



Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support

5-Year Strategic Plan

2026 – 2031

About Sawubona

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support is a nationally incorporated non-profit organization that aims to equip Black and other caregivers of individuals with disabilities, and their families, to use their voice and create change.

Sawubona puts caregivers first. We connect Black families to the services, resources and expertise they need, and navigate alongside them across the school, health and disability systems. We build a community where caregivers find belonging, recognition and practical support for their own wellbeing, not only for the person they care for. And we work with mainstream agencies and funders so that they engage Black caregivers through Africentric, better informed practice.

MISSION

To support the needs of Black caregivers of loved ones with a disability and their families, while strengthening systems of care, building strategic partnerships, and scaling our proven model.

VISION

That every Black caregiver of a family member with a disability feels a sense of belonging.

Our values

Partnership

We are stronger together.

Cultural safety

We build relationships through trust, respect and honesty.

Optimism

We believe a better future is possible.

WEBSITE sawubonaACS.org

PHONE [647-491-3775](tel:647-491-3775)

EMAIL info@sawubonaACS.org

SOCIAL [Instagram](#) · [X](#) · [Facebook](#)

A note from the Executive Director

Dear Friends, Partners, and Community,

I am proud to share our new Strategic Plan for the next five years. This plan marks an exciting new chapter for Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support.

Over the past year, we listened to our community. We looked at our strengths. We found new ways to grow and serve you better.

Our focus for the future rests on three clear goals:

Expand Our Reach – Bring our programs to more people who need them.

Strengthen Our Roots – Build stable funding and support for our team.

Drive Innovation – Bridge system gaps through expanded partnerships and knowledge exchange.

This strategic plan is a collective commitment. We cannot achieve our aims without your continued trust, expertise, and partnership.

Thank you for standing alongside us as we build a stronger, more resilient network for Black caregivers, both locally and beyond.

With deep gratitude,



Sherron Grant

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

How we made this plan

This document sets out Sawubona's strategic priorities for the five-year period from 2026 to 2031. The plan was developed through consultations with the Board, external stakeholders and staff. It is grounded in the findings of the Strategic Planning Discussion Paper (May 2026) and the outputs of the strategic planning session held May 30, 2026, in which board and staff members sorted 13 suggested priorities and identified five areas of shared focus for the plan period.

Sawubona engaged the consultancy [Logical Outcomes](#), led by Neil Price, to carry out the engagement and draft this plan. That work included a review of the organization's current position, consultations with board members, staff and external stakeholders, and facilitation of the strategic planning session from which these priorities emerged.

The plan presents the five strategic priorities that form its core, each with a rationale, key actions and indicators of success. The indicators of success are high-level starting points; these will be refined and developed during a future initiative.

STATEMENT OF DIRECTION

Sawubona is committing to stabilizing its funding and staffing base, formalizing its caregiver navigation function, codifying its model of caregiver support, growing strategic partnerships and deepening caregiver programming over the next five years. The organization will maintain its caregiver-first focus while building the foundation from which a broader provincial and national presence can grow.

The five priorities

All five priorities are active across the plan period. They are sequenced so that earlier work creates the conditions for later work, without delaying the start of any of it.

#	PRIORITY	PRIMARY EMPHASIS
1	Stabilize core funding and staffing	Years 1–2 primary focus; sustains all other priorities through Years 3–5
2	Formalize a caregiver navigation function	Years 1–3 primary build; deepened through Years 4–5
3	Codify and disseminate the Sawubona model	Years 1–2 internal development; Years 3–5 dissemination and revenue
4	Grow strategic partnerships	Years 2–3 framework; Years 4–5 formal partnerships and sector influence
5	Deepen caregiver programming	Years 2–3 build, sequenced behind staffing; Years 4–5 sustained and expanded

Stabilize core funding and staffing

Every other priority in this plan depends on a stable funding base and adequate staff capacity. Navigation, programming, codification and partnerships all rest on it. Stabilization means shifting from project-based grants toward multi-year core funding, broadening the revenue base, and adding the staff capacity the work requires so that it no longer depends on founding leadership.

KEY ACTIONS

- Scan the funding landscape, focusing on multi-year core operating grants from provincial, federal, philanthropic and corporate sources.
- Develop and submit applications for at least two multi-year core funding streams within Year 1.
- Define the staffing roles most urgently needed — caregiver support and navigation — and build a phased hiring plan.
- Develop independent revenue through the training and consultation offering, building on the existing ministry partnership.
- Set a Year 5 financial sustainability target: at least three revenue sources, with no single source exceeding 50% of annual revenue.
- Define a pathway to a fully compensated Executive Director role and resource it by Year 3.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	TARGET OR SIGNAL
Core funding secured	At least one multi-year core operating grant confirmed by end of Year 1; two or more by Year 3
Revenue diversification	No single funding source exceeds 50% of annual revenue by Year 5
Staffing capacity	At least one additional paid staff position filled by end of Year 1; staffing plan in place through Year 5
Operating reserves	At least three months of operating reserves held by end of Year 3
Independent revenue	Training and consultation revenue represents a meaningful share of annual budget by Year 4
Executive Director compensation	A pathway to a fully compensated ED role defined and resourced by Year 3

Formalize a caregiver navigation function

Navigation is already part of Sawubona's work: referrals are made, resources are shared, and families are connected to school, health and disability systems. Our aim is not to become a full-service navigation agency, but to define what Sawubona offers and what it does not, document the process, resource it with dedicated staff, and articulate what makes the offer distinct from mainstream services.

KEY ACTIONS

- Document current referral and navigation practices and identify gaps in scope, capacity and documentation.
- Define the function's scope: what Sawubona offers, what it does not, and how it connects families to partner organizations.
- Hire or designate a staff lead for navigation with relevant training and experience by Year 2.
- Establish reciprocal referral relationships with at least three trusted partner organizations, including in the school system.
- Maintain and update the agency directory of Black professionals at least annually.
- Develop a plain-language description of the navigation offer for families, partners and funders by Year 2.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	TARGET OR SIGNAL
Scope defined	Written scope document for the navigation function completed by end of Year 1
Navigation staffing	Dedicated navigation capacity in place by Year 2
Referral relationships	Formal reciprocal referral arrangements with at least three trusted partners by Year 3
Agency directory	Directory reviewed and updated annually, and actively used by members and partners
Caregiver reach	Growing number of caregivers connected to services through Sawubona each year
Offer communicated	Plain-language description of the navigation function in use with families and partners by Year 2

Codify and disseminate the Sawubona model

Sawubona's model of Black caregiver support already exists in practice, but it is held in our daily work rather than documented. Setting it down provides the evidence base funders expect, protects institutional knowledge through any leadership transition, and lays the groundwork for a training and consultation offering.

KEY ACTIONS

- Articulate the Sawubona model: its values, its practices, and what it looks like across different caregiver contexts.
- Define Africentric approaches within the Sawubona context.
- Develop a theory of change that captures the causal logic: what Sawubona does, for whom, and what changes as a result.
- Document the model in a format accessible to funders, partners and the sector by end of Year 2.
- Develop a library of caregiver impact stories for communications, funding proposals and sector engagement.
- Build a formal training curriculum and pricing structure on the codified model, ready to deliver by Year 4.
- Share the model with sector partners and in at least one public forum by Year 3.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	TARGET OR SIGNAL
Model documented	A written model of practice completed, reviewed by the board, and in use by end of Year 2
Theory of change	Theory of change developed and used in at least one funding application by Year 2
Impact stories	A library of caregiver impact stories developed and actively used by Year 3
Funder use	Model documentation cited in at least two successful funding applications by Year 3
Training offering	Formal training curriculum built on the model, ready to deliver by Year 4
Sector recognition	Model shared in at least one sector forum or publication by Year 3

Grow strategic partnerships

Sawubona is increasingly asked to provide letters of support, join grant applications and take part in sector tables. That interest is an asset, but it also carries the risk of being absorbed into other organizations' agendas. Our approach is therefore deliberate and selective: establish the terms of partnership first, then build formal relationships from a position of organizational stability and a documented model. Disability partnerships are near-term; health partnerships sit on a longer horizon.

KEY ACTIONS

- Develop a partnership framework that articulates what Sawubona will and will not offer in collaborations, and what it requires in return.
- Assess existing informal partnerships and collaboration requests against the framework by Year 2.
- Identify two or three priority disability sector partners for formal relationship-building in Years 2–3.
- Engage Black-led community health centres as preferred health sector partners from Year 3 onward.
- Build a process for evaluating unsolicited partnership requests that protects the caregiver focus and organizational independence.
- Ensure all formal partnerships are time-limited and reviewed against organizational benefit.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	TARGET OR SIGNAL
Partnership framework	A written partnership framework adopted by the board by end of Year 2
Partnership assessment	All active informal collaborations assessed against the framework by Year 2
Formal partnerships	At least two formal agreements with disability or health sector organizations in place by Year 5
Partnership quality	Partners report that Sawubona's caregiver-first focus is understood and respected
Revenue or in-kind	At least one formal partnership generates meaningful revenue or in-kind support by Year 5
Independence	No partnership requires Sawubona to subordinate its caregiver focus or operate under another mandate

Deepen caregiver programming

Caregiver programming is central to our mission, and there is an established base to build on: roughly 280 site members and more than 300 interested members. Deepening the offer requires staff capacity that is not yet in place, so this priority begins once stabilization is under way and expands through Years 4 and 5.

KEY ACTIONS

- Expand the frequency and variety of virtual gatherings for caregiver members from Year 2 onward.
- Develop a modest but meaningful suite of one-to-one check-in and small-group self-care offerings by Year 3.
- Increase the frequency of in-person gatherings, with attention to accessibility for members outside major urban centres.
- Develop programming that explicitly includes caregivers of adults with disabilities, including those navigating the transition out of the school system at age 21.
- Build in staff wellbeing supports and supervision structures, given the emotional intensity of this work.
- Collect feedback from caregiver members annually to guide programming decisions.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	TARGET OR SIGNAL
Programming volume	Measurable increase in programming touchpoints per member per year from Year 2 onward
Sense of belonging	Annual survey shows maintained or improved belonging, recognition and reduced isolation
Reach of members	Growing proportion of the 300+ interested members engaged in regular programming by Year 3
In-person reach	At least one in-person gathering outside the Greater Toronto Area annually from Year 3 onward
Caregiver wellbeing	Members report that programming supports their wellbeing as caregivers, distinct from support for the person they care for
Adult caregiver inclusion	Programming explicitly addressing caregivers of adults with disabilities in place by Year 3

What success looks like at Year 5

By 2031, a successful implementation of this plan means Sawubona has:

- 01 A sustainable, diversified funding base with multi-year core grants from at least three sources, a compensated Executive Director, and meaningful independent revenue from training and consultation.

- 02 A formalized caregiver navigation function with dedicated staff capacity, documented referral practices, and reciprocal partnerships across the disability, health and school sectors.

- 03 A codified, publicly available model of Black caregiver support recognized by funders, sector partners and government, anchoring a training and consultation offering that generates independent revenue.

- 04 A deliberate, selective portfolio of partnerships that serve the caregiver focus and position Sawubona as an influential voice in how mainstream agencies engage Black caregivers.

- 05 A deepened programming offer that reaches members virtually and in person, explicitly includes caregivers of adults with disabilities, and is grounded in annual feedback from the caregiver community.