

**SWOP-USA
ADVOCACY
AGENDA
2020-2022**





Introduction

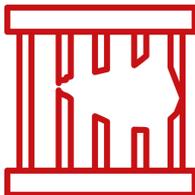
The Sex Workers Outreach Project is a national social justice network dedicated to the fundamental human rights of sex workers and their communities, focusing on ending violence and stigma through education and advocacy.

The following areas were identified as priorities by the Board of Directors and through consultation with SWOP chapters:

1. Decriminalization of sex work
2. Addressing the harms of criminalization and anti-trafficking legislation
3. Destigmatizing sex work
4. Capacity and movement building among sex workers

The Advocacy Committee incorporated feedback from consultation with chapters and recent board discussions to build on the prior agenda. The current agenda frames the above priorities of our work into three areas: decriminalization, law and policy, and awareness raising.

In this agenda each priority is informed by a goal and three key steps that SWOP USA will take to achieve that goal.



Priority One: Decriminalization of Sex Work

Goal: Promote the Full Decriminalization of Sex Work in the United States

Decriminalization removes punitive laws that target sex work and instead sex work is regulated through existing labor laws. Research shows that the provision of labor rights and the removal of criminal penalties associated with sex work enables greater access to justice, protects against exploitation, and supports sex worker health and safety. Decriminalization is recognized as the framework most conducive to protecting sex workers' human rights. For this reason, decriminalization is supported by the World Health Organization, UNAIDS, and other organizations like Amnesty International. SWOP USA opposes all forms of criminalization and intrinsically trusts individuals to make decisions about their work and their bodies that best fit their needs. Decriminalization is the full realization of this philosophy in public policy.

Sex workers' rights is an intersectional matter inseparable from broader issues of poverty, racial justice, gender equality, labor and migration. SWOP affirms that decriminalization is *one* of many steps toward sustainable social change and justice. SWOP recognizes that the discourse around sex worker rights and decriminalization has been dominated by white cis sex workers, often to the detriment of trans and POC sex workers. This failure calls for an urgent need to reframe the decriminalization discourse using an intersectional analysis whereby sex workers most impacted by criminalization are prioritized and amplified. Specifically, POC sex workers, migrant and gender diverse sex workers and other sex worker subpopulations who compounded stigma and discrimination.

How we plan to get there:

1. Take steps to emphasize the discourse of decriminalization around the experiences and voices of POC, migrant, and gender diverse sex workers and other sex worker subpopulations most impacted by criminalization and social inequality

- Streamline SWOP's Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism (AO/AR) framework into all levels of our work
- Collaborate with the AORTA Coop to develop resources and materials for racial and gender justice
- Implement and promote ongoing AO/AR training requirements for all SWOP members, affiliates, partners and volunteers
- Expand SWOP membership and chapter leadership to be more equitable and inclusive recognizing the diversity of our experiences, backgrounds and expertise

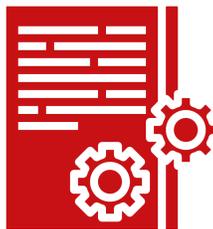
2. Create a Working Group to oversee SWOP efforts to promote decriminalization in the USA with a focus on embedding the AO/AR framework into all working relationships and activities aimed at supporting decriminalization

- Track decrim efforts throughout the USA to pulse check any legislative shifts regarding the legal status of sex work and other policies relevant to the health, living and working conditions of sex workers

- Continued coalition building and stakeholder analysis with the aim to include allies and support at every level of society
- Initiate, support and promote decriminalization efforts on the state and federal level in partnership with member chapters and organizational partners

3. Increase the visibility and priority of decriminalization within the national social justice agenda

- Build intersectional working relationships between SWOP chapters, community and civil society organizations and sister movements to amplify sex worker voices about issues affecting our living and working conditions
- Develop and promote joint statements, position papers, and resources on topics related to anti-criminalization efforts and other issues affecting sex workers
- Work in collaboration with partner organizations and movements to raise public awareness around decriminalization as it relates to anti-violence, economic equality, and racial and gender justice.



Priority Two: Law and Policy

Goal: Address all forms of criminalization of sex work through education and advocacy

Criminalization exacerbates every harm that sex workers are vulnerable to. Anti-trafficking legislation like FOSTA-SESTA is another form of criminalization which operates under the guise of protection. Laws like these wreak havoc on sex worker communities and re-victimize trafficking survivors. Any form of criminalization pushes sex workers into unsafe working conditions, undermines public health and sex workers' negotiating power and increases the risk for physical and sexual violence, particularly at the hands of police.

Despite all sex workers facing some risk of criminalization, some are more at risk than others. Trans sex workers of color, migrant and undocumented sex workers, street based workers, and sex workers who use drugs experience higher rates of violence and policing. SWOP USA is represented by and serves diverse communities of sex workers. Our community includes sex

workers who are POC, LGBTQ+, migrant/CALD¹, differently-abled, are currently or have previously been incarcerated, and others who are disproportionately impacted by criminalization, discrimination and violence.

SWOP USA aims to educate policy makers and the public about the implications of laws and policies that criminalize sex work. SWOP will work in partnership with sex worker led organizations and chapters to contribute to state and federal efforts to advocate against all forms of criminalization and to repeal FOSTA-SESTA.

To do this we will:

1. Build strategic partnership with other human rights and social justice organizations to keep sex worker rights on the policy agenda

- Network with inter-organizational partners around matters of racial justice, gender equality, labor and housing, migrant rights, harm reduction, sexual health, and policing
- Develop a vetting process for working with researchers and media professionals whose work and practice aligns with SWOP mission and values
- Forge policy partnerships with other organizations to advocate for decriminalization and other measures that minimize harm against sex workers

2. Develop and promote educational materials addressing the negative impacts of criminalization and harmful anti-trafficking legislation like FOSTA-SESTA

- Engage in ongoing dialogue with community members, SWOP chapters, and partner organizations about the impact of law and policy on the ground
- Create and distribute toolkits addressing how criminalization and anti-trafficking legislation exacerbates violence and discrimination against sex workers
- Host and promote webinars, podcasts, briefs, and written materials about sex workers' rights

3. Work to cultivate better relations between the media, researchers and sex workers

- Build capacity of sex workers to participate and leverage media opportunities and speak to the press through toolkits and media training
- Work with media contacts to release and promote press briefs and statements on issues relevant to sex work policy
- Work with vetted media partners and researchers to promote positive press around sex worker rights and evidence-based research

¹ CALD = Culturally and linguistically diverse



Priority Three: Awareness Raising

Goal: Address stigma to build a stronger sex workers movement

Stigma affects the sex worker community externally and internally and it is one way that structural and societal violence against sex workers are instigated and perpetuated. SWOP USA seeks to work externally against sex work stigma through public education and advocacy in addition to working internally to address the ways it shows up within in our community.

In an effort to strengthen the sex workers movement and to improve our organizational priorities, SWOP USA aims to to build the capacity of our chapters and membership by supporting sex-worker led initiatives and improving relationships. SWOP USA recognizes awareness raising as a key step in destigmatizing sex work. Frequent and continued efforts to uplift and amplify sex worker voices is necessary if we are to shift attitudes about sex work, sex workers and sex workers' rights.

How we plan to do this:

1. Initiate, support and promote sex worker-led campaigns, toolkits and resources

- Recognize sex worker days of importance such as International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers, Trans Day of Remembrance, International Sex Workers Rights Day, International Sex Workers Day, and Pride.
- Initiate, participate and promote sex worker-led arts, cultural and anti-stigma projects
- Promote and maintain the sex worker community support line and other sources of support

2. Continue to network with partner and allied organizations

- Attend external events and conferences to build partnerships across organizations, agencies and movements
- Build our communications and web presence through joint communications and policy development
- Supporting the flow of information around sex worker issues to chapters and allied organizations

3. Strengthen SWOP USA chapter relations

- Continue having a Chapter Coordinator to assist in navigating internal conflict and issues
- Integrate SWOP anti-racism and anti-oppression trainings into our chapter building to address whorearchy and lateral violence within the sex worker movement
- Increase team building through monthly calls, leadership facilitation and organizational consultation and trainings