

# OKEQ Strategic Plan Final Draft

## 2025 – 2030

For 45 years, Oklahomans for Equality (OkEq) and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community have faced many obstacles in securing equal rights and a sense of safety and well-being. Over the years, important progress has been made. But recent internal and external issues, including a growing hostile political environment on many levels, are creating unprecedented challenges for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and those organizations providing services and support. In response, OKEQ must adapt to changing circumstances as it continues to support individuals, defend hard-fought rights, and stand against discriminatory policies. We believe the following goals, strategies, and actions will help us create a more resilient and capable organization to meet the moment as we work with others to show strength and a unified voice.



### Our Mission

**Oklahomans for Equality** (OkEq) seeks equal rights for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and families through intersectional advocacy, education, programs, alliances, and the operation of the Dennis R. Neill Equality Center.

### Our Goals

GOAL ONE: Complete the reconciliation and restorative justice process started by the Community Relations Committee and Transition Team.

GOAL TWO: Implement internal and external changes to increase organizational effectiveness and improve governmental operations.

GOAL THREE: Employ highly qualified staff who are mission aligned and have lived experience in proximity to the community being served.

GOAL FOUR: Expand programs and partnerships to improve services and outreach.

GOAL FIVE: Improve the financial, fundraising, and operational structures to stabilize operations and provide a foundation to respond to future needs and challenges.

GOAL SIX: Refresh and reimagine our Center to better serve today's community.

# OKEQ Detailed Strategies

*Action items should be considered a starting place; additional actions may be warranted by the staff, volunteers or committees tasked with the goals and strategies.*

## GOAL ONE

### **Complete the reconciliation and restorative justice process started by the Community Relations Committee and Transition Team.**

Strategy One: Take actions which demonstrate our durable commitment to the reconciliation work.

Action Items:

- Engage Restorative Justice Institute of Oklahoma (RJIOK) for a second phase of culture work with the board, staff and larger community.
- With RJIOK help, host a mission / vision / values retreat with the board and community.
- Budget for an annual RJIOK board workshop as well as opportunities to share the training with the larger community.
- Examine and update our policies and practices, especially related to governance, membership, financial management, fundraising, and partnerships.

Strategy Two: Ensure transparency and communicate frequently.

Action Items:

- Continue quarterly town halls and monthly president's letter.
- Educate community members on our new code of conduct and the feedback mechanisms for handling incidents and grievances.
- Reaffirm recent statements regarding organizational challenges and harms; explain the processes completed or in development to address them.
- Communicate these updates with the community as they are implemented within the framework of a strategic communications plan.
- Utilize targeted communication strategies and innovative methods to engage members and stakeholders in the work.

## GOAL TWO

### **Implement internal and external changes to increase organizational effectiveness and improve governance operations.**

Strategy One: Create governance structures that support community involvement at every level.

#### Action Items:

- Finalize roles and responsibilities of trustees, board, advisors, including a structure for the financial expectations that ensures buy-in but also creates accessibility.
- Launch a revised membership strategy that clarifies benefits and responsibilities of membership and creates mechanisms to pay membership dues either through dollars or volunteer service.
- Grow our talent pipelines by engaging more individuals of varying backgrounds and skillsets in committee service.
- Review and update policies and processes for selecting and onboarding new board members.
- Ensure annual training for board members in the areas of nonprofit basics, board responsibilities, OkEq history, social media organization representation, and DEI awareness and action.
- Build new ways for business and funding partners to demonstrate allyship.
- Actively engage with CenterLink and other national resources so we can learn from best practices nation-wide.

Strategy Two: Review community perceptions of OkEq and make appropriate changes to marketing and branding to address concerns and build on positives.

#### Action Items:

- Engage professional assistance to review branding and build layered communication strategies (i.e. website, e-news, apps, social media, print materials, etc.)
- Recognize our history and accomplishments as we make appropriate adjustments to respond to current and future challenges and opportunities.
- Promote Pride as something that lives year-round and is a visible aspect of our engagement in community.
- Use the power of storytelling to uplift the voices and diverse perspectives of the community as we expand our outreach and services.
- Ensure our images are representative of the diverse community we serve.

Strategy Three: Use data to tell our story of impact, report our outcomes, and make decisions regarding the implementation of our goals and strategies.

Action Items:

- Develop an annual stakeholder survey to track progress on needs, goals, and engagement. Use this data to determine program priorities.
- Develop an annual staff survey to track progress on needs, goals, and engagement. Use this data to make staff related recommendations and in evaluation of the Executive Director performance.
- Utilize technology tools to track participation in programs and services. Develop surveys to determine client satisfaction as well as relevant impact.
- Engage in annual planning and review processes.
  - Executive Director creates annual operational plans to establish specific goals and metrics involved in meeting the goals of the plan.
  - Executive Committee reviews the plan quarterly and updates board on strategic plan implementation status.
  - The board annually reviews the plan at a summer planning retreat and adopts changes to the plan as needed at the Annual meeting.

## **GOAL THREE**

**Employ highly qualified staff who are mission aligned and have lived experience in proximity to the community being served.**

Strategy One: Ensure capable executive leadership.

Action Items:

- Launch an Executive Director search committee to build out position description, identify the qualities and qualifications needed, and lead an effective recruitment and interview process.
- Hire and onboard an Executive Director with a track record of inclusive leadership and demonstrable skills to address the needs of the organization and those we serve.

Strategy Two: Invest in a staff structure that provides the capacity to implement strategic initiatives and prioritizes ongoing training and development.

Action Items:

- Review organization needs and create a long-term staffing plan to address fundamental responsibilities including advocacy, programs, outreach, marketing, fundraising and building partnerships.

- Ensure up to date job descriptions and clear organization chart with every iteration of staff development.
- Develop staff recruitment and selection processes that balance community experience, diversity, mission alignment and technical skillsets.
- Examine compensation structures and benefits to assure workplace retention.
- Invest in training and accountability to support continued development for team members.
- Hire and train paid front desk workers as needed to augment volunteer contributions. Ensure all front desk workers have the training and updates needed to ensure consistent guest experiences, accurate referrals, and exceptional customer service.

## **GOAL FOUR**

### **Expand programs and partnerships to improve services and outreach.**

Strategy One: Engage with community through collaboration and partnerships.

Action Items:

- Complete community asset mapping to identify potential partners as well as programmatic gaps that may still exist that could be filled by OkEq.
- Create structures through which it is absolutely clear and transparent what OkEq's relationship is with those operating in our space or promoted on our social media (i.e. which are our programs, which are vetted services that are operating under formal agreements, which are given support but operate independently etc.)
- Maintain space for hosting third party providers delivering case management, counseling and other important social services on a consistent and widely promoted schedule.
- Clarify and strengthen our relationships with existing partners and develop new connections to better serve the community. Update our partnership agreements.
- Partner with affirming social safety net organizations to meet the needs of those most vulnerable in our community through services such as housing and rent assistance, food security, trans-friendly clothing and other important needs.
- Evaluate our clinic operations to determine which services are best done in-house and which can be provided through partnerships. Invite other clinic providers offering different types of affirming services to use our space during hours our in-house provider is not in residence.
- Partner with credible social justice organizations to lend our name and resources to ongoing efforts to defend and expand civic liberties. Expand our engagement with others in the state around advocacy and public affairs.

Strategy Two: Be a hub for connecting people to the affirming resources and training they seek.

Action Items:

- Expand training and resources for our volunteers to ensure consistent and informed information and referrals.
- Actively engage at tabling events and Pride celebrations across the state to both promote our own resources and stay aware of the resources being offered by others.
- Update our resource guides for affirming faith communities, supportive health resources, legal resources, equality business members, and other allied businesses and social services. Publish the resource guide on our website.
- Actively participate with interfaith and community networks that are seeking to improve equity and quality of life for the people of Tulsa, making sure the needs of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals are represented at the table.
- Expand outreach with local attorneys to provide various legal resources and periodic legal clinics to provide information and guidance to members on relevant topics.
- Partner with educational organizations to provide GED classes, language classes, and a variety of professional learning opportunities in our space, targeted to our members' identified needs.

Strategy Three: Offer opportunities to our community members to build leadership, give service, and advocate for positive change.

Action Items:

- Train a cadre of board and staff representatives to speak to 2SLGBTQIA+ issues with the media and at community events.
- Partner with city government, emergency responders, and large institutions to ensure they are considering the needs of Oklahoma's 2SLGBTQIA+ population when making policy.
- Expand the Equality Business Alliance Membership Program.
- Offer periodic service-day activities at OkEq and with other service agencies for members.
- Work with Leadership Tulsa to relaunch the Lead Together Program.
- Provide education, connection, and encouragement to our members and allies, especially those that have the social or financial capital to do so safely, to be advocates within institutions to foster safer spaces overall and push back on efforts to dismantle protections such as GSA's, BRG's, DEI offices, and other initiatives that have provided safe harbor.

Strategy Four: Always be a safe space where people find community, belonging, and support.

Action Items:

- Review current safety protocols and security needs and make adjustment as needed to address concerns and potential threats.
- Continue and expand our successful line-up of support groups meeting at the center.
- Start a program to fill the gap in young adult programming (18-23) that was identified during community listening sessions.
- Invest in quarterly community feasts and holiday gatherings to make space for friendship and comradery.
- Host, cohost and/or amplify awareness of important community milestones and markers such as Trans Day of Remembrance, World Aids Day and more as appropriate.
- Honor those we have lost in our community by hosting an annual memorial service.

Strategy Five: Embrace the power of the arts, affirming spiritual traditions, and wellness practices to build community across lines of difference, engage hearts, tell stories, and make powerful social change.

Action Items:

- Build on the potential of the art gallery with compelling shows and monthly or bi-monthly art openings. At least once a year provide a show that highlights some aspect of our shared history.
- Support the efforts of the staff and the LRT Advisory Council to maximize the utilization of the black box theater for the benefit of OkEq and the community at large.
- Partner with others to offer author talks, lecture series, affirming religious or spiritual programs, holistic wellness workshops and retreats, film festivals, and other types of intergenerational, cultural, and educational programming.
- Maintain and expand access to the rich, diverse, and affirming collection provided by the Nancy and Joe McDonald Rainbow Library.
- Continue the work of the History Project to preserve OkEq documents, artifacts, and community donated items which tell the story of OkEq and of the local 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

## **GOAL FIVE**

**Improve the financial, fundraising, and operational structures to stabilize operations and provide a foundation to respond to future needs and challenges.**

Strategy One: Complete the substantial investments in technology that have been started by the IT Special Committee

Action Items:

- Finalize the customer relationship management software conversion process.
- Implement Asana project management software organization wide.
- Launch the “Let’s all do Good” app.
- As funding permits, upgrade technology in the meeting rooms to accommodate today’s virtual meeting landscape.
- Develop a secure and comprehensive document storing and sharing protocol so resources are available despite staff and volunteer transitions.
- Provide ongoing training to staff and committee chairs on best practices, organizational standard operating procedures, and use of available technology tools.

Strategy Two: Create and implement a comprehensive financial plan that diversifies revenue streams, ensures financial stability, expands endowments and operating reserve, and supports sound fiscal decision making.

Action Items:

- Continue quarterly reforecasting and mid-year rebudgeting protocols.
- Annually implement a successful end-of-year giving campaign that engages individuals and small businesses in the mission.
- Continuously innovate and improve on the annual gala strategy in ways that maximize proceeds and the participant experience. Prioritize ways that people can be included at a variety of giving levels.
- Expand our major gifts and foundation support by improved communication and direct contact with current and lapsed donors while cultivating and developing new funders and growing our base of support.
- Identify mission-related special-project giving opportunities in addition to seeking general operating support.
- Approve a facility rental strategy that balances earned income with in-kind hosting 2SLGBTQIA+ focused events. Market special rental packages that increase facility rental income.
- Improve earned revenue opportunities through a calendar of engaging and entertaining fee-based events.
- Create effective campaigns that solicit, cultivate and track paid memberships.



- With board and trustee leadership, implement a planned giving program and other funding initiatives designed to add to the corpus of the existing endowments with the Tulsa Community Foundation. Review and update as appropriate the investment and distribution terms of the endowments.
- Publish a digital annual report that transparently shares sources and uses of funding while highlighting accomplishments and impact.

Strategy Three: Expand the value and positive impact that Pride programming provides to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community while managing financial and liability issues.

Action Items:

- Explore options and determine if OkEq remains the best organization to host and coordinate the Pride festival and programming for the future.
- Continue the community listening process related to priorities and most important aspects of the annual Pride Festival to the queer community members.
- To address the growing expense and significant staff and volunteer commitment, adjust the primary festival events to a one or two-day event.
- With the Pride committee, discuss the opportunities to include more educational and cultural programming with a Pride theme year-round.

## **GOAL SIX**

**Refresh and reimagine our Center to better serve today's community.**

Strategy One: Continue organizing and refreshment of the Center.

- Engage staff, board and volunteers along with professional organizers to help with organizing and decluttering activities.
- Support the ongoing work of the archivist and volunteers in sorting and preserving meaningful materials that should be kept for historical purposes.
- With trustees, develop a budget and funding stream to provide for the maintenance and replacements of physical assets and allow for ongoing improvements to address changing needs.
- With trustees, complete an examination of current space usage and implement facility upgrades that improve the quality of the space, enhance user experience, and maximize facility use.
- Innovate new uses for old spaces that prioritize flexibility. With staff and stakeholders evaluate needs for spaces such as staff offices, counseling rooms, clothes closet/food pantry, meetings spaces. Consider co-working or coffee house type spaces that members can use during open hours.
- Refresh paint, floor coverings, furnishings, and lighting; add new plants, artwork and office furniture as needed.

Strategy Two: Plan and execute a capital campaign.

- Engage with staff, architects, fundraising professionals, volunteers, trustees, and contractors to plan a renovation of the Equality Center.
- Create a budget for capital improvements and add to the endowment if possible.
- Conduct a capital campaign starting with major gift solicitation in 2026 and a public fundraising effort that launches with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Center in 2027.
- Implement renovation plans with effective construction management in coordination with the needs of the Center.
- Plan a grand reopening celebration for the Center.