

YWCA of the Hartford Region

Strategic Plan, 2009-2013

Mission

The YWCA of the Hartford Region is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

Founded in 1867, the YWCA of the Hartford Region is part of the world's largest and oldest multi-racial women's movement. The YWCA of the Hartford Region pursues its mission and associated goals through public policy advocacy, programs and services that promote both change at a systemic level and improved lives for individuals and families in our community.

Guiding Principles and Core Values

As an organization, we are committed to the pursuit of lasting change for a more just society. We are inspired by the idea of women helping themselves and each other and by the prospect of equal opportunity, justice and dignity for all people. We believe social inequalities that arise from racism and sexism in our community must be addressed. We believe that every woman, every girl and every child deserves the opportunity to shine at each stage of life. We believe in creating opportunities one woman at a time.

In keeping with these beliefs and in pursuit of our mission, the YWCA of the Hartford Region embraces and promotes the following core values:

Equality: We consciously confront in ourselves, our organization and our community barriers such as sexism, racism and poverty that prevent fair treatment and justice, and we advocate for equal opportunities and equal rights for all.

Diversity: We embrace diversity, and value the contribution of all perspectives and backgrounds.

Empowerment: We promote development of both the capacity and the confidence women and girls need to make sound decisions and positive life choices and to become effective advocates for themselves.

Collaboration: We actively work with like-minded partners to strengthen our ability to achieve the goals of the organization.

Service: We serve and support individual members of our community and our community at large in caring, compassionate, and innovative ways.

Action: We put our values to work in support of our mission, seeking to create opportunities for women and eliminate racism while striving to attain the vision of peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

Our Vision of the YWCA of the Hartford Region in 2013

In four years, the YWCA of the Hartford Region will be an increasingly visible, effective **force for positive change** that advances racial justice and women's status in meaningful, measurable ways. The connection between our activities and our mission – empowering women and eliminating racism – will be strong, authentic, and also self-evident to members of the community. Racial and gender justice “filters”

will be institutionalized in every facet and at every level of the organization. Our intentional dedication to the elimination of racism and the empowerment of women will guide and inform all work and decision making of the YWCA of the Hartford Region. As a result, the ways in which we translate this dual mission into operational terms – through advocacy and programming – will have both **greater focus and greater impact**. More specifically:

- We will build on existing programmatic strengths, including high-quality childcare, while pursuing with heightened energy hallmark programs in the areas of racial justice and economic empowerment. The organization will be playing a leadership role in **advocating for systemic change** on core issues affecting women and on matters of social justice. We will be addressing, through both programs and public policy initiatives, inequities and disparities stemming from racism, sexism, and classism. Our direct service/programming and our advocacy efforts will be closely aligned, and they will inform and feed each other. In time, those we serve will themselves be among the strongest advocates for empowerment, equality, and the elimination of racism.
- We will be, as we have been historically, innovative, flexible and opportunistic in **responding to both chronic problems and emerging needs of women and families** in the community. Our programs and services will effectively support and empower women in their quest to be self-sufficient and to secure access to the financial resources, jobs, housing, healthcare, and education that are the essential building blocks for stable lives. By integrating our programs and services in new and creative ways, we will increasingly be offering programs/services that align with and respond in a holistic fashion to women's evolving needs and changing roles over time – from their teenage days to their entry into college or the workforce, from their parenting of children who need quality care and education to the purchase of a first home, and beyond.
- Through programs and related public policy advocacy we will be educating others in the community on **racial justice** issues and playing a leadership role in addressing racism at a systemic level. There will be a formal and integrated racial justice component in each of our programmatic areas, and we will be consulted frequently as a source of best practices in translating a commitment to racial justice into effective programming. Our organization's own programs and practices will reflect the principles of racial and social justice we espouse.
- The YWCA of the Hartford Region's **reputation** as an effective champion of the rights and needs of women and girls and as a highly respected advocate for racial justice and systemic change will have been bolstered as a result of a highly effective marketing effort. Awareness of and appreciation for the impact of the organization's programs will have expanded locally and regionally. Our unique role in the women's rights and racial justice arena will be better and more widely understood within the communities we serve. Our mission and message will resonate with women of all ages and races. Community leaders will be consulting or involving the YWCA regularly on matters relating to racism and empowerment of women.
- We will be a more culturally competent, multicultural and multiethnic **organization** whose diversity – across all constituent groups – more closely reflects the diversity in the communities we serve. We will be recruiting, developing and retaining highly motivated and competent staff members and volunteers. Board members will be knowledgeable and passionate about the YWCA's mission, and they will be actively engaged as effective ambassadors and generous supporters of the organization.
- The organization will have expanded and diversified its funding base to create a **stable and sustainable financial foundation**. Our endowment will be growing. An increasing number of individuals will be joining the ranks of dues-paying members and donors, and new sources of support within the state, region and even beyond will be funding key initiatives and ongoing operations.

Overarching Goals and Supporting Objectives

- **Build on programmatic strengths** and assure that all direct-service programs, existing and new, meet identified needs in the community, are aligned with the YW's mission of empowering women and eliminating racism, and are financially viable
 - *Develop value-adding Hallmark programs in racial justice and economic empowerment*
 - *Integrate programs and services in new and creative ways to respond in a holistic fashion to women's evolving needs and roles*
 - *Enhance the racial justice focus in the content, marketing, and outcomes of current programs*
 - *Position the YWCA childcare programs as the program of choice*

- **Build and pursue an advocacy agenda** in support of systemic change that promotes economic empowerment for women and racial justice for all
 - *Become a more prominent voice for the diverse needs of women and children in the community*
 - *Proactively address systemic inequities relating to gender or race as social justice issues*
 - *Strengthen relationships with elected officials and policy makers*
 - *Engage and empower YW members and supporters in mission-related advocacy efforts themselves*

- **Build sustainable organizational capacity – human, financial, and physical resources** – that supports attainment of the YW's goals and enhances its value-adding impact in the community
 - *Recruit, develop and retain diverse, highly motivated and competent staff and volunteers*
 - *Actively engage the board and other key stakeholders as effective ambassadors for and generous donors to the organization*
 - *Ensure physical facilities and technology infrastructure support strategic priorities and operational efficiency*
 - *Expand and diversify the organization's funding base*
 - *Rebuild the endowment to generate adequate operating income and promote long-term financial stability*

- **Build the YW's credibility and reputation** as a recognized voice for women and girls, and as a leading advocate for equal opportunities and the elimination of discrimination based on gender or race
 - *Expand public awareness of the YW's mission, programs, impact*
 - *Be visible in the community as a champion of women's rights and an advocate for racial justice*
 - *Increase staff knowledge, understanding and competency in interpreting, operationalizing and implementing the mission focus on racial justice*
 - *Ensure that the board and other advisory groups represent the diversity of the communities we serve*
 - *Cultivate an outcomes-oriented culture throughout the organization*

Year-One Operational Priorities

GOAL 1: Build on programmatic strengths

- *Begin to integrate racial justice into all existing programs and pilot initiatives that leverage existing capacity and relationships*
- *Design strategic programming initiative(s) relating to economic empowerment of women*

GOAL 2: Build and pursue an advocacy agenda in support of systemic change

- *Develop , communicate and pursue public policy priorities*
- *Leverage success of the Stand against Racism to establish it as signature program*
- *Hire racial justice director with public policy experience/responsibilities*

GOAL 3: Build sustainable organizational capacity

- *Establish foundational competence in strategic areas (fundraising, public policy advocacy, racial justice)*
- *Train and equip board members to be more effective on the fundraising front*
- *Seek multi-year funding support for a strategic initiative designed to help the YW translate its mission into operational terms – through advocacy and programming – with greater impact*
- *Maximize/leverage luncheon relationship to promote participants' full and ongoing investment in the mission*
- *Redefine membership and develop membership strategy*

GOAL 4: Build credibility and reputation

- *Establish racial justice foundation (common language, policies, practices, baseline metrics)*
- *Expand the organization's visibility*