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# **2025 – 2028 Strategic Plan**

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## LETTER TO OUR COMMUNITY

Dear Friends of the YWCA Greater Newburyport:

2024 marks the 141<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the YWCA (the YW) in Newburyport. Over the past 141 years, the YW has experienced a great depression, several recessions, two world wars, and now two global pandemics. The most recent pandemic caused many of us to rethink our place in the world and question what is truly important.

It seems fitting that the organization took an opportunity this year to ask our members, donors, supporters, and staff what is important about the YW and why it matters in our community today.

We learned that:

- The YW stands as a leader and thought partner in addressing issues of women's rights and racial justice.
- The programs and services provided by the YW—**wellness, aquatics, affordable housing, childcare, youth leadership development, and racial justice**—are essential to those who rely upon them. However, they are often described as "hidden gems" within the broader community.

The goals and strategies that follow are designed to ensure that the YW can meet the needs of the community and those it serves today and into the future. We're proud of this Plan and excited about continuing the organization's success.

Today, we invite everyone to join us as we implement this newly developed roadmap that will guide the YW into the future. Together, we will continue working to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.

Sincerely,

John Feehan  
Executive Director

Deborah Rider  
Board President

### Design Team Members

Jessica Baylor  
Nancy Batista-Caswell  
Amanda Bradbury  
John Feehan

Hannah MacVane  
Margaret McCarthy  
Jaclyn Meers  
Sara Quimby

Deborah Rider  
Robin Schell  
Tsveta Semova

## Key Insights

Through the process of developing our strategic Plan, we gained valuable insights that supported the creation of the Plan's goals and strategies.

The YW serves as a vital community resource, offering a wide range of programs and services with a small and dedicated staff. Our professional staff is respected in the community, passionate about the mission, and committed to delivering high-quality services.

The community sees the YW as a leader in promoting racial justice. The organization holds an important role in leading diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and thus has the opportunity to collaborate and enhance its leadership in education, convene thought leaders, and provide platforms for community discussions to advance racial justice in our predominantly white community.

The YW is a leading provider of affordable housing in the community. Access to safe, stable, and affordable housing is essential for a healthy community and the empowerment of women. It also addresses the harm caused by systemic racially based housing discrimination.

Within the framework of social determinants of health, the YW understands that fitness directly impacts physical and mental health. By providing equitable access to our programs, we aim to strengthen the organization and the community as a whole.

The YW recognizes the importance of strategic communication and will implement a comprehensive marketing plan to streamline communication, grow programming and membership, attract additional resources, and enable the organization to adapt and respond effectively to the community's needs.

The YW values collaboration that strengthens and supports its mission and service to the community. The organization will continue to build community relationships and partnerships as it evolves and develops groundbreaking projects.

The YW's vibrant and diverse Board of Directors, with members from diverse backgrounds, is dedicated to fulfilling its mission, meeting its governance responsibilities, and adapting to support its growth. Through board service, there are opportunities to complement the work of the staff, serve as mission ambassadors in the community, and offer more mentoring and leadership opportunities for young women.

## MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

### Mission Statement

YWCA Greater Newburyport is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

### Vision For Our Community

YWCA Greater Newburyport envisions a healthy, safe, and supportive community for all. We strive to:

- **Build awareness** for equity and racial justice through advocacy and education, and empower our greater community to address injustices with us.
- **Innovate and improve our programs, operations, and services** by providing safe, affordable, and supportive child care, youth development, affordable housing, and health and wellness opportunities.
- **Grow access to essential services** by providing opportunities for women and their families to succeed.
- **Work collaboratively** by building and strengthening community partnerships and relationships with funders, supporters, local agencies, and community organizations.

### Our Values

**EMPOWERMENT** – Empowering women is the foundation of our work. We are committed to providing affordable child care, affordable housing, health and wellness services, leadership opportunities, and advocacy to promote gender equality.

**RACIAL JUSTICE** – Centering and elevating voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) to create healthy, safe, and accessible spaces that promote dignity for everyone.

**ACTIVISM** – We advocate for racial and social justice and women's rights, striving for a safe and healthy community for all.

**INCLUSIVITY** – Our programs are designed for all, regardless of background or identity. We strive to create experiences that foster a sense of belonging and community for all who participate.

**INTEGRITY** – We approach our work with honesty and authenticity and fulfill our mission ethically and responsibly.

**PERSISTENCE** – We recognize the deep-rooted nature of racism and sexism and understand that solutions will not come quickly. Therefore, we are dedicated to addressing these issues for the long haul.

**NON-VIOLENCE** - We seek to uphold Dr. King's vision of change in that evil can be resisted without resorting to violence.

## **DEVELOPING THE PLAN**

In the fall of 2023, a design team, including members of the Board of Directors and staff leadership, was formed to develop a three-year Strategic Plan for the YW. Fio Partners, a consulting firm that provides customized consulting services to ensure nonprofit organizations' healthy development and growth, was selected through a competitive bidding process.

From September 2023 through February 2024, the Design Team worked with Fio to build and review the information base needed to support the planning process.

The strategic planning process began with the design of the information-gathering phase. The process included opportunities to gather organizational observations from various perspectives, including Board members, staff, donors and funders, members, and community stakeholders. The information base included:

### **Internal Insights**

- A Board of Directors Online Survey gathering input into the design of the strategic planning process and perspectives of Board functioning
- Leadership staff interviews assessing multiple aspects of operations, input into the strategic design process, and perspectives of leadership functioning
- Staff focus groups gathering input on staff perceptions of the organization, its work, and its leaders
- Assessment of management functions
- Analysis of organizational finances
- Profiles of current programs, utilizing a customized template for information gathering

### **External Insights**

- Interviews with community stakeholders, including funders, partners, and community leaders both within Newburyport and the surrounding communities
- Community focus groups, including current members, former Board members, donors, volunteers, and community partners

- A Community online survey gathering input from current and past members, program participants, donors, and **supporters**.
- Research on Managing Historic Assets with a focus on best practices and resources available to nonprofit organizations that own and manage historic buildings.

Transparent communication was a key component of the strategic planning process. A communication portal was set up in Basecamp, and draft survey reports and analyses were posted online for the Design Team's review and comments. The Design Team also convened several times to review and discuss the activities and completed reports. They oversaw current and proposed activities relative to information gathering and conducted stakeholder interviews on behalf of the organization. Once the Design Team reviewed the information, it was distributed to the Board.

The YW held a retreat for the organization's Board of Directors in March 2024 to review the information base and provide input into the development of the Plan, with a focus on the mission, vision, values, and future organizational and program opportunities. The Plan will guide the organization's annual planning efforts through five primary organizational goals. Staff leadership and the Board will jointly track progress by monitoring the Plan's agreed-upon key results.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS 2025 – 2028**

Goal 1: Evaluate and strengthen existing programs, expanding services as opportunities arise.

Goal 2: Grow sustainable fundraising, marketing, and outreach efforts to increase organizational resources, program participation, and visibility in the community.

Goal 3: Strengthen community relationships through partnerships and emerge as a leader in community advocacy and education.

Goal 4: Strengthen organizational systems and infrastructure to meet operational needs.

Goal 5: Develop Board leadership to support the organization's evolution, growth, and impact.

## STRATEGIES

**Goal 1: Evaluate and strengthen existing programs, expanding services as opportunities arise.**

**Strategy 1:** Invest in staff and leadership that will position the YW's programming for the future.

### Proposed Activities

- Build a recruitment strategy for open positions.
- Identify training opportunities to strengthen expertise and center mission alignment.
- Strengthen internal communications for employees.
- Evaluate the appropriate staffing levels.
- Evaluate additional leadership positions (COO, Marketing, Fund Raising, and Business Development).

**Strategy 2:** Continue to develop affordable housing projects in underserved communities as opportunities arise.

### Proposed Activities:

- Assess and prioritize potential opportunities for feasibility.
- Regularly review and discuss opportunity areas (including geographic location) with leadership staff and the Board of Directors.
- Gather feedback and incorporate resident input into facility planning and management.
- Strengthen partner relationships.

**Strategy 3:** Build capacity in child care and youth education to serve more children and their families.

### Proposed Activities:

- Build program leadership through targeted hiring.
- Conduct space planning to meet programmatic needs, including identifying and evaluating new spaces in the community.
- Identify key community partners for program collaboration and expanded services.

**Strategy 4:** Design a plan to promote racial justice, educate the community, and foster inclusivity and equity.



Proposed Activities:

- Develop goals in collaboration with the Racial Justice Committee, Board, and leadership.
- Identify key community partners for program collaboration and expanded services.
- Build a program calendar to include current and future activities and events.

**Strategy 5:** Ensure accessibility and availability of health and wellness programming.

Proposed Activities:

- Establish a committee to support health and wellness priorities.
- Expand the definition of health and wellness and restructure the program portfolio to align with the social determinants of health.
- Identify and cultivate relationships with key community partners for program collaboration and expanded services.

**Strategy 6:** Build a consistent mechanism to collect feedback from YW members and community stakeholders to identify and address areas for improvement.

Proposed Activities:

- Conduct an annual feedback process (survey, phone, meetings, etc.).
- Review and discuss results with the Leadership Team.
- Identify priority areas for improvement with the Leadership Team, Executive Director, and Board of Directors.

**Goal 2: Grow sustainable fundraising, marketing, and outreach efforts to increase organizational resources, program participation, and visibility in the community.**

**Strategy 1:** Design and implement a fund development plan to grow fundraising and cultivation activities.

Proposed Activities:

- Review current donor data information.
- Research and analyze potential sources of funds.
- Segment and personalize cultivation and messaging activities.
- Solicit funds from priority areas.
- Identify key metrics to track success.

**Strategy 2:** Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing and social media plan for all programs and services.

Proposed Activities:

- Build a community events calendar, identifying important opportunities for the organization.
- Identify and integrate opportunities to expand and sustain membership.
- Identify social media opportunities and set goals.
- Identify key metrics to track success.
- Engage marketing and social media support.

**Strategy 3:** Build a team of organizational ambassadors to expand and diversify the YW's network.

Proposed Activities:

- Hone key speaking points to represent YW programs and advocacy.
- Train the organization's leadership as ambassadors, setting activities and expectations.
- Assign roles and responsibilities for the organization's leadership using the community events calendar.

**Goal 3: Strengthen community relationships through partnerships and emerge as a leader in community advocacy and education.**

**Strategy 1:** Cultivate key community partnerships and relationships, prioritizing opportunities to strengthen and expand YW services.

Proposed Activities:

- Develop a community asset and relationships map to evaluate current relationships.
- Identify opportunities to expand the YW's network and add to the community outreach calendar.
- Host community events and optimize the spaces at YW facilities.

**Strategy 2:** Expand community advocacy and education opportunities.

Proposed Activities:

- Update and implement the advocacy matrix.
- Identify opportunities to collaborate on community advocacy efforts.
- Regularly organize community events and discussions to establish the YW's role as a convener.

#### Goal 4: Strengthen organizational systems and infrastructure to meet operational needs.

**Strategy 1:** Build and implement a comprehensive facilities maintenance plan and calendar for all YW buildings to manage regular maintenance, repairs, updates, and capital improvements.

Proposed Activities:

- Work with staff to evaluate the condition of buildings and facilities.
- Plan, budget, and schedule regular maintenance activities.
- Provide a system for staff to report maintenance concerns.
- Develop a mechanism to review and discuss the management and use of YW's historic assets.

**Strategy 2:** Build and implement a multi-year organizational technology plan.

Proposed Activities:

- Assess current technology, identifying and prioritizing organizational needs.
- Research and secure options for technology expertise as the budget allows.

#### Goal 5: Develop Board leadership to support the organization's evolution, growth, and impact.

**Strategy 1:** Define the role of the Board and set expectations for fundraising.

Proposed Activities:

- Assign clear roles to Board members to cultivate key donor relationships.
- Leverage Board member connections to increase name recognition and raise additional funds for the organization.

**Strategy 2:** Expand and diversify key organizational relationships by training Board members to serve as community ambassadors.

Proposed Activity:

- Design and implement ongoing ambassador training for Board and committee members.

**Strategy 3:** Diversify and strengthen Board skills and expertise to support the organization's strategic priorities.

Proposed Activities:

- Create a Board handbook to define the roles and expectations of YW Board members.
- Map current skillsets and expertise to identify gaps and anticipate future needs as the organization evolves.
- Add new Board members according to priorities.
- Identify and implement Board training opportunities to support the organization's advocacy goals.

**Strategy 4:** Align Board annual planning with the organization's strategic priorities.

Proposed Activities:

- Build an annual practice of setting Board goals.
- Self-assess against set goals.
- Evaluate and discuss the effectiveness of the Board's performance.

## MONITORING OUR PROGRESS

### Implementation Approach

The Strategic Plan is a living document and a road map to which the YW staff and Board can be held accountable. The Plan will be used to create annual goals for the organization, the Board of Directors, and staff leadership. Progress against annual goals will be monitored by ensuring regular updates at Board meetings and consistent reporting on desired key results. In addition, a detailed implementation plan will be used to track progress against the selected strategies and tactics for the first year and then updated accordingly for each successive year.