



**C**HICAGO  
**A**LLIANCE  
**A**Gainst  
**S**EXUAL  
**E**XPLOITATION

# STRATEGIC PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

fiscal years 2018-21

# + ABOUT

## THE CHICAGO ALLIANCE AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

### The Current & Future State of CAASE

Our organization, Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE), was founded in 2006 by Rachel Durchslag, who saw that there were no anti-sex trafficking organizations focused on addressing the demand side of the sex trade: men who buy sex. She envisioned CAASE to be an organization that would fight prostitution by focusing attention on men who pay for sexual services, and with education that would prevent men from exploiting the most vulnerable and marginalized members of the community—the mostly girls and women who are prostituted in the sex trade. In 2009, CAASE acquired a legal services and policy non-profit (the Justice Project Against Sexual Harm), expanding our vision to encompass sexual harm outside the commercial sex trade. We also took on the tasks of improving local and state law and policy related to rape and prostitution, and providing survivors in Cook County with free legal representation. Our work has continued to grow in the years since, including but not limited to, the execution of multiple cutting-edge research projects, expanded education programming, increased community engagement events and partnerships, numerous policy and advocacy wins, and a substantially broadened legal services department.

In this moment, our dynamic and powerful work could not be more relevant and necessary. Within the past year, we have witnessed national movements against sexual assault and harassment gain tremendous momentum and visibility. Through campaigns such as #MeToo and Time's Up, survivors have boldly come forward to share their stories and demand culture change that will prevent sexual harm and hold men accountable for conduct that too many have long engaged in with impunity.

This new moment will require our organization to be innovative and resilient, continuing on the path towards real, systemic change. Now is the time for Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation to reflect on where we've been and imagine a future filled with possibility and growth. We have prioritized this necessary visioning in crafting a new strategic plan, providing a clear and concise map for what is to come.

#### MISSION

CAASE addresses the culture, institutions, and individuals that perpetrate, profit from, or support sexual exploitation.

#### VISION

CAASE envisions a community free from all forms of sexual exploitation, including sexual assault and the commercial sex trade.

#### WORK

Community Engagement  
Legal Services  
Prevention  
Public Policy and Advocacy

# + THE PLAN

An organizational assessment of CAASE conducted in preparation for the strategic planning process indicates that our programs are strong and our staff is highly skilled and dedicated to the mission, vision and work of the organization. Both staff and programs are respected in their fields, and we will continue to develop both in the next three years. In addition, we are esteemed for living our values, as evidenced by our diverse staff and the integration of equity practices into all aspects of our work.

A particular challenge we now face is the increasingly violent and dehumanizing political rhetoric targeting marginalized communities. Because such groups are already disproportionately impacted by sexual violation, these attacks harm those we serve, and constitute challenges that our staff, already stretched to their capacity, are seeking to address through all aspects of our work: community engagement, legal services, prevention, and public policy and advocacy. In the next few years, how--or whether--we will be able to rely on federal or state funding for our work remains uncertain.

The strategic plan for the approaching years will capitalize on the current assets of the organization to position us as a model for responding holistically to the broad spectrum of sexual harm--whether manifested in school or work-based sex harassment, rape, or commercial sexual exploitation--that is epidemic in our community, our nation, our world. As we strengthen CAASE's internal systems to achieve financial and structural stability, we will continue to be an actor committed to thinking globally, and acting locally.

## PLAN FOCUS

Four capacity areas were identified for this plan's focus:



The plan also stresses the need to infuse **Intersectional Equity** into these areas and throughout the entire organization.

# GOALS & OBJECTIVES FOR FY2018 - FY2021



# + SUMMARY OF KEY PRIORITIES

## Financial Stability & Steady Growth

While CAASE's financial picture is strong, this plan focuses on ensuring that in three years, our board's capacity to secure funding is better honed and utilized. This will lead to a more engaged board, increasing their fundraising capacity and their relationship with staff. While we're conscious of a need to diversify our funding, and recognize that political changes could threaten certain funding streams, we anticipate incremental growth led by a reinvigorated and consistently developing board, an enhanced development and fundraising strategy and an improved culture of philanthropy throughout the organization. This plan also recognizes the need to increase staff capacity to promote and support special events and individual donor cultivation, as well as the need to attract and retain diverse and qualified staff, interns and board members.

## Commitment to Intersectional Equity

This plan focuses heavily on ensuring that CAASE continues to be a safe, welcoming place for staff and community members. It also challenges us to grow our capacity to promote and sustain survivor leadership and to strengthen our engagement with the communities and people in Chicago who have lived experience enduring diverse forms of sexual violation. We're committed to developing an administrative plan that applies an intersectional equity lens to our internal operations and external activities. Along with that priority comes a renewed commitment to increasing our accountability to those who are most marginalized and impacted by sexual harm: girls and women; people of color; low-income people; immigrants and people without documentation; members of the LGBTQ community; and people with disabilities. To achieve this, we will be in partnership with providers and the communities to which we want to be most accountable.

## Clarifying Our Work, Increasing Understanding & Visibility

Though CAASE's work is known and understood by our clients and others working to end sexual harm, this plan acknowledges the need for a major shift in the way we communicate our story to the broader public. A rebranding of the organization to clearly reflect the scope of our work will accompany efforts to increase the visibility of our work and staff in public space. Additionally, strides will be taken to ensure the language we use accurately reflects the work we do and the partnerships we value, and that our guiding principles and values are better developed and articulated, both internally and externally.

## Tracking Our Progress

This strategic plan for CAASE's future requires a deep commitment from our organization's leadership, staff, and board. It will be operationalized through incorporation in each department's annual plan and includes mechanisms to assist all parties in carrying out the work that lies ahead. Each strategy or task has a timeline for completion, quantifiable measurements for success, and designated lead staff, board members, or committees to drive its progress.

# + CONCLUSION

With the 2018-2021 plan, we'll continue our excellent work while moving toward a place of strengthened stability, impact, visibility and leadership.

While there is no doubt that the dramatic shift in the national dialogue around sexual harm has helped illuminate the necessity of CAASE's work, it is also clear that conversation alone is not enough. For every positive development in the fight against systems and practices that enable sexual harm, there are countervailing forces making concerted efforts to limit the rights and resources of those who are most vulnerable to sexual violation. In this moment, we are thrilled to have a strategic plan that will guide CAASE's work over the next three years as we seek to ever more effectively catalyze lasting cultural change through clear and decisive action.

## CONNECT WITH CAASE

To learn more about CAASE, our work, or to get involved with our mission, visit [caase.org](https://caase.org). You may also email [info@caase.org](mailto:info@caase.org) or call 773-244-2230.

To make a donation, visit [caase.org/donate](https://caase.org/donate).