues inherent in these service fields and develop specific strategies for research, adaptation, innovation and evaluation.
- Create a formal structure for our Community of Practice, to ensure strong understanding, shared learning and participation.
- Strengthen and expand our personal and professional support for our facilitators, the majority of whom are survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Develop a clearer understanding of how this approach impacts our service provision.
- Complete improvements to the program portion of AWBW's website and implement new case management system to strengthen feedback loops and provide access to new and improved resources around curriculum, reporting, evaluation and support.
- Update our online curriculum, with input from program partners, to more fully incorporate a trauma-informed framework, gender inclusivity, and cultural responsiveness. Using the expertise of Windows Program Facilitators, we will integrate relevant innovations to specific curricula for working with service fields related to domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Strengthen strategies for evaluating AWBW's service delivery model, including updating the current evaluation tools.
- Engage in key discussions with professionals and system work groups in the field of trauma-informed care to gain and share knowledge with our Community of Practice, building AWBW's role in providing services to survivors.



## GOAL 2

Strengthen AWBW's financial systems and fund development strategies to achieve long-term sustainability.

- Update income, expense and reserve strategies with the aim of a balanced budget by 2019 and a surplus budget by 2020.
- Implement new financial monitoring and reporting systems to help us make more timely and informed decisions.
- Evaluate our financial model and the true cost of doing business. Adjust program service fees and scholarship model as needed. Update our donation support levels accordingly.
- Focus on building diverse revenue streams across foundation, corporate, events and individual gifts to meet the growing demand for AWBW's arts program:
  - Foundation: Grow our foundation support through research, recommendations and approaches to new funding sources; streamline the grants process, build multi-year support and increase teamwork on cultivation and grant submission.
  - Corporate: Grow our corporate support through strategic identification and engagement of prospective corporate partners, retention of existing partners, and build upon matching grant opportunities.
  - Events: Build our supporter base through events that target diverse audiences and move donors from awareness, to event attendance, to giving at an event, to annual giving.
  - Individual: Increase individual support by stewarding and offering engagement opportunities to donors at all levels from volunteers to major donors.



# Strategic Goals (cont.)

## GOAL 3

Create a more efficient and effective work environment to enhance staff morale and organizational well-being.

- Develop a unified organizational structure and culture that allows us to navigate change with intention and purpose.
- Invest in professional development opportunities for board and staff, facilitating cross-training on information gained.
- Implement new databases to more effectively track work, share vital information, connect with program partners and donors and encourage efficient collaboration.
- Assess needs and produce a realistic timeline for hiring of future staff positions.
- Explore opportunities for volunteers to both engage in meaningful ways with AWBW's mission and help build the capacity of the organization.
- Establish a timeline and work plan, and identify necessary support to make a transition to a new office space possible in the future.

“The workshop was a very inspiring and motivating experience. It has reminded me the importance of self care in order to continue to help others in their healing.”

— **Windows Participant/Facilitator**

## GOAL 4

Implement organization-wide practices to improve diversity, equity, inclusion and cultural responsiveness. Work towards creating a staff, board, and supporter base that better reflects the communities we support.

- Promote diversity, equity, inclusion and culturally responsive best practices amongst staff and board.
- Incorporate trauma-informed care principles into the workplace as appropriate.
- Support our staff and Windows Program Facilitators with access to resources for better understanding about intersectionality and its impact on individuals' experiences of trauma.
- Participate in appropriate coalitions and professional events to connect with more diverse supporters and board candidates.
- Evaluate human resources practices and implement methods to attract, hire and retain a more diverse staff and board.
- Revitalize our Advisory Board to incorporate a diversity of perspectives, providing guidance in all areas of AWBW's work.



# Implementation & Evaluation

This plan will be implemented by the board and staff of A Window Between Worlds from January 2018 through December 2020. AWBW's Chief Executive Officer will work closely with the Founder/Executive Director and Chief Program Officer to oversee its implementation. All goals have been outlined internally to ensure that anticipated outcomes are clear and success can be measured.

AWBW staff will hold small group meetings to examine challenging areas and those that cross multiple departments. Staff as a whole will check in regularly regarding recent accomplishments and key upcoming work. The Board of Directors will receive progress reports towards strategic goals on a regular basis to evaluate and amend this plan as needed.



“The participant understood how her work in DV, sobriety and therapy all contribute to being a better mother, wife and woman. I’m really seeing the pieces coming together for this participant.”

— Windows Facilitator

# Conclusion

According to the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, up to 70% of people will be impacted by trauma in their lifetime, and up to 43% experience trauma by the age of 18. Trauma is one of the biggest threats to the brain and well-being of children and adults, as well as the health and safety of the greater community.

As more is learned about trauma and its long-term health impacts, the need for trauma-informed programs to promote healing in a safe environment is increasingly recognized. As a result, AWBW's accessible and transformative healing arts program is even more sought after. Since our founding over 25 years ago, we have continued to see extensive growth and demand for our program.

This three-year Strategic Plan outlines the goals that will help us build the systems, knowledge, and diversity across our program, fund development, workplace, staff and board to take the organization to greater levels of community impact. Our vision for AWBW's future is one in which we have built a strong foundation with all the resources necessary to effectively collaborate with human service agencies seeking to implement our unique art program into their continuum of care; a future in which trauma survivors and communities have the opportunity to use the creative process to connect with each other, build resilience, heal and foster lasting and meaningful change.







---

710 4th Ave, #5, Venice, CA 90291 • 310.396.0317 • [awbw.org](http://awbw.org) • [@awbworg](https://twitter.com/awbworg)

AWBW is a 501(c)3 organization. Tax ID: 95-4448606