

Equity Report 2022



NEBRASKA COALITION
TO END SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



A Message from Coalition Staff

Like many nonprofits, the Coalition has been discussing equity for some time. However, 2020 was a tumultuous year that brought a raging pandemic, a contentious election, and global protests against systemic racism. If we ever needed a wake-up call to ground us in the roots of the anti-violence movement, the time was now. During the protests, advocates from our network of sexual and domestic violence programs began asking how to incorporate anti-racism, equity, and inclusion concepts into their sexual and domestic violence prevention work at the community level. In reaching out to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center for recommendations, they referred us to Darin J. Dorsey, an anti-violence consultant and trainer with experience in sexual violence prevention work.

When we connected with Darin to discuss ways in which we could weave the values of anti-racism and equity throughout our prevention strategies, he challenged us first to consider how the Coalition itself aligns with these values. What did our organizational structure look like? How do we make decisions within the Coalition? What was the Coalition's culture like? Do we have equitable policies and practice? After a few probing questions from Darin, we realized the Coalition needed to dig in on our journey towards a more equitable workplace. Other Coalition staff agreed.

It has been approximately two years since the Coalition began its organizational assessment with Darin and the Rooting Movements' consulting team. In that time, the Coalition experienced significant turnover among staff and a months-long search for a new Executive Director. Had we known the challenges that lay ahead, perhaps

we would have paused on the assessment. On the other hand, perhaps such turnover only added to the urgency of the assessment. Either way, as a non-profit organization we faced the perpetual dilemma of completing the work before grant funds expired.

Some of the information that surfaced from the assessment was new and unsettling to some staff, while at the same time validating what other staff witnessed or experienced within the organization on a daily basis. The process led some staff to identify harm that they had caused to others within the organization and question how they can repair the harm with colleagues moving forward. Staff began to reflect on their own complicity with white supremacy culture in the organization and anti-violence movement, and their role in disrupting white supremacy culture in the future. For staff who held marginalized identities, it felt encouraging that colleagues took the process of unpacking and assessing inequity within the organization so seriously. Honestly, some staff questioned whether they could continue working at the Coalition, should the Coalition fail to take action on the findings from the assessment.

While we staff are proud of the organization for undergoing an organizational assessment, we know this assessment is merely the first step towards creating an anti-racist and equitable organization within the larger anti-violence movement overall. The Coalition is determined to take action on the findings from this report both immediately and long term, not only as a commitment to staff, but to the network of programs, our community partners, and survivors.

Rooting Movements' Consulting Team



Darin J. Dorsey (He/Him) leads Rooting Movements with an extensive background in social change work and over a decade within the movement to end gender-based violence. He holds expertise in violence prevention, policy advocacy, and organizational change management. He is passionate about holding organizations accountable to their missions and values.



Talcott Broadhead, MSW (They/Them) is a transgender Social Worker, anti-violence and anti-bias expert, Holocaust scholar, author, Professor, and trauma specialist. Their current work is centered at the intersection of transgender liberation, disability justice, depathologization, anti-racism, historical trauma, historical resilience. It is Talcott's mission to teach and practice skills that promote equity, informed-knowledge, and the ethical application of socially-just social work and mutual support.



Rooting Movements is a consulting firm dedicated to strengthening social and political movements by helping organizations connect with the history, values, and approaches of their respective movements.

All social and political movement organizations are susceptible to engaging in practices that are inconsistent with their movement's values.

Rooting Movements understands that organizations need to adapt, change, and evolve over time. Rooting Movements helps organizations be intentional about ensuring that the changes they make reflect the values that drive the change they intend to make in our society.

This may involve an assessment of organizational culture, policies, and practices in an effort to develop a people-centered workplace. It could include strategic planning, to ensure that an organization's path forward is consistent with its values and mission. It might be facilitating an organizational retreat where staff can strengthen their connections to each other and their respective movements.

Methodology

In the first half of 2021, Rooting Movements' consulting team provided two reports to the Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence (hereafter referred to as "Coalition"). One report specifically assessed Organizational Structure and Decision-Making and the other provided a broader review of Equity within the Organization's Culture, Policies, and Practice

Rooting Movements engaged in the following processes to inform these reports:

Interviews: Rooting Movements' consulting team gathered information through a total of 21 confidential interviews with:

- › All Nebraska Coalition Staff;
- › Several members of the Board of Directors, including board members who also served as leaders at member organizations; and
- › Interviews with External Stakeholders; including members, past employees, and individuals who work at allied organizations.

These interviews were up to one hour long and included standardized questions for each constituency.

Policy Review: Talcott Broadhead provided an initial review of all organizational policy and Darin J. Dorsey provided a secondary review. This included reviewing over 20 separate policy documents. Policy recommendations were provided in two formats - within the final report and within annotated copies of its policy documents. Rooting Movements' consulting team recommended that the Coalition seek guidance from a qualified attorney when rewriting and implementing policy change.

Membership Review: The Coalition's membership was reviewed to identify opportunities to increase equity and inclusion.

Analysis

Rooting Movements' consulting team applied a racial justice and intersectional feminist lens grounded in the foundational history and values of the gender-based violence movement. Rooting Movements' consulting team incorporated gender justice, disability justice, immigrant justice, LGBTQIA+ justice, and other justice-oriented approaches that prioritize marginalized communities and identities into the analysis. This approach informed the reports Rooting Movements' consulting team provided to the Coalition.

In assessing equity at the Coalition, Rooting Movements' consulting team considered the organization's stated commitments and values; including those contained within the "Mission, Vision, and Values" section of the Coalition website and the commitments made within the Moment of Truth¹ letter that the Coalition signed on to in Summer of 2020.

The goal of these reports was to help the Coalition assess whether their approaches and strategies, both internal and external, reflect their stated values and the foundational values of this movement, namely: liberation, autonomy, racial and gender justice, and anti-oppression.

¹ *Moment of Truth: A Movement Reckoning and Renewal*. (2020, August 26). VAWnet.Org. <https://vawnet.org/events/moment-truth-movement-reckoning-and-renewal>

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Rooting Movements' consulting team divided findings into three categories:

Personnel, Culture, and Policy

Personnel

The initial assessment found that the Coalition has a talented, knowledgeable, and experienced staff that holds several decades of collective experience. The assessment began at a time when the organization was between Executive Directors. This context contributed to a lack of clarity when it came to organizational decision-making, which resulted in inequities. It was recommended that the Coalition support managers in providing more collaborative employee supervision processes while increasing opportunities for consensus decision-making.

Unfortunately, like many organizations in this movement, the talents and experience of BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and Bilingual+ staff at the Coalition were not adequately recognized or compensated for. Rooting Movements' consulting team identified a pattern where opportunities for advancement were not always accessible for staff with these identities and experiences. Changes to hiring processes were recommended that will help to prevent this from occurring in the future and repair past harm.

Policy

The Coalition's policies were in line with most organizations in this movement and within non-profits more broadly - they often limited employee agency at the expense of reducing organizational risk and relied upon surveillance approaches to management. Some examples of recommendations include changing policies that deterred staff from engaging in work outside of the Coalition (including speaking and consulting opportunities), avoiding policies that required employees to front the cost of travel, and encouraging flexible work policies that provide employees with more agency and independence. Updates to grievance procedures were also recommended to ensure that the Coalition can apply them equitably to all staff and constituents.

Culture

The dominant culture at the Coalition prioritized cis-gender, white women at the expense of other staff who held marginalized identities. People perceive anti-oppression work, and specifically racial justice work, as inconsistent and unsustainable from both within and outside of the organization. It was recommended that the Coalition increase professional development opportunities for all

Affinity Group: a group of people linked by a common interest or purpose.

staff and prioritize leadership opportunities for staff with marginalized identities. Given the dominant culture at the Coalition, Rooting Movements' consulting team recommended that the Coalition explore opportunities to develop **affinity groups** for staff, and eventually network of programs, with marginalized identities. The Coalition was also encouraged to invest additional time and resources in supporting and connecting with Indigenous communities throughout Nebraska.

Next Steps

In the months since the assessment was complete, the Coalition has started the process of centering equity as the foundation for our work and making needed changes to every level of our organization. Our first inclination was to start with making recommended changes to our policies and procedures. However, we also know that too often, white-led organizations change policies as the main ‘solution’ to organizational inequities and a substitute for doing the harder work.

Training: We began by contracting with Rooting Movements to facilitate four training sessions to ground us in the intersectional foundation needed to engage in this work. Recordings of the four trainings, identified below, are now part of the first 30-day onboarding of all new staff:

- Rooting Ourselves in the Movement
- Disability Justice
- Supporting Trans Community Members
- Allyship and Harm Repair

The Coalition also offered the first three of these training sessions to our network of programs and community partners.

Equity Committee: The Coalition created an Equity Committee made up of current and former staff and community partners. This group, currently guided by Rooting Movements, makes recommendations to the Coalition around equity-based actions the Coalition can take. Based on those recommendations, the Coalition has made additional changes:

Pay Equity: The Coalition now calculates and administers cost of living increases to ensure that pay disparities between higher salaries and lower salaries do not get wider over time. Coalition staff are no longer paying different rates of health insurance premium policy based on age.

Equitable Hiring Processes: The Coalition created and implemented equitable hiring practices at each stage of this process.

Staff Support: The Coalition provides BIPOC staff, LGBTQ staff, bilingual staff, and staff with disabilities with resources to participate on work time in national or local affinity groups for additional support. A process is underway to create identity-based affinity groups led by Coalition staff and consultants for our network of programs’ advocates.

Ongoing Learning: The Coalition creates a monthly space to conduct equity activities and review resources together as a team. We know that our learning must be ongoing as well as our ability to hold ourselves, and others, accountable.

As an organization that has always been white-led, true equity means a significant culture shift that will take time and be ongoing. We are committed to continuing this work, acknowledging harm when needed and holding ourselves accountable.

A Note from Rooting Movements

Rooting Movements is grateful for the privilege to connect with the Coalition’s staff, board members, and organizational members in this process. There is a clear desire to change and become an organization grounded in the historical movement to end gender-based violence. The Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence has the capacity to be a leader within the state and among Coalitions on a national level, bringing us all closer to living in a society that is free of violence. Rooting Movements looks forward to continuing to support the Coalition as it moves in this direction.

Board of Directors and Members

Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence

Board of Directors

Autumn Noble, Omaha, Chair
Candi Jones, Omaha, Vice-Chair
Kate McCoy Jones, Omaha, Secretary
Matthew Cavanaugh, Omaha, Treasurer
Nikki Gausman, Kearney, Parliamentarian
Kat Bauer, Ogallala
Dawn Conley, Omaha
Marisa Hattab, Omaha
Angela Roeber, Elkhorn
Tiffany Seibert Joekel, Omaha

Affiliate Partners Membership

Omaha Tribe of Nebraska
Ponca Tribe of Nebraska
Santee Sioux Tribe of Nebraska
Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska

Network of Programs Membership

Bright Horizons, Norfolk
Catholic Charities - The Shelter, Omaha
Center for Survivors, Columbus
The Bridge, Fremont
Willow Rising, Grand Island
Domestic Abuse/Sexual Assault Services, McCook
The DOVES Program, Gering
Friendship Home, Lincoln
Haven House, Wayne
Healing Hearts and Families, Broken Bow
Heartland Family Service - Domestic Abuse Program, Papillion
Hope Crisis Center, Fairbury
Parent-Child Center, Lexington
Project Response, Auburn
Rape/Domestic Abuse Program, North Platte
Sandhills Crisis Intervention Program, Ogallala
S.A.F.E. Center, Kearney
enCourage Advocacy Center, Hastings
Voices of Hope, Lincoln
Women's Center for Advancement, Omaha

Nebraska's coalition of domestic and sexual violence programs provide access to safety and shelter across the state.

To locate the program nearest you, visit www.nebraskacoalition.org.

Other Resources:

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
National Domestic Violence Hotline
www.ndvh.org

1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network
www.rainn.org

1-866-331-9474
National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline
www.loveisrespect.org

1-844-7NATIVE
StrongHearts Native Helpline
(Monday-Friday, 9am-5:30pm CST)
www.strongheartshelpline.org

Mission Statement

The Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence enhances safety and justice by changing the beliefs and behaviors, and dismantling the systems that perpetuate sexual and domestic violence, human trafficking, stalking, and other forms of violence.

Vision Statement

We believe our world and all who live in it are sacred. We envision a world where violence is a distant memory and healthy relationships prosper for people of all identities.

Values

Safety, Prevention and Social Change, Anti-oppression, Anti-racism, Equity and Inclusion, Accountability, Transformative Justice, Collaboration, Education, Empowerment and Autonomy, Leadership, Intersectional Feminism, Lived Experience



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