



YWCA



**3-YEAR
STRATEGIC
DIRECTION**

**SUPPORTING WOMEN & FAMILIES
FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING**

**eliminating racism
empowering women**

ywca

Seattle | King | Snohomish



A MESSAGE FROM YWCA'S CEO

There is no doubt that the last couple of years of COVID were filled with unforeseen challenges and injustices for our region and our neighbors. **Through it all, our organization, our supportive community, and the people we serve have been resilient, innovative, and compassionate.**

We simply could not have met the community's needs without a dedicated, diverse, and skilled network of staff, elected officials, funders, donors, and community partners. **Together**, we provided emergency shelter and housing to many in need, delivered meals to families facing food insecurity, supported parents and students when classes moved online, assisted renters at risk of eviction, and much more. **In 2020, of the 7,000+ people we served**, 73% of participants exiting YWCA shelters or homelessness prevention programs moved into permanent housing, 94% of residents who lived in YWCA permanent housing maintained housing stability, and 93% of participants left a YWCA employment program with increased job readiness. And throughout the pandemic, we have supported our tireless staff with access to testing, vaccinations, child care, remote work opportunities, and mental health services.

YWCA works every day to deliver the tools and resources women and families need to survive. However, as the needs of our community grow – trapping future generations in cycles of poverty and inequity – we must acknowledge that it's time to do more. We cannot merely stand by and only offer our services, we must also address the systemic issues that allow for these daily injustices. It's time to change the policies and systems that put people at risk, and ensure those who are furthest from equity have the opportunity to thrive in life.

As YWCA embarks on our 129th year of service, we are doubling down on our mission to **ELIMINATE RACISM** and **EMPOWER WOMEN**. Meaning, we will leverage our professional expertise, personal commitment, and program experience to elevate our voice and increase our impact by advocating for just policies and equitable legislation. YWCA's new strategic direction reflects our commitment to **move our community from surviving to thriving**, both in the current moment of crisis and as we partner together to build towards a better tomorrow.

Today, we're starting the march towards a brighter future that will lead our community to a world that is **equitable and just** – a world that is long overdue. **We look forward to having you by our side.**

With Gratitude,



Maria Chavez-Wilcox
Chief Executive Officer

UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT REALITY OF OUR REGION

Racial and gender inequity have real-life consequences in Seattle, King, and Snohomish counties. Systems change is long, hard work. But every single day that antiquated policies and systems remain in place, our neighbors face avoidable perils. Now more than ever, local women and families face unprecedented challenges trying to access affordable housing; mental and physical health resources; and stable, living-wage careers.

As an organization built on a legacy of women helping women, YWCA has been at the forefront of advocating for women's advancement for the past 125+ years. The COVID pandemic further exposed the systemic flaws that require our collective, immediate attention. For example:

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DEATHS IN KING COUNTY QUADRUPLED OVER THE TOTAL FROM 2019.

COMMUNITIES OF COLOR, PARTICULARLY WOMEN OF COLOR, HAD THE HIGHEST UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN 2020.

OVER THE PAST SIX YEARS, RENTS IN THE SEATTLE METRO AREA HAVE INCREASED 57%, WHILE MINIMUM WAGE ONLY INCREASED BY 24%.

OVER THE LAST YEAR IN SNOHOMISH COUNTY, THE NUMBER OF UNSHELTERED CHILDREN (18 AND YOUNGER) INCREASED 111%.

WOMEN IN POORER AREAS OF KING COUNTY ARE DYING 14 YEARS SOONER THAN THOSE LIVING ROUGHLY 10 MILES AWAY.

While these statistics are a momentary snapshot of our regional adversities, it is clear that circumstances have been trending in the wrong direction. When anyone in our community is hurting, it affects us all. The time has come to say enough is enough. Let's unite as allies, friends, and neighbors to uplift those who have been most impacted.

COLLECTIVELY, WE CAN CHANGE THE CURRENT REALITY.



IMAGINING A FUTURE WHERE...

systems and policies are actually designed to support every person in our community and there is equitable access to the resources necessary for a safe and healthy life.

This is a future worth fighting for — one guided by courage rather than fear. With a clear vision in mind, we have a shared north star to build towards:

* OUR MISSION



TO ELIMINATE RACISM AND EMPOWER WOMEN.

* OUR VISION

A healthy and joy-filled community transformed by racial and gender equity, where women and girls of color have equal access to opportunity and resources to pursue their full potential, which elevates the entire community.

* OUR VALUES

- EQUITY & COURAGE
- COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP
- COMPASSION & COMMITMENT

STRIVING TOWARD A BRIGHTER FUTURE

We will help usher in this new future by living our values, investing in our program pillars, partnering with community members, and strategically working towards our 2025 goals.

PROGRAM PILLARS

HOUSING

**HEALTH
& SAFETY**

**ECONOMIC
ADVANCEMENT**

GOALS BY 2025

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

By 2025, see a 25% increase of women furthest from equity who have gone “from surviving to thriving*” as a catalyst for community impact

PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE

To be an exemplary organization that centers participants’ needs and treats them with dignity, respect, and care

CAPACITY- BUILDING

Ensure 100% of YWCA’s internal capacity and systems are on track to reach “best in class” operational effectiveness



*Surviving to thriving is defined as: permanent, affordable and stable housing secured; fulfilling, living wage job or higher education attained; regular and supportive health care services provided; and personal safety protected from gender-based violence.

ACTIONS TO SPUR A NEW REALITY

YWCA is ready to leverage our platform, experience, history, and resources to push for transformational change. This work demands that we hold ourselves accountable to the communities we serve, and make sure the things we say are reflected in the things we do.

OUR VOICE

WE WILL advocate for policies that advance racial and gender equity

BY growing our capacity for public policy engagement, advocacy, communications, and amplifying the voices of our community members



OUR WORK

WE WILL further prioritize the experiences and outcomes of women and girls furthest from equity

BY improving the tools, training, and framework for all programs to effectively center the voices of program participants and respond to their needs



OUR ORGANIZATION

WE WILL grow our impact as an anti-racist organization

BY investing in our people, processes and culture, modernizing our infrastructure, and strengthening our operational effectiveness



OUR COMMUNITY

WE WILL harness the power of collective action and community relationships

BY doubling down on partnerships that promote and support culturally-specific and/or BIPOC-led organizations



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No one person or organization created racial and gender inequities and it will take all of us to build the thriving community we all deserve. We worked tirelessly to ensure YWCA's strategic direction was shaped by various external voices and community needs, including:

CONDUCTING OVER 60 INTERVIEWS INCLUDING FOLKS FROM SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS, FOUNDATIONS, AND PUBLIC SECTOR OFFICIALS

SURVEYING 12,000 DONORS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

HOSTING NUMEROUS COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS WITH VARIOUS COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS



A special thanks to our Board of Directors for their dedication, time, and insightful contributions to make this long-desired plan a reality.

- | | |
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NEW TO YWCA?

HERE IS A SNAPSHOT OF OUR WORK AND THREE PROGRAM PILLARS.

HOUSING

We are all aware of the serious homelessness crisis in King and Snohomish Counties. While there are many efforts and groups working on solutions, at YWCA, we are uniquely focused on addressing the lack of stable and affordable housing options for women and children. We do this by providing access to transitional and permanent housing to our program participants, working with landlords, and advocating for state and local policy change.

ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT

Though COVID created economic opportunities for some, its ongoing ripple effect hit the service industry hard. At YWCA we remain concerned that a lack of steady employment, benefits, and a living wage are even harder to attain for women of color in our community. With this strategic plan we are increasing our investment in providing employment services, job training, counseling, and assistance for women searching for work or retraining opportunities.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Beyond housing and employment, 2020 and 2021 compounded stress for many women and families. With children regularly out of school, daycare, or after school programs, many working moms had to leave their jobs. As family incomes declined, domestic violence increased. Every day at YWCA emergency shelters, we are humbled to serve women and children surviving untenable situations. Our community needs us now more than ever.


JOIN US

As we continually provide upgraded programs and services to meet community needs today, we will also advocate for systemic changes to improve the lives of generations to come.

Join us as we work towards this brighter future. You can help by supporting our programs, advocating for state policy changes, staying informed, becoming a volunteer, and donating.

Learn more at:

[ywcaworks.org](https://www.ywcaworks.org)

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