



Washington
Peace Center
Strategic Plan
2015 - 2018

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Executive Summary

The Washington Peace Center, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2013, has grown tremendously over the past five years, doubling our staff, budget, and activist lists. Building upon this expanded base we have developed a strategic plan for the next three years which will continue to deepen our work and prioritize intentionally creating space for collaboration, reflection and movement building.

Our major priorities for the next three years are to:



- **Strengthen and expand our current programs** - fortifying our foundation as a hub for the movements in Washington DC by strengthening and expanding our Trainers Network, the Activist Awards, and our role as a Resource Clearinghouse.



- **Prioritize our anti-racist commitment** - renewing our commitment to, and engagement in, the struggle for racial equity, assessing our internal structure and programmatic work, and building towards a city-wide conversation on race and anti-racism.



- **Create spaces to deepen the political education, analysis, and collaboration of DC area activists** - by organizing a large annual assembly and other educational events that will facilitate strategic conversation, strengthen connections within the activist/organizer community, and enhance an intersectional political analysis.



- **Intentionally build relationships with marginalized communities** - to expand our connections and increase our impact, we will actively seek input from these communities about our programs, support their campaigns and events, and offer our equipment and other resources as needed.



- **Strengthen our organization internally** - by continuing to grow our budget and staff, building our board to be reflective of the communities we are working with, considering alternative leadership models, and ensuring a diverse, sustainable and expanding funding base.

"Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism."

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Mission/Vision

The Washington Peace Center is an anti-racist grassroots, multi-issue organization working for peace, justice, and nonviolent social change, based in the metropolitan Washington D.C. area since 1963.

We envision a world based on respect for people and the planet that is achieved through a commitment to nonviolence, peace and social justice.

Our mission is to provide education, resources and action for those working for positive social change and a world free from oppression.

We strengthen the impact of the peace and justice movements by:

1. fostering greater collaboration among activist groups
2. bridging the gap between global, national & local issues and communities and;
3. providing material support to achieve these goals

Our Role in the Larger Movement

How do we do this work?

The Washington Peace Center's board is committed to 4 motivating frameworks within which we make strategic decisions and conduct our work. Too often, race, class and gender divide our movements because underlying oppressions and power dynamics aren't addressed. With that in mind, we agree that:

- Movements are the path to collective liberation;
- Issues are intersectional and solidarity is a verb;
- Dialogue fosters shared leadership and builds shared vision to imagine something new;
- Leadership development is essential for building the movements we need.

All our programs will function within these frameworks and priorities will be set using them as guides for how to create the world we want.

Why do we do this work?

The Washington Peace Center believes that movements of people building power are the means to long-lasting social change and collective liberation. To this end, we strive to be an activist hub, helping actions in DC to be more efficient and effective. We see our role as Resource Clearinghouse not just as an organization providing material support ranging from information to equipment, but

as a movement builder. We offer the tangible resources, the essential knowledge, and the trainings that build and sustain activism in the DC area and beyond. Whether through providing stage and sound systems, guidance on how to acquire a permit, or popular education, we offer support which empowers individuals and organizations to effectively work for systemic change.

Providing such helpful tools allows us to share information, develop collaboration opportunities, and build relationships with people throughout DC, who have a wide array of experiences and backgrounds, who work on a multitude of issues ranging from ending global war to fighting for the local right to housing. By creating space and supporting opportunities for connection across backgrounds and issues, we facilitate greater collaboration and communication between and among change-makers in the DC area.

Where we are now

The Washington Peace Center has grown tremendously over the past five years, doubling our staff, budget and activist lists. We have become an integrated and engaged force in the DC activist community, providing essential tools, knowledge and skills for those working for positive social change and a world free from oppression. We are one of the few organizations that connects issues on a local, national and international level. We work with groups that organize for climate and other justice issues, to meet human needs, to abolish prisons, to ground drones, and to end war. We prioritize intentionally building space for collaboration, reflection and movement building, which is sorely needed in our organizing efforts.

Current Programming:

- Trainers Network
 - o We host the DC Trainers Network which builds communication and confidence among trainers and facilitators and provides a workspace to improve the skills that our community needs. Using popular education tools, we host monthly trainings, 2-day long Training for Trainers and gatherings specifically for those working on leading anti-oppression trainings.
- Activist Awards
 - o Each year we host our annual Activist Awards Grassroots Gala, where we honor outstanding local activists and throw a party for over 300 members of our community. Last year's Activist Awards Grassroots Gala was described by one attendee as "a family reunion for our community," where we connect and celebrate with each other away from meetings and picket lines, to build relationships and hold up the important work we've all done over the past year.
- Resource Clearinghouse
 - o We serve as a hub for activists providing resources, advice and connections. We

provide tangible resources, such as stages and sound systems, essential knowledge for organizing in DC, such as how to acquire permits or where to hold an event, a searchable Organization Directory of more than 300 groups in the DC/MD/VA area, and fiscal sponsorship for over a dozen smaller groups and projects.

- Activist Alert email/calendar
 - o We host the most comprehensive local calendar for progressive events in the DC/MD/VA area and send a weekly email highlighting upcoming events in order to build collaboration and communication among local activists.

- Peace Letter
 - o We publish our newspaper, The Peace Letter, regularly. Recent issues include the Anti-Oppression Issue, focused on the importance of anti-oppression analysis for social justice organizing, and Housing is a Human Right, concerning the DC housing crisis.

- Educational Programs
 - o We organize educational forums to highlight such notable occasions as bombing Syria or the “end” of the war in Iraq. We’ve organized multiple events highlighting the costs of war, nationally and locally, as well as forums on the local housing crisis in the DC area.

- Collaboration Building
 - o We hold regular events to coordinate the work of members of the DC activist community, build collaboration among local groups and strengthen the movement as a whole. We’ve done this work through working with the DC Metro Social Forum and through hosting seasonal Leftist Community Meetings.

Our Internal Growth over the Past 5 Years:

	2008	2011	2013
Staff	2 PT, 2 interns	2 FT (one a year-long fellow), 6 interns	2 FT, 1 PT, 6 interns
Membership on our lists	1687 (email) 0 (social media)	3000 (email) 2122 (social media)	3934 (email) 5399 (social media)
Individual Donors	206	256	350
Budget	\$57,946	\$80,387	\$103,079

Major Priorities for the Next Three Years



- Strengthen and Expand our Current Programs



- Prioritize our Anti-Racist Commitment



- Create Spaces to Deepen the Political Education, Analysis, and Collaboration of DC area Activists



- Intentionally Build Relationships with Marginalized Communities



- Strengthen our Organization Internally
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A. Strengthen and Expand our Current Programs

Fortifying our foundation as a hub for the movement in Washington, DC means developing systems to ensure our programming not only reflects our core priorities, but also reflects the changing and evolving needs of the DC activist community.

Our programs need to be reflective of the current state of the movement in the DC area, and evolve to fit the needs of the community as they change. Therefore, over the next three years we are committed to increasing outreach and building relationships to ensure that the Trainers Network, the Activist Awards, our programming as a Resource Clearinghouse, including our fiscal sponsorship program, are reflective of changing and evolving needs in the DC area.

Goals:

- Regularly evaluate current programs to ensure effectiveness and that they reflect core priorities of leadership development, intersectionality, and movement-based analysis
- Integrate collective liberation and political education components into each Trainers Network event
- Grow and develop the Activist Awards as an integral movement event in DC, and develop and implement mechanisms for including Activist Awardees in our programming
- Grow to meet the needs of the activist community for resources useful for organizing

- Engage a wider, more diverse circle of people in the Trainers Network, the Activist Awards, and with the resources we offer
- Enhance the self-sustainability of each of these programs in terms of funding and volunteer leadership



B. Prioritize our Anti-Racist Commitment

In the 1990's, the Washington Peace Center went through an intense anti-racism analysis in which we evaluated our internal dynamics, practices, allies and programs using an anti-racism lens. This led to a significant shift in the Peace Center's priorities, a re-defining of peace as intrinsically connected to local social justice issues and a renewed commitment to collective liberation. Since then we've self-identified as an anti-racist organization and have led trainings and conversations about how racism and other oppressions impact our lives and organizing. However, we haven't revisited that process internally or played more than a supporting role in leading those conversations city-wide.

Race continues to be an important issue nation-wide, from the election of Barack Obama, to ongoing police violence against Black men such as Trayvon Martin and Mike Brown, to record levels of deportation and to massive displacement of African-American populations here in DC. We've seen race continue to be a divisive issue within our movements and in DC in particular. We know that you can't organize in DC without confronting the reality and impacts of racism. The Peace Center wants to strengthen our local presence in DC in the next three years, so therefore it's imperative that we address race and racism in an authentic way. Over the next three years, we will deepen our evolving sense of what our anti-racism commitment means and will implement these principles internally and in WPC programs.

WPC will collaborate with, and actively support, organizations led by people of color in a manner that respects their leadership; WPC staff and board members will engage in regular conversations and trainings about racism/anti-racism and be racially and ethnically diverse; and WPC staff and board will implement anti-racism principles into our decision making and operations. As an anti-racist organization, the Peace Center will be known across the city as committed to and engaged in the struggle for racial equity.

Activities:

- Convene an internal "Change Team" among our board and staff, to lead an internal audit of the Peace Center with an anti-racist analysis. This will include looking at demographics, decision-making, HR policies, programs, etc.
- Ensure all board and staff go through anti-racism training
- Over two years, evaluate the findings, and implement the recommendations, of the audit of our internal structures and programmatic work
- Host ongoing gatherings of local anti-racism and anti-oppression facilitators - support

their networking and reflection, and the strengthening of their work

- Host a series of anti-racism and/or anti-oppression trainings for others, perhaps based on work that emerges from the gatherings of facilitators
- After discussing with others and researching how this has happened in other cities, strive to convene a city-wide conversation on anti-racism by Year 3



C. Create Spaces to Deepen the Political Education, Analysis, and Collaboration of DC area Activists

The Peace Center sees building strategic, intentional collaboration as essential for growing a stronger movement for positive social change. We also want to be part of deepening the political understanding and movement analysis of change-makers in the DC-MD-VA area. To this end, the WPC will plan an annual event – for example an assembly- that will be a platform for planning, collaboration, strategic conversation, building skills and analysis, and creating a point of entry for new people, with the intent to build relationships and better understand each other’s issues and the linkages between them.

To build up to the annual event, we will organize a series of educational events about current events and/or social justice issues with an intersectional and anti-racist lens, centered on the voices and experiences of those directly impacted by the issues. We will provide education about key issues with an eye towards action.

Activities:

- Host an annual assembly to bring together DC-area activists and changemakers to deepen connections, strengthen a political analysis, help with strategic collaboration and build the skills of those working for peace and justice
- Evaluate the impact of this assembly and assess whether different programming, such as smaller monthly gatherings, would better meet those goals
- Host regular educational events on peace and justice issues with an intersectional and anti-racist analysis, some of which will be rapid-response events based on current political needs
- Publish our newspaper, The Peace Letter, if and when it would assist with this programming



D. Intentionally Build Relationships with Marginalized Communities

As an organization working for peace, justice, and nonviolent social change, the Peace Center must be connected with the communities most affected by the policies we seek to change. In years past we have prioritized outreach to activist and organizing communities in the DC area and currently feel very connected to many key organizations. However, we know that if we don't continue to reach out and be active in our communities, we could be supporting a small, insular group. Therefore, over the next three years we will prioritize reaching out, particularly to marginalized communities, to expand our connections and increase our impact.

We will identify and prioritize communities, organizations, and spaces in which to do outreach. We will intentionally build authentic relationships over time through actively seeking input from these communities about our programs, supporting campaigns and events, and offering equipment and other resources as needed. This will lead to greater collaboration with new communities as part of the Peace Center's work, diversifying our base of supporters and those benefiting from our programs. We seek to identify where we can make the most meaningful contributions in order to increase the success of our collective and respective work.

Groups we want to build relationships with include but are not limited to: youth, communities of color, people of color-led organizations, immigrant and/or non-English speaking communities and organizations, and poor and working class communities.

Activities:

- Assess who we currently have strong relationships with and where we want to build, especially among our former Activist Awardees
- Set up listening meetings with those we want to build relationships with and intentionally support their organizing
- Support their work and engage with them in an ongoing way
- Use this process to build to the goal of convening a city-wide conversation about anti-racism
- Investigate possibility of building a relationships with a similar-minded organization based internationally by Year 3



E. Strengthen our Organization Internally

Having a strong organization is essential to achieving our other priorities, several of which will require more staff. Thus we need to grow our budget in order to have 3 full-time staff by 2017, with sustainable salaries, good benefits and appropriate professional development opportunities.

We need to work on making the board commitment more sustainable and consider how we can make board membership more accessible for people. We also want the board to grow more reflective of the communities we are trying to work with.






We are committed to being more intentional about incorporating anti-racism principles into our work, which will require training for board and staff members. This process may also impact our staff and board structures, and we will consider different leadership models for staffing and training for new staff.

While the WPC has been successful in having sustainable funding, we need more support to have the impact we seek. Our fundraising priorities over the next three years will include growing our number of sustainers, diversifying our funding, and integrating fundraising into all our programs. We will also explore alternative fundraising models that reflect our vision and core values.

Activities:

- Increase the number and retention of staff through improved salaries, benefits, and human resources policies. Have three full-time staff by Year 3
- Expand/diversify the board and its functions via outreach to existing & new partners/communities
- Enhance intern and volunteer opportunities and experiences
- Explore alternative leadership models & prioritize professional development for staff, Board, interns & volunteers
- Seek new sources of income, including new grants, cooperative fund-raising & resource sharing
- Double the number of sustainers and online donations by Year 3

TIMELINE FOR STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
 <p>Current Programs</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess Activist Awards, evaluate fiscal sponsorship program 	
 <p>Anti-Racism Commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct internal audit, ensure internal trainings Host facilitators gatherings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement audit recommendations Facilitate trainings for others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement audit recommendations Convene city-wide conversation
 <p>Build Collaboration / Analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host assembly Hold 2 educational events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host assembly Host rapid-response events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host assembly or other gathering Host 4 educational events
 <p>Building Relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make priority list and make meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have meetings Support organizing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build deeper relationships Support organizing
 <p>Internal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin 3-year Fundraising Plan; explore alternative leadership models for staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the board to 13 people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand to 3 FT staff

PROJECTED BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PROFILE

Expenses	2013-2014 (actuals)	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Employees	114,739	126,000	130,000	154,000
Rent	9,519	9,700	10,000	13,000
Office Expenses	4,456	4,750	5,000	6,000
Education and Program	16,199	16,830	17,000	20,000
Fundraising	2,235	2,700	3000	4,000
Travel	-	700	500	500
Operating Reserve	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
TOTAL	148,148	161,680	166,500	198,500
Income				
Individuals	82,994	104,000	111,000	120,000
Grants	36,680	36,000	41,000	56,000
Program Fees	13,889	8,500	10,500	12,500
Surplus spending	23,256	13,200	7,500	10,000
TOTAL	156,819	161,700	170,000	198,500

Financial Profile: In 2014, Washington Peace Center is a \$150,000 organization whose income is derived from 62% individuals, 37% grants and 10% program fees. Our primary expenditure is for our staff (74%), who lead all our programs and work within our community.

