



# STRATEGIC PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fiscal Years 2018 to 2021

Re-adopted 2022 through 2026

# + 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 organizations focused on addressing the demand side of the sex trade: men who buy sex. She envisioned a non-profit that would focus attention on men who pay for sex, with education that would prevent the continued exploitation of the most vulnerable and marginalized members of our community—the girls and women (both cis and trans, mostly from BIPOC communities) who are hurt in the sex trade. In 2009, CAASE acquired a legal services and policy non-profit, and expanded our vision to encompass sexual harm outside the commercial sex trade. We took on the tasks of improving local and state law and policy, and providing survivors in Cook County with free legal representation. Our work has continued to grow and now encompasses cutting-edge research projects, expanded education programming, community engagement events and partnerships, numerous policy and advocacy wins, and a legal services department that now serves almost 200 survivors a year.

Since our start in 2006, our dynamic and powerful work remains relevant and necessary. 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.

Our organization is needed, and continues to be innovative and resilient, moving on the path towards real, systemic change. As Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation continues to reflect on where we've been we still see a future filled with possibility and growth. We have prioritized this necessary visioning in our strategic plan, providing a clear and concise map for what is to come as we have re-adopted it and updated it to serve us through 2026.

#### 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 Education  
Public Policy and Advocacy

# + THE PLAN

An organizational assessment of CAASE conducted in preparation for strategic planning found 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. 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 continue to face is violent and dehumanizing political rhetoric targeting marginalized communities, including specifically those groups who are disproportionately impacted by sexual violation.

Our strategic plan and its re-adoption for the approaching years capitalizes 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, but acting locally.

CAASE accomplished many of its goals set out by the plan over our first three years from 2018 through 2021, while progress in other areas was hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Rather than create a new plan, our board and staff recommitted to the path laid out in 2018 to allow for continued improvements and voted to re-adopt the plan for 2022 through 2026.

## PLAN FOCUS

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



The plan continues to center the importance of **Intersectional Equity** in all our efforts and throughout the entire organization.

# GOALS & OBJECTIVES FOR FISCAL YEARS 2018 TO 2025

## BOARD/GOVERNANCE

CAASE'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL BE MOTIVATED, EFFECTIVE, AND EFFICIENT LEADERS OF A GROWING ORGANIZATION

- Utilize CAASE board members' skills and talents effectively as instruments of capacity building.
- Implement processes for recruitment, training and retention of board members.
- Facilitate a culture of communication and transparency between Board and staff.
- Create and utilize the Board SPLAIC (Strategic Plan Implementation Committee) to implement the Plan and modify if needed.

## MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

CAASE WILL BE A RECOGNIZED AND UNDERSTOOD BRAND

- More effectively promote guiding principles and values.
- Continue improving language to accurately reflect the work we do and the partnerships we value.
  - Create opportunities for Marketing and Communications to target populations and work in collaboration with partners.
- Increase visibility of CAASE's work and its staff in public space.

CAASE WILL CONTINUE TO CENTER INTERSECTIONAL EQUITY IN OUR EXTERNAL WORK AND IN OUR INTERNAL PRACTICES AND CULTURE

- Develop an administrative plan that applies an intersectional equity lens to our internal operations and policies.
- Incorporate intersectional equity practices into departmental missions, annual plans, and operations.

## COMMUNITY ROLE

CAASE WILL BE ACCOUNTABLE TO SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL HARM AND THOSE MOST AT RISK FOR SEXUAL HARM

- Create and sustain community input mechanisms to benefit all areas of work.
- Develop and nurture partnerships with providers and the communities to which we want to be most accountable.
- Ensure our programming is based in best practices and best available information/evidence.
- Maintain work infusing anti-racism and combating white supremacy, aiming to expose and address overlapping forms of systemic inequity.

## RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

CAASE WILL BUILD CAPACITY TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

- Create and maintain a culture of philanthropy.
  - Create a development and fundraising strategy.
- Develop relationships with larger community and private foundations.
- Increase staff capacity to promote and support special events and individual donor cultivation.
- Attract and retain diverse and qualified staff, interns, and board members.
- Nurture and continue growing our comprehensive professional development and improved performance management structure.

# + SUMMARY OF KEY PRIORITIES

## Financial Stability & Steady Growth

While CAASE's financial picture is strong, this plan focuses on ensuring that 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 will continue to prioritize intersectional equity in all our internal operations and external activities. Along with this 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. This commitment specifically names white supremacy and anti-Black racism as oppressions we commit to rooting out internally and externally in our work. To achieve this, we are 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 continued improvements in how we communicate our story to the broader public. We seek continually to ensure the language we use accurately reflects the work we do and the partnerships we value, and to have our guiding principles and values 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. As during its first three years, it is being 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 re-adoption of our Strategic Plan for 2022 through 2026, we'll continue our excellent work while moving toward a place of strengthened stability, impact, visibility and leadership.

While national dialogue around sexual harm continues to 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 through 2026 as we seek to ever more effectively catalyze lasting cultural change through clear and decisive action.

As we delve deeper into this plan, we will share re-commitments and updates for changes CAASE will be focusing on through 2026.

## 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).