

ARAW
STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT
NOTES

On Thursday, October 10, 2019 the ARAW Board and staff met to determine keys goals for ARAW for the next 3 years.

VISION

The group reviewed a proposed vision statement for ARAW.

Elderly women in our community will live well and with dignity.

There was discussion on whether or not the vision statement should include “elderly women living alone” and/or “elderly women in need”.

After discussing it everyone agreed that the vision statement is meant to be aspirational and could encompass all elderly women and therefore it was accepted as written.

MISSION

The group reviewed the current mission statement and a proposed revised mission statement.

The original mission statement:

The mission of The Association for the Relief of Aged Women is to furnish assistance to and promote the welfare and relief of elderly women.

The proposed revised mission statement:

To furnish financial assistance and friendship for the welfare and relief of elderly women.

We do this by:

Investing in our community partners to identify and address women’s unmet needs.

Meeting our beneficiaries’ needs through one time, intermittent or ongoing financial support.

Providing friendship to women through social visits.

The group offered the following questions and suggestions.

1. Everyone liked incorporating “friendship” into the mission statement.
2. The revised statement is too narrow in scope.
3. ARAW should not lose “promote the welfare.”
4. Incorporating “promote” into the mission statement leaves the possibility of other ways to help.
5. In the first bullet under “We do this by”, are we investing or doing?
6. The first bullet should include Investing and “**collaborating**”.
7. Add a bullet to address the idea of promoting the welfare of elderly women.

The group agreed on the following revised mission statement:

We furnish financial assistance, friendship, and promote the welfare and relief of elderly women.

We do this by:

- *Investing in and **collaborating** with our community partners to identify and address women's unmet needs.*
- *Meeting our beneficiaries' needs through one time, intermittent or ongoing financial support.*
- *Providing friendship to women through social visits.*
- **Promoting**... need to create a phrase for this.

The strategic planning committee will refine the bullets associated with the mission statement and present the both the vision and the mission statement to the board for their final approval.

VALUES

The group review the draft core values.

- Empowering women to help themselves.
- Women helping women.
- Not alms alone, but a friend.

The group offered the following comments:

1. Is "empowering" what ARAW really does?
2. Is hope part of the values?
3. Change empower to enable.
4. To "help themselves" should read to live with dignity, or to "live to their maximum potential" or "to be self-reliant."
5. ARAW's support alleviates stress and improves the women's circumstances.
6. Bullets 2 and 3 are fine- do we need bullet one?

The strategic planning committee will review and revise the core values.

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

The group agreed to a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for ARAW. The following are the ones that the group identified as most significant. The numbers following each item are the number of people who designated the item as a priority, followed in parentheses by the number of those people who gave the item a star, meaning it is a major priority.

Strengths

1. Visiting the beneficiaries 10 (2 stars)
 - Relationship with the women
2. Funds unmet needs no one else will fund 9 (6 stars)

3. Committed/involved board	7 (3 stars)
4. Commitment to mission	7 (3 star)
5. Clear mission	6 (3 stars)
6. Effective committees	4 (1 star)
7. Energetic new E.D.	3 (1 star)
8. Don't have to rely on fundraising	3 (1 star)
9. Healthy portfolio	3
10. Flexibility of discretionary fund	3
11. History- years in service	2
12. Empathy	1

Weaknesses

1. Diversity of the beneficiaries	9
2. Measuring the ROI of ARAW's investments	8 (5 stars)
3. Board Diversity	8 (4 stars)
4. No long-term financial plan	8 (4 stars)
5. Consistency of beneficiary visits	7 (2 stars)
6. Policies, grant/beneficiary support process often changes as the board and its leadership changes	3
7. Board structure	2 (2 stars)
8. Lack of consistency in how outreach workers perform their jobs	2
9. Small office space	1
10. Understand board and E.D. roles	1
11. Use of technology	1
12. Relationship with some community partners	1

Opportunities

1. Find new office space	13 (2 stars)
2. Invest in programs (e.g. financial, literacy, Health, etc.)	9 (2 stars)
3. Elderly population is increasing	6 (3 stars)
4. Fundraising	5 (3 stars)
5. Partnerships with other organizations serving the same population	5 (2 star)
6. Expand geographical footprint	4 (3 stars)
7. Run own programs for beneficiaries	3 stars
8. Take an active role in the community	3 stars

Threats

1. Downturn in the market	15 (12 stars)
2. Elderly population is increasing	12
3. Growing multi-lingual population	5 (1 star)
4. Government cutbacks	5 (1 star)
5. Future of the board (e.g. virtual meetings)	8 (1 star)

GOALS

Five draft focal areas were presented to the group as follows:

1. Increase the return on our investment by giving a higher percentage of our funds directly to the women who need it.
2. Broaden our reach in support of elderly women.
3. Strengthen the impact of visits to ARAW beneficiaries.
4. Improve our organizational infrastructure to support the strategic plan.
5. Ensure that we are financially sustainable.

The group broke into 3 groups to discuss the first three focal areas, as well as the board portion of the infrastructure focal area.

Group 1- Clare, Jane, Jeanette, Maria, Rosemary, Susan

Draft Goal #1: Increase the return on our investment by giving a higher percentage of our funds directly to the women who need it.

The group revised the goal to read:

Reallocate our funds to increase direct support to women in need.

The group identified the following strategies:

1. Refocus the grant funding process.
2. Establish a “true” RFP process.
3. Develop a strategic financial plan.
4. Focus on efficacy and cost savings.

In regard to strategies and action steps for the board, group 1 identified the following:

1. Bring new members into leadership roles earlier.
2. Rotate chairs on committees.
 - Establish co-chairs
3. Review the composition and work of the executive committee.
4. Undertake board succession planning.
5. Look at the board meeting experience.
 - Consider a consent agenda
6. Focus on recruitment.
7. Continued board education and development.

Group 2: Ann, Debbie, Gale, Jo-Ann, Olivia, Roseanne

Draft Goal #2: Broaden our reach in support of elderly women

The group revised the goal to read:

Broaden our reach and support of elderly women.

The group identified the following strategies and action steps:

1. Identify and reach additional underserved elderly women.
 - In-house outreach
 - Possible resources- doctors, police, family members, PACE, Salvation Army, food pantries, sister rose, churches, and community agencies
2. Offer programs- ancillary and existing.
3. Make ourselves known in the community.
 - Mixers
 - Branding
 - Conversations to establish relationships

In regard to strategies and action steps for the board, group 2 identified the following:

1. Better communications between the board and the office and to others.
2. Introduce quarterly “listening” lunches where board members can learn from each other.
3. Improve the structure and content of the monthly board meetings.
4. Work with outside advisors.

Group 3: Diane, Gretchen, Mary, Pam, Shannon

Draft Goal #3: Strengthen the impact of visits to ARAW beneficiaries.

The group revised the goal to read:

Strengthen the impact of visits to ARAW beneficiaries to promote friendship.

The group identified the following strategies and action steps:

1. Standardized visiting protocol.
 - Develop and implement training program
 - Create a checklist for the visits
 - Develop a questionnaire to identify
2. Coordinate efforts of outreach workers.
 - Evaluate opportunities to use ARAW visits in place of some social worker visits

The group also highlighted the following questions and concerns:

1. Going forward should ARAW rotate through all the beneficiaries or see beneficiaries on an as needed basis?
2. Currently, the visits are happening but the relationships are not being developed.
3. How do we address the idea of “friendship” and ensure that we are creating friendships?

In regard to strategies and action steps for the board, group 3 identified the following:

1. The board should reflect the community we serve.
2. Promote age diversity.
3. Redefine the role and makeup of the executive committee.
4. Secure new office space.
5. Define future staffing needs.

The whole group discussed the sustainability focal area and possible strategies.

Draft Sustainability Goal: Ensure that we are financially sustainable.

The group accepted the goal as written.

The group's comments:

1. Build reserves.
2. Create and populate an investment committee.
 - Add ad hoc or board members who are industry experts.
3. Develop a policy on investments and spending.
 - Look at alternative investments.
 - Periodically comparison shop investment managers.
4. Develop a long term financial plan, budget, etc.
5. Evaluate buying versus leasing office space.
6. We do not need to do fundraising in the next three years.
 - Keep fundraising on the radar.
 - Do long-term plan in anticipation of possibly having to fundraise in the future.
 - Find other funds with similar missions.
7. Become more well known
 - Develop an annual report to tell the story.
 - Continue to develop the website.
8. Control expenses.