

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COALITION of OREGON
RJCO

STRATEGIC ISSUES REPORT

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Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	3
II.	Mission, Values, Vision	4
III.	Organizational Obligations	5
IV.	Environmental Assessment	6
V.	Strategic Issue #1 How does RJCO meet the needs of the community dispute resolution programs and other restorative justice programs and practitioners?	7
VI.	Strategic Issue #2 What is needed to insure Coordinating Committee membership is complete and diverse?	8
VII.	Strategic Issue #3 What steps must be taken to make membership in RJCO meaningful?	9
VIII.	Strategic Issue #4 How will RJCO increase awareness and education about the restorative justice field?	10
IX.	Latent Strategic Issues	11
X.	Recommendations	11

I. Introduction

The Oregon Office of Community Dispute Resolution (OOCDR) was asked by the Restorative Justice Coalition of Oregon (RJCO) to facilitate a strategic planning process that would allow the organization to advance restorative justice practices throughout the state of Oregon.

RJCO was formed from the former Coalition of Victim-Offender Mediation Programs (COVOMP) in the 2012-2013 timeframe. Since its inception RJCO has dedicated extensive time and effort to develop a mission, vision, and values for the organization. The purpose of this strategic planning effort is to identify external initiatives that would focus on moving the organization forward.

On September 16-17, 2015 in Gleneden Beach, OR an RJCO strategic planning team met to develop the plan. This team consisted of the RJCO Executive Committee, members of the RJCO Coordinating Committee, and a few general members of the organization. Those in attendance are listed below:

Matthew Hartman, Clackamas County Juvenile Department – Executive Committee
Kevin Grant, Neighbor to Neighbor – Executive Committee
Cara Walsh, Resolve – Executive Committee
Betsy Coddington, Resolutions Northwest – Coordinating Committee
Chip Coker, Center for Dialogue and Resolution – Coordinating Committee
Kelly Rath, Oregon Department of Corrections – Coordinating Committee
Christina Alba, Resolutions Northwest – Coordinating Committee
Amy Chase Herman, Clackamas County Resolution Services – Coordinating Committee
Tim McCabe, Center for Dialogue and Resolution – Member
Carley Berkey, Beaverton Dispute Resolution – Member

Mark Quinlan from the Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution facilitated the strategic planning process. Liz Gatti an RJCO member assisted him.

The planning process was informed by the results of a “listening project” that was conducted by Portland State University on behalf of RJCO during the fall of 2014. This project assessed the self-reported needs of individuals working in the restorative justice field.

The process identified four strategic issues that required immediate action. In addition, three strategic issues were identified as potentially requiring action within the agreed upon timeline of 18-24 months or shortly thereafter as part of a future strategic planning effort. Potential strategies to address the key issues were identified and subcommittees were formed for each issue. However, timelines for action and resources needed to implement strategies were not identified. The subcommittees will continue to fine-tune the potential strategies within each identified issue and present their findings to the Coordinating Committee who will finalize the strategies that will be adopted.

II. Mission, Values, and Vision

Mission:

RJCO is a coalition of Oregon restorative justice practitioners and programs. We promote and support the implementation and practice of restorative justice principles and models in Oregon's justice, law enforcement, educational, and other community institutions.

Values:

As the Restorative Justice Coalition of Oregon, we value:

1. RESTORATIVE philosophy by:
 - Addressing harms through meaningful accountability.
 - Supporting innovative and forward-thinking outcomes.
 - Seeking positive change within and between our clients through internal shifts that have lasting transformational implications.
2. INCLUSION in our approach to people and ideas by:
 - Honoring diversity in all its forms.
 - Treating all people with dignity and respect.
 - Showing compassion and empathy.
 - Engaging in focused listening.
 - Acknowledging and asking thoughtful questions.
3. COLLABORATION in our programming, by designing processes together with clients, staff, volunteers, agency partners, and community members.
4. EMPOWERMENT in our skill building, by drawing out the best skills in our team members and clients through modeling, training, and coaching.
5. CONNECTION in our mode of operation, by using strategies to connect people to people, actions to impacts, cognition to behavior, and past to future.
6. FLEXIBILITY in our processes, by adapting the variables of case management and education opportunities to fit the particulars of each case and client.
7. HONESTY and TRANSPERANCY in our actions with others and our communities.

Vision:

RJCO envisions safe, inclusive, and resilient communities that address harm by fostering personal responsibility, mutual respect, and healthy relationships

III. Organizational Obligations

- Provide educational and training opportunities.
- Expand the understanding and application of restorative justice principles.
- Create partnerships, collaborations, and actively engage key stakeholders.
- Advocate for the development and expansion of restorative practices in a variety of institutional settings.
- Serve as a resource and support network for restorative justice practitioners and administrators.
- Adhere to and support restorative justice best practices.
- Influence local and state policy around institutional responses to harms keeping public safety, victim needs and offender accountability at the forefront.
- Coalition members are the active and driving force behind decisions made and action steps taken to successfully achieve the vision and mission of the coalition. Membership will be actively engaged and their input elicited in the decisions and the direction of the restorative justice movement in Oregon.

IV. Environmental Assessment

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>STRENGTHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong foundation, vision, passion. • Momentum and interest for restorative justice within Oregon. • Restorative justice provides an alternative to the traditional criminal justice system. • Skilled practitioners with varying backgrounds. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>WEAKNESSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of sustainable resources such as time and money. • Lack of clarity on how to move forward. • Lack of broad skill sets such as fundraising on Coordinating Committee. • Lack of broad representation on impacted populations.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funders who support restorative justice. • National and state momentum toward restorative justice practices. • Potential to build on interest within schools to increase funding and capacity. • Potential to impact many types of organizations. • Increased support from the community dispute resolution centers. • Gain favorable media attention. • Restorative justice practices allow for many collaborative opportunities. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>THREATS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practices that due harm under the restorative justice banner. • Fear of the unknown. • New branches and directions of restorative justice that may dilute integrity of the field. • Bad press.

V. Strategic Issue #1

How does RJCO meet the needs of the community dispute resolution centers (CDRC) and other restorative justice programs and practitioners?

Goal: Be a resource to the CDRC's and other restorative justice programs and practitioners by providing a structure and space to bring them together and discuss restorative justice.

Responsible Strategic Plan Team members: Matthew Hartman and Chip Coker

Potential Strategies:

- Connect with CDRC's to gather input on what structure and space is needed to address issue. Once feedback is gathered from CDRC's and other programs and practitioners have Coordinating Committee develop next steps.
- Have phone conversations with CDRC Directors prior to the November 2015 Oregon Association of Community Dispute Resolution Centers (OACDRC) meeting.
- Develop a workgroup between CDRC's and RJCO to explore ideas and create proposals.
- Reach out to CDRC's that do not have restorative justice programs to assess their interest in developing restorative justice practices within their organizations.
- Provide restorative justice trainings at OACDRC meetings. Specifically, develop an orientation or "RJ 101" that provides practical program development that could be conducted by CDRC's with existing restorative justice programs.
- Establish learning cooperative.
- Determine how RJCO membership can be active participants in the RJCO community.

Resources Needed: TBD

VI. Strategic Issue #2

What is needed to insure a diverse 13 member Coordinating Committee?

Goal: A whole and diverse Coordinating Committee that is in alignment with the RJCO working agreements criteria for committee membership.

Responsible Strategic Plan Team members: Kevin Grant and Amy Chase Herman

Potential Strategies:

- Develop a system for making decisions on nominees and determine whether an incremental or complete approach is better.
- Identify current RJCO membership and their role in selecting Coordinating Committee.
- Enact current process and decide on officers for Coordinating Committee and make selection of officers at October 2015 RJCO meeting with officer's terms beginning January 1, 2016.
- Strategize solicitation techniques for nominating potential Coordinating Committee members.
- Develop system for eliciting nominations and reach out and solicit new committee members.
- Establish policy for mid-term departures from Coordinating Committee.
- Conduct RJCO membership drive to enroll members on January 1, 2016.
- Have RJCO membership nominate and elect three Coordinating Committee members by January 1, 2016.
- Current Coordinating Committee appoints three new members immediately to fill current vacancies.

Resources Needed: TBD

VII. Strategic Issue #3

What steps must be taken to make membership in RJCO meaningful?

Goal: Have a growing and engaged membership.

Responsible Strategic Plan Team members: Kelly Rath and Christina Alba

Potential Strategies:

- Fully implement members only portion of website.
- Develop online membership process that includes application, payment, and members page access information.
- Consult with Resolutions Northwest on use of social media.
- Develop a communication plan that clearly describes role of RJCO.
- Develop a schedule for coordinating a “membership drive” that would include representation at the OMA conference and other key events.
- Invite new members through membership drive and provide them with expectations of what membership entails, including voting rights.
- Provide a clear picture of available benefits and future benefits to new members.
- Provide a mechanism for members voices to be included at meetings and within the decision making process.
- Create a cooperative learning environment with tools such as a website where members could learn and submit best practices.

Resources Needed: TBD

VIII. Strategic Issue #4

How will RJCO increase awareness and education about the restorative justice field?

Goal: Oregonians will have an awareness and consistent understanding of restorative justice.

Responsible Strategic Plan Team members: Cara Walsh, Carley Berkey, Tim McCabe

Potential Strategies:

- Consult with a branding professional.
- Assess current perception of restorative justice.
- Develop a campaign plan that includes positive media goals and directs attention to RJCO as the hub.
- Consider unintended consequences that may occur.
- Create a presentation package about restorative justice that is sponsored by RJCO.
- Identify who should be made aware and educated initially.
- Create talking points that restorative justice practitioners can use to create consistency in messaging.
- Produce a short video and multimedia materials that could be shown on computers or during presentations that explains restorative justice.
- Reach out to potential funders while being cognizant of competing entities for funding.

Resources Needed: TBD

IX. Latent Strategic Issues

The RJCO strategic planning team determined it would revisit the following issues as time and resources allowed during the next 18-24 months, but, they were not considered as high a priority as those listed previously. These issues emerged during the listening project and resonated with the team who all agreed they warrant future exploration.

- How can RJCO coordinate and support a system of accountability and quality assurance for restorative justice practitioners and program providers while maintaining flexibility, inclusivity, and transparency?
- How can RJCO coordinate and support restorative justice programs and practitioners in the establishment of standards and practices for restorative justice?
- How will RJCO assess the restorative justice needs of the larger community?

X. Recommendations

The Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution recommends that the RJCO Coordinating Committee establish a process to review and fine-tune the potential strategies by the end of 2015.

Action plans should be developed for each strategic issue that will identify what specific action must be taken to implement the strategies; identify expected outcomes and milestones; determine responsible parties; and determine what resources will be required and where they will be obtained.

Action plan implementation should be reviewed and monitored for accountability to assure that implemented strategies remain responsive to identified needs and RJCO should allow for modification of plans, if necessary, as the organization evolves.