

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

MANAGED IT SERVICES

Willow Domestic Violence Center needed impeccable IT support from a partner who could also help them choreograph a complicated relocation.



THE CHALLENGE

Serving the Rochester, N.Y., area for nearly four decades, Willow Domestic Violence Center helps more than 7,000 people annually, including 300 children. It's the only state-certified domestic violence service provider in Monroe County.

In 2015, this 24/7 facility was planning a major project to relocate from their aging building and separate their administrative offices to a new, confidential location where they serve those affected by violence. At the same time, Willow was looking for more hands-on IT support from an outsourcing partner, and was seeking proposals from providers who could also help them make the transition to new space.

Willow needed a partner capable of making sure they were operational 24/7 because their hotline never sleeps. They have to be ready to meet the needs of domestic violence victims, day and night. And they needed support for everything from ongoing IT maintenance to end user work stations and printers, mobile devices, servers, and the many vendors involved in keeping their technology and connectivity in top condition.

PARTNER SOLUTION

When reviewing proposed IT Service contracts, Willow reflected on their values and needs from an IT partner. They were looking for a small company feel, with large corporation knowledge. They needed a small pool of trusted technicians that would know staff by name, and could help maintain confidentiality. When the Innovative team came in and met with Willow's Operations & Special Projects Manager Amber Lingenfelter, and listened to the company's needs and goals first hand, the choice was obvious. After a detailed proposal that captured everything Willow was looking to accomplish, they hired Innovative in June 2015.

The top priority at the time was to support them in their old facility as they prepared to make a move to multiple new, separated facilities. First, Innovative helped Willow plan the elaborate transition to their administrative offices while construction continued on private facilities for their clients. During that time, they needed support keeping their systems running in the midst of change.



Innovative Solutions also assisted with the following:



Technical Support



Preventative maintenance



Access/security matters



Vendor management



Service requests



IT governance and reporting

A ribbon-cutting ceremony for a secret address

As the grand opening of their client facility drew closer—a location intentionally kept private—another challenge presented itself.

Willow wanted to mark the occasion of the opening of their new client facility with a press conference and ribbon-cutting ceremony, but they needed to preserve the privacy of the location. The Willow team orchestrated an event at their public office space and conducted a virtual ribbon cutting remotely—live-streaming it by camera to protect the other location. Innovative Solutions helped them make sure the logistics were well planned so there would be no last-minute technical glitches, such as having enough bandwidth so everything could be live streamed on a big screen.

“The ribbon-cutting ceremony was a time for Willow to celebrate and communicate with the public, and we wanted that to come off without a hitch, but the work they do every single day is even more crucial,” says Alex Wiater, Account Manager / System Administrator for Innovative Solutions. “Making sure everything’s working, from phones to security systems—anything internet based. Having information flow between Willow’s two locations. Making sure people when people answer Willow’s hotline phones that their internet is always working, so they can look up resources they need to help people. It’s vital that they be up and running for the clients they serve.”

That includes other outposts for Willow. Willow Center Court Advocates are on-site at Monroe County Family Court, in a separate and secure waiting room, to assist you in obtaining an Order of Protection. In a typical year, Willow assists more than 2,000 individuals at Family Court. Willow also has staff who work at local hospitals, and mobile advocates too. Having reliable remote connectivity is imperative to supporting survivors

WHY WAS INNOVATIVE THE RIGHT PARTNER?






“If our technology were to falter, and a computer went down, and we didn’t have a backup plan in place, we would not be able to support our programs so consistently. **Thanks to Innovative Solutions, our IT is strong and sturdy.** The phones are working, the computers are typing, the right people have the right tools that they need to get the work done. And our survivors are safe.”

Amber Lingenfelter, Operations and Special Project Manager

on the road, at coffee houses, at partner agencies—wherever services are needed and accessible. It all has to be connected and operational.

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

The partnership between Willow and Innovative Solutions has solved multiple problems for the organization—and created new opportunities, including:

-  **Reliable, 24/7 uptime for their systems and their Hotline (222-SAFE)**
-  **Prevention of, rather than reaction to, security breaches**
-  **Consistent, efficient employee training**
-  **Security awareness tools for Willow clients**
-  **Better communications among staff through a Facebook Workplace platform**

Innovative Solutions recently helped Willow set up Facebook Workplace as a more dynamic environment for internal communication. It's an engaging, intuitive way to share information privately within the office, and interact socially online in much the same way Facebook users are already accustomed to doing, which has helped make the office staff closer and more communicative across their multiple spaces and outposts.

Since beginning their relationship with Innovative Solutions, Willow has also hired a full-time Director of Operations as a direct contact for Innovative—and the combination of a dedicated staffer and a partner who keeps things humming along has enabled Amber Lingenfelter to focus more on special projects, undistracted by IT issues.

Educating Willow's clients to keep them safer

Training can't stop at the staff level. Innovative is able to supply training tips for the people, in turn, serving survivors of domestic violence who may have reason to fear for their safety.



Disable location tracking on any app that someone might use to locate them.



Block or "unfriend" people or known associates on social media apps.



Make sure antivirus software is on every computer.



Use caution with information they input when using the internet.



Change passwords on any accounts that might be used to track a client.