

Yukon Women in Trades & Technology

Strategic Plan

2020-2023

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Introduction

In November 2020 the YWITT board of directors came together with staff to discuss the future of YWITT and establish strategic priorities for the coming 1-3 years. These priorities will focus the actions of the board and staff towards achieving the vision and moving the organization forward towards its next evolution.

History

Yukon Women in Trades and Technology (YWITT) was founded in 2000 as a means of addressing the barriers and challenges women in the Yukon face in entering the trades. Over the last 17 years the organization has grown from a small organization offering do-it-yourself plumbing and carpentry workshops to a well-recognized community institution offering a range of programs that build awareness of trades and technology careers as well as support women of all ages in those fields.

The organization has a strong reputation and has been valued for empowering women to succeed in non-traditional careers, inspiring economic security for women and educating both employers and women about the values and benefits of hiring Yukon women.

YWITT is funded largely by the Yukon Government Community Training Fund and the Women's Equality Fund. The organization is adept at leveraging partnerships with non-profits, industry and government to offer a range of exciting and mutually beneficial programming and initiatives.

The board signed off on the last strategic plan developed by the organization in 2017. Implementation of the 2017 strategic plan was very successful. The document supported the Executive Director and Program Coordinator to make focused decisions regarding programming and partnership opportunities. See Situation Analysis for more details.

Over the last three years YWITT has reinvented its annual conference, secured new relationships with instructors and partners that have evolved into long term partnerships with multiple projects. One big achievement of the last three years was the completion and release of a research project that updated the data on

the state of women in trades in the Yukon and identified the needs of women in the trades. This report established YWITT's expertise in this sector and opened new doors and relationships as well as shifted programs in the ecosystem - such as the introduction of a new women's only pre-apprenticeship carpentry program at Yukon University.

The organization, now more than ever, has more demand than capacity to offer programming to adult women, as well as tiered or scaffolded programming to young women who are entering programming streams with an interest in the trades. In addition, technology programming has increased substantially and the partnership with TechYukon has proven fruitful. More and more women in the trades have been reaching out with requests for mentorship and other supports - it seems with the change in generations, that the time might be now to build YWITT into a more formal community hub and support network for active tradeswomen in the Yukon.

In the spring of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic struck the Yukon and substantially affected operations. The annual conference was cancelled and programming was paused, and then resumed with social distancing measures in place. While this has affected programming, it provided YWITT with an opportunity to review the demand for programming, begin the organization's activities and start to look ahead to the next evolution of the organization. With the uncertainty of COVID-19 come questions about the security of funding streams, and the desire to explore new revenue streams as well.

The organization is in a strong place. With solid financials, ever growing visibility and recognition, increasing demand for programming, and solid partnerships - the time has come to explore what sustainable expansion and growth might look like and what opportunities exist to further grow the impact and visibility of the organization.

Strategic Plan Elements

Vision

Yukon Women in Trades and Technology is a vibrant hub with community partnerships and programs that increase awareness and provide support to women and girls in trades and technology.

Mandate

We achieve our vision by...

Educating: women and girls about the viability of trades and technology opportunities for women

Supporting: potential and present women in trades and technology

Advocating: to remove barriers to access and create equal opportunities for women in trades and technology

Our Belief

Gender should not be a barrier to pursuing workplace opportunities in the trades and technology sectors.

Strategic Priorities (2020-2023)

The strategic priorities will form the main focus of Yukon Women in Trades and Technology actions in order for it to reach its vision over the next 1-3 years.

1. Continue to strengthen and streamline internal policies, and board and staff planning.
2. Create a more formal programming structure that allows us to scale and meet demand.
3. Develop and deliver direct supports to existing and potential tradeswomen. Grow the hub

Priority Actions

The priority actions described below reflect the key actions that will accomplish each strategic objective. For each the task has been assigned either to the Board (B) or Staff (S) to lead in partnership with the other. Members of the board should be assigned to lead the work for each strategic action. A work plan should be created for each one with timelines and deliverables. The prioritization of these items is to be determined by the Board with staff.

#1 - Continue to strengthen and streamline internal policies, and board and staff planning.

Action	B	S
Do a policy review and create a policy development work plan. Establish which key policies are missing and create an action plan for completing them. (January board meeting)	X	
Complete compensation policy (March 2020)	X	
Complete harassment policy (Sept 2020)	X	
Complete and approve 4-5 new policies for the year	X	
Create a board recruitment process - establish current key strengths, establish gaps, and make a list of recruits for each gap	X	X
Make a list of board strengths (individual strengths and assets each board member brings to the board)	X	
Create board organizational chart, assign responsibilities (based on strengths), and identify gaps for recruitment	X	

#2 - Create a more formal programming structure that allows us to scale and meet demand.

Currently the organization is experiencing high demand for programming and maxed out on the capacity to offer more existing and diverse programming. More staff and space are needed to do so. With the changes brought about by COVID now is the time to assess the potential of various revenue streams (funding and cost recovery) to grow the organization's capacity in a sustainable manner and meet this growing demand.

It is recommended that the board hire a contractor to complete a brief business plan exploration to assess the various programming demands, potential revenue streams for each, and the capacity, assets, and costs required to serve the demand. This business plan will inform the creation of more formal programming pillars that have scaffolded programming, and also inform negotiations for core funding in December of 2021

Action	B	S
Grow existing programming and create an evidence-based foundation to expand current offerings.		X
Establish a scope of work and locate funds to hire a contractor to complete a business plan/feasibility study.	X	X
Complete business plan/feasibility study by Dec 2021 to inform funding negotiations with core funders.	X	X
Continue working with Tech Yukon on Technology programming.	X	X
Continue to explore growth of programming into mixed media where resources allow.	X	X

#3 - Develop and deliver direct supports to existing and potential tradeswomen. Grow the hub.

YWITT has focused its attention on education and awareness raising as well as streamlining internal operations over the last several years. Now that these foundations are strong the organization is looking to turn its attention to the “support and advocacy” pillars of the mandate. In particular the recent research study established a key need for a mentoring program, and the staff team have seen these needs echoed back to them in conversations with clients, prospective instructors, volunteers and others. The time seems to be right to invest in creating a structure around a mentorship and support program, leveraging others in the ecosystem to do so.

This area of action is about becoming known as a first stop for support and referral for women curious about, entering, or actively working in the trades. It is about re-establishing connections with existing trades women to create a network of support, and to better advocate for their needs.

Action	B	S
Follow up with Future Skills application. Share workplan and funding application with the Board.	X	X
As needed, follow up with YG Education core funding about repurposing some core funding towards this program.		X
Create a mini communications strategy with the goal of designing regular members, community communications and soft launching the program to begin the recruitment process.		X
Explore need for entrepreneurship training, network, referrals and other services to support women in trades		X
Add messaging to regular communications about YWITT as a hub of support for women considering or working actively in the trades		X
Review and update membership structure, benefits and policies	X	

Performance Measures

The following performance measures will be used to review the progress of the strategic plan. The plan should be reviewed annually at the AGM. Staff and the board should create a report on progress for each action and re-evaluate as circumstances evolve.

- YWITT has a policy development action plan and has approved 4-5 new policies per year (as needed). The compensation plan and harassment policy are complete by 2021.
- YWITT recruits and retains a strong and active board. Board members understand their roles and responsibilities and feel they contribute meaningfully to the board.
- The mentorship support program pilot has launched and the program continues to grow and improve based on user feedback.
- YWITT has formalized the member supports it provides (and potentially a membership structure) and is tracking and evaluating the impact of the community hub. Active and prospective tradeswomen are actively engaging in the hub and finding meaningful value in the programs and supports offered.
- YWITT has completed a business plan or feasibility study to explore the demand, costs and potential revenue and funding streams for a more structured and scaffolded program stream. The organization has a clear vision for sustainable steps to growth, including how to add new team members, expand programming, and accommodate new space and assets that are needed. This information has informed the funding negotiations with core funders.
- YWITT has broadened its funding sources and is implementing its plan to scale sustainably.

Risk Management

- Manage workload carefully. Create work plans for actions above on timelines that create manageable workloads for both board and staff to implement.
- Stay in tune with the shifting environment and adapt the plan to new circumstances as needed.
- Board and staff must remain focused on key priorities and ensure that core functions and programs are not burdened by taking on too many new initiatives.
- The board must continue to increase its capacity and knowledge of board governance.
- Continue to monitor and follow COVID-19 regulations and guidelines and accommodate programming as required and stay in contact with funders about potential changes

SWOT

Strengths

- Yukonstruct /NorthLight Office has worked well to increase visibility and connection to partners, and provide access to expandable space like boardrooms as well as the shop for programming.
- Launch of the research project solidified YWITT expertise, increased visibility, expanded our partnerships and resulted in meaningful change in the sector such as the creation of the Yukon University women' only pre apprenticeship carpentry program pilot.
- The research project also put the organization more deeply in touch with the current needs of tradeswomen and the research results have been reflected in ongoing conversations with members around the supports they would like to see.
- We have continued to expand our partnerships and relationships with tradeswomen and sector partners and we are seeing more long-term relationships that are building and evolving over time.
- We are seeing a benefit to working in other organizations' shops and spaces as we can operate under their health and safety policy and it simplifies ownership of assets, maintenance of equipment etc.
- Partnership with Tech Yukon has increased tech programming.
- Board roles and responsibilities and portfolios strategies worked very well with the last board and should be adopted again as the board grows.

Weaknesses

- Office space will not accommodate a third person (though we could hot desk) and sometimes there is limited access to programming space at NorthLight.
- High board turnover (partly due to COVID capacity limitations).
- Policy work made good progress, but needs to be finished and approved.

- Potential of ED turnover soon, and we have seen high turnover in the Program Coordinator position.
- Need for more documentation of Program Coordinator position to reduce onboarding time and ensure consistency.
- Stronger member communications are required to ensure folks understand clearly what we do and how they can get involved. Consider creating a stronger page on the website, launching a regular newsletter and other strategies to inform potential and existing volunteers, instructors and active tradeswomen.

Opportunities

- Tech programming is easier to offer in the current COVID-19 environment as it can better accommodate distance and self-paced learning.
- Opportunity to pause the conference for the year has provided space to reflect on the intensive capacity the event takes and to explore if there are ways to achieve the same goals with less effort.
- Increasing demand for programming across the board is an opportunity to explore cost-recovery programs, and diversified funding sources.
- Funding application with Future Skills Canada to move forward with mentorship program and supports. There is opportunity to repurpose existing core funding towards this program if we are not funded by Future Skills.
- More programming for graphic design, film, photography etc.
- Opportunity with Tech Yukon to build capacity and offer more programming for tech.
- Consider year-round programming offerings that scaffold up from awareness into pre-trades.
- Explore the conference goals, costs and capacity requirements and reflect on how the same goals may be achieved with less capacity demand. (Currently 6-9 months of planning and wrap up).

Threats

- COVID-19 affect on programming and revenues
- Potential changes to core funding agreement with COVID-19 effects on education and Yukon government.
- How do we scale to meet demand sustainably?