



2023-2025

# PLAN FOR IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Women in Leadership for Diverse Representation  
Mujeres en Liderazgo para la Representación Diversa



# ABOUT WILDR

Women in Leadership for Diverse Representation - WILDR - was launched in early 2022. It is led and supported through the efforts and contributions of core volunteers and other community members.

## Mission

WILDR is committed to realizing more diverse representation by women in elected and appointed positions in Santa Cruz County. We support progressive women who reflect the communities they serve through training, networking, and leadership development.

## Vision

Our vision is a democracy where elected officials and other leaders reflect the population, serving in roles that uplift all people in equity and justice.

## Where We Focus

WILDR provides information, connects people to resources, and, most importantly, builds networks of support in Santa Cruz County and all of its jurisdictions.

## Values

WILDR works to create the conditions for women with aligned values to enter and be supported in leadership roles, with a focus on elected and appointed positions in government. WILDR engages people that align with our core values, regardless of party. WILDR does not support specific candidates through endorsements or campaign funding.

## WILDR participants support and work to uphold:

- racial and gender equity,
- reproductive justice,
- lifespan education funding,
- voter access,
- housing justice, and
- equitable and shared economy for all.

Power - Parity - Presence



# WHY WILDR MATTERS

"Research indicates that whether a legislator is male or female has a distinct impact on their policy priorities. There is also strong evidence that as more women are elected to office, there is a corollary increase in policy making that emphasizes quality of life and reflects the priorities of families, women, and ethnic and racial minorities." - WomenDeliver

Santa Cruz County is culturally rich and diverse. Yet, this diversity is not adequately reflected by people in elected and appointed positions.

What was before anecdotal or observational, Santa Cruz Ventures, a nonprofit, has worked to document and track. In partnership with local government, Ventures published "[A Santa Cruz Like Me](#)" to illuminate gaps in representation using timely data and analysis.

- Women make up slightly more than half of the county's population ([DataShare](#)). Still, many county boards and elected bodies in Santa Cruz have little or no representation of women or individuals of diverse backgrounds or experiences.
- In Santa Cruz County, 31% of the population is either multiracial or a race other than white; additionally, 35% of the population is Hispanic or Latino (DataShare). However, within City or County government, appointed representatives bodies--including City Council, as well as twelve commissions and committees--there is a 34% undercount of people of color in the makeup of boards and commissions. This discrepancy is especially prominent for Hispanic and Latino people, as there is a 19% variance within the county and a 17% variance in the city of Santa Cruz (Ventures).
- Renters account for only 28% of the County Board, whereas 54% of the general population in Santa Cruz rent their housing (Ventures).

In addition to these examples, other important disparities exist. By income, age, (dis)ability, education, income, LGBTQ+, and other aspects of identity and intersectionality, there are considerable opportunities for better representation in local elected and appointed positions.

At WILDR, we know that our community benefits from representation. By uplifting women who align with WILDR's values, we aim to close gaps in representation and strengthen bridges between our communities and our government. We see representation in public offices as a critical step to achieving equitable and healthy communities.



# SITUATION AND CONTEXT FOR IMPACT

In its first year, WILDR facilitated several successful forums, engaging hundreds of people in learning, connecting, and sharing. In 2022 WILDR also initiated a group for existing elected leaders to learn from each other and build resilience for the challenges of governance.

WILDR has asked participants to provide feedback after every forum and in preparation for planning, with [surveys](#) also sent specifically to inform this plan. Additionally, key [informant interviews](#) were completed. This information was reviewed and summarized in a strategic planning session held in November 2022, influencing the summary of strengths, assets, and critical issues, as well as 2-year goals.

## Summary of WILDR Assets and Strengths

- A strong network that spans the county
- Focused on diversity, centering voices that need to be heard
- Accessible forums - provided, at no cost, online and translated
- High-quality content; up-to-date information
- Teamwork & collaboration among core members
- A safe space to address and work through challenges
- Committed and skilled volunteers, translators, interns, and other contracted staff
- Adaptability and nimbleness
- Growing repository of information and resources
- Website <https://www.wildrsantacruz.com/>

## Critical Issues for the Organization

- Limited hours (capacity) of leaders and staffing WILDR to fulfill its potential
- Lack of consistent funding
- Current deficit of funding
- Lack of clarity around the ideal structure, e.g.,
  - Lack of 501c status is a disincentive or a barrier for many funders.
  - Membership structures may be more flexible but may also limit participation and inhibit equity within the organization.



# 2023-25 PRIORITIES

In alignment with its mission and working toward the vision, WILDR has set three priorities for 2023 through 2025. These priorities were based on the current situation and aligned with an understanding of the barriers that women and diverse candidates face for elected and appointed offices. They are:

- Community and network building,
- Elections and appointments, and
- Capacity and sustainability.

For each priority, we have set a goal and identified a plan of action. Each priority and the specific activities associated with them are aimed at reaching our ultimate goal of more diverse women in elected and appointed positions.

## **Goal 1: A WILDR Network.**

Grow the network of WILDR in diversity, number, and strength of connections.

## **Goal 2. Increased Equity in Elections and Appointments.**

Build engagement in WILDR among women that have been historically under-represented. This may also include addressing barriers and system issues that prevent people from seeking or obtaining positions within the government.

## **Goal 3. WILDR Sustainability.**

Develop a sustainable and documented operational model for WILDR.

Sustainability focuses on high-quality process and results for the organization, identify and using resources responsibly and strategically, and building more capacity for the work of the organization.



# STRATEGIC GOALS

## Goal 1: A WILDR Network.

**Action: Grow the network of WILDR in diversity, number, and strength of connections.**

WILDR will expand and strengthen the network of people supporting diverse women candidates and appointees. By providing networking opportunities through four virtual forums, making WILDR presentations available to other organizations to spread our mission, and supporting women currently serving in elected and appointed office, we will be able to build support for WILDR and the women involved.

### Measures

1. Increase the number of participants connected to WILDR by at least 50%, annually broadly inclusive of diversity named (e.g. age, ability, race, ethnicity, geography, etc.)
2. Increase communications through social media and email by at least 50% annually
3. Provide at least four presentations to groups about WILDR each year
4. Increase in number of participants in virtual events year over year.
5. Meaningful connection for participants as measured through participants' reporting in surveys and interviews

### Strategies

- Develop and use a communication plan for regular outreach and engagement
  - Communicate regularly and frequently through email to sustain and build engagement
  - Introduce WILDR to more Santa Cruz County women through presentations to target groups and social media
- Organize at least four virtual events annually to share knowledge and offer networking opportunities among existing participants, and introduce WILDR to new participants
- Provide formal and informal mentoring partnerships between WILDR participants
- Mobilize existing members to engage their networks with WILDR



# STRATEGIC GOALS

## **Goal 2. Increased Equity in Elections and Appointments.**

**Action: Build engagement in WILDR among women that have been historically under-represented**

In prioritizing elections and appointments, we will encourage women to think about themselves as candidates who can run and apply for open positions. Activities to encourage women to run as representatives include sharing information about how to run and about available positions in Santa Cruz County via email and our website, as well as providing training and mentoring opportunities. By supporting women through the process of building a campaign and running for a position, we want to achieve the actualization of more diverse women in office.

### **Measures**

1. Number of contacts established with South County individuals and groups
2. Number of presentations to target groups
3. Establishment and implementation of tracking system to measure diversity of WILDR participants by age, race, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, gender, education, homeownership etc.
4. Connections made for candidates to training programs such as [Emerge](#)
5. Quantity of communications done in Spanish as well as English

### **Strategies**

- Work towards bridging North and South County divides through targeted outreach to individuals and groups
- Outreach to groups and individuals in key areas where there is underrepresentation: by age, language, geography
- Connect with existing groups by making presentations at their meetings and events
- Generate and implement a plan to match early candidates to training opportunities
- Provide accessible and engaging communications, e.g. in Spanish, using social media messaging appealing to younger populations etc.

**Power - Parity - Presence**



# STRATEGIC GOALS

## **Goal 3. Sustainability for WILDR.**

### **Action: Develop a sustainable and documented operational model for WILDR**

Finally, to ensure stability and the success of WILDR's future endeavors, we will engage more people with time, talent, and financial resources to expand our capacity. Further, we will build a sustainable financial model for WILDR to guarantee that we can establish it permanently. By recognizing the importance of concretely establishing WILDR through securing support and financial planning, we will be able to support a long-term transition of increasing diverse women in office.

#### **Measures**

1. Establishment of a financial intermediary to allow WILDR to receive tax-deductible donations
2. Number of requests for funding to institutional funders
3. Number of individual donations
4. Number of partnerships with other organizations, key champions, training organizations, and funders.

#### **Strategies**

- By 2024, develop the infrastructure and financial support to uphold the organization's mission and vision (see strategic financing section)
- Build capacity through volunteer and paid capacity
- Continue to develop a knowledge repository to support long-term strategy
- Develop and maintain at least five new partnerships with other organizations, key champions, training organizations, and funders.





# ROLES AND SUPPORT NEEDED

WILDR is seeking nonpartisan partners in Santa Cruz County who will collaborate in producing, funding, and publicizing forums and other meetings in 2023 and 2024. We envision a coordinated effort with shared leadership to provide networking forums targeted to different geographies, an in-person learning and networking session for diverse women planning election campaigns, etc. With our partners, we will ensure that women receive information through a variety of media and channels with which they are familiar. WILDR organizers are open to tailoring our partnerships to build on the capacity of each partner, recognizing that we are stronger together and will reach more women by working collaboratively.

Example activities:

- further networking and community building
- sharing information about how to run a campaign and be appointed to a commission
- developing leadership skills, and
- addressing barriers diverse women face in becoming leaders.

WILDR is also seeking funding to support operations.

**Power - Parity - Presence**



# STRATEGIC FINANCING

In 2022 WILDR incurred expenses totaling nearly \$7,400, with the largest costs being for translation/interpretation (WILDR is committed to having written materials, as well as live presentations translated into Spanish,) virtual meeting subscriptions, and administrative support (four interns from Cabrillo College and UCSC worked for WILDR in 2022.) Funds were raised through a GoFundMe campaign: all participants to WILDR events were asked to make a non-tax deductible contribution and a contribution from UCSC's Blum Center. The difference between expenses and revenue was covered by WILDR organizers. Additionally, WILDR has been supported through the in-kind hours of its leaders and supporters.

EXPENSES 2022	
Social Media	\$103.00
Website	\$279.00
Zoom	\$1,041.00
Translation / Interpretation	\$2,850.00
Administrative Support	\$2,250.00
Design	\$400.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,923.00</b>
REVENUE 2022	
GoFundMe	\$3,640.00
Other Contributions	\$1,050.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,690.00</b>
Difference Revenue over Expenses	<b>\$2,233.00</b>

PROJECTED EXPENSES	2023	2024
Social Media	\$150.00	\$200.00
Website	\$300.00	\$500.00
Zoom	\$800.00	\$800.00
Translation / Interpretation	\$3,000.00	\$3,500.00
Administrative Support	\$2,500.00	\$12,250.00
Design	\$500.00	\$750.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,250.00</b>	<b>\$18,000.00</b>
PROJECTED REVENUE	2023	2024
Individual Donations	\$3,500.00	\$4,000.00
Organizational Donations	\$2,250.00	\$4,000.00
Foundation Grants	\$1,500.00	\$10,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,250.00</b>	<b>\$18,000.00</b>
Difference Revenue over Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00

## Potential Strategies

- Engage with an organization providing formal fiscal sponsorship so that contributions to WILDR become tax-deductible donations. Once this is in place, apply for foundation grant funds.
- Generate revenue for interns and paid assistance through a fundraiser event - in-person meet and greet.
- Research membership organization status for consideration and implementation in 2024.
- Continue to solicit non-tax deductible funds from WILDR organizers, forum participants, and public



## **Acknowledgments**

WILDR is composed of people committed to getting work done!

### **Founder & Lead Organizer**

Dorian Seamster

### **Organizing Committee**

Christina Cuevas

Gail Pellerin

Lora Lee Martin

Sarah Marschall

Jennifer Schacher

### **Advisory Committee**

Yvette Lopez Brooks

Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson

Rose Filicetti

Stephanie Barron Lu

Maria Cadenas

Jenni Veitch-Olson

Erica Padilla Chavez

Vanessa Quiroz-Carter

Elaine Johnson

Yadira Flores

### **Interns**

Elizabeth Hidalgo

Bella Walsh

Marisol Ornelas

Devine Hardy

### **Additional and Specialized Support**

- Amanda Harris Altice - Logo and Design
- Stella Lauerma - Translation and Interpretation
- Beatriz Trujillo - Interpretation
- Sage Catton - Administrative Support