



SWOP USA

Sex Worker Outreach Project – Unites States of America

2019-2021 Strategic Plan



SWOP USA

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Summary

As the issue of sex worker rights emerges into mainstream consciousness, the Sex Worker Outreach Project-USA (SWOP-USA) is here to serve as a vehicle to bolster the work and voices of social justice advocates across the nation. As the largest sex worker rights organization in the United States, SWOP-USA is committed to the safety, autonomy, and human rights of people in the sex trade, and ***stands in solidarity with the many social justice movements intersectional to our own***, including but not limited to Black Lives Matter, disability rights, drug and immigration reform, gender equality and the LGBTQ movement, and the rights of the working class.

The strategic plan outlines how, between 2019 and 2021, SWOP-USA will build on our significant achievements and lessons to date, while also strengthening critical areas of our work and responding to a rapidly changing and challenging environment. The plan is grounded in our values and latest achievements while providing flexibility in growing with the changing context, to ensure we stay true to our mission and are able to prioritize resources for the benefit of our sex worker community and the communities we live in.

The largest obstacle we will face in carrying out our plan is the lack of dedicated resources for sex worker health and rights, high level of burnout and have to all deal with our own trauma and survival. We must meet this need for promoting personal mental and physical wellbeing at every turn. At every conference we attend in 2019 through 2021, we need to schedule a sex worker meet and greet. The question should not be *Is there a sex worker meet and greet?* – but *when and where is the sex worker meet and greet?*

Organizational Profile

SWOP-USA is a 501©3 organization registered in California. Since our founding in the Bay Area in 2003, SWOP-USA has grown into a national grassroots network of regional chapters and local activists. This network works together to address stigma and criminalization through peer support, community outreach, media engagement, allied collaborations, and direct action. As a result, SWOP-USA enjoys national and international name recognition and visibility.

Our current board of directors of 12 members is diverse, well informed about the intersectional issues faced by our movement and constituency and are committed to driving our organization forward and achieving the goals and objectives in this document. SWOP-USA's board demographics include (gender, race, age, location, and a history of sex work or support of sex work.)

We employ an executive director, two administrative employees and three community advisory board (CAB) members. Our 30 chapters, across the U.S., are diverse in leadership as well as in types of member outreach and activities.

Our Mission

SWOP-USA is a national grassroots social justice network dedicated to the fundamental human rights of sex workers and their communities, focusing on ending violence and stigma through education, community building, and advocacy.

Our Values

- *Dignity and Respect*

Sex workers are human beings who deserve the same dignity and respect given to non-sex working people. Society has historically used *respectability politics* (ideas of what is and isn't "socially acceptable") as an excuse for tolerating the abuse, murder, and criminalization of sex workers. We firmly reject the idea that a person is undeserving of respect because of their involvement in the sex trade, and we dedicate ourselves to ending discrimination against sex workers in all of its many forms. We recognize that no one story represents sex work, and we honor the vast variety of experiences that people in our communities have lived. We validate all forms of sex work as equal, and actively work to dismantle whorearchy (the idea that certain types of sex work are more or less dignified than others) in the public, as well as within our sex worker and activist communities.

- *Community*

The Sex Workers Outreach Project strives to create conscious sex worker communities, valuing anti-racism and anti-oppression education as a means of fostering safe environments for all. We rely on strong communities to keep us safe, share information on harm reduction, and fund and organize peer support. When we stand together as a community, we are better able to organize and advocate for our human rights and protections. Our communities are strengthened by honoring diversity among our members, and each individual's right to self-representation.

- *Accountability (Nothing for us, without us, is for us)*

We recognize that people in our communities come from a vast array of backgrounds, and that we are all at different stages of understanding the intersectional issues that relate to our movement. We strive to provide educational materials to our members on overlapping social justice issues, and to promote a culture of self-awareness and learning. We assume the best intentions of peers and seek to both offer and accept constructive criticism as a gift for growth. We actively work to identify, acknowledge, and dismantle forms of oppression that manifest within our groups, our organization, and ourselves, and hold ourselves accountable to make good on incidents where we fall short.

- *Self Determination*

Our bodies are our own. As members of SWOP, we demand that individuals retain the exclusive right to determine how they use their own bodies under all circumstances, including in making occupational, health, lifestyle, sexual and reproductive choices. We support harm reduction principles, believing that each individual is an expert on their own life, and thus in the best position to determine their needs, and how to get those needs met. We strive to provide information and materials to help people make informed choices and access the resources they need to stay safe. We condemn the structural oppression that seeks to take away our power and control through violence, labor exploitation, and economic marginalization. We

acknowledge that methods of survival, self care, and asserting autonomy differ from culture to culture and person to person, and value non-judgement as a means of offering support to all people.

- *Sex Work as Work*

We stand by sex work as a form of emotional and physical labor that people of all backgrounds undertake as a means of supporting themselves and people who depend on them, and as a means of surviving. We maintain that consent and the upholding of individual rights are key differentiators between sex work and sexual assault, and we reject the notion that sex work is inherently linked to violence. We maintain that addressing root issues of poverty, racial and gender discrimination, drug use, and immigration reform (to name a few) will give people who do not want to engage in sex work more income options and reduce sex worker vulnerability to violence and exploitation.

The presence of sex workers in social movements, the visibility of sex workers in communities of all kinds, and societal awareness of sex worker rights as fundamental to human rights in no way perpetuate violence, sexual assault, slavery and trafficking in persons. We believe that when sex work is decriminalized, and when sex workers do not suffer from stigma and discrimination, issues of abuse in the sex trade can be better identified, addressed and nullified.

Our Core Principles

Sex workers are particularly keen to organize now that the online sex trade has shut down. SESTA has brought to our attention that the changes in technology and market on both a broad and narrow scale have created a changing social pattern that is, on one hand, harmful to sex worker rights, but also helpful as we are gaining ground in the “FAIR” department. We are also becoming more publicly associated with alternative lifestyle groups and this makes our cause even stronger.

After a careful review of our past record of achievements and the current political climate, we feel it is necessary to outline our core principles, which will serve to guide our strategic goals, objectives, and scope of work over the next three years. SWOPUSA’s work is based on three core principles:

1. Acceptance of sex work as work.
2. Opposition to all forms of criminalization and other legal oppression of sex work (including sex workers, clients, third parties, families, partners and friends).
3. Supporting self-organization and self-determination of sex workers.

In order to accomplish wide acceptance of these principles, we must complete a strategic analysis of our current model of operation, consider where we can improve and focus our collective energy and experience to the following elements. The importance of doing so cannot be understated. As SWOP-USA moves forward to make sure that our organization is outfitted with the knowledge and tools it needs to reach our goals and objectives, we will commit to holding ourselves to a higher standard of leadership inclusive of responsibility and accountability to our constituency.

Our Theory of Change

We will take advantage of our large national presence and financial accessibility to grassroots support to continue providing local organizing by writing policy recommendations and building our national coalitions and national alliances with other organizations – including but not limited to – our own SWOP Chapters. Using our customer relationship management tool, we will help our local chapters to connect to their own local coalitions and alliances that will further our mission to create a safer world for sex workers. We will spend 2019 strengthening those alliances, coalitions and networks that are focusing on intersectional issues and work to formalize partnerships with Memorandums of Understanding and use our National network, large presence, great resource distribution and capacity building strengths as the building blocks of formal partnerships.

While December 17 will continue to remain our primary event during the year, we will capitalize on the attention drawn to violence against sex workers with strategies to address police violence within our urban and suburban communities. We will draw lines from police violence to the anti-trafficking efforts to end demand and continue to provide harm reduction information and education at every opportunity.

By utilizing our board, staff and volunteer’s time to carry out our advocacy, organizing, policy efforts and support activities, we will contribute to the safety, autonomy, and human rights of people in the sex trade.

Our Core Strategic Directions, Priorities, and Activities

Three Core Directions for 2019

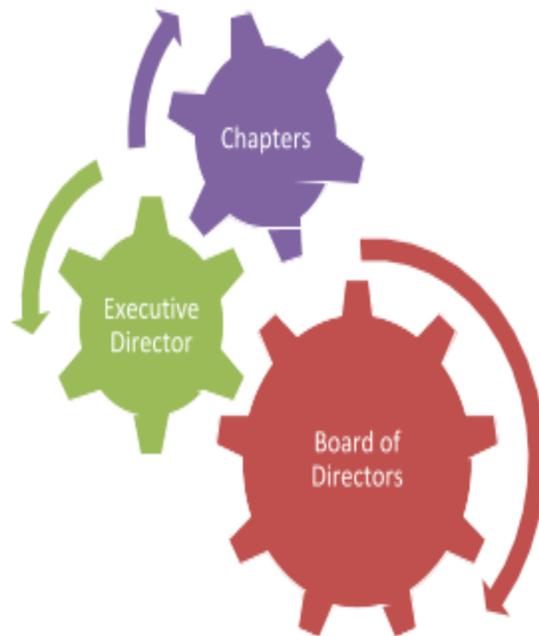
To guide SWOP-USA, three directions have been identified as core to the growth of our organization. Subsequent priorities each fit into one of these directions.

1. Organize the internal structures and processes of our organization and work to achieve institutional memory to enable the organization to thrive even with changes in leadership.
2. Take advantage of the re-launch opportunity of our organization to focus on becoming better at what we do.
3. Provide chapters with the tools and motivation to successfully permeate their community and build capacity for SWOP-USA and the sex worker rights movement as a whole.

Five Strategic Priorities

1. Priority One: Internal Focus - Refine Governance and Executive Functions
2. Priority Two: Internal Focus - Grow Fund Development Activities
3. Priority Three: Internal Focus - Enhance Chapter Member Relations
4. Priority Four: External Focus - Identify Issue Advocacy Campaign
5. Priority Five: External Focus - Launch the “New SWOP-USA”

Priority One - Refine Governance and Executive Function (Direction #1)



Our organization is committed to improving communication between our chapters, our allies, our funders, our community and us. We believe that our first order of business should be to automate the processes that we can and operate with intention and integrity.

2017-2018 Accomplishments

1. **Governance**. Our new board of directors (BOD) created committees dedicated to specific organizational (internal and external) task sets. These committees will meet separately or virtually (i.e. email) to work on relevant subjects and report progress back during our monthly board calls. These Committees are as follows, executive, finance, advocacy, fundraising, grants & proposal writing, and December 17th. Appendix __ contains a description of each committee's function and tasks.
2. **New Staff Hire - Executive Director**. We hired an interim executive director on June 1, 2018 who is aware of the history of SWOP-USA and its chapters, who will serve for 18-24 months until a new ED is hired. The position of executive director encompasses the job responsibilities for both the previous chapter coordinator and communications director. We have the following expectations from the Executive Director:
 - a. Report to the board but still be a vital part of the planning and implementation process
 - b. Overseeing Staff
 - c. Bookkeeper and Ombudsperson
 - d. Administrative duties
 - e. Checking [My Virtual Mailbox](#)
 - f. Attend and Present at Conferences
 - g. Publish bimonthly newsletter
 - h. Help the board fundraise and write grants
 - i. Oversee community advisory board (CAB)

- j. SWOP chapters will communicate directly with the executive director
- 3. New Staff Hire - Bookkeeper. We also hired a bookkeeper to maintain our day-to-day financial operations.
- 4. Communications. We have implemented new technical tools to make communication easier and faster and to allow us to gather data as an organization to assist in coalition building and grant acquisition

2019-2021 Opportunities for Growth

- 1. Hiring the next Executive Director. The ED should be from the demographics most affected: ideally a queer, transgender person. May be wise to hire from the Board so they can ease into the role. A sub-committee will begin this ED search in March 2019
- 2. Streamline processes of onboarding Chapters, Board members, and staff
- 3. Volunteers. Learn to utilize “untapped” volunteers
- 4. Data. Receive and provide better data
- 5. Recruit and retain board members, especially diverse members such as darker-skinned PoC

Priority Two: Grow Fund Development Activities (Direction #1 and #2)

2017-2018 Accomplishments

- 1. Internal Budgeting Process. Establish internal budgeting process with the outcome of finalizing the 2019 Budget

2019-2022 Opportunities for Growth

- 1. Give and Get. Pilot board member get and give.
- 2. Identify a process in which budgets are made
- 4. Improve data collection around fundraising; e.g. tracking why people donate
- 5. Solicit systematic feedback from chapters
- 6. Improve record-keeping
- 7. Diversify income streams
- 8. Conduct a SWOT using the Business model canvas

Priority Three - Enhance Chapter Member Relations (Direction #3)

Our chapters have been largely operating independently and we have had many new chapters pop up that were not fully prepared to be a chapter of SWOP-USA. Our history has been to be slow to react to crisis and conflict within our chapters and we brought on an ombudsperson in 2016 and recently put a new staff member into that position with experience and a good record of communication. They submit regular monthly reports to the board. We have several strategies for chapter management that we are putting into place now and will have different standards for chapters moving forward with both old and new chapters.

2017-2018 Accomplishments

1. Chapter Readiness Assessment. The executive director will assess chapter viability during the initial “getting to know you” process to determine if individuals affiliated with chapter are a good fit for SWOP in relation to our values and also our internal culture of anti-oppression and dismantling white supremacy. Materials are also provided to potential new members
2. Chapter Onboarding Process Refined. Onboarding of chapters is meant to provide newer activists with the tools they will need to be effective organizers in their communities. Potential chapters meet with the executive director initially, and chapter requirements are reviewed, along with the chapter-affiliate agreement, chapter planning worksheet, and chapter governance sheet, which are all sent to potential chapter members.
3. Chapter Protocols for Ongoing Support. Typically, the executive director meets with potential chapters once a month and reviews opportunities, questions, and potential barriers or conflicts.

2019-2022 Opportunities for Growth

1. Chapter education. With the launching of the anti-racism/anti-oppression educational modules we will also have the opportunity to introduce other interactive material for chapters. While it is very important to introduce intersectional education first and foremost, additional classes such as: media, campaign strategies, and event organizing will also increase capacity at the chapter level.
2. Chapter mentoring. There should be several regional chapter organizers that will work with chapters both new and long-term to develop them into flourishing community organizations. Sustainable chapters have multiple leaders in them that are committed both to the values and goals of SWOP but also to the other members of the chapter. Historically interpersonal conflict has been the number one source of chapters disintegrating or splitting up, while our Ombudsperson has been vital to navigating conflict, having proactive in-person facilitation and training from SWOP USA could prevent much of the strife our chapters experience at times.
3. Chapter communications. In the next 24 months the goal is to have more direct communication between chapters and the SWOP USA infrastructure, chapters have typically been very autonomous and at times remained out of contact with SWOP USA for months at a time. Check-ins should be regular and predictable, and resources should be readily available to chapters facing a number of challenges and opportunities for expansion and progress.
4. Fiscal Sponsorship. Provide fiscal sponsorship for projects that support our movement
5. Pilot new ideas for sharing information – a different medium than a listserv
6. Milestone achievements. To understand how our chapter relations grow within the next three years.

Priority Four - Identify Issue Advocacy Campaign (Direction #2)

2017-2018 Accomplishments

1. Identified advocacy issues critical to SWOP-USA’s success.
 - Fighting violence, particularly policy violence
 - Public education about differences of sex work and sex trafficking, harms of war on trafficking
 - Political education and engagement
 - Sustainable movement
 - Self-care plan promotion
 - Local capacity issues

- Establish and maintain viable working relationships with other sex worker rights, harm reduction, de-carceration (as opposed to incarceration), and labor rights organizations, coalitions, and networks

2019-2022 Opportunities for Growth

1. Issue campaigns. Implement focused issue-based advocacy campaigns
 - Fighting violence (decrim) – long term
 - Sex work is not sex trafficking
 - Political education and engagement – education for SW on policy
 - Self-care – we don't facilitate the time to say "listen, take care of yourself"
 - Promote Sacred Whore
2. Starting a mental health fund – pay for people to go to therapy or seek help from SW-friendly providers
3. Local capacity – national policy engagement project
4. Networking with communities and activist movements
5. Federal advocacy

Priority Five - Launch the "New SWOP-USA" (Direction #2)

2017-2018 Accomplishments

1. Lawsuit settled. Settled lawsuit with Travelers and now SWOP-USA has a new logo
2. Communications surrounding SWOP-USA and annual December 17th Event.
 - a. The "New" SWOP-USA recognizes that its constituents are ALL sex workers
 - b. We have already moved to revamp the December 17th event and rebrand it as REST IN POWER in part to raise the profile of the event so that it will be more likely to receive local, national and international press coverage.
 - c. SWOP-USA has changed its policy of using pictures in our propagation of the list of memorial names. We will not be using pictures with or without permission but local organizers can make their own determination about this policy.
 - d. SWOP-USA has changed its policy of using legal names on the list. We will be using preferred, stage or working names on our list upon request and when available to preserve privacy for the family and friends of the memorial name.

2019-2022 Opportunities for Growth

1. Observation of December 17th. December 17th is our most important annual event and we are internationally recognized as the curator of both the list of names and the events and memorials taking place around the world. This committee will be responsible for the background organizing and launching of December 17th lists and promotion of events this year and will:
 - a. Update website to reflect the new SWOP-USA branding.
 - b. Request name and event submissions on social media and through local list serves.
 - c. Announce mini-grant opportunities in ___ to US based organizations hosting a formal event, giving priority to SWOP chapters, but also allowing outside networks to apply for mini-grant funding as we did successfully last year.
 - d. Expand the REST IN POWER brand dramatically this year and each year following.
 - e. Issue press releases regularly leading up to the event.

- f. Provide some prepacks of materials for organizers in the form of a toolkit.
 - g. Encourage chapters and other local organizers to get local community sponsors to support their event with in kind donations of space, food or other service or material.
2. Toolkit for social media, accessibility
 3. **Strengthen and expand partnerships.** Examples include, [ACLU](#), [EFF](#), [Amnesty](#), [NSWP](#) can help us seize the opportunity to focus the lens on violence brought about by the SESTA/FOSTA legislation. Partnerships with other organizations that address racism, LGBTQ issue-based organizations, prison abolition organizations, and organizations that work with the homeless are excellent places to potential allies.

Addendum

A. List of SWOP Board, Staff, and Key Volunteers

Current Board of Directors

Alex Andrews - alex@swopusa.org

Alex Corona - alexc@swopusa.org

Andrea Ferguson - andrea@swopusa.org

Ceyenne Doroshow - ceyenne@swopusa.org

Cocoa (President) - cocoa@swopusa.org

Cris Bleux (Secretary) - cris@swopusa.org

Koriandre Davenport - kori@swopusa.org

Phoenix Calida (Treasurer) - phoenix@swopusa.org

suprihmbé - thotscholar@swopusa.org

TS Jane (Vice President) - tsjane@swopusa.org

Staff

Christa Daring (Executive Director) - christa@swopusa.org

Casey McKeel (Bookkeeper) - bookkeeping@swopusa.org

Sangam 'Alopeke (Ombudsperson) - ombudsperson@swopusa.org

Next Strategic Plan Addendum:

- B. Fundraising Plan*
- C. End of Year Report*
- D. National and Chapter and Project Map*
- E. Membership Plan*