



2022
STRATEGIC PLAN

MESSAGE

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At Women’s Voices for the Earth (WVE), we envision a world free from the impacts of toxic chemicals, one where our planet and communities are thriving, one where each one of us are able to use our power to build a sustainable and collective future. As the executive director, I work with fierce organizers, researchers, and advocates to co-create this vision alongside communities most impacted by environmental harm. I’ve been fighting for bodily autonomy and liberation for over a decade within and alongside activists from the reproductive justice movement.

Over the last three decades our organization has redefined what is possible. **WVE has been at the forefront of the environmental health movement.** Over the last three years we have seen the impact of our work on ingredient transparency policies and practices in the beauty and home care industries. Our strategic policy advocacy work and strong partnerships have led to four major legislative victories in New York and California—two states that are often on the leading edge of industry practices and can influence the market nationally. We are both committed to disrupting the status quo and honoring the thoughtful, intentional, and compassionate practice of our values. We have applied this balance daily and for decades. To put it plainly, change doesn’t happen overnight.



The current threats to our planet require a deeply intersectional response. Without a bottom-up movement driving change, people will continue to be left behind and deemed disposable. As a justice-based organization observing these harmful missteps from well-intentioned actors, we knew we needed a new direction to **lean into our role as weavers—building a tapestry of voices, advocates, and issues**—and expand our table to support collective action towards a future free from the impacts of toxic chemicals. Simply put, we needed to walk the walk, rather than just talk the talk. From my lived and professional experience, I know that intentions for inclusivity without a plan that is developed alongside people most directly and/or disproportionately impacted often falls short and far too frequently leads to more harm.

We underwent a strategic planning process with the goal of sustainably broadening our vision and mission to hold more intersectional issues and campaigns, while maintaining the joy, hope, and rebellious spirit that is a common thread between so many members of our community. We have a rigorous and compassionate commitment to undoing the individual and organizational habits that reinforce white supremacy culture, and replace them with leadership practices that foster a sustainable work environment and strengthen the transformative work we are co-creating in our communities. I'm proud to have co-created a plan for the next five years of WVE with a diverse group of partners, members, staff, board members, fellows, and nonprofit colleagues. Throughout the strategic planning process, it became evident that we share a clear vision and theory of change for our work.

Our renewed theory of change will get us even closer to turning this vision into reality by focusing on leadership development within communities most impacted by toxics exposure, advocating for preventative measures rather than stop gaps, employing an intersectional approach to cross movement

coalition building, and developing further internal culture changes that reflect our renewed values and allow for a sustainable work-life balance. Leading with compassion and vulnerability isn't something that shows linear results; some days are harder than others, but the larger arc of this leadership journey has shown that the work has been worth it in this strategic planning process. WVE is positioned to leverage our transformational internal work to support and scale the external work of change making in the world.

Our 2022-2027 strategic plan is already being turned into action with the following current efforts.

I'm proudly leading the organization into its first salary audit process, ensuring transparent and equitable compensation for all current, future, and prospective WVE staff members. Furthermore, establishing a reserve fund for WVE was among my top priorities when I began my role as ED in 2019. Over the course of the last three years, we have built and grown the organization's reserves to support three months of expenses. This sustainability measure is critical not just to ensure operations for at least three months, but it is also intrinsically connected to worker's rights and economic justice. When we commit to sustaining our organizations for any length of time, we are also invested in the livelihood of the employees and contractors who help animate the work. At WVE, we recognize that our people are our greatest asset in achieving our mission.

We have learned so much over our long tenure, and one thing that remains abundantly clear is that **the will of the people can and does create change.** I'm proud to lead this team that centers both **joy and justice.** Change management that seeks to disrupt white supremacy culture requires rigor and compassion: a focused commitment to doing better every day, as well as the grace to approach our mistakes with curiosity and an eye towards generative, adaptive solutions that center the vision of the world we are





aiming to build. Together we've developed strong partnerships, built out our mobilization power, and released hard hitting reports to hold corporations accountable. Moving forward, WVE will continue to amplify the voices of those most disproportionately impacted by toxics exposure. That includes women, nonbinary and trans people, immigrants, lower-income workers, and people of the global majority. I'm immensely grateful to all who contributed to co-creating this plan. Without our community, we would not be able to do this work. **This plan is a testament to how our collective influence is far greater than our individual impact.** We invite you to examine your own internal bias and what it means to center joy and justice in all that you do.

Onwards,

Amber Garcia, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

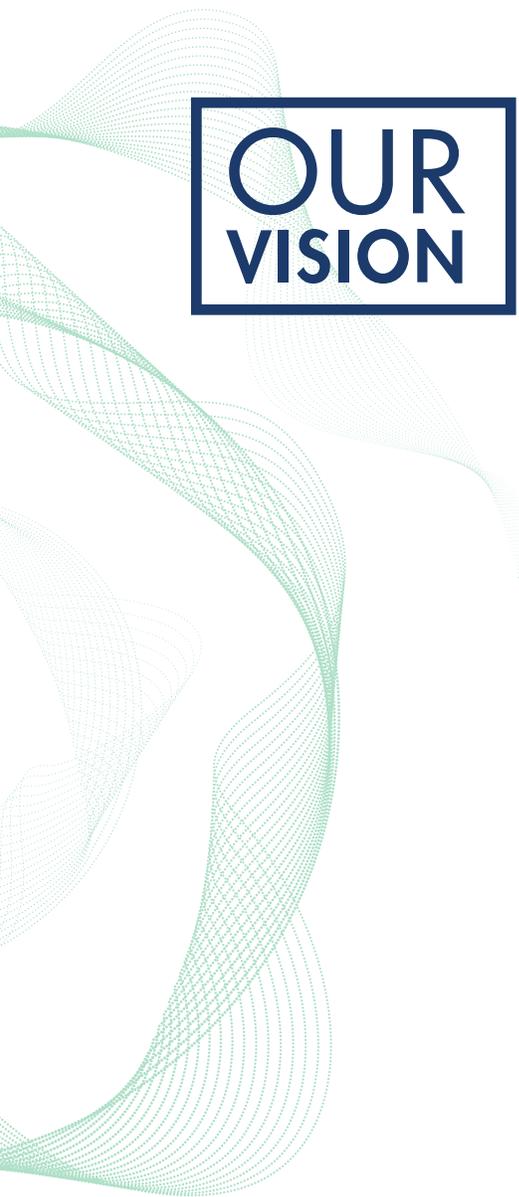
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the spring of 2021, Women's Voices for the Earth (WVE) embarked on a strategic planning process facilitated by Rivera Consulting Inc—a movement focused organizational development firm. WVE is a 501(c)(3) environmental health organization that has led on issues of toxics exposures and gender justice for almost three decades. WVE is widely known for our expertise in toxics in cleaning products, intimate care products, and beauty products. WVE is one of the only gender-informed voices in environmental spaces, which provides a unique lane for our environmental health work. A longstanding organization with several notable victories, WVE met a crossroads as a global pandemic and racial reckoning simultaneously took hold. WVE reflected on our organizational commitment to justice, diversity, equity and inclusion, and desire for a loftier and more inclusive organizational vision.



Over the course of 6 months from 2021 to 2022, WVE staff members, board members, fellows, members, and partners underwent an asset-mapping process to determine the various strengths and opportunity areas within the organization. Assets are resources with which an organization can carry out its mission. Asset mapping is a community-based research approach that allows for deep collaboration and multi-constituency participation in planning, learning, and playbook making. WVE's leadership, staff and board members developed metrics of success for the strategic planning process and identified organizational asset groupings for the purpose of developing a qualitative survey tool. This tool set forth to answer the following central research question; how does WVE fit into the larger campaign landscape of racial, environmental, gender, reproductive, labor and climate justice?

After conducting, transcribing, coding and analyzing the survey tool responses, several key findings emerged. The institutional knowledge of long-term staff was cited as a critical asset by all stakeholders, as well as the scientific expertise WVE brings to the table. Many participants were interested in determining which geographic area to expand to next. Moreover, maintaining work-life balance as WVE's vision expands was a universal need from staff and board members. Many staff and board members noted that they would prefer a slower expansion to ensure the work grows strategically. Analyzing the preliminary findings set the stage for co-planning for the years ahead. Our findings demonstrated that **WVE is poised to make significant impacts** in the health of disproportionately impacted communities with further development of a strategic plan that acts as a roadmap for long-term organizational success. The following document details this process, its findings, and the road ahead for WVE.



OUR VISION

WVE envisions a world free from the impacts of toxic chemicals, one where our planet and communities are thriving, one where our gender, race, sexuality, zip code, income level or job does not determine our health outcomes. A world where workers are treated with dignity from our paychecks to our working conditions. In this world, every point in the cycle of production and consumption—from extraction, to processing, to use, to disposal—contributes not just to a less toxic world, but to a thriving world.

We envision WVE as a community that is accessible, intersectional and empowering for LGBTQIA+ people, young people, Black people, Indigenous people, Latin@ people, Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander people, refugees, immigrants, people with disabilities, and working class people. We honor and recognize the intersectionality of these identities. And when we say disproportionately impacted people we are clear that we are talking about people at these intersections. We strive to put solidarity into action as we build this community.

OUR NEW MISSION

WVE drives action towards a future free from the impacts of toxic chemicals rooted in gender justice alongside those historically and presently ignored by the environmental health movement by leveraging an intersectional solidarity approach based on our expertise in research, advocacy and organizing.

THEORY OF CHANGE

CORE STRATEGIES TO REACH OUR VISION

Leadership Development to Fuel the Movement: Increase budget to \$1.3 million and double staff capacity to support the longevity of our organization and movement. During a period marked by several urgent threats, we are committed to building up existing and new leaders with the skills and lived experience to navigate our deeply challenged political system.

Prevention First Model of Advocacy: Our work is focused on prevention to avoid feeding a cycle of incrementalism that leaves communities of color, lower-income workers, immigrants, and many others who are historically shut out from power dealing with the largest negative impacts.

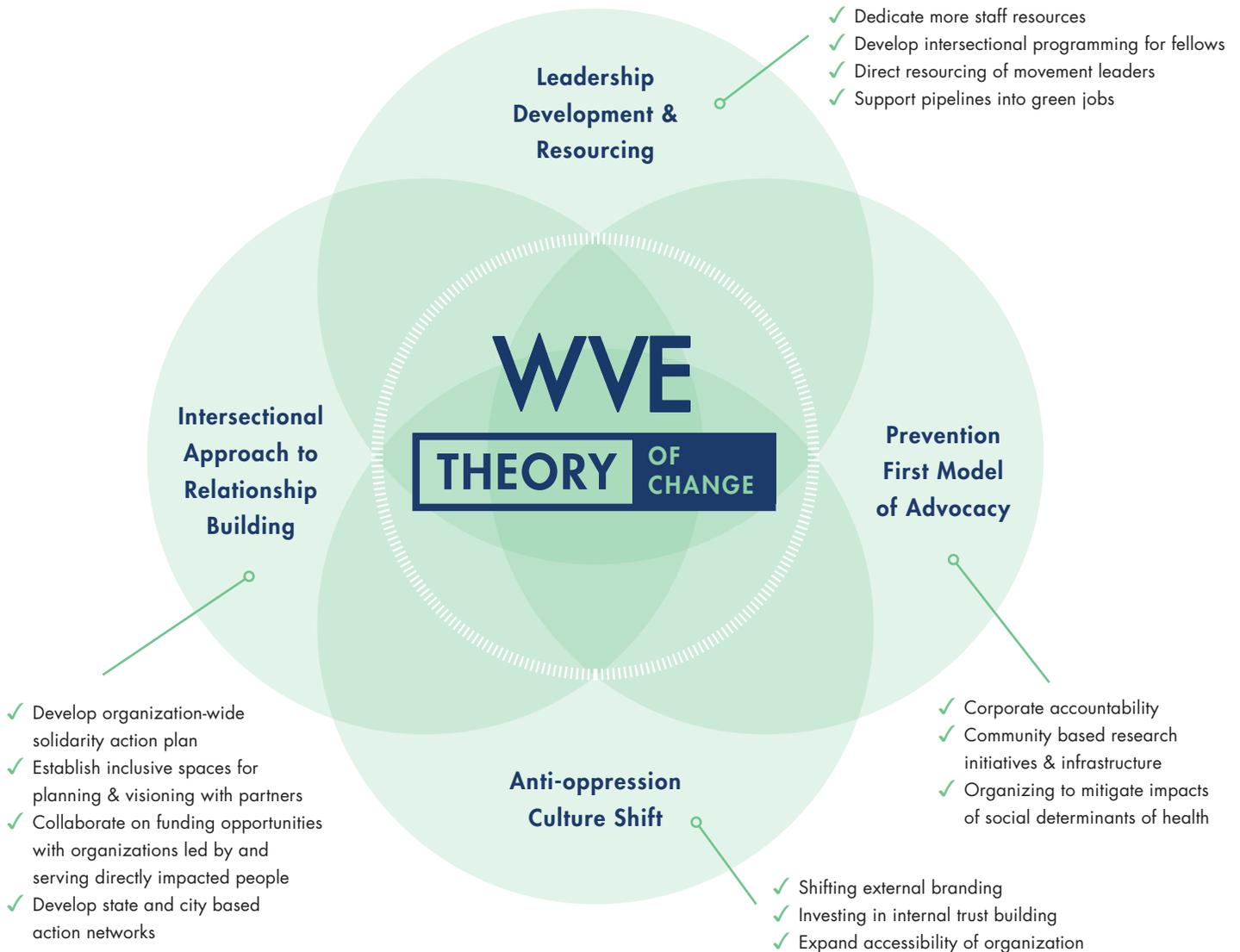
Intersectional Cross-Movement Relationship Building: WVE recognizes that our work is even more impactful when done in community with residents, organizers, and advocates throughout and beyond the environmental health movement. Sharing resources to repair and prevent environmental harm is critical to developing trusting relationships.

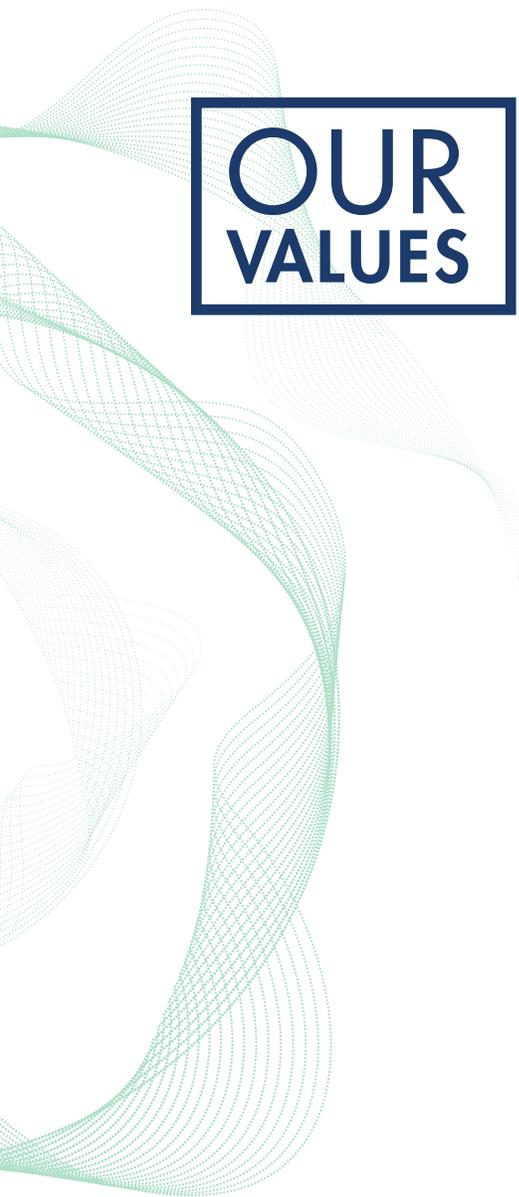
Anti-Racist Culture Shift: Developing consistent, participatory and consensus-driven internal cultural norms and practices, budgeting, external branding, as well as self and collective accountability mechanisms that embed a Healing Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion framework.

TO ACHIEVE the aforementioned vision by 2027, Rivera Consulting Inc identified four core strategies. Below you will find an overview of all four strategies, inputs for each, and the desired result.

USING THESE STRATEGIES, WVE WILL STRIVE TO:

- **Develop and sustain relationships** with communities and organizations led by and serving people who face gender injustice, people of the global majority, LGBTQIA+ folks, and lower income workers, nationally and outside of the environmental health field.
- **Expand the capacity** movement-wide to integrate justice and equity issues into the national environmental health movement agenda and green industries
- **Interrupt the cycle** of harm and result in the elimination of toxic chemicals in products that are used disproportionately in communities of color and amongst low-wage workers
- **Improve overall public health** of directly impacted or high risk communities
- **Co-create** a multiracial, multilingual and intergenerational community





OUR VALUES

Care and stewardship of our planet: Without our planet, there would be no us. Our work centers the urgent needs of our planet to create a thriving environment for all.

Gender justice: We believe in a world where gender doesn't determine anyone's value or worth and isn't a barrier to opportunities or ability to thrive. Gender justice concentrates on digging out the root causes of gender injustice: misogyny, misogynoir, cisheterosexism, transphobia, and homophobia

Anti-oppression: We believe we must actively and consistently challenge systems of oppression, both internally and externally. We recognize the oppression that exists in our society and will work to equalize the power imbalance in our communities. As we resist oppression in all forms we center joy and hope, a radical act that acknowledges that communities and individuals experiencing oppression are far more than statistics.

Prevention Focused: We believe that the most just way to address environmental inequities is preventing harm in the first place. Through our work to eliminate toxic chemicals in products and the extractive practices in production and disposal of toxics, we are working to remove the conditions for disproportionate environmental harm.

Cultural humility: We believe that people are the experts of their own culture. We strive to give credence to the autonomy, expertise, and unique nature of people from all backgrounds, race, and culture as we conduct research, develop and implement programming, and partner with communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND GRATITUDE

This work would not be possible without the contributions of so many individuals in our community. We want to acknowledge Rivera Consulting Inc for facilitating, and the expertise of so many that helped us co-create our new strategic plan. Many thanks to WVE's current and former board and staff members, partner organizations, donors, fellows and supporters who dedicated their time and insight into our path for WVE's future work.

CONCLUSION

By leveraging our four main strategies for change, we will drive action towards a future free from the impacts of toxic chemicals rooted in gender justice alongside those historically and presently ignored by the environmental health movement. Due to the contributions of so many in our community, our path forward is clear: develop an intersectional solidarity approach based on our expertise in research, advocacy and organizing. With this strategic plan in place, we strive to put solidarity into action internally and externally to root out oppression and harm. We look forward to what we collectively build along the way.



[WOMENVOICES.ORG](https://www.womensvoices.org)