



Nellie's

Shelter, Education & Advocacy for all women and children

2019-2022 Strategic Plan Report

Submitted by Lorna McCue, Consultant
December 20, 2018



Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
INTRODUCTION	3
VALUES, VISION AND MISSION	4
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS.....	5
OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS	6
OUTCOMES	7
APPENDIX 1: STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT REPORT	8
APPENDIX 2: CONSULTATION SYNTHESIS REPORT	9
APPENDIX 3: BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS REPORT	11



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents Nellie's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, as approved in principle at the December 12, 2018 meeting of Nellie's Board of Directors. It was developed by the Strategic Planning Committee struck by Nellie's Board of Directors in early 2018, comprised of 3 board members and the Executive Director.

The Strategic Planning Committee hired a consultant to facilitate a strategic planning process that reflected Nellie's values, vision and mission.

The consultant reviewed eight organizational documents related to recent strategic and transitional planning activities. She then prepared a thematic analysis of the content of the documents.

A series of stakeholder consultations were conducted by the consultant to ensure that the strategic plan would reflect the experience, knowledge and perspectives of personnel at all levels of the organization. Three focus groups were held with staff, and individual key informant. Interviews were held with the Executive Director, a board member and a consultant who had worked extensively with the Board. A summary report of the consultations was produced, consisting of two sections. The first is a summary of the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified by the participants. The second is a list of key priorities that were articulated by several respondents. These priorities were then organized into a strategic planning framework, to be further developed at the November 3, 2018 board/management strategic planning retreat.

The document analysis and stakeholder consultation summary were circulated to retreat participants, along with proposed strategic directions, prior to the retreat. The retreat was attended by ten board members and the four members of the management team, facilitated by the consultant. By the end of the day, a substantial strategic planning framework had been established, and participants expressed satisfaction with the progress that had been made. The retreat also provided an opportunity for board and staff to exchange information and views and thus enhance their knowledge of the organization.

The Strategic Planning Committee further refined the strategic plan and presented it at the December 12, 2018 meeting of the Board of Directors, where it was approved in principle.



INTRODUCTION

In early 2018 Nellie's Board of Directors struck a Strategic Planning Committee to develop a strategic planning process that would reflect the values and mission of Nellie's and culminate in the adoption of a new strategic plan. The strategic planning process consisted of the following steps:

- Step 1: Hire a consultant to lead the strategic planning process
- Step 2: Compile and summarize relevant background information
- Step 3: Consult with staff, management and board
- Step 4: Hold a joint Board and Management Team strategic planning retreat
- Step 5: Write the strategic plan
- Step 6: Present the strategic plan to the Board of Directors for approval

A detailed work plan was developed for the strategic planning process, with milestones set and reviewed at each of the monthly Strategic Planning Committee meetings held between July 2018 and November 2018.

This report presents Nellie's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, as approved in principle at the December 12, 2018 meeting of Nellie's Board of Directors. It is comprised of:

- Values – the abstract ideas that guide organizational thinking and decision-making
- Vision – a description of the organization, having achieved success
- Mission - What the organization is going to do, and why
- Strategic Directions - A broad course of action aimed at achieving the mission
- Objectives – Specific statement of what the organization intends to accomplish
- Strategies – The methods that will be employed to achieve the objectives
- Actions – The activities required to implement the strategy
- Outcomes – The results expected for designated areas of focus

Three appendices are attached to this report that summarize the background activity that led to the development of the strategic plan; i.e. the results of the stakeholder consultations, the report of the background documents that were examined, and a summary of the November 3rd strategic planning retreat.



VALUES, VISION AND MISSION

Values Statement

Nellie's is a community-based feminist organization which operates within an anti-racism and anti-oppression framework.

Vision Statement

We are committed to social change through education and advocacy, to achieve social justice for all women and children.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to operate programs and services for women and children who have and are experiencing oppressions such as violence, poverty and homelessness.



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #1 Improve organizational capacity and resilience.

Our thinking:

We need to stabilize the organization, through training and succession planning, to respond to current issues such as:

- Management is stretched too thin; we need to build resiliency in the organization to ensure key functions are maintained;
- Demands on direct services are increasing; and
- There is a need for specialized knowledge and positions.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #2 Expand and improve the physical space to better serve Nellie's priority populations.

Our thinking:

At present, neither the CSO space or the shelter are accessible. The shelter is crowded, lacks privacy and doesn't have sufficient space for children. The quality of the physical space has an impact on the stress levels and general well-being of residents and staff. The new shelter will alleviate these issues, but although the design and the land are in place, funds for construction and other capital costs have not been confirmed. Even with confirmation of government funding, we will still need to raise funds for ancillary capital costs; e.g. appliances, equipment and furnishings.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #3 Strengthen expertise and leadership around women and children with complex needs, from a trauma- informed, harm reduction and accessibility framework.

Our thinking:

Our services are unique within the Toronto social services sector in terms of the population served and our model of service. Increased demands on our services are straining our resources. Increasing the expertise of board, management, staff and volunteers will result in more responsive, effective and consistent service delivery. Increasing our leadership in the community by providing training to other shelter staff will enable them to serve more complex needs and thus reduce Nellie's burden.

OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #1				STRATEGIC DIRECTION #2		STRATEGIC DIRECTION #3		
Improve organizational capacity and resilience.				Expand and improve the physical space to better serve Nellie's priority populations.		Strengthen expertise and leadership around women and children with complex needs, from a trauma-informed, harm reduction and accessibility framework.		
is Objective 1.1		Objective 1.2		Objective 2.1	Objective 2.2	Objective 3.1	Objective 3.2	
Restructure the organization to ensure long-term stability and responsiveness.		Increase organizational capacity for fund development		Secure funding for the capital costs of the new shelter	Reduce risks of potential funding shortfall for the new shelter	Fully train all board, management, staff and volunteers in trauma-informed, harm reduction and accessibility.	Enhance Nellie's leadership position by promoting their service delivery model	
Strategy 1.1.1	Strategy 1.1.2	Strategy 1.2.1	Strategy 1.2.2	Strategy 2.1.1	Strategy 2.2.1	Strategy 3.1.1	Strategy 3.2.1	Strategy 3.2.2
Redesign organizational structure and enhance HR and fund development functions.	Improve board succession planning.	Expand board capacity for fund development.	Strengthen branding and marketing.	Organize a capital campaign.	Develop a contingency plan for funding for new shelter.	Create an onboarding and ongoing training plan to be implemented for board, staff, management and volunteers.	Formalize Nellie's service model.	Promote and share knowledge with external service providers.
Actions	Actions	Actions	Actions	Actions	Actions	Actions	Actions	Actions
a) Hire a consultant to analyze the organizational structure, needs and gaps. b) Develop a plan to restructure the organization. c) Conduct a budget review to implement the newly approved structure.	a) Analyze the board's needs and gaps, including those of the board executive. b) Develop a recruitment strategy to identify new board members who meet these needs and gaps. c) Identify new executive members. d) Strengthen the onboarding process for new board members and new board executive members.	a) Revise general job description for board members to emphasize fund development responsibility. b) Initiate recruitment process for a board member with fund development experience.	a) Enhance fundraising tools. a) Refresh marketing materials.	a) Orient management and board to the requirements of a capital campaign. b) Create a capital campaign strategy. c) Create Ad-Hoc committee and Recruit experienced members to join Capital Campaign Committee.	a) Identify elements of contingency plan, such as media plan, alternate sources of funding. b) Conduct research and consultation to inform plan. c) Draft contingency plan for board approval.	a) Review board. Management, staff and volunteer orientation processes to identify gaps. b) As a result of the review set priorities for training and development.	a) Define best practices for service delivery. b) Create a best practice guide.	a) Create a train the trainer program based on Nellie's service model and areas of expertise. b) Market the train the trainer program to the social services sector.



OUTCOMES

One of the strategic directions will be the primary focus of the board in each of the three years covered by the strategic plan. The three areas of focus have been summarized as “people”, “capital” and “leadership”. Activities relating to all three areas of focus will occur in all three years. However, setting a specific outcome to be achieved for a single area of focus in each of the three years will help to concentrate the organization’s energy and resources and thus increase the momentum for change.

Area of Focus	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	People	Capital	Leadership
Strategic Direction	Improve organizational capacity and resilience.	Expand and improve the physical space to better serve Nellie’s priority populations.	Strengthen expertise and leadership around women and children with complex needs from a trauma- informed, harm reduction and accessibility framework.
Expected Outcomes	By the end of Year 1, Nellie’s will have approved a new organizational structure that will meet current and emerging needs, and a financial plan to implement a phased organizational change process.	By the end of Year 2 Management and Board will have completed Capital Campaign training and an ad hoc Capital Campaign Committee will have been created.	By the end of Year 3 Nellie’s will have developed a best practice guide and train-the-trainer program for working with women and children with complex needs from a trauma-informed, harm reduction and accessibility framework.

±



APPENDIX 1: STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT REPORT

A strategic planning retreat was held on November 3, 2018 from 9:00 – 4:00 p.m., facilitated by the consultant.

Ten board members and four management staff participated in the retreat:

Board

Sherece Taffe	Bethany Johnson	Donnalea Sparling	Dale Yurka
Dana Granofsky	Suzanne Johnson	Kate Cowan	Joanne Fong
Erin Pollon	Donna Kellway		

Management Team

Margarita Mendez	Anna Morgan	Janna Cheng-Brown	Ingrid Graham
------------------	-------------	-------------------	---------------

The goals of the retreat were to:

1. Share results and findings of the Strategic Planning Committee's work to date;
2. Establish alignment and buy-in around directions and strategies;
3. Make some significant decisions with a clear understanding their implications;
4. Productive discussion of key issues facing Nellie's and how best to address them through a strategic plan; and
5. Empower board and management to take action to move the organization forward.

A meeting package was circulated prior to the meeting containing the agenda, background reports and three strategic directions proposed by the Strategic Planning Committee.

During the strategic planning retreat, participants:

- affirmed their commitment to the values, vision and mission of Nellie's;
- reviewed and revised the strategic directions proposed by the Strategic Planning Committee;
- divided into three groups, each of which worked on developing objectives, strategies and actions for one of the strategic directions;
- reviewed, discussed and revised various components of the plan; and
- discussed and confirmed the next steps in the strategic planning process.

At the conclusion of the retreat, participants expressed satisfaction at the progress that had been made in developing the strategic plan, and with the process of the session.

The consultant compiled notes from the retreat for review by the Strategic Planning Committee.



APPENDIX 2: CONSULTATION SYNTHESIS REPORT

October 9, 2018

This report summarizes the results of a series of stakeholder consultations that were conducted by the consultant to ensure that the strategic plan would reflect the experience and knowledge of personnel at all levels of the organization. Three focus groups were held with staff, and individual key informant interviews were held with the Executive Director, a board member and a consultant who had worked extensively with the board on board development.

From the notes and recordings of the focus groups and interviews, two summary sections have been developed. The first is a summary of the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified by the participants. The second is a list of key priorities that were articulated by several respondents.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unique social justice / AOAR framework• History and reputation• Dedicated staff• Professionalism• Fund development strategies• Good relationship with community, funders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insufficient and unstable funding• not enough support for shelter staff; heavy workload, complex needs, emotionally-draining• Weak management structure; insufficient management staff for shelter and CSO Programs; lack of capacity to plan for E.D. succession• Information-sharing and transparency between management and front-line staff• Insufficient orientation of new board members to board process• Ongoing clarification required regarding governance vs. operation responsibilities• Insufficient space and programming for increased number of children at the shelter• Insufficient accessibility at shelter for women with physical disabilities and hearing impairments



Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment of programs against priorities; make appropriate referrals; decide when to lead and when to partner• Major public fundraising campaign• Recruit board members with experience in fund development• Staff training re new knowledge and methods and self-care• Change management process regarding move to new shelter and integration of program staff• Joint board and staff training• Become more involved in advocacy work• Develop training tools for harm reduction, mental health and trauma; could become more known for this work• Establish transitional housing; keep old shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change in provincial government may cause delays or reductions in funding• Reduction of government funding for income supports, housing, harm reduction services, etc. will place further strain on community resources, including Nellie's• Limited space and staff time and a high level of diversity among residents (e.g. short vs. long-term, mental health issues, transgender) leads to conflict; level of violence could escalate with risk of injury to staff and residents.

Key Priorities

At its September 26' 2018 meeting, the Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the notes of the stakeholder interviews and focus groups and identified three key priorities to be addressed in Nellie's new strategic plan.

- Increase expertise and establish leadership role in providing trauma-informed shelter and capacity-building services to women with mental health issues and disabilities.
- Improve the physical space of the shelter; i.e. increase the number of beds; the space allocated per bed; privacy; play space; accessibility, etc.
- Organizational structure, particularly with respect to human resources allocations.



APPENDIX 3: BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS REPORT

August 15, 2018

A. Documents Reviewed

The following documents were reviewed to inform the development of Nellie's 2018 strategic plan.

1. Nellie's Program Evaluation Report June 2017
2. Nellie's Transitional Plan 2015-2017
3. CSS Funding Submission 2017
4. Nellie's Strategic Plan 2010-2014
5. Nellie's Implementation Strategic Plan 2010-2014
6. Strategic Plan Committee Meeting Minutes: April 9, 2018 and March 19, 2018
7. Nellie's Management Team Planning Discussion Notes, October 18, 2017
8. Nellie's Social Justice Committee Priorities and Areas of Focus, October 19 2016

B. Methodology

The analysis of secondary data previously collected by Nellie's, linked with notes from various committee meetings, provides a comprehensive resource from which new understandings can be derived and new connections made among the various components of the organization. Previous planning processes documented significant stakeholder engagement; i.e. of clients, staff, board, volunteers and clients, which will also inform the current planning process.

During the initial review of each of the documents listed above, points relating to strategic planning were noted and organized under relevant topic headings. The documents were reviewed again to capture thematic content in a more systematic manner. To mitigate the limited knowledge of the consultant with regard to the context in which the previous data was collected or reported, the report will be validated by Nellie's Strategic Planning Committee.

C. Areas of Focus

Four main areas of focus were identified in the analysis of the background documents: Organizational Description, Situational Assessment, Strategic Directions and Goals/Objectives. The main points identified in the review documents for each of these areas are listed below.

1. Organizational Description

- a) **Vision:** Social change through shelter, education and advocacy, to achieve social justice for all women and children.
- b) **Values:** Nellie's is a community-based feminist organization which operates within an anti-racism and anti-oppression framework.



- c) **Mission:** Nellie's mission is to operate programs and services for women and children who have and are experiencing oppressions such as violence, poverty and homelessness.

d) **Population Served:**

Women who are living in or at risk of poverty who face multiple barriers and marginalization such as newcomers, racialized women, Indigenous women, transgendered women, sex workers and women with disabilities.

2. Situational Assessment

a) External Factors

- i) Changes in United Way funding
- ii) Change in provincial government
- iii) Municipal election Oct 2018
- iv) Violence Against Women (VAW) sector lobbyist hired to work at the systems change level

b) Internal Factors

Strengths:

- i) History: provided shelter services since 1973
- ii) Organizational Identity: strong values base and a defined niche in VAW sector; highly recognized and valued as an expert in trauma-informed, feminist services that integrate a harm reduction approach
- iii) Social justice (SJ): Advocacy and SJ work engage clients and are respected within the sector
- iv) Effective Methods: Nellie's uses the JARS (Justice, Autonomy; Restoration, Safety) and Sustainable Livelihoods frameworks.
- v) Staff: flexible/open to change/committed; seen by clients as helpful, supportive, caring
- vi) Social Connections: connections with others and opportunities for peer support are fostered
- vii) Evidence-based: strong internal and external data collection to support programming; strong evaluation framework; previous organizational evaluation was very positive.
- viii) Partnerships: Partnership is a key lever in achieving Nellie's mandate. Nellie's has over 60 organizational partners at present.
- ix) Accessibility: Numerous strategies are in place to ensure accessibility, including intensive outreach through other agencies
- x) Physical Space: Community Support and Outreach (CSO) space is regarded as an asset



Areas of Concern

- i) Requests from clients for enhanced programs and supports (see Goals section)
- ii) Human Resources
 - expiration of collective agreement in 2020
 - retirements and staff turnover
 - Bill 148
 - lean management team (impact on hiring, retention/risk)
 - volunteer recruitment/ coordination
- iii) Organizational structure (grassroots collective ⇒ transitional ⇒ professional) Nellie's is a different organization from when last SP was developed
- iv) Relocation to new shelter
- v) Cleanliness and food quality of shelter are important to clients
- vi) Increasing complexity of needs of client population; increasing number of clients with complex needs, increasing number of women with children.

3. Strategic Directions/Priorities

The following directions and priorities were either stated in previous plans or identified in committee meeting notes.

- a) **2010-2014 Strategic Plan:** Four strategic directions were identified:
 - Be focused and engaged in advocacy and our response to emerging issues;
 - Strengthen and re-align our programs and services;
 - Increase our revenue (develop fundraising plan); and
 - Obtain new space (space planning, capital campaign).
- b) **SJ Committee:** SJ priorities were identified as the intersecting issues of trauma, substance use and mental health, with three key outcomes:
 - i) Women and children are safer and urgent basic needs are met;
 - ii) Longer-Term Security/Access to Resources; and
 - iii) Social Justice.

See Appendix 1 for SJ priority outcomes and key actions.
- c) **Physical Location and Design:** Accessible shelter, adequate physical space for people to gather, and the planned relocation of the shelter were mentioned in more than one document.
- d) **Maximizing impact:** Three references were made to maximizing impact; i.e.:
 - Organizational partnerships;
 - Representation on community tables; and
 - Links to broader social justice movement.
- e) **Sustainability/Fundraising:** no particular strategies were specified.
- f) **Research and evaluation:** no research questions were specified.
- g) **Branding:** Suggestions were made to re-define, re-position, and/or brand the organization in preparation for 50 -year anniversary in 2023.



4. Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives were either stated in previous plans or identified in committee meeting notes. Needs identified by staff and clients are also included here as a response to them would require setting goals.

a) Fundraising

- i) Questions as to whether fundraising (FR) efforts should be more professionalized, strategic and/or donor-centric
- ii) Need to raise \$ for SJ work
- iii) Develop key FR messages targeted to specific donor groups
- iv) Determine Major Giving target list based on social justice priorities
- v) Determine a Major Giving and Fund-raiser -related Champion
- vi) Training and expectation of board and staff regarding fundraising
- vii) Develop a business case for funding for sexual violence work

b) Social Justice

A need was identified for more targeted SJ goals, with support from management and partners.

c) Programs and Supports

i. From CSO application: Objectives

- To reduce social isolation and increase resilience through assessment of needs, increased knowledge of and access to services and peer-to-peer support
- To understand systems that impact the lives of women, including systemic oppressions and barriers
- To support women to transition out of poverty by building employment and life skills

ii. Client input from evaluation report: Clients would like more

- children's programs
- evening and week-end programs
- more help to navigate government services

iii. Staff input from evaluation report and management team discussion: Needs were identified in the areas of

- mental health/counselling support
- case management of clients
- structured group programming that teach and explore the cycle of abuse, power and privilege, social justice, advocacy, self-care, etc.
- intake processes and tools
- ways to engage CSO clients over time to develop social justice and advocacy skills so that they can play a role in system change work



iv. From evaluation report – Recommendations:

- Consider having a service delivery model where the CSO staff (i.e., housing staff) are located within the shelter at certain times of day in order to support shelter clients to access the expertise of those staff.
- Consider a mental health worker that can de-escalate crisis, assess trauma, and engage in crisis intervention as needed, to help build the capacity of the organization.
- Move to a more active case management model, in order to meet evolving client needs. Include in this model a more formalized assessment of trauma so staff can better connect clients to the right resources and can connect healing trauma to self-care, community engagement and life goals.
- Change having shelter programming dollars going to event planning and instead focus on programming that supports group-based interventions that teach and support an analysis around VAW and systemic changes (also engaging CSO clients), with some event elements built in.
- Further articulate and develop Nellie's unique service delivery approach to trauma, harm reduction and mental health in order to teach it to staff and to other organizations
- Further develop the pathway for clients at CSO to drive to the social justice priorities developed in 2016 (where CSO clients can start to get resident leadership and civic engagement training in order to do social justice work in the community).

d) Organizational Structure and Management

Recommendations and staff input from evaluation report included:

- i) Consider revising the data strategy for Nellie's, in order to better capture the breadth and depth of work being done and services being provided (e.g., better tracking referrals, applications made, advocacy engagements, etc.).
- ii) Partner strategically to support social justice priority areas and populations.
- iii) New management structure
- iv) Provide more supports to staff and to bridge external and internal social justice work.
- v) Find ways to communicate and collaborate re: service delivery between the shelter and CSO
- vi) Professional training to support clients who have experienced trauma
- vii) Support for staff engaged in emotionally demanding work
- viii) Revise the staff training plan
- ix) Develop a relief staff training program



D. Thematic Analysis

An analysis of the background documents yielded several themes regarding a preferred future for Nellie's. The table below identifies the theme area and items that might be addressed in a strategic plan.

Theme	Summary Analysis
Organizational Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nellie's has a strong and widely shared sense of vision, values and mission May be beneficial to conduct a re-branding of Nellie's; i.e., articulate position in the VAW sector, devise brand strategy, design visual identity, write brand messaging and set brand standards; possibly linked to 50-year anniversary
Organizational Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition from grassroots collective to professional service may require changes to various organizational components Increase collaborative service delivery between the shelter and the CSO
Physical Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of move to new shelter will be a significant area of focus over the next few months
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues around the collective agreement, compliance with Bill 148 and staff succession may need to be addressed Lean management team may not be sufficient to meet program coordination, staff training and staff/client support needs Specialized mental health/trauma workers would be helpful More support is needed for staff engaged in emotionally demanding work, and for self-care A training program for relief staff is needed
Programs and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing complexity of needs of client population requires additional programs, supports and possibly adjustments to the service delivery model Clients would benefit from more children's programs and weekend programs Increased structure for intake, case management and group SJ programs could be beneficial
Social Justice/ Advocacy	<p>This is a high priority area, for which specific objectives and measures could to be set; e.g.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Engage clients in SJ and advocacy work Link to broader SJ movement within the VAW sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure representation on community tables Participate in sector-wide advocacy Partner strategically to support SJ priorities
Resource Development	<p>It would be beneficial to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business case for funding for sexual violence work Identify new methods of revenue generation Strategically align program objectives with targeted donors or funders Strengthen donor relations Consider enhancing professional FR support



E. Conclusions

Throughout the background documents there was a high level of consistency with regard to Nellie's values, general directions and priorities. All documents revealed Nellie's to be a values-based organization with a long history, strong reputation and a solid niche in the VAW sector. Many organizational strengths were noted, such as high-quality services, caring staff, peer support, a multitude of partnerships and strong social justice and advocacy priorities.

Many of the items noted in this review relate to management functions and organizational enablers, such as fundraising, staff training, deployment of human resources, and program coordination. For the purposes of the strategic planning process we can assume that basic management functions are being carried out effectively and according to established standards. Some of these elements may be considered while developing the implementation plan. Others are within the operational jurisdiction of the Executive Director and would more appropriately be addressed within the context of an organizational review or the Executive Director's performance evaluation.

It was noted that some of the previous plans contained a lot of questions. It is important to identify data requirements and complete the data collection before attempting to create a strategic plan. This will enable more definite objectives and activities to be stated in the plan.