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# West Hawai'i Mediation Center

**Report of the Strategic Planning Committee**

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## Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Timeline, Process, and Procedures	3
Participants and Stakeholders	4
Mission	5
Vision	6
Goals	7
Goals and Strategies: An Overview	8
Goals and Strategies: Detail	11

# Introduction

**If you don't know where you are going, how will you know you got there? OR as Yogi Berra said, "If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else."**

Those statements are what underlies the need for Strategic Planning. Developing a plan to guide an organization helps to give purpose and direction. A good plan can provide a concrete path to move forward, giving an organization a reason to do what it is designed to do.

The Strategic Plan starts with identifying why it exists – its purpose, its mission. Developing a good mission statement requires a look into the very fabric of the organization. At its core, the mission tells the world around you what you do well every day.

Once the organization has its mission, it can look forward to ascertaining what its world will be like in the future – its vision. Having a vision is important because then you can begin to develop strategies and set goals with actions that will help you to get there. Succinctly, what is it that the organization wants to be in the world. You plan with purpose involving all stakeholders.

That is a Strategic Plan. Mission, vision, strategies, goals, and action steps – all put into place to give guidance to the board, the executive director, and staff. Plan implementation could be seen as the ultimate conclusion to Strategic Planning but it's not!

Regularly reviewing, gentle tweaking, and reporting to stakeholders – they all lead into a spiral of continuous improvement. The organization constantly adjusts to changing needs both internally and externally. Therefore, it is important, periodically, to do an intensive assessment and update of the Strategic Plan to identify accomplishments, continued needs, and new challenges.

# Timeline, Process, and Procedures

West Hawaii Mediation Center began to develop its first Strategic Plan in 2017. Under the leadership of Giovanna Gherardi, Ruth Smith, and Amanda Blount (Interim Executive Director), the plan was completed in early 2018 and adopted by the WHMC Board of Directors in February 2018. Soon after, the Board recruited its new Executive Director, Eric Paul. Together, they began implementing the plan.

As the Strategic Plan implementation became the responsibility of the Executive Director, the Board regularly reviewed progress with the ED. Successes were celebrated while points of focus were addressed.

In early 2020, the Board began preparing for a complete review and assessment of the existing strategic plan. They appointed a planning committee (Jasmin Kieman, Eric Paul, and George Winchell) to organize and lead the planning process. And then March of 2020 thrust the world to adapt in the midst of the Covid pandemic. New programs and protocols were developed to help with landlord/tenant issues and the concerns for evictions. Peer mediation programs adapted because schools were closed. Massive adjustments were forced upon us. The planning process was conducted between the Fall of 2020 and the Fall of 2021. A new Strategic Plan was implemented for 2022-2024.

In the summer of 2024, the board extended the Strategic Plan to June 30 of 2025, and the process for a new Strategic Plan commenced. From August 2024 through June of 2025, the leadership of George Winchell, Stephanie Beeby, Charlene Nishida, Paul Darr, and Eric Paul guided the organization through assessments, surveys, in-person feedback, dialogue with board and staff, and many drafts and re-writes to amend the Strategic Plan.

This document sets forth a course of action with new and revised strategies containing updated goals and new action steps.

Thank you to the Board of Directors, the staff, mediators, and other stakeholders for their mana'o. Their support will help to make this a **working document** and not just a set of papers in a file cabinet.

# Participants and Stakeholders

## Board of Directors

**CHARLES GREENFIELD (PRESIDENT)**  
**CHARLENE NISHIDA (VICE PRESIDENT)**  
**NELSON HAIRSTON JR. (SECRETARY)**  
**PAUL DARR (TREASURER)**  
**SEAN DUIM (DIRECTOR)**  
**STEPHANIE BEEBY (DIRECTOR)**  
**GEORGE WINCHELL (DIRECTOR)**

## Staff

**ERIC PAUL (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR)**  
**GINA AGUSTIN (MEDIATION PROGRAM MANAGER)**  
**KATRINA ZAVALNEY (PEER MEDIATION COORDINATOR)**  
**JENNIFER HALLEY (FINANCE MANAGER)**  
**KATE SIMS (MEDIATION COORDINATOR)**  
**CIETTA PENN (RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COORDINATOR)**

## Mediators and Community Members

**MARY MOWDY**  
**LINDA JEFFREY**  
**LEROY GROSE**  
**KAWEHI INABA**  
**MICHELE CHAVEZ-PARDINI**  
**GRAYSON HASHIDA**  
**CECILIA POBLETE**  
**AK SHINGLE**  
**GIOVANNA GHERARDI**  
**MARK HOLST**  
**AMANDA MAKIO**

## Community Survey

A total of 33 respondents to our community survey.

# Mission

## **WHMC helps people resolve conflict**

A mission statement is a declaration of purpose for an organization. It is a succinct statement that proclaims what WHMC strives to do in the here and now. The mission is powerful in its simplicity. It strips away all the extraneous and places focus on why we exist. What is it we want to be known for in the community we serve? What do we do every day? For the Board, staff and volunteers, the mission is why we are here. The mission statement boldly announces that as part of the WHMC, *we help people resolve conflict.*

# Vision

## **Trusted partners to cultivate a culture of peace.**

When an organization knows its purpose, its *mission*, it can look to tomorrow and beyond, its *vision*. A vision describes where we want to be in the future. What does West Hawaii Mediation Center want to achieve in the long-run? The vision provides the foundation for our planning. We set goals that move us toward that future vision. And then strategize on how to best accomplish those goals; in order for WHMC *to be trusted partners to cultivate a culture of peace*.

# Goals

## Achieving Our Vision

We have a mission for NOW and a vision for the FUTURE. Now, how do we get from here to there? We plan. We develop goals, strategies, and measurable action steps to allow us to achieve our vision. To accomplish this vision, WHMC has identified five goals:

1. Increase awareness and presence of WHMC and our services in the community.
2. Empower clients in conflict by providing skilled and engaged volunteer mediators to facilitate effective mediations.
3. Provide effective conflict resolution for youth: in schools and with youth organizations.
4. Sustain and grow restorative justice alternatives in West Hawai'i.
5. Identify and diversify consistent funding sources for the financial stability of WHMC.
6. Strengthen WHMC Leadership



# Goals and Strategies: An Overview

With the goals established, we can plan on what needs to be done to accomplish the goals. We develop strategies or plans to move us forward. Our strategies identify the path that the Board, staff, and volunteers will follow as we move into our vision. Strategies are the concrete things that we will do to accomplish each goal. A strategy is actionable and evaluative.

## **Goal 1: Increase awareness and presence of WHMC and our services in the community**

*Strategy 1: **Prepare** a marketing campaign for ongoing visibility.*

*Strategy 2: **Learn** from and partner with Native Hawaiian organizations as it pertains to conflict resolution alignment.*

*Strategy 3: **Identify** and participate in community outreach and education events*

## **Goal 2: Empower clients in conflict by providing skilled and engaged volunteer mediators to facilitate effective mediations.**

*Strategy 1: **Develop** and sustain mediator mentor program*

*Strategy 2: **Increase** recruitment and engagement of volunteers*

*Strategy 3: **Improve** client understanding and readiness for mediation*

### **Goal 3: Provide effective conflict resolution for youth: in schools and with youth organizations**

*Strategy 1: Establish* Peer Mediation touchpoints at every West Hawaii School

*Strategy 2: Engage* families of our PM youth with the work of WHMC.

*Strategy 3: Create* partnerships with youth organizations that could utilize Conflict Resolution education

### **Goal 4: Sustain and Grow Restorative Justice alternatives in West Hawai'i**

*Strategy 1: Identify* and Cultivate Restorative Justice Partners

*Strategy 2: Increase* recruitment and engagement of volunteers

*Strategy 3: Develop* a RJ truancy program for youth

### **Goal 5: Identify and Diversify consistent funding sources for the financial stability of WHMC**

*Strategy 1: Maintain* a community-based fund development committee

*Strategy 2: Retain* and expand community donor relationships

*Strategy 3: Build* capacity to offer trainings and facilitations that increase revenue

## **Goal 6: Strengthen WHMC leadership**

*Strategy 1:* **Recruit** Diverse Community leaders for board membership that align with organizational needs

*Strategy 2:* **Invest** in staff retention and professional development

*Strategy 3:* **Develop** regular assessments and feedback loops for evaluation and monitoring

# Goal and Strategies: Detail

## **GOAL 1: Increase awareness and presence of WHMC and our services in the community.**

### **Strategy 1: Prepare a marketing campaign for ongoing visibility.**

Community visibility and marketing is an essential component of any growth prospects for WHMC. We must be known by our community. Public understanding of the importance of WHMC's mission is a result of a regular flow of information of who we are and of the impact we make. A key focus of this strategy is to create and implement a marketing strategy which may include print and digital media, an increased social media footprint, targeted video clips, advertising, event marketing, and a budget to support it. Public recognition leads to higher levels of engagement. High engagement translates to financial support, increased flow of clients and partnerships, and ensures mission delivery.

### **Strategy 2: Learn from and partner with Native Hawaiian organizations as it pertains to conflict resolution alignment.**

Every culture has ways to manage and resolve conflict. We live in the only state with a non-white majority. Opportunities exist to learn and mutually support our diverse communities through various practices for conflict resolution. This strategy focuses on fostering relationships with Native Hawaiian organizations - our host culture. We believe that relationships ought to drive possible program development and outcomes - rather than the other way around. It is only in connection to Native Hawaiians that we will learn how to work with, serve, and direct potential programming.

### **Strategy 3: Identify and participate in community outreach and education events.**

Awareness of our work and mission comes through being present where our community gathers. We will develop a continual presence with organizations, through educational opportunities, and our presence at gathering points to spread the mission of WHMC. The goal of this outreach is twofold: to gain continual awareness of community needs and potentialities, and to harness our care and passion for conflict resolution to take action on their behalf. For this purpose, we ask: What methods and strategies are most effective for community engagement and education?

## **Goal 2: Empower clients in conflict by providing skilled and engaged volunteer mediators to facilitate effective mediations.**

### **Strategy 1: Develop and sustain mediator mentor program**

In our last Strategic Plan, we celebrated the training of 6 mediator mentors - capping our goal to improve the quality of our mediation services. Mediator mentors commit to sharing their knowledge, expertise, and experience in mediation with less seasoned volunteer mediators. Moving forward, we intend to deepen this initiative through codifying their work in connection to new apprentices, observations and feedback while growing their number.

### **Strategy 2: Increase recruitment and engagement of volunteers**

Volunteer mediators play a crucial role in fulfilling our mission to help people resolve conflict. Our volunteers enable us to keep our services a low-cost alternative, and they act as community ambassadors for mediation; building community awareness, goodwill, and fiscal support. Furthermore, the majority of our mediations are facilitated by a few active volunteers. While we know not every volunteer's time commitment is the same, we need to add volunteers to our mediator pool and increase the rate at which those volunteers mediate.

### **Strategy 3: Improve client understanding and readiness for mediation**

We help people resolve conflict - our clients are the ones experiencing conflict. Guiding a client toward a successful resolution starts the moment they call WHMC. Many have never used our services, are unfamiliar with mediation, or confuse mediation with a more legal process akin to arbitration or evaluative mediation. Educating the client prior to mediation, setting expectations, building trust with WHMC and its volunteers, and walking with them through the process prepares the environment for a healthy mediation process.

### **Goal 3: Provide effective conflict resolution for youth: in schools and with youth organizations**

#### **Strategy 1: Establish Peer Mediation touchpoints at every West Hawaii School**

There are 37 West Hawaii schools. We believe each of these schools provides opportunities for conflict resolution engagement. Our youth education in schools has tiers of relationships that include awareness of our services, connection with our Peer Mediation Coordinator, education touchpoints, full PM programs, and training of staff and teachers.

#### **Strategy 2: Engage families of our PM youth with the work of WHMC**

Peer Mediators are trained and do their work on a school campus. But each of these keiki touch relationships in the community - their families. The Peer Mediation program provides an opportunity to support families who might need our services, want to volunteer, or possibly connect with us through monetary support. We intend to explore and build bridges of connection to families in West Hawaii through our Peer Mediation program.

#### **Strategy 3: Create partnerships with youth organizations that could utilize Conflict Resolution education**

At the core of all services is a commitment to provide culturally appropriate and competent conflict resolution services for those we meet. To identify and provide services that can effectively serve our youth, WHMC will seek out, strengthen, and expand partnerships with other community agencies, nonprofits, and human service organizations that also serve the youth of our community. WHMC staff and Board will focus attention on cultivating relationships with organizations whose services complement the mission of WHMC.

## **Goal 4: Sustain and Grow Restorative Justice alternatives in West Hawai'i**

### **Strategy 1: Identify and Cultivate Restorative Justice Partners**

The transformational work of restorative justice is based on ties with each other and ties within the community. By developing partnerships with local leaders and local agencies we are building a network to more effectively support people who have been harmed and hold people who have caused harm accountable. Through these networks and our restorative justice advisory board, we will identify areas of need and better serve west Hawai'i.

### **Strategy 2: Increase recruitment and engagement of volunteers**

As our restorative justice work grows, so will our need for volunteers. We intend the role of the Restorative Justice Coordinator to be more "coordination" and less "facilitation." This will necessitate targeting competent volunteers for training (quantity), developing ongoing quality assurance measures (quality), and providing opportunities to facilitate cases (recurrence) as our referral network grows.

### **Strategy 3: Develop a Restorative Justice truancy program for youth**

Hawai'i leads the nation in the percentage of students arrested, who are disproportionately Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, or black. Schools have utilized a discriminatory reliance on police to deal with status offenses like truancy, curfew violation, and running away. These offenses are better resolved in non-criminal proceedings. Young people ought to only interact with police if absolutely necessary. In this way, young people need relationships and the tools to strengthen them. Through partnering with other youth organizations, we envision restorative justice opportunities to help meet this need.

## **Goal 5: Identify and diversify consistent funding sources for the financial stability of WHMC**

**Strategy 1: Maintain a community-based fund development committee**

We have learned that sustained fundraising efforts require a well-rounded committee of people working together. Fundraising cannot fall directly on staff. A fund development committee consists of community members who draw on their expertise and network of relationships to make our fundraising efforts a success. The committee will have a clear purpose and goals, distinct roles and responsibilities for members, and be committed to leveraging their place in the community for the good of the Mediation Center.

**Strategy 2: Retain and expand community donor relationships**

A community mediation center relies not only on grant funding, but also on the support of people who care for this community. Individual donors are a sustainable source of income. While we have grown our donor base, we intend to identify and steward major (\$5k+) donors, as well as mid-tier and low-range donors. This work will be integrated with fundraising events, marketing events, and leveraging relationships for Friends of the Center.

**Strategy 3: Build capacity to offer trainings and facilitations that increase revenue**

When challenging community issues arise, West Hawaii Mediation Center ought to be trusted to offer a healthy space for dialogical engagement. When organizations experience conflict among or between departments and staff, WHMC should be well equipped to manage their conflicts. When political factions can't agree on policy issues, WHMC can provide a space to democratically work toward solutions. In other words, conflict is all around us and we have the opportunity to be a trusted agency to guide people through it. And, these are opportunities to both train and facilitate that include revenue fees for our services.



## **Goal 6: Strengthen WHMC Leadership**

### **Strategy 1: Recruit Diverse Community leaders for board membership that align with organizational needs**

WHMC recognizes the importance of diversifying our organization at every level. In an effort to increase diversity, and to represent and understand the needs of our community we serve, WHMC will develop and conduct strategic conversations with varied people-groups of West Hawai'i. This work will include community outreach, talk-stories with cultural leaders, community leaders and associations, local businesses, faith communities, and other representatives of our Island.

### **Strategy 2: Invest in staff retention and professional development**

We recognize that gifted and experienced staff are essential to thrive as an organization. Staff retention helps sustain growth over time through continuity of programming, community partnerships, and resources. Efforts to retain well performing staff include salary and cost-of-living increases, opportunities for professional development, staff connection opportunities, and staff appreciation.

### **Strategy 3: Develop regular assessments and feedback loops for evaluation and monitoring**

Every aspect of WHMC includes accountability mechanisms that include feedback opportunities. All staff have annual reviews. Clients, partners, and programs all have elements of feedback surveys. At the center of our evaluation is our Strategic Plan - the guide light for our work over the next five years. Each year the Strategic Plan will be evaluated for accomplishments and new benchmarks for the year. These benchmarks will be created in conversation with staff and board. The Board of Directors will hold the organization accountable to the plan outlined above.