



FREEDOM WITHIN PRISON PROJECT

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN | 2025-2028

May 30, 2025

Presented by:



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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Supporters, Partners, and Community Members,

It is with deep gratitude and anticipation for what lies ahead that I share with you the Strategic Action Plan for Freedom Within Project for the years 2025 - 2028. This comprehensive plan represents the culmination of thoughtful reflection, dialogue and collaboration with our staff, board, partners and most importantly, those directly impacted by the systems we seek to transform.

Since our founding, Freedom Within Project has remained grounded in our belief in the inherent dignity and wisdom of those who have been marginalized by the carceral system. We have witnessed the power of emotional literacy, restorative justice and community-based healing to interrupt cycles of harm and co-create pathways to liberation.

This strategic plan is both a roadmap and reaffirmation of our steadfast commitment. It outlines key priorities that will guide our work in the coming years: expanding our reach, deepening our impact, strengthening our organizational infrastructure, and cultivating leadership opportunities for those most directly impacted by mass incarceration. Every objective and initiative outlined in this plan is rooted in our core values - compassion, insight, accountability, respect, responsibility and transformation.

We know that real change requires sustained effort, courage and collaboration. We are proud of what we have accomplished together and energized by what is possible when our collective vision for justice and healing is made actionable. With this plan, we aim not only to grow our programs and expand our outreach but also to respond to the needs and wisdom of our community with humility and purpose.

Thank you for being a part of our community and our journey. Whether you are a supporter, a colleague, a volunteer or a program participant, your commitment makes our work possible. We look forward to traveling this path together toward a future where every person is seen, heard and valued.

With gratitude and determination,

Malcolm Dydo, Executive Director



Introduction

The Strategic Planning Process

This strategic plan was developed by the FWP Board of Directors and Leadership Team over a 6-month period using an evidenced-based method of strategic planning called Technology of Participation. TOP methods were developed by The Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA), a leader over the past five decades in promoting lasting positive change in organizations and communities around the world. TOP Strategic Planning presents a structured planning process that incorporates the workshop method for building consensus, the focused conversation method for effective group communication and an implementation planning process for turning ideas into productive action and concrete accomplishments.

The strategic planning process was facilitated by Robin Callahan, President of The Callahan Collaborative, a nonprofit consulting firm committed to helping nonprofits and their leaders to thrive.

Participants:

Macolm Dydo, Kirsten Pohlman, Jay Saber, Marcel Manzardo, Michael Erkiletian, Dave Klause;
Facilitators – Robin Callahan and Gail Rothman from The Callahan Collaborative.



Organizational Overview

Vision, Mission & Values

VISION

Transforming justice by moving beyond punishment to repairing, healing, and thriving.

MISSION

Restoring wholeness to individuals, families and communities impacted by incarceration through a path of compassion, insight, and accountability.

VALUES

Compassion, insight, accountability, mutual respect, responsibility, and transformation.

Stakeholder Survey Feedback

Methodology:

Freedom Within Project reached out to nine key stakeholder groups for feedback: past FWP Board Members, Governmental Agencies and Policy Makers, Correctional Administration and Staff, Freedom Within Participants, Community-based Organizations & Service Providers Serving Incarcerated Populations, Co-Facilitators and Past FWP Facilitators. Two stakeholder groups, Participant Families, and Donors, did not have any respondents.

Stakeholder groups were identified and prioritized by high/medium/low influence and high/medium/low interest. Through this outreach effort, Freedom Within Project gathered responses from a broad and diverse audience, ensuring that the insights reflect a wide range of perspectives from those connected to and impacted by the work of FWP.

The Google Survey platform was used to deliver the questions to each category of stakeholders and collect their responses in a two-month timeframe. Approximately 50% of those surveyed responded, and many were generous in answering the questions to provide insightful and actionable feedback that Freedom Within Project utilized during the strategic planning process.

Themes across all stakeholder groups:

- **Sustainability & Expansion:** New facilitator development, administrative capacity building, and fundraising infrastructure are urgent needs.
- **Cultural & Institutional Barriers:** FWP must continue its uphill work against correctional culture resistance while maintaining its integrity and participant-centered approach.
- **Post-Release Support:** Stakeholders across categories urge expansion of post-release services like mentorship groups and emotional support networks.
- **Visibility & Outreach:** Freedom Within should amplify storytelling through podcasts, social media, and broader community engagement strategies.
- **Partnership Building:** Stronger alliances with legislative advocates, community organizations, and facility staff can support growth and influence.



Objectives & Key Strategies

Objective 1 – Optimize Organizational Effectiveness

1.1 Hire Professionals to Optimize Effectiveness

1.2 Strengthen & Diversify the Board

1.3 Embody a Strategic Culture

First Year Accomplishments

- Engagement of a grant specialist for compliance on current grants and to write future grants
- All Board members will have gone inside at least once
- Identified and added missing Board members – skillsets and diversity
- Board calendar/Program calendar
- Hire a contract fundraiser to work on FWP's behalf
- Develop a Glossary of common language

3-Year Success Indicators

- ✓ A diverse Board of 9 which provides the skill set needed to grow the organization
- ✓ 9-to-12-month operating reserve
- ✓ Leadership succession plan for key staff
- ✓ Dashboard of key metrics (what do we measure and why)
- ✓ We have embodied a strategic culture as measured by feedback from our annual board survey
- ✓ Long-term (3 years) business projection growth plan

Objective 2 – Grow Our Impact

2.1 Expand Programmatic Impact

2.2 Leverage Strategic Partnerships

2.3 Strengthen Curriculum

First Year Accomplishments

- Complete curriculum and facilitators handbook
- 4 Groups in 3 facilities
- Develop a facilitator training session

3-Year Success Indicators

- ✓ Expand Path to Freedom Program to one additional facility
- ✓ Develop an effective re-entry infrastructure (practical & emotional support) through leveraged partnerships
- ✓ Develop facilitation training to bring others inside
- ✓ Develop a business model by which we monetize our curriculum and training
- ✓ Establish meaningful measures of program impact
- ✓ A support group for families of incarcerated individuals

Objective 3 – Mobilize Community Support and Engagement

3.1 Engage the Community and Increase Fundraising

3.2 Tell Our Story

First Year Accomplishments

- Website completion with donation page
- All board members will have gone inside at least once
- Build out a database, using an expert to create a database, or using our existing website CRM
- A marketing and communications strategy

3-Year Success Indicators

- ✓ Successful community engagement event
- ✓ Powerful stories from returning citizens about the impact of a Path to Freedom
- ✓ Board members are equipped to be effective ambassadors on behalf of FWP (as indicated in the annual Board survey)
- ✓ Effective and efficient database

