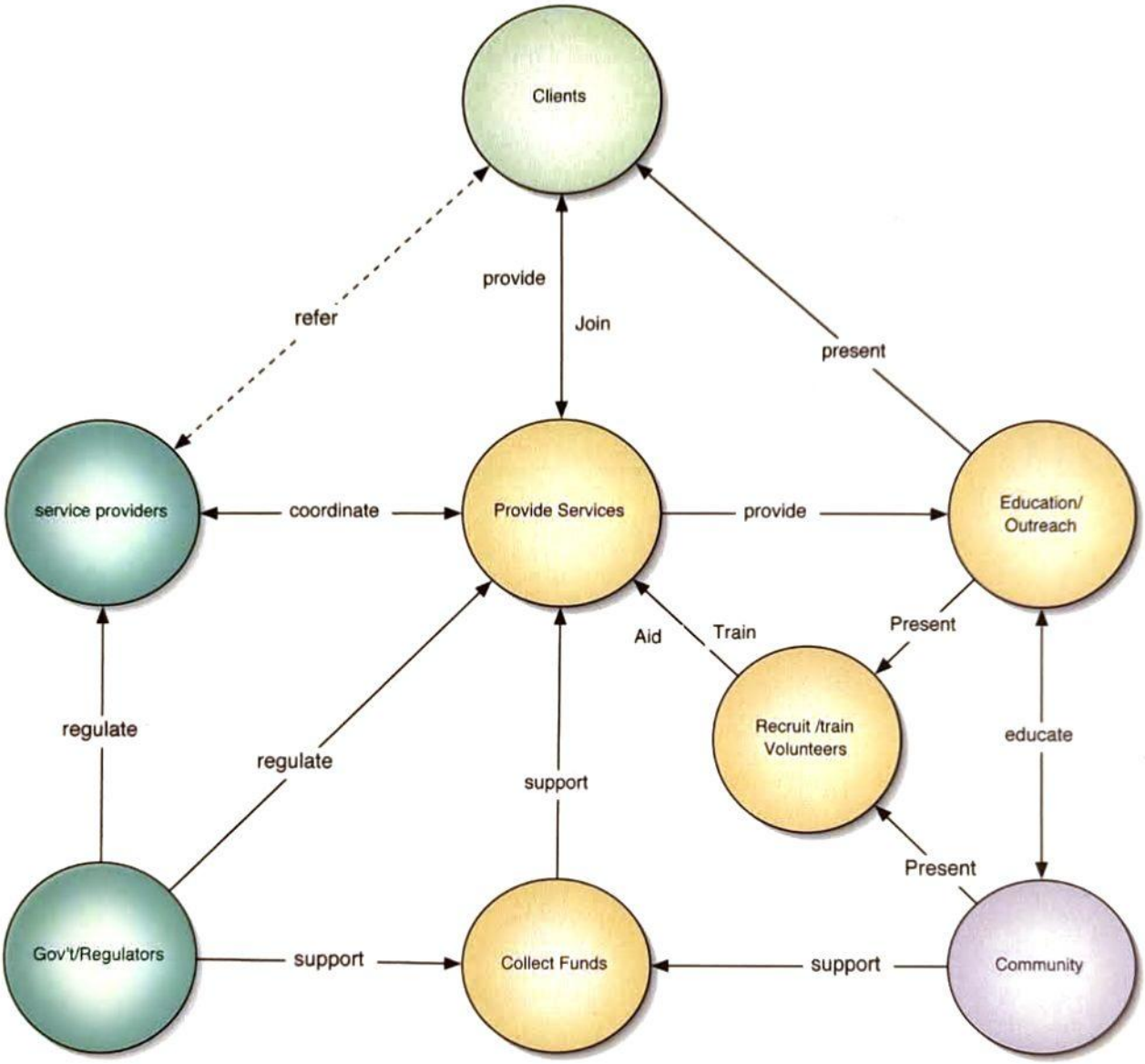
The Women Center's Web Site Redesign



http://www.thewomensctr.org

Information Architect: Maria Jones

MAY, 2005

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The Women's Center
Web Site Redesign

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The Women's Center Web Site
Introduction & Brief History

Introduction:

The Women's Center provides comprehensive services to victims of domestic violence & sexual assault and their children.

The Women's Center current web site does not fulfill the needs of the organization. It is outdated, poorly structured & difficult to navigate. It does not provide the help needed by persons calling in emergencies, its cold, objective appearance does not inspire confidence that such persons need. Nor does it convey the trust, clarity & stability that are important to donors.

A newly redesigned web site will help clients learn about the services & programs that the organization offers, increasing the effectiveness of the organization. The web site will also work as a tool to help communities realize the dangers of domestic violence & sexual assault as well as inform victims to identify the signs of abuse.

Furthermore, it will also help the organization to reach more clients, educate the community, collect donations, recruit volunteers and improve the overall branding image public awareness of the organization. This will be critically important as the Women's Center embarks on a million dollar capital campaign to increase the capacity & improve the living conditions of its domestic violence shelter and improve its sexual assault services.

A Spanish version of the site will be offered to reach the spanish speaking community therefore a larger portion of Spanish speaking victims can benefit from the organization's services.

History:

The Women's Center was founded in 1972 as a feminist, grass-roots organization to help the community victims of domestic violence and sexual assault by providing temporary housing & counseling. Today the organization has grown to an annual budget of $ 1.3 million, 32 paid positions and 130 volunteers. It is currently expanding its facilities to better serve the community. The new shelter area will increase by 40 % it's capacity, therefore will be able to accommodate more clients. A redesigned web site will be a great tool to inform the public of the services offered.

The Women's Center is funded by Federal, State and Local sources but relies greatly on individual & private sources. The web site will help the organization attract donors & collect funds to fulfill the needs of the victims.

The Women's Center is a Member of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA) & the Illinois Coalition against Domestic Violence. (ICADV), a links page is necessary to offer the users paths to other helpful resources to benefit the victims.

The Women's Center Web Site: Client Demands

February 3rd, 2005 Meeting : Executive Director: Camille Dorris

Interviews were undertaken with Camille Dorris, executive director of the Women's Center & staff members involved in client services throughout the organization. They presented a number of suggestions to improve the web site.

- The 24 hr Emergency Hot-line telephone number should be prominently placed for easy access, perhaps incorporated in the header throughout the site.
- Users should be warned that their Internet activities can be spied by the abuser. The warning can be added to the footer all through the site.
- It should be clearly stated on the home page that the Services offered by The Women Center are absolutely FREE.
- The site should be in English & Spanish versions. The spanish version should be made available & be prominently indicated for easy access throughout the site. Perhaps incorporated in the top navigation all throughout the site.
- The language used in the site will be very straightforward & easy to understand.
- A Prevention Education section needs to be added to iform the general public of the facts of domestic violence and rape. It needs to include an account of the activities of the women's center including the services, the numbers of clients served. Educating teenagers of the dangers of domestic violence & rape can help them avoid situations where this actions can occur, there fore contributing to an informed, educated community.
- Safety planning tips need to be added. They are a very important tool for victims to cope with the circumstances they can find themselves in when sharing their lives with an abuser.
- A list of the signs of abuse are needed to help the victims to identify abuse. For persons who are being abused, who wonder or need to know if they are being abused and persons who may be witnessing abuse.
- An art gallery and poetry section was requested.
- Success stories were suggested as accounts of women who had been empow ered through the aid of the Women's Center. Therefore, giving hope and support to those victims that are reluctant to ask for help.

Current home page

Visual Design: Cold, impersonal, monotone, formal, rigid

Contact Information: No emergency contact. The hotline telephone is vital, & should be placed in the header predominantly.

Email Address: Needs a disclaimer informing the users that emails cannot be relied on for emergencies, in case of emergency please call the emergency line.

Unclear Navigation Links:

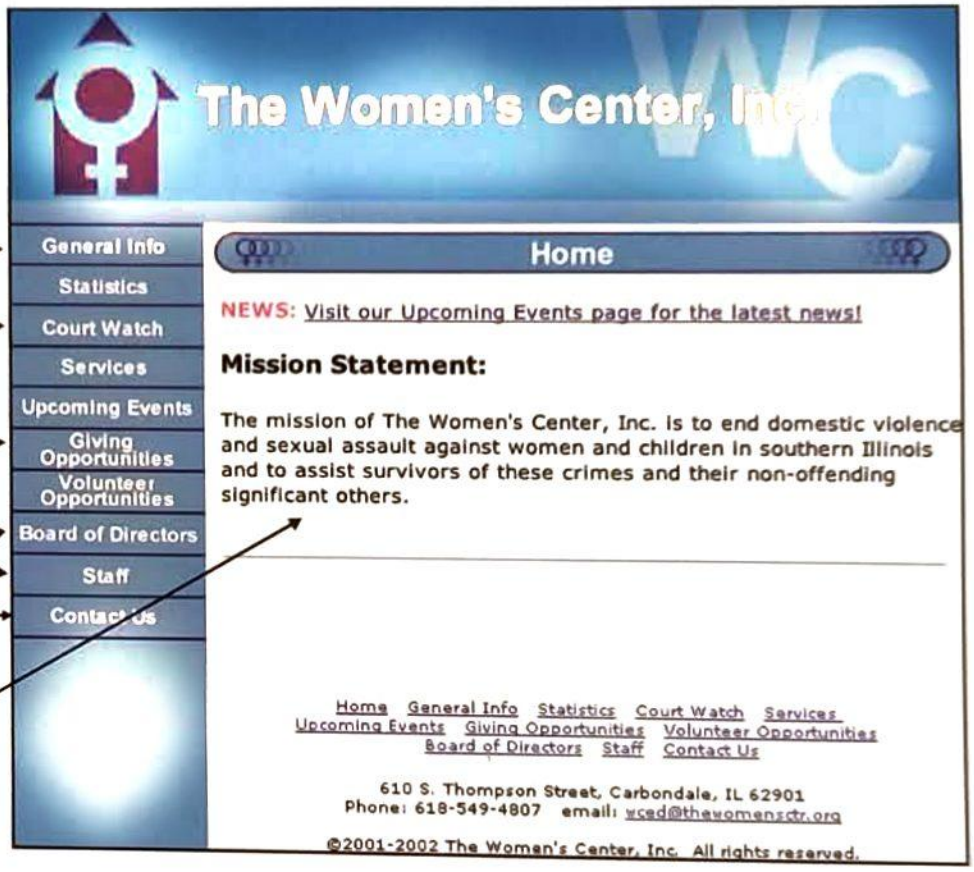
Too vague → General Info

Obsolete sections → Statistics, Court Watch

Unclear language → Services, Upcoming Events, Giving Opportunities, Volunteer Opportunities

Belongs in About us section → Board of Directors, Staff

Should be more visible → Contact Us



Language: When persons first enter the site, they need to be addressed on their own terms and invited in, not given a formal speech in the third person, which is about them not to them.

The Women's Center Web Site: Current Usability Issues

Design Issues: The current web site is hard to navigate and difficult to understand. The services that the Women's Center provides to the community require a more comprehensive & extensive web site to address the current necessities of the organization and its counterparts.

The current design structure & colors are cold and impersonal and do not convey the feeling of security, warmth and hope that clients need in such difficult circumstances. It also fails to engender the sense of trustworthiness and professionalism to donors, volunteers and other organizations.

Visual/Æsthetic:

- Cold & impersonal
- Formal, Rigid
- Monotone use of color
- Outdated
- Not practical

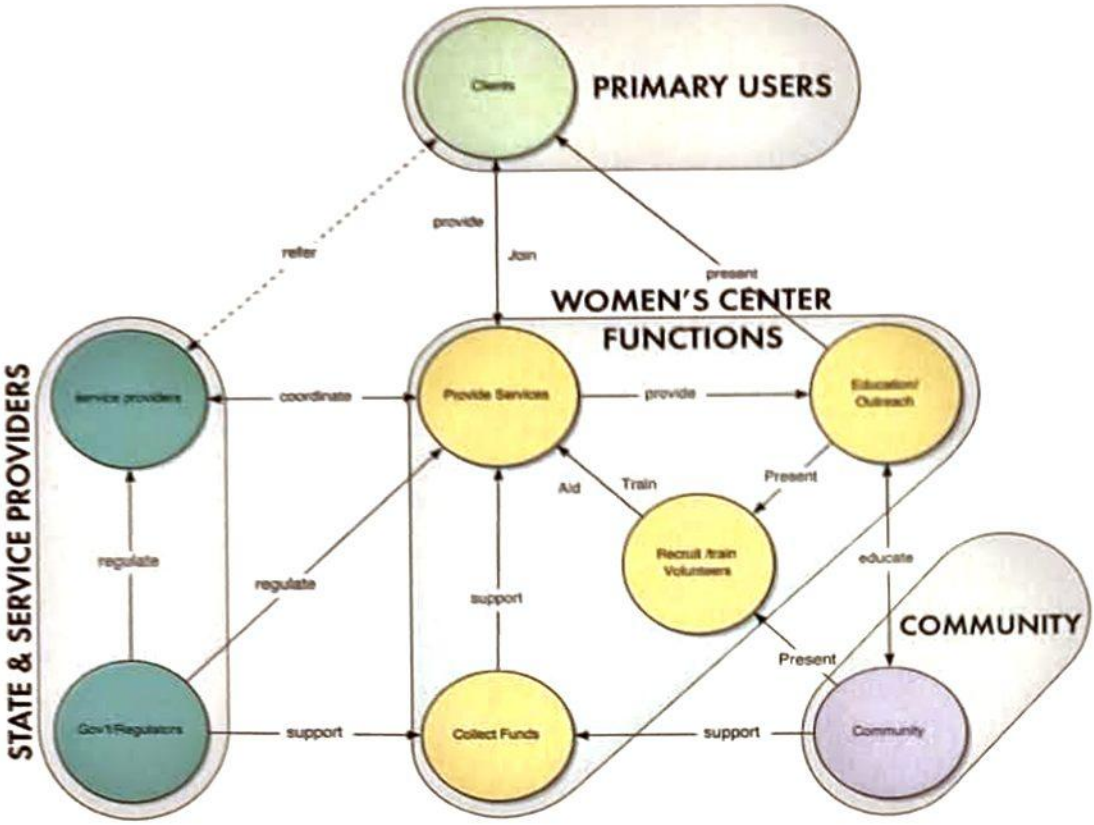
Structure:

- Vital informations is currently difficult to find
- Inexistent information hierarchy

Orientation: The site fails to communicate clearly what it is for. It is not only hard for users to find things. It is often difficult for them to figure out what is in the site for them.

- Difficult to navigate
- Obsolete sections
- Difficult language

Concept Map:



The diagram above represents the functions of the Women's Center as well as it's relationships with clients, donors, volunteers, community, state & services providers.

Functions:

- Provide Services to Clients: How we can help.
- Collect Funds: Donations.
- Fund-raising Events: Upcoming events.
- Community: Outreach: Education & Prevention, Help tool for general public.
- Recruit Volunteers: Volunteer.

Uses:

The web site will be used by clients, volunteers, donors, community members & other organizations. The site must, in effect, be simultaneously customized to the needs of each of these different users, so it makes sense to each of them & enables each to find the information they need.

The Women's Center Web Site: Functions & Uses

Clients:

Clients are the primary users of the web site. Many users are persons that have been recently or are currently being sexually assaulted or are suffering domestic violence and require immediate help. The web site must provide clients with emergency help and understanding of the services provided by the Women's Center. Helping the victims identify their problem and offer them options to overcome their situation is the primary function of the web site.

Outreach:

Community members support the organizations efforts by promoting awareness of the center and by providing donations. The organization engages in outreach, particularly through prevention education on an ongoing basis in order to inform the public about the dangers of sexual assault & domestic violence. Therefore, the web site's objective is to offer the general public with the necessary help tools. The web site should focus attention on upcoming educational events and on upcoming fund-raising events.

Volunteers are essential to the functioning of the organization. To recruit volunteers, the web site will provide with information of the different volunteering opportunities and requirements. Promote volunteer needs and opportunities, upcoming volunteer training opportunities and volunteer requirements, as well as manuals and other important orientational documents.

Donors provide support so the organization can assist the victims. The web site should inform the donors of the different giving possiblities and provide a schedule of upcoming events and giving opportunities. The objective of the web site is to reach more donors and therefore recollect more funds.

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Clients Need to Know:

- To know how to identify abuse through its signs.
- To develop confidence buy hearing the stories of survivors who have been helped.
- How to ask for help imediately.
- About the services available to them.
- About the various providers & institutions that can help them.
- To understand the path for healing.
- To know how to achieve their goals.

Users should be informed about the range of services provided:

- 24hrs emergeny hotline
- Transportation
- Options
- Legal Protection (Protection Orders)
- Safety Planning (cell phones, etc...)
- Medical & Legal Advocacy
- Referrals (doctors, lawyers, jobs)
- Shelter (safe place for victims), Supplies, Food
- Children & Teen Program
- Therapy, Counseling, Support Groups
- Therapy through artistic expression
- Job Placement
- Upcoming Events

The information should convey:

- security
- safety
- warmth
- hope

The Women's Center Web Site: Users Needs

Donors & other Organizations Needs:

- To know how to donate ?
- To know how much $ the WC needs ?
- What their money is used for & the social value it creates.
- To be notified of the Fundraising events.
- The efficiency of the organization.
- That is non-profit & it is assisted by volunteers.

The information should convey:

- Trustworthiness
- Transparency
- Assertiveness
- The distinctive identity of the Women's Center as the specific package of services offered & the specific approach the center takes to helping clients.

Volunteers Needs:

- To know about the volunteer opportunities.
- To know what are the requirements.
- To what it means to be a volunteer.
- To know about training.
- Application Form (pdf download).

The information should convey:

- Compasion
- Positivity
- Constructiveness
- Assertiveness, Convincing

Community Needs:

- To know about the educational outreach (prevention education).
- To know what the Women Center accomplishes for the community.
- To know about upcoming events.
- To know how can the community help?

The information should convey:

- Compasion
- Positivity
- Constructiveness

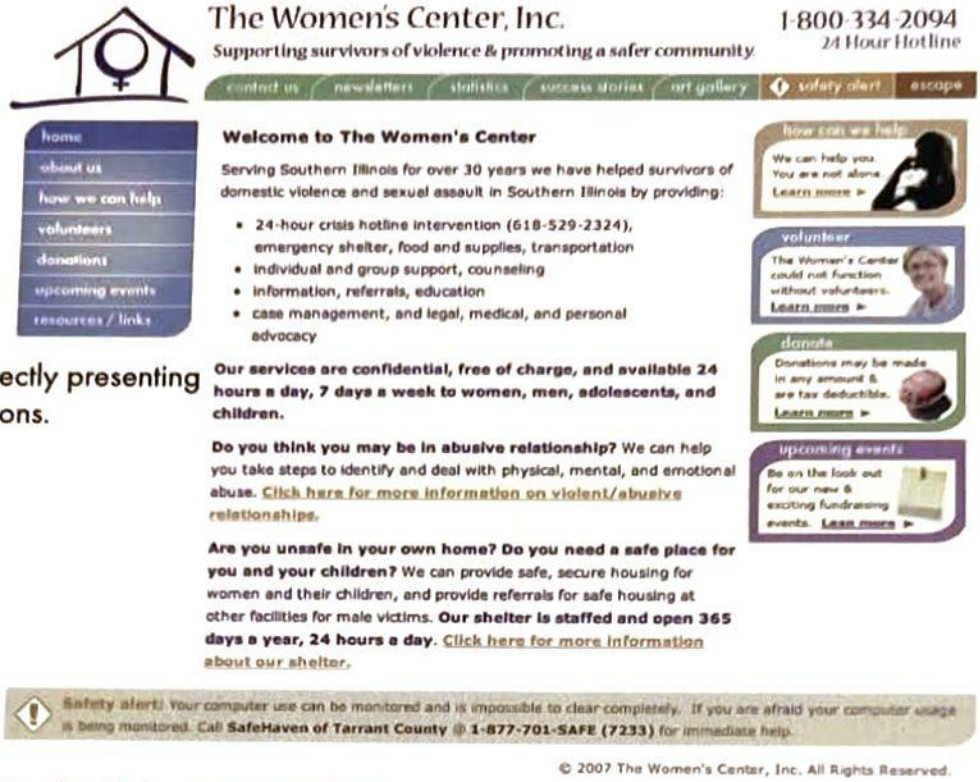
Proposed Redesign:

Emergency Telephone: Always located in the header all throughout the web site

Navigation:
Easy to navigate. All sections can be reached in two clicks.

Language: Speaks to the user directly presenting user needs and decisions.

Safety Alert: Always in the footer.



Graphics: Used to draw attention to important sections.

How we can help Section: This section will inform clients of the services & programs offered by the Women's Center and also to help victims identify their situation.

Volunteers Section: The Volunteers section will include information about the different volunteer opportunities & requirements, the activities & upcoming events and as well as provide with helpful tools to help the volunteers perform their social service more effectively.

Donations: The donors section will inform donors of the different options for donations and the benefits of giving to the organization. In addition, it will provide with a schedule for the ***upcoming fund-raising events.***

Upcoming Events: This section will promote upcoming events, including upcoming events, a schedule of the date and time with a picture of the event if available.

The Women's Center Web Site: Proposed Redesign

The newly redesigned web site will provide the different users with a highly informative effective & reassuring interface needed with a helpful and pleasant experience, maintaining a consistent design & usability throughout the site. The site will stress practicality & usefulness, with an intuitive structure that will allow the user to reach all the information in a maximum of two clicks.

Goals:

- User friendly, easy to navigate.
- Clear and efficient communication: speaks to user directly presenting user needs and decisions.
- Provide Educative and preventive information.
- Helpful resources for victims in need of help.
- Recruit volunteers.
- Recollect donations.
- Provide volunteers with helpful resources to perform their tasks.
- Bilingual: English & Spanish to reach more population.

Environment:

- Practical design.
- Quick loading time.
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Compliant.

Organization:

- Eliminate obsolete sections.
- Organize information for more intuitive navigation & orientation.
- Improve visual & navigational hierarchy.
- Color will be used to draw the attention of the user to important sections.
- Use color coding to situate the user in each section (navigation will indicate user location).

All information on the site will be brief & easy to understand since a large portion of users are victims in immediate need of help. Visual aid like diagrams & charts will be used to make the information easily understandable as well as accessible to all visitors.

Visual aids:

- Flow Chart of Court Process.
- The Power & Control Wheel.
- The Cycle of Violence.
- Bulleted lists (For example: Signs of Abuse List).

Home

- 24 hr emergency phone (placed in header).
- Internet activity warning (placed in footer).
- Informal introduction for WC users (emphasis on victim resources). Introduction to the services offered by the woman center with links to explainatory sections.
- The copy should speak directly to the user.
- Orientation to other sections through graphic links as well as conventional navigation buttons.

Questions like:

- Have you've been raped or sexually assaulted?
- Do you think you are being abused ?
- Do you need to leave your home ?

Will be used to direct users to helpful sections.

Side Navigation:

About us

- History & philosophy
- Board of Directors
- Staff - Phone directory & positions
- Volunteers

How we can help (Services)
Domestic Violence

- List of signs of abuse, power & control wheel, cycle of violence will be displayed on the domestic violence home page &
- Your healthcare
- Legal options (Flow chart of court process)
- Emotional support / recovery
- Children program
- Faq's & myths

Rape Crisis

- Your healthcare
- Legal options (Flow chart of court process)
- Emotional support / recovery
- Family & friends support
- Faq's & myths

Children Program
Teen Program (Teen Zone)
Gay & Lesbian Community
Elder Abuse

Volunteers

- Direct-services
- Non-direct Services
- Upcoming Events
- Training
- Translators
- Pdf application form

Donations

- Special events
- Memorial cards
- Planned giving
- Capital campaign / building fund
- Needs list

Upcoming events

- Calendar of events

Resources / links

- icasa.org
- ncadv.org
- rapevictimadvocate.org
- now.org
- etc...

Top Navigation:

Contact us

- 24hrs Hotline
- Shelter phone
- Business phone
- Address
- Staff - Phone Directory
- E-mail

Newsletter

- Read on the site, download or print

Statistics

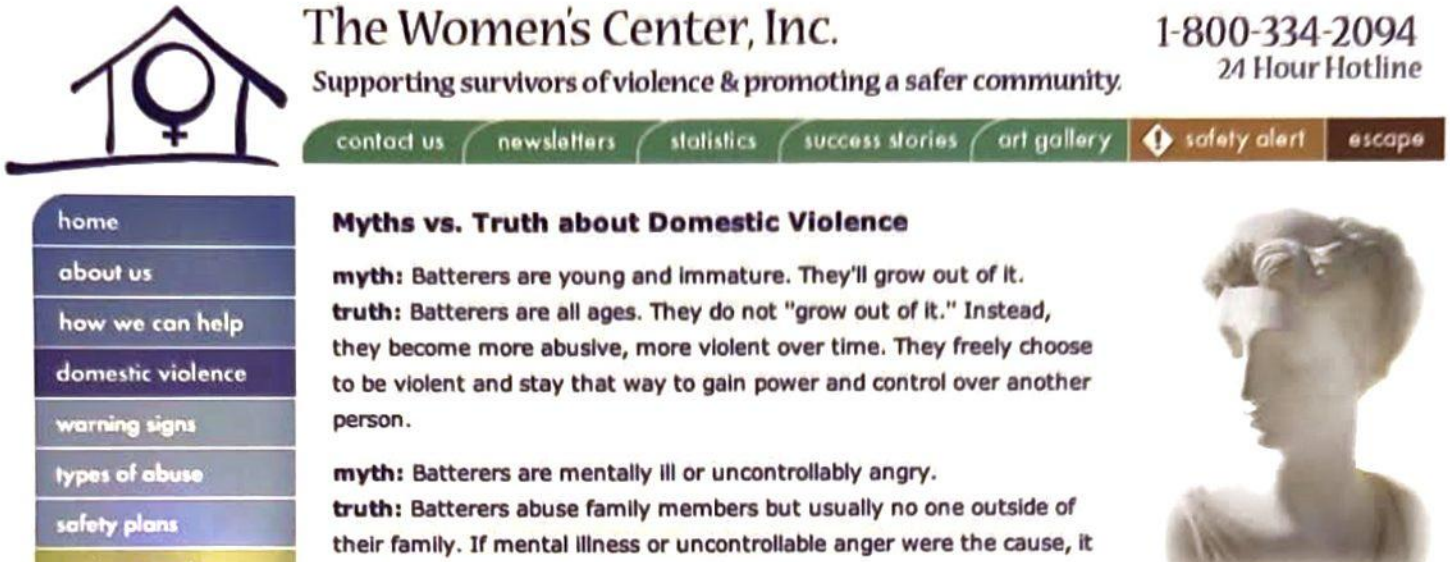
- Women Center Statistics

Succes Stories & Art Gallery

The Women's Center Web Site: Pages & Content

Navigation example:

Side Navigation: Once the user chooses an option, for example: how we can help, a drop down menu extends to reveal the different programs that the organization offers. This design enables the user to acces all sections in a maximum of two clicks.



Side Navigation: Color coding is used to situate user in each section. When a user is in a section the color changes from the rest of the navigation buttons.

Darker color is used when the navigation reveals its dropdown menu options to draw users attention.

About Us Drop Down Navigation Example:

The Women's Center, Inc.

Supporting survivors of violence & promoting a safer community.

1-800-334-2094
24 Hour Hotline

contact us | newsletters | statistics | success stories | art gallery | safety alert | escape

- home
- about us
- mission & philosophy
- board of directors
- staff
- volunteers
- how we can help
- volunteers
- donations
- upcoming events
- resources / links

About Us



One of the first domestic violence centers in the country, The Women's Center, Inc. was created in 1972 by our "founding mothers"--a group of visionaries who recognized the need for a safe, secure environment for Southern Illinois women and their children. The Women's Center has operated continuously since its founding over 30 years ago. Our staff of professionals and trained volunteers are dedicated to helping people regain control of their lives, their choices, and their futures. We are recognized as experts on domestic violence and sexual assault and work constantly to educate Southern Illinoisans about these issues.

The Women's Center is a nondenominational, nonprofit agency that operates under a Board of Directors, and we receive partial funding through various local, state, and federal sources. Services for our two major programs, domestic violence and sexual abuse, are provided through the combined efforts of our paid professional staff, degree-seeking interns, and trained volunteers.

Safety alert: Your computer use can be monitored and is impossible to clear completely. If you are afraid your computer usage is being monitored. Call **SafeHaven of Tarrant County @ 1-877-701-SAFE (7233)** for immediate help.

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The Women's Center Web Site: Web Site Screenshot

How we can help Drop Down Navigation Example:

The Women's Center, Inc.

Supporting survivors of violence & promoting a safer community.

1-800-334-2094
24 Hour Hotline

contact us | newsletters | statistics | success stories | art gallery | safety alert | escape

- home
- about us
- how we can help
- domestic violence
- sexual assault
- children program
- education/prevention
- volunteers
- donations
- upcoming events
- resources / links

How we can help

At The Women's Center, Inc. we provide comprehensive services to survivors-women, men, adolescents, and children--of domestic violence and sexual assault. Our goal is to support each survivor and provide information about resources and options so individuals are equipped to take charge of their lives. Our advocacy is on behalf of the survivor as guided by and centered on the survivor herself/himself.

The Domestic Violence and Shelter Program primarily serves Jackson, Franklin, Perry, Union, and Williamson counties; but any woman and her dependent child(ren) seeking safety from an abusive situation will be welcomed into the domestic violence shelter. The shelter is located in Carbondale, in Jackson County. Male clients needing shelter are referred to area facilities sponsored by other agencies.

The Sexual Assault program serves Jackson, Franklin, Perry, Union, Williamson, Johnson and Saline counties. **Our offices are located in the towns of Carbondale (Jackson County), Marion (Williamson County), and Benton (Franklin County).**

The children's program (for infants to 18 year olds) recognizes that kids from violent households are kids with special needs. Children, whether as victims or as witnesses of domestic violence toward family members, need a safe, supportive environment. They need nurturing, encouragement, and recognition of their unique sense of self in order to promote healthy development. We offer many services to assist children affected by domestic violence.

Education and prevention are key to ending violence. The Women's Center offers public education and prevention programs on many topics related to domestic violence and sexual assault/abuse.

The services we provide are completely free of charge and support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our core services include 24-hour crisis hotline intervention, information and referrals, counseling, group support, legal, medical and personal advocacy, transportation, case management, and emergency food and supplies. We offer services to women and their children living in the shelter as well as to individuals in the community.

Top of Page



Crisis Hotline:
(800) 334-2094
(618) 529-1802

Carbondale:
Shelter Program:
ph. (618) 529-2324
Rape Crisis Services:
ph. (618) 549-4807

Marion Satellite Office:
Domestic Violence Program:
ph. (618) 997-0949
Rape Crisis Program:
ph. 993-3178

Franklin County Satellite Office: ph. (618) 438-4118

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Volunteers Drop Down Navigation Example:

The Women's Center, Inc.

Supporting survivors of violence & promoting a safer community.

1-800-334-2094
24 Hour Hotline

contact us | newsletters | statistics | success stories | art gallery | safety alert | escape

- home
- about us
- how we can help
- volunteers
- direct services
- non-direct services
- training
- translators
- donations
- upcoming events
- resources / links

Volunteers



The Women's Center, Inc. could not function without the dedicated assistance of our many volunteers.

Volunteers serve in two areas:

- Direct service, helping victims of sexual assault and domestic violence after a period of training and certification. Our counselors sponsor free volunteer training at John A. Logan College several times a year, starting in January, June, and September. Click here for more information.

- Non-direct service, behind-the-scenes agency support. These volunteers do not work with clients, but our clients benefit greatly from their work. Non-direct service volunteers can began anytime and require no training. Non-direct service volunteers generally work normal business days and hours with the occasional evening and weekend opportunity. Click here for more information.

Interested in becoming a volunteer? Please schedule an interview with the Volunteer Recruiter before the start of volunteer training, 618-549-4807, ext. 232.

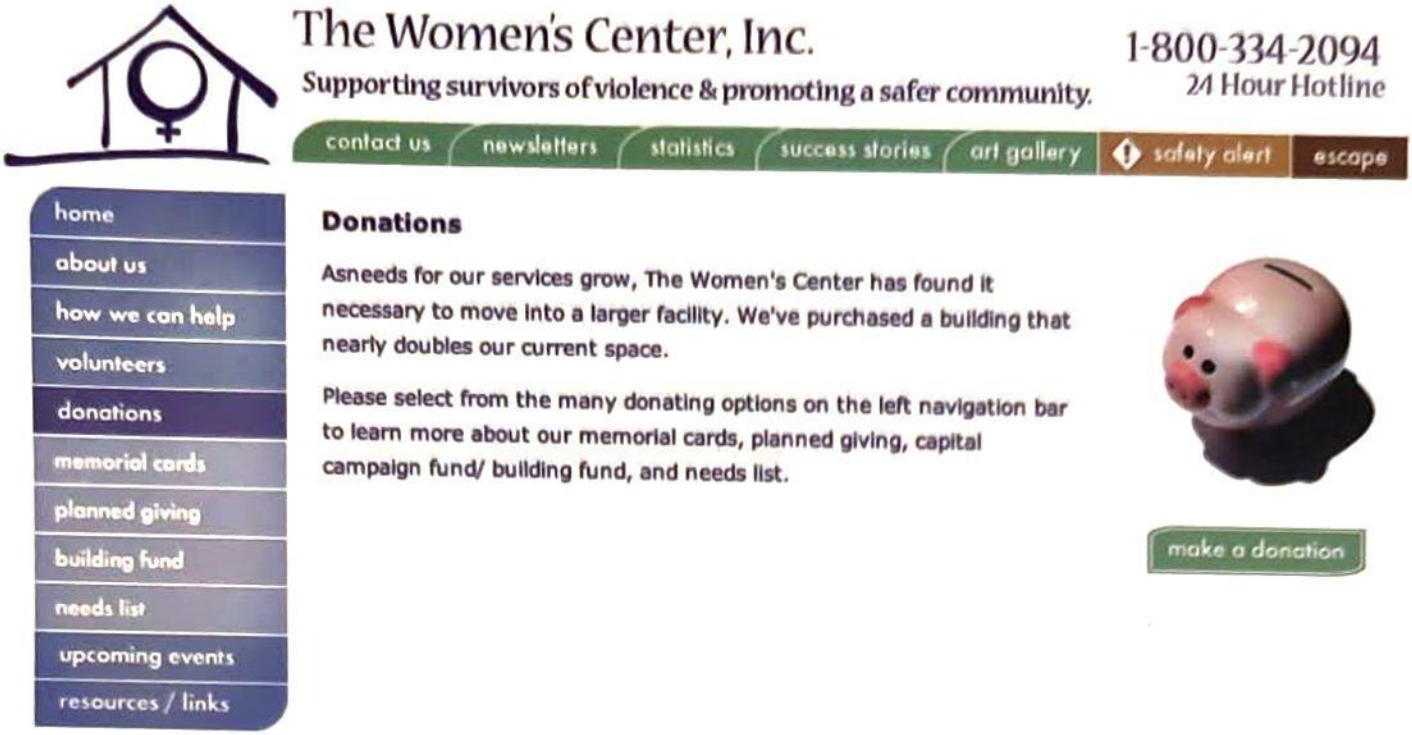
Download a printable application form

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The Women's Center Web Site:
Web Site Screenshot

Donations Drop Down Navigation Example:



The Women's Center Web Site: Conclusion

Conclusion:

The redesign of the Women's Center web site addresses essential visual, navigational & orientational shortcomings of the current site. These shortcomings have had a substantial impact on service to clients and the general public.

Reaching more victims in need is the principal purpose of the web site. Therefore, it has been taken in consideration the users circumstances & designed an interface accordingly. Information relevant to clients is organized and presented with an appropriate organization and affect to make it informative, functional & assuring. It's Practical design & simple interface helps the user navigate through the site intuitively. The navigation enables the users to access to the information simply & rapidly. Color coding is used to situate the user in the different sections.

The language must speak to the user directly presenting user needs and decisions. Offering support to the victims through valuable educative information & the necessary tools to recover.

The web site's informational aspect is emphasized by making color secondary to content. This is archived by using low saturation, pale, subtle colors. The use of soft lines & a curvy free flowing layout convey's a female spirit. It also inspires trust and transparency, appealing to donors & regulating agencies. This is achieved by the use of clear colors to reveal a professional look that conveys the experience & compassion that the organization exercises on a daily bases.

The newly redesigned web site accommodates the expansion of the Women's Center facilities helping the organization reach more victims, attract more donors, recruit volunteers & educate the community through outreach preventive education & fund-raising events. As the Women's Center expands the versatile design of the web site will allow it to keep pace.

To promote the web site posters can be placed in key locations to encourage the community to browse the site, a poster design has been created for this purpose. The newsletter should mention the newly redesigned web site, informing the community of the possibility to downloading a pdf or read it online.