



# STRATEGIC PLAN

2021 - 2024

## A LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

For a number of years now myself, the Board of Directors and the staff have talked and dreamed about the future of First Step. We aspire to reach more survivors of intimate partner violence who need our help, provide more awareness in the community, increase staffing and expand the services we offer, and create more space to meet with and shelter survivors and their children.

In early 2020 the Board of Directors agreed that in order to make some of these dreams reality we had to take action steps, which began with a Strategic Plan. They authorized me to begin exploring possible consultants to guide the strategic planning process and funding to pay for these services. Through a grant from Virginia Housing, First Step was able to secure funding to contract with Kensington Strickland Group, LLC from August 2020 to June 2021 to complete a three-year Strategic Plan for First Step. To begin the process a Strategic Planning Committee was formed with three members of the Board of Directors and three staff members.

An initial challenge for completing the strategic plan was the COVID-19 Pandemic. Because of health and safety concerns related to the virus we were unable to meet in person, but we agreed that the process would continue using virtual meeting platforms. Throughout the process Kensington Strickland Group, LLC and the Strategic Planning committee met regularly for discussions with the Board of Directors and staff. Also, during the process community stakeholders including consumers, supporters, funders, former Board Members, collaborative partners and other community members provided input through surveys, phone conversations and virtual meetings.

In June 2021 the Board of Directors met and approved a new Mission, Vision and Values Statement created through this eleven-month process, as well as the strategic plan. The First Step Strategic Plan, 2021-2024 which follows is the result of hard work and many conversations by the Board of Directors, Employees, and Community Stakeholders. Over the past few months we have been implementing the strategies of the plan, so that we can meet the goals and work toward our future aspirations for First Step.

*Candy Phillips*

Candy Phillips





# CONTENTS

Strategy Context	3
Our Mission, Vision, and Values	4
Our 5 Main Goals	5
Goals 1 and 2	6
Goals 3, 4, and 5	7
Action Steps	8



# WHY A STRATEGIC PLAN?

**First Step: A Response to Domestic Violence Inc.** is a private, nonprofit organization that provides safe emergency shelter, support services, counseling, and resources to survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence. It is the only agency that serves and shelters survivors in the City of Harrisonburg and the County of Rockingham and it has done so for over forty years.

This Strategic Plan is a summary of the goals, strategies, and action items that First Step has adopted to strengthen and deepen the agency's impact. This plan aims to position First Step as a leading resource and asset in the local area by helping survivors break the cycle of domestic and intimate partner violence in their lives. In order to do so, First Step must strengthen its infrastructure to promote strategic growth and ensure the sustainability of the organization.

**Thank you** to all on the Strategic Planning team who successfully lead the organization through this process!

# OUR MISSION VISION & VALUES

## OUR MISSION

Empowering survivors to break the cycle of violence and abuse in their lives

## OUR VISION

To live in a community free of abuse

## OUR VALUES

For over 40 years, First Step has been committed to providing free and confidential services to survivors of intimate partner or relationship violence who have experienced economic, physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, and/or verbal abuse, including but not limited to controlling behavior, isolation, threats, intimidation, gaslighting, stalking and dating violence.

First Step welcomes and respects all survivors of intimate partner or relationship violence, regardless of **race, ethnicity, color, age, gender, disability, national origin, religion, language proficiency, citizenship status, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.**

# OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

## GOAL 1

Create a  
financially strong  
and resilient  
First Step

### Strategic Objectives

1. Develop a balanced and sustainable funding model
2. Diversify income revenue streams
3. Build a culture of philanthropy

## GOAL 2

Develop  
diverse and  
visionary  
leadership  
throughout the  
organization

### Strategic Objectives

1. Support the First Step Executive Director to implement a strategic vision for the organization.
2. Build the capacity of the First Step Board of Directors for engaged and inspired leadership.
3. Create an inclusive system for board member recruitment, retention, and success.

# OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

## GOAL 3

**Build a stronger brand and community presence**

### Strategic Objectives

- 1 Expand community knowledge of the prevalence of domestic and intimate partner violence.
- 2 Build and improve online presence.
- 3 Increase public awareness of First Step as a key resource on domestic violence

## GOAL 4

**Foster an inclusive organizational culture that values diversity and equity**

### Strategic Objectives


- 1 Make an organizational commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).
- 2 Attract and retain diverse talent across the whole organization to increase diversity among volunteers, staff, and board members to better reflect the needs of survivors.
- 3 Amplify the message that First Step's "doors are open to all survivors."

## GOAL 5

**Enhance First Step's ability to serve more survivors**

### Strategic Objectives

- 1 Increase First Step's staff capacity to survivors.
- 2 Identify short and long-term options to increase First Step's capacity to provide shelter.
- 3 Strengthen strategic partnerships to serve survivors and the community.



# HOW YOU CAN HELP



## BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR

Eradicating domestic violence is a community effort!

A recurring donation of **\$50** or more can insure a survivor is not forgotten.



## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

@firststepVA

Are you on social media? We are too. Connect with us!



## SUBSCRIBE TO OUR EMAIL NEWSLETTER

[www.firststepva.com/sign-up-newsletter/](http://www.firststepva.com/sign-up-newsletter/)

Join our community to stay updated on what is going on and learn how you can help!





129 Franklin St.,  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

(540) 434-0295

[candyphillips@firststepva.com](mailto:candyphillips@firststepva.com)



This Strategic Plan was designed  
and created by Gabrielle Redcross.