

**SWOP-USA ADVOCACY AGENDA
2016-2018**

Introduction to SWOP-USA Advocacy Agenda

The SWOP-USA Board of Directors asked chapters to consider what social justice issues, related to sex work, they wanted the Board to prioritize. Each Chapter ranked these issues on a scale from 1 (Not Very Important) to 5 (Extremely Important). Thus, those with the highest ranking were deemed the most important for the Board. Those are, shown here:

1. Violence against sex workers (including systemic and police violence)
2. Addressing decriminalization and legal status of sex work
3. Reducing Stigma and discrimination
4. Responding to the Anti-Trafficking movement

In each circumstance, we identified a macro goal--or what we hope to see as the end result-- after working towards and meeting micro, or intermediate, goals. We realize that as the political and social environment changes, these micro goals may also adapt and change in pursuit of the final goal.

Especially in regards to Macro Goal #4, responding to the anti-trafficking movement, we believe the most effective response is through working towards Macro Goals #1-3 and ensuring that our actions are widely publicized and available for advocates, activists, and professionals. Ultimately, by creating an environment that is more sex worker supportive, we will dismantle the support for anti-trafficking policies that promote expanding criminalization.

Our organizational goals all stem in part from our overarching mission: that we, SWOP-USA, and our chapters, is a national social justice network dedicated to the fundamental human rights of sex workers and their communities, focusing on ending violence and stigma through education and advocacy.

Macro Goal #1: Eliminate the systemic and interpersonal violence faced by sex workers in the United States.

At SWOP-USA, we imagine a world where sex workers are not harmed by systemic and interpersonal violence. We realize much of this violence is exacerbated by stigmatization and criminalization. As such, we see this goal as working in tangent with our push to promote widespread decriminalization and to end social stigmatization of sex workers.

How we get there:

Create a safe, welcoming environment within the SWOP-USA community for all sex workers, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ability, and type of sex work, among other identifying factors.

Step #1: Evaluate membership diversity within SWOP-USA by surveying the membership. Also identify areas where members have felt uncomfortable or want to develop their familiarity (Month 1).

Step #2: Compile and release this report to the wider membership, highlighting areas where SWOP-USA needs to improve our inclusivity (Month 2-3).

Step #3: Establish anti-oppression/anti-racism training requirements for all SWOP-USA Board members, chapter reps, and new chapter founders (Month 3-6).

Step #4: Drawing upon evaluation data, start building intersectional working relationships with other organizations that serve diverse populations and can serve as strong allies (Ongoing after Month 3).

Step #5: Hold quarterly webinars, hosted in collaboration with intersectional organizations identified in Step #4, that address serving and supporting a more diverse population of sex workers (Ongoing after Month 4).

Step #6: Expand the SWOP-USA Board membership to be more inclusive and diverse (Ongoing after Month 4).

Step #7: Deliberately approach activists, identified through partnerships with other organizations, about starting SWOP-USA chapters to improve who we are serving (Ongoing after Month 4).

Step #8: Identify and hire a SWOP-USA ombudsman who can field, respond, negotiate, and lead chapters and members through conflict (both those related to diversity and intersectional, and interpersonal conflicts)(Ongoing after Month 4).

Reduce sex workers' exposure to systemic violence, such as violence perpetrated by social service agencies, medical providers, and public policy.

1. Social Service and Medical Providers

Step #1: Solicit comments from members to identify the largest perpetrators of systemic violence and how this violence is perpetuated. (Months 1-6)

Step #2: Test the effectiveness of PROS networks in reducing systemic violence. (Months 6-15)

Step #3: Create a national-level PROS network certification program that incorporates the results from earlier research. (Months 15-18)

Step #4: Tie certification to a directory of service providers that are PROS-certified. (Months 18+)

2. Public Policy

Step #1: Identify harmful public policies nationwide that interfere with sex workers' safety. (Months 1-6)

Step #2: (Simultaneous to Step #1) Work with Communications Committee to develop a communications kit for promoting the expansion of Good Samaritan laws to include sex workers (Months 1-6)

Step #3: Begin contacting cities with existing Good Samaritan laws about expanding their language to include sex workers (Months 6-9)

Step #4: Identify 3-5 most responsive cities to use as test cases for expanding Good Samaritan laws and concentrate pressure on these cities (Months 9-18)

Step #5: (Simultaneous to Step #4) Keep press well apprised of changes to city Good Samaritan laws (or back-tracking) (Months 9-18)

Step #6: Following successful expansion of Good Samaritan Laws, review and decide what arguments and strategies were most impactful (Months 18+)

Step #6: (Alternate) Following unsuccessful expansion of Good Samaritan laws, review approach and identify areas for improving policy outreach (Months 18+)

Reduce sex workers' exposure to interpersonal violence, such as violence perpetrated by clients, sexual predators, and police.

1. National Expansion of Bad Date Sheets

Step #1: Identify cities where bad date sheets are in operation, how data is collected, how they are distributed, and what populations they are reaching/reporting (Months 1-3)

Step #2: Form bad date sheet steering committee involving representatives from St. James' Infirmary, HIPS, Project SAFE, Denver SWOP, and SWAN (Canada), and other organizations have long-standing bad date reporting programs (Month 3)

Step #3: Work with Bad Date Sheet Steering Committee to develop a strategy for expanding bad date sheet reporting and distribution nationwide, including investigating designing an app (Month 4-7)

Step #4: Put strategy into action and widely publicize with help of Communications Committee (Months 8+)

Step #5: Create and conduct training with Community Support Line volunteers to prepare them to collect and upload bad date reports (Months 8+)

2. Police Violence

Step #1: Work with Communications Committee to develop and highlight stories about police violence (Throughout)

Step #2: Identify based on reports and media coverage, working with Communication Committee, SWOP-USA's "Cities of Exploitation" (or some catchy name) that highlights

cities or states where police departments have long-histories of abusing sex workers (Months 1-4).

Step #3: Reach out to these cities/states about developing new strategies to remove them from the “Cities of Exploitation” list (Months 4-6).

Step #4: Develop training for police and law enforcement on working with sex workers in a productive and respectful way (Months 6+)

Step #5: Highlight success stories as a result of the LE training mentioned in Step #4 (Months 10+)

Macro Goal #2: Support the successful decriminalization of all types of sex work within the United States.

In all fifty states, at least some form of sex work (usually independently managed prostitution) is illegal. We strive to promote decriminalization of all types of sex work. Decriminalization differs from legalization by taking government intervention, either thru regulation or criminalization, entirely off the table. Instead, individuals are able to determine their working conditions, their prices, and their business costs. SWOP-USA intrinsically and trust individuals to make decisions about their work and their bodies that best fit their needs. Decriminalization is the full realization of this philosophy in public policy.

How We Get There:

Research ongoing current decriminalization efforts and evaluate their possibility for effectiveness.

Step #1: Maintain an online database (in Google Drive) tracking various decriminalization efforts around the country (both policy and legal)(Ongoing).

Step #2: Identify the most promising decriminalization efforts happening nationwide and reach out to the sponsors or plaintiffs involved (Ongoing).

Step #3: Work with key individuals in each campaign to provide non-financial support, such as *amici* briefs, volunteer support, signature gathering, written and oral testimony, etc (Ongoing).

Step #4: Collaborate with Communications Committee to create a decriminalization response tool-kit for targeting the media in cities and states where decriminalization efforts are underway (Month 1-3; Ongoing distribution).

Step #5: Research successful decriminalization efforts in other countries, and identify the common themes and efforts that contributed to each effort's success (Month 1-5).

Step #6: Reach out to efforts that are deemed less than promising to discuss how to improve the effectiveness of their efforts based upon this development of best practices (Months 6+)

Start a National Decriminalization Working Group that develops a plan for widespread decriminalization

Step #1: Shared with the previous micro-goal, research successful decriminalization efforts in other countries, and identify the common themes and efforts that contributed to each effort's success (Month 1-5).

Step #2: Form the NDWG with international sex worker activists who have participated in successful decriminalization campaigns (Months 1-5).

Step #3: Create a "Best Practices for Promoting Decriminalization" resource guide. Widely distribute this publication (Months 6-12).

Step #4: Relying upon these best practices and the accompanying discussions, create a roadmap for moving towards decriminalization in the United States (Months 12+).

Step #5: Secure legal representation to help with the implementation of the decriminalization roadmap (Months 12+)

Provide ongoing emotional and organizational support to partner-organizations that come out publicly in support of decriminalization (such as Amnesty International).

Step #1: Identify organizations that have either publicly come out in support of decriminalization or could be swayed to support decriminalization (Ongoing).

Step #2: Work with Communications Committee to create both 1) a thank you to supportive organizations; 2) an "ask" for easily-swayed organizations; and 3) a list of talking points to help organizational staff address criticism or concerns about decriminalization. Kit should also introduce SWOP-USA and explain that we can provide technical assistance around decriminalization issues (policy development, research requests, sex worker quotes, etc.) (Month 1-6)

Step #3: Send these kits to supportive and targeted organizations (Months 6+)

Step #4: Publicly thank these organizations (via social media and on our website) as such support is secured (Ongoing).

Step #5: Defend such policy decisions in public discourse and at partner organizations' membership meetings or public events (including sending SWOP-USA members to represent at these events, ala Amnesty International regional conferences)(Ongoing).

Step #6: Likewise, meet with the policy directors of such organizations to identify policies that they would like SWOP-USA to publicly support. Present these policies to the SWOP-USA membership for voting and to issue statements of support, as they are voted upon (Ongoing).

Identify potential partner organizations that we want to encourage to come out publicly in favor of decriminalization.

Step #1: Identify organizations that have either publicly come out in support of decriminalization or could be swayed to support decriminalization (Ongoing).

Step #2: Work with Communications Committee to create both 1) a thank you to supportive organizations; 2) an "ask" for easily-swayed organizations; and 3) a list of talking points to help organizational staff address criticism or concerns about decriminalization. Kit should also introduce SWOP-USA and explain that we can provide technical assistance around decriminalization issues (policy development, research requests, sex worker quotes, etc.) (Month 1-6)

Step #3: Send these kits to supportive and targeted organizations (Months 6+)

Step #4: Publicly thank these organizations (via social media and on our website) as such support is secured (Ongoing).

Foster research that directly addresses the claims that enable stigmatization and criminalization.

Step #1: Work with membership to develop research questions or concerns that relate to stigmatization and criminalization (example: job satisfaction of sex workers compared to other hourly wage workers; qualitative research on impact of criminalization on housing stability; etc.)(Ongoing)

Step #2: Secure funding, if possible, to carry out these surveys with SWOP-USA membership (Ongoing).

Step #3: Recognize sex worker friendly research who would be willing to collaborate with SWOP-USA on conducting community-directed research (Ongoing)

Step #4: Work with SWOP chapters to avoid “survey fatigue from research demands (Ongoing).

Step #5: Establish research contract for outside researchers who are interested in collaborating with SWOP-USA members and chapters (Months 1-4).

Step #6: Introduce SWOP-USA to those sex worker-positive researchers who we may be interested in collaborating (Months 4+)

Step #7: Put out a Call for Proposals for such researchers on these issues; review and support 1-3 proposals annually that help further this goal (Months 5+)

Step #8: Ensure that SWOP-USA research is widely distributed along both academic and popular outlets (Month 12+).

Macro Goal #3: Move towards a world where sex work is seen as work, and stigmatization is greatly reduced. Further eliminate the criminal consequences associated with sex work that foster discrimination.

Stigmatization and discrimination often follow the criminalization of sex work. These collateral social consequences often last far after (or even precede) actual incarceration or criminal sanctions. We also acknowledge that intersecting forms of stigma and discrimination, including racism and transphobia, can actually lead to entry into sex work. These intersecting forms of discrimination and stigma can blur the lines between fully consensual sex work and circumstantial sex work. SWOP-USA strives to foster a society where current or former engagement in sex work is a non-issue. We further hope to build a society where each individual can fully exercise their autonomy in consenting to sex work, not respond to social forces.

How We'll Get There:

Spearhead a slick, well-constructed anti-stigma campaign that gives visibility to sex workers and the stigmatization they face.

Step #1: Hold planning call hosted by Jamila SWOP Atlanta and Miriam on November 13th at 7PM EST (Month 1).

Step #2: Based upon that planning call, put forward a plan for organizing and engaging SWOP-USA membership in an anti-stigma campaign (Months 1-6)

Step #3: Launch an online human rights reporting mechanism to collect data and personal stories of rights violations related to stigma, violence, etc. (Months 3-6)

Step #4: Reach out to larger organizations that share the larger goals of ending slut shaming- IE The Unslut Project, Slut Walk

Step #5: Organize highly publicized launch party for anti-stigmatization campaign (Month 6).

Step #6: Ensure wide publicity of project as it continues over the first 60 days. This may include the use of a hashtag on social media. (Month 6-7).

Step #7: Incorporate images from anti-stigma campaign into SWOP-USA website and materials moving forward. Use these images, and make them available, to accompany press releases or stories relating to anti-stigmatization (Month 8+).

Foster research that directly addresses the claims that enable stigmatization and criminalization (crosslisted from Macro Goal #2).

Step #1: Work with membership to develop research questions or concerns that relate to stigmatization and criminalization (example: job satisfaction of sex workers compared to other hourly wage workers; qualitative research on impact of criminalization on housing stability; etc.)(Ongoing)

Step #2: Secure funding, if possible, to carry out these surveys with SWOP-USA membership (Ongoing).

Step #3: Recognize sex worker friendly research who would be willing to collaborate with SWOP-USA on conducting community-directed research (Ongoing)

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Step #8: Ensure that SWOP-USA research is widely distributed along both academic and popular outlets (Month 12+).

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Step #1: Evaluate membership diversity within SWOP-USA by surveying the membership. Also identify areas where members have felt uncomfortable or want to develop their familiarity (Month 1).

Step #2: Compile and release this report to the wider membership, highlighting areas where SWOP-USA needs to improve our inclusivity (Month 2-3).

Step #3: Establish anti-oppression/anti-racism training requirements for all SWOP-USA Board members, chapter reps, Community Support Line volunteers, and new chapter founders (Month 3-6).

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Step #8: Identify and hire a SWOP-USA ombudsman who can field, respond, negotiate, and lead chapters and members through conflict (both those related to diversity and intersectional, and interpersonal conflicts)(Ongoing after Month 4).

Create/foster a welcoming community for sex workers through support of the Community Support Line

Step #1: Establish a regular (monthly or bimonthly) schedule of trainings for new volunteers and at least quarterly check in schedule for existing volunteers

Step #2: Establish a system of quality assurance for the line to ensure calls are handled appropriately.

Reduce sex workers' exposure to stigmatization as perpetrated by social service agencies, medical providers, and public policy (crosslisted under Macro Goal #1)

2. Social Service and Medical Providers

Step #1: Solicit comments from members to identify the largest perpetrators of systemic violence and how this violence is perpetuated. (Months 1-6)

Step #2: Test the effectiveness of PROS networks in reducing systemic violence. (Months 6-15)

Step #3: Create a national-level PROS network certification program that incorporates the results from earlier research. (Months 15-18)

Step #4: Tie certification to a directory of service providers that are PROS-certified. (Months 18+)

Step #5: Build a Know Your Rights Guide for adult film performers with regards to navigating OSHA (Months 18+)

2. Public Policy

Step #1: Identify harmful public policies nationwide that interfere with sex workers' safety. (Months 1-6) Resource: Drug Policy Alliance map.

Step #2: (Simultaneous to Step #1) Work with Communications Committee to develop a communications kit for promoting the expansion of Good Samaritan laws to include sex workers (Months 1-6)

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