



Strategic Plan 2020 - 2023

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Who We Are

South Okanagan Women in Need Society (SOWINS) is a grass roots organization that began in 1980 with a few local women deciding that there needed to be a safe place in Penticton for women to go to when hurt by their male partners. Meetings were held in basements of women's homes. On March 5, 1981 the South Okanagan Women In Need Society was incorporated as a non-profit society.

A summer student conducted a needs assessment in 1982. However, with no funding available, the society set up a Safe Home system where private homes were operated by volunteers in Penticton, Naramata and Summerland. Women and children would be picked up by volunteers and taken to the safe homes. The Jaycette's donations reimbursed safe home families/operators for food etc.

In April 1985 SOWINS hired a part-time coordinator and operated a 24-hour crisis line, donated from the Jaycettes. By November 1985 the society negotiated its first contract with Ministry of Human Resources for \$2,000 per month so an office and the crisis line operated out of 304 Martin Street. In 1986 another part-time person was hired and the agency was moved to a rental house which became SOWINS's first Transition House, albeit without proper funding. Ministry of Social Services and Housing expanded its contract to approximately \$95,000 a year in 1987. A full time staff and executive director was hired and a duplex at 2494-2496 Cornwall Drive was purchased in August for \$115,000.

In 1993 the Children Who Witnessed Abuse program was added, then an Outreach program in 1994. A van, SOWINS' first vehicle, was purchased in 1995 to provide transportation for women and children. In 1997 SOWINS became union certified with Health Sciences Association. In 1999 Board of Directors reviewed the mandate, policies and procedures to accommodate emerging needs as women fleeing abuse were also experiencing mental health and substance abuse issues.

SOWINS purchased a building downtown and opened WINGS Boutique in July 2000 with a bequest from a long time donor. WINGS was a thrift store providing revenue along with clothing for women and children accessing programming. In 2008 SOWINS annual contracts were approximately \$500,000. WINGS closed its doors in 2014 when it was no longer making a profit and the building was sold. In 2014 SOWINS was renting office space on the third floor on Martin Street. In 2015 plans were made to find a Transition House that would accommodate women of different abilities. In 2016 SOWINS purchased a 7,900 square foot building that was wheelchair accessible, able to house up to 35 residents, each with private bedroom and bathroom, along with Second Stage Housing units for the first time in the South Okanagan. Also in 2016, SOWINS purchased a 4000 square foot ground floor space and built their new administration which, in 2020, has 15 offices. In 2017 SOWINS was successful in an application to MCFD to fund a youth bed at the Transition House for youth that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. In 2018 we applied and received funding for a second youth bed.

In 2017 SOWINS signed a five year lease to a space where we built “The Centre”; a place that provides services and programming to individuals doing survival sex work, living in homelessness, with mental health concerns and addictions. During 2018 SOWINS expanded its funding to include HPP, Homeless Prevention Program which provides funds to women to secure and sustain housing. Also in 2018 SOWINS was successful in its bid for the Community Based Victim Services contract which support individuals going through court as a result of Intimate Partner and Sexual violence. In 2019 SOWINS began operating their first BC Housing-owned, long-term safe, affordable apartment building with twelve, two bedroom, two bathroom units for women and children.

Today, SOWINS operates four sites, six fleet vehicles, has 74 staff and receives funding from BC Housing, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Public Safety Canada, Interior Health Authority, United Way, Ministry of Children and Family Development, with an annual revenue of 2.6 million.

SOWINS began with providing a safe place to sleep and eat, creating the foundation on which SOWINS was built. Today, 39 years later, SOWINS is a trauma-informed organization where women receive support, live in a safe environment, and make informed decisions on how they want to restructure their lives. SOWINS has become an integral part of the community’s social safety net and fabric of the South Okanagan.

Our Vision

All individuals have the ability to make choices to live a safe and healthy life.

Our Mission

Supporting individuals in their recovery from the impact of violence and abuse while working to prevent violence and abuse in our communities.

Core Services

We work to meet the needs and interests of our clients through delivery of the following:

- Transition House
- Safe Homes
- Tamarack Long Term Housing
- Women's Counselling
- Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling and Empowerment (PEACE) Program for Children and Youth Experiencing Violence
- SAFExst
- Community Based Victim Services (CBVS)
- Homeless Prevention Program

Core Values

Throughout our organization, we strive to adhere to the following principles:

- Accountability
- Compassion
- Inclusion
- Diversity
- Respect

Executive Summary

The board of directors for the South Okanagan Women in Need Society (SOWINS) has developed the following **2020-2023 Strategic Plan** based on input from board directors and staff.

Prior to online strategic planning sessions in May 2020, individuals from both groups participated in a study to identify current challenges and upcoming opportunities for SOWINS. Compiled data helped determine the **Key Result Areas (KRAs)** that require in-depth attention over the next three years.

In their strategic planning sessions, the board formulated **Strategic Goals** that relate to each KRA. These goals give specific direction to staff and to the board's committees.

A subsequent one-year **Tactical Plan** was developed by staff and board committees for goal execution, commencing in September 2020. Quarterly progress reports will be provided to the board of directors with an annual summary report to the board at year end. These reports will include milestone achievements, called **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**; proof that progress is on track. New tactical plans are to be developed annually.

The three-year **Strategic Plan** is to be reviewed and refreshed annually. Progress reports will be delivered by the board at their Annual General Meetings. A new three-year strategic plan will be developed in the spring of 2023, for execution starting in September 2023.

Key Result Areas

The KRAs identified by the board of directors and staff for 2020 through spring of 2023 are:

- Organizational Excellence
- Client-Centred Programs
- Collaborative Relationships
- Informed Community

Strategic Plan

This three-year plan, developed by the board and executive director, outlines the goals to be achieved by the spring of 2023.

Key Result Area 1: Organizational Excellence

Developing our people and processes to increase our proficiency and value.

Goal 1.1: Develop further the board's governance best practices.

Goal 1.2: Ensure effective supports are in place for all operations.

Goal 1.3: Develop a staff attraction and retention plan.

Key Result Area 2: Client-Centred Programs

Ensuring our programs are meaningful for our clients and community.

Goal 2.1: Ensure client safety in all our programs.

Goal 2.2: Address gaps in service to enhance current and future programming.

Key Result Area 3: Collaborative Relationships

Working with new and existing partners to address the needs of our clients.

Goal 3.1: Enhance our relationships with service providers to further eradicate violence and abuse.

Goal 3.2: Work with other agencies and local governments to expand our services to other communities in the South Okanagan.

Goal 3.3 Identify the gaps in service regarding intersectionality and seek new relationships to help eradicate violence and abuse.

Key Result Area 4: Informed Community

Improving public engagement and perception of our organization.

Goal 4.1: Increase awareness and understanding of our services.

Goal 4.2: Educate students and educators within the school system on violence, abuse, and healthy relationships.

Goal 4.3: Educate first responders to identify and respond effectively to violence and abuse.