



PeerWorks

# Strategic Plan

2025–2035

# Leading Together: Our Strength is Each Other

In 10 years, Peer Support will be firmly established as a vital and respected discipline within Ontario's healthcare system, with PeerWorks recognized as the leading provincial voice driving the growth and sustainability of the sector. Through advocacy, education, and community-building, PeerWorks will ensure that Peer Support remains a cornerstone of recovery. As the sector thrives, PeerWorks will continue to support its members in navigating change, overcoming challenges, and advancing the collective power of Peer Support across Ontario and beyond.

# Executive Summary: Hope and Adaptability

PeerWorks (PW), has provided essential services to our +50 member organizations and individual Peer Support professionals: professional development, networking opportunities, administrative support, regional marketing, Peer Support training, and government advocacy for the past 32 years.

As we collectively evolved in so many ways, our rebranding of OPDI to PeerWorks, recognized the strides that have been made to ensure that Consumer/Survivor Initiatives (CSIs) and Peer Support Organizations (PSOs) are a part of Ontario's official healthcare framework.

Yet, as PeerWork's leadership reviewed the work that resulted from our Strategic Direction — 2020–2023, we realized that our vision and mission remain steadfast and still serve our movement as it continues to grow and flourish. They have been updated slightly to reflect the true impact of our collective work.

It was also essential for our Board to take a realistic view: “How are we going to fulfill our ongoing value proposition to our members and the discipline, while always respecting our original values of the Consumer/Survivor Movement?”

PeerWorks' Board has decided to launch our next Strategic Plan with a 10 year view: 2025–2035. This reflects our vision to maintain a stable, relevant service delivery model within the realistic financial realities, while we continue to strengthen and thrive as a sector. PW is committing to reporting our progress to this plan on a biennial basis to our membership, and the Board will conduct a formal review in 5 years — midway through our new plan — so that it remains relevant to our sector's growth trajectory.

This 10 year Strategic Plan — “Our Strength is Each Other” — reinforces the successes of our collective voices, and our commitment to our movement's enduring long term vision and rightful place in Ontario's evolving healthcare framework.

# Planning and Engagement Process

PeerWorks' Board of Directors started this Strategic Planning process in 2022, while assessing the progress of our 2020–2023 plan. Over many comprehensive discussions, that highlighted our sector's resourcing realities, the Board wanted to set the tone for future strategic planning that would allow for long term visioning while putting realistic milestones into place.

Over the course of the last two years, our Directors have dedicated 7 sessions on PW's long term vision: to determine how to preserve the roots of our movement and the core of our member services, and still be able to strengthen and grow our sector's professional role in the healthcare framework.

We have also provided members with ongoing opportunities to provide feedback, including through our annual membership survey. How PeerWorks can better serve you, be your LOUD and persistent provincial advocacy voice, and strengthen your support systems was at the forefront of every Board Strategic Planning discussion.

Based on these various inputs, some very clear themes have emerged on PeerWorks' hopefulness and value to you, our Province's healthcare framework and how we can continue to grow the movement.

- > **Champion:**  
Advocacy and Leadership
- > **The Magic of Peer Support:**  
Be True to our History
- > **Professionalism and our Members' Needs:**  
Education, Funding, Mentorship and Networking
- > **Our People:**  
Connecting and Community
- > **Employment and Living Expertise**
- > **Long-term Thinking:**  
Confidence in our Collective Value Proposition, while Looking Beyond a Decade

# PeerWorks' Mission and Values:

We believe that a slightly updated version of our Mission and Vision still reflects our ongoing sectoral work. PeerWorks looks forward to engaging with our members in Year 5 of this plan, to assess if they still resonate with our work.

## Mission

PeerWork's mission is to strengthen, amplify and deepen diverse peer voices in Ontario through community building, information-sharing, collaboration, advocacy and education.

## Vision

A world in which Lived Experience is valued, peer autonomy and peer culture are embraced and protected, diversity is respected, and Peer Support is accessible to all.

# At a Glance: Strategic Plan 2025–2035

Our  
Strength is  
Each Other

Strategic Priority #1:  
**We are Loud**  
*The Power of Our Vision,  
Our Voice*



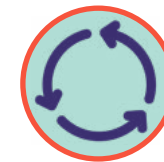
**Intent: To Further our Movement Through Advocacy and Education**

**Themes into Action**

- > Educating our Government Funders and Community Partners
- > Implementing the Position Statement

- > Ensuring that our Strategic Efforts are Equally-Focused on Addictions and Mental Health

Strategic Priority 2:  
**We are Sustainable**  
*A Funded and Well-Served  
Peer Support Sector*



**Intent: To Support the Sustainability, Resiliency and Adaptability of our Members and our Sector**

**Themes into Action**

- > Funding as a Core Prong of PW's Advocacy Strategy
- > Increasing PW's Revenues through Training Opportunities
- > Conducting Feasibility Study for Personal Donations and Community Bonds

- > Developing a PR/Marketing Plan to Raise Awareness and Support New Revenue Strategies (Donations)
- > Exploring Accreditation as a Potential Path to Professionalism and Supporting our Members
- > Creating a Framework for Mentorship Opportunities

Strategic Priority 3:  
**We are Strong**  
*A Solid Governance  
Foundation*



**Intent: To Ensure that PeerWorks' Decision Making and Stewardship is Guided by Best Practices, Transparency, Accountability and Diversity**

**Themes into Action**

- > Governance Review: Setting up Best Practices Framework for PeerWorks
- > Developing Governance Resources that Membership can Use

- > Create Clear Succession Planning Strategies that support Membership Engagement

# Strategic Priority #1:

## ***We are Loud***

### **The Power of Our Vision, Our Voice**



#### **Intent: To Further our Movement Through Advocacy and Education**

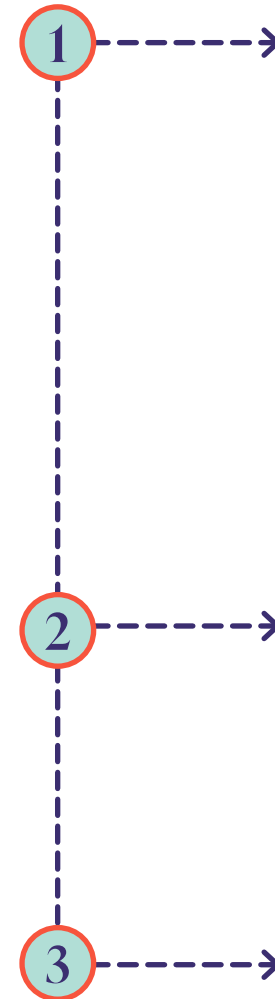
Our past has guided us, while we constantly adapted to a changing world, and optimistically charge forward with a vision for the future. Our future is rooted in Mad History, education, and acknowledging the ‘powers’ of Peer Support, and the hope rooted within Lived Experience, while advocating for enhanced options within our Province’s mental health and addictions framework.

PW’s ongoing work with our funders, at the provincial Health tables and with each of you highlights our role as the provincial education and advocacy voice for the Peer Support/ Lived Experience work in local communities. So growing our influence, through education and advocacy is a key priority in this Plan.

While determining what goals PeerWorks would focus on to further our Advocacy and Education priority, the following key components were taken into consideration:

- > **Accessibility of Peer Support**
- > **Enhancing Awareness of Peer Support as a Stand-Alone Discipline, and its importance within Ontario’s Vision for Recovery**
- > **Further Embedding Peer Support into Ontario’s Health Framework (and beyond!):**
  - > Peer Support and Clinical services, offered together, provide incredible opportunities for those seeking support. When Peer Support is used correctly it can positively influence the clinical supports and services offered within our communities. The expertise and experience offered within Lived Experience should be used to inform and evaluate the effectiveness of clinical services.
- > **PeerWork’ role as the leading provincial Authority on Peer Support, will:**
  - > Ensure that the Peer Support movement, and its social justice connection to Consumer/Survivor and Mad movements are never lost (including the Position Statement).
  - > Continue to influence and support the Province’s vision of preventative healthcare.
- > **The Power of our People:**
  - > Leverage our collective experience and partnerships to effect change and influence government.

## **Themes Into Action**



#### **Educating our Government Funders and Community Partners**

- > Ongoing work in local communities with our membership, supporting their efforts in local government and community partner education and advocacy
- > Annual Queen’s Park Day: Ensuring that our collective voice and Peer Support’s value is understood at the provincial-influencer levels

#### **Implementing the Position Statement**

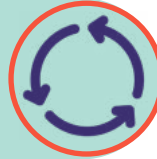
- > Create annual priorities from the 10 statements

#### **Ensuring that our Strategic Efforts are Equally-Focused on Addictions and Mental Health**

# Strategic Priority #2:

## We are Sustainable

### A Funded and Well-Served Peer Support Sector



#### Intent: To Support the Sustainability, Resiliency and Adaptability of our Members and our Sector

As Ontario's healthcare framework struggles as an overburdened system, the impact and value of our sector's expertise continues to be recognized. However, Peer Support can only remain a sustainable and viable part of the formal healthcare framework, while serving our local communities from a grassroots perspective, if there is proper funding in place. Our members' direct feedback and data-sharing has allowed PeerWorks to assess funding challenges through an evidence-based approach.

This key priority was guided with the following considerations:

#### > Resources & Capacity are a Constant Challenge:

- > Our professionals are not getting appropriately paid for their expertise, and talent retention is a real threat to our sector.
- > PeerWorks, the provincial voice, is severely under-funded and will not be able to grow its services to our professionals, as we strive to flourish as a discipline.
- > New revenue potential can build capacity through: more training opportunities (ie WRAP and MHFA), providing consultations and Peer Support accreditation to non-profits/hospitals, and developing microcredentials.

#### > Raising Our Collective Profile not only increases Peer Support's profile and awareness, but will support new revenue strategies

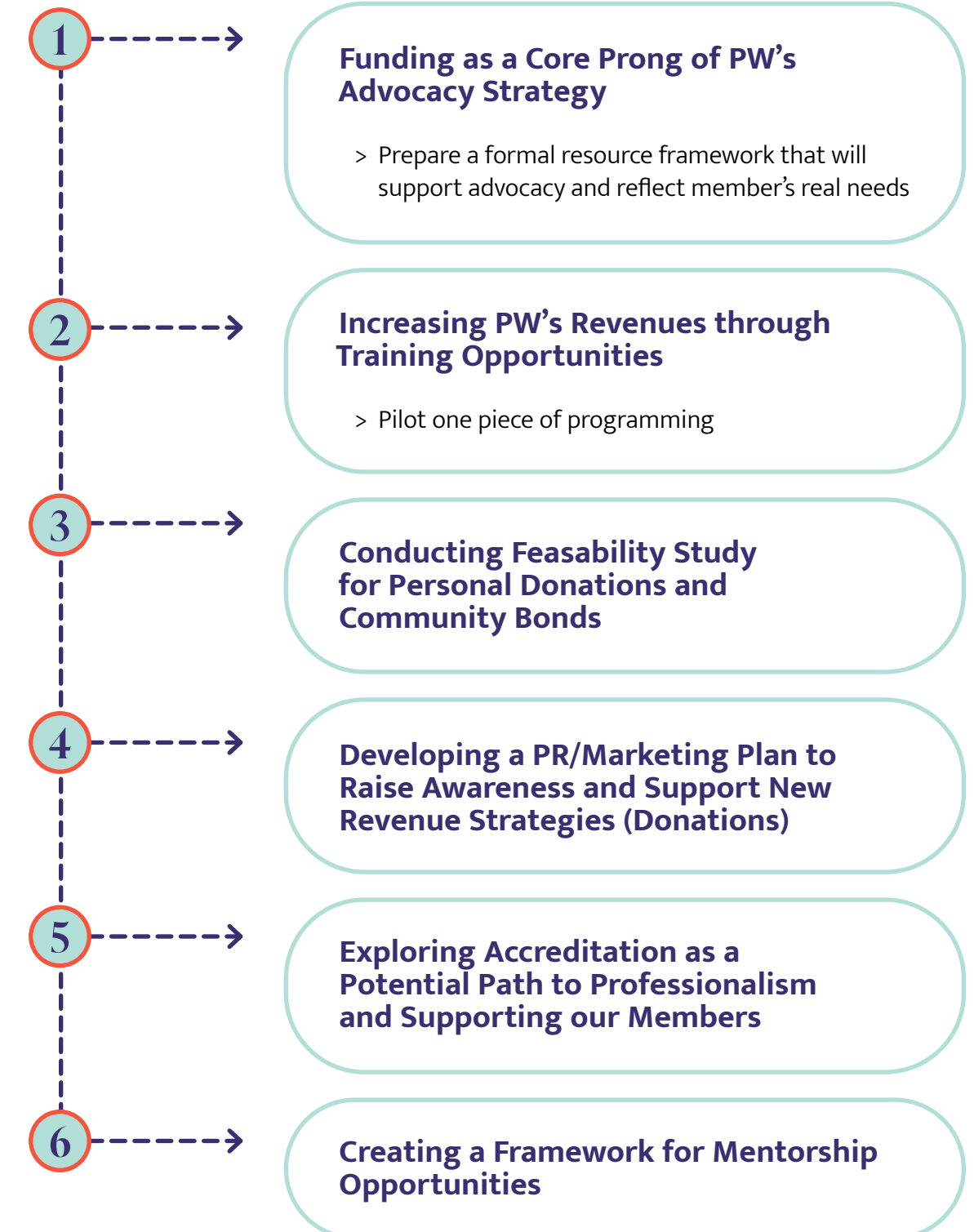
#### > Are We Enabling our Sector's Adaptability and True Potential?

- > How can we support our organization and members, as we dream and innovate?
- > Peer Support's promise goes beyond the healthcare framework: housing, immigration, employment and serving diverse communities.

#### > Serving You:

- > PeerWorks is ultimately here to serve its members and the movement. All of these goals support that end, and your ongoing feedback has guided this Plan, to support your needs through:
  - » Mentorship opportunities.
  - » Education and Professionalism: We also need to appreciate the power of volunteerism within our movement, and not lose sight of our unpaid volunteers as we continue to strengthen professionalism within the Peer Support/Lived Experience sector.

## Themes Into Action



# Strategic Priority #3:

**We are Strong**

**A Solid Governance Foundation**



## Intent: To Ensure that PeerWorks' Decision Making and Stewardship is Guided by Best Practices, Transparency, Accountability and Diversity.

As a non-profit organization that is provincially-funded and promotes the principles of continuous improvement, accountability and engagement, the PeerWorks' Board of Directors has undertaken considerable work to become a 'Best Practices' governing body. The Directors have incorporated Annual Governance Education sessions into the Board's annual cycle of work, and have launched a comprehensive Governance 101 initiative to enhance PeerWorks' Board resources and practices.

In a quickly moving regulatory landscape, PeerWorks' by-laws will be updated to ensure compliance with current not-for-profit requirements, and to incorporate new governance shifts that will better enable PW's succession planning and long-term efforts. The Board is committing to a regular by-law review process — either triggered by a new regulatory requirement, or on a 5 year cycle as part of the Directors' regular review processes.

Globally, Boards are seeing that their priorities now go beyond financial performance, risk management and regulatory compliance. PeerWorks is dedicated to a governance model that will embed the principles of diversity, transparency and accountability in every decision made by the Board.

They are also committed to developing resources that will support their stewardship of PeerWorks as an organization, and of our collective movement. New onboarding materials are being created for PeerWorks' Directors, and based on membership feedback, those plain-language resources will also be shared with member organizations to support their local Boards and management.

## Themes Into Action

1

### Governance Review: Setting up Best Practices Framework for PeerWorks

- > Ensuring our corporate By-Laws are current and in compliance of new legislation, while adopting better governance practices
  - Committing to a regular By-Law review process
- > Update board policies, processes and onboarding materials
- > Develop Board annual metrics on effectiveness and engagement

2

### Developing Governance Resources that Membership can Use

- > Based on direct member feedback — develop plain-language guides for member organizations' Boards to use, to support governance best practices

3

### Create Clear Succession Planning Strategies that support Membership Engagement

- > A defined and transparent annual skills-matrix for the Board to use as part of its recruitment processes
- > Use mentorship framework to support Board succession planning (2.6)

# Our Strength is Each Other

PeerWorks believes that the next 10 years will be pivotal for our sector and the Peer Support movement. The power of our shared voice and experiences, a solid governance foundation, and a properly funded and well-served sector will solidify Peer Support's rightful place in Ontario's evolving healthcare framework (and beyond!). PeerWorks looks forward to communicating our progress against this Strategic Plan. May we all be guided by optimism, hope and adaptability, as we collectively move forward for a stronger future for Peer Support.







## Get in Touch

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