

ACDS Government Relations and Advocacy Strategic Framework

2019-2022 OUTCOMES REPORT

In 2019, the ACDS GR Committee articulated goals and priorities guided by *ACDS' Vision and Impact Framework*. This document summarizes the activities undertaken from 2019 to March 2022 to achieve these goals and outcomes, and by so doing, concludes the 2019-22 strategic plan. New priorities will be identified for foreseeable work from 2022 onwards, aligned with ACDS' 2022-25 strategic framework.

ACDS Vision

People with disabilities live full lives as citizens supported by a vibrant network of services in their communities

Mission

ACDS is the collective voice of our members, advancing excellence and best practices, advocating for effective public policy, and championing professional disability services. We achieve our mission by:

- Giving Voice* Advocating for issues that affect the community disability sector
- Building Capacity* Strengthening community disability services
- Connecting and Collaborating* Building connections and engaging for collaboration

Government Relations and Advocacy Goals

Giving Voice (Advocacy)

- A. ACDS is recognized as a collective and credible voice of community disability services
- B. ACDS policy positions and solutions are based on well-researched information and evidence

Building Capacity (Education)

- C. ACDS members have the knowledge and capacity to engage in government relations and policy advocacy activities with a collective voice
- D. The social and economic impact, high standards and professionalism of community disability services are widely understood and valued

Connecting and Collaborating (Engagement)

- E. ACDS is viewed as a key strategic partner in collaborative activities
- F. ACDS shows leadership by convening members and sector stakeholders for collective action

ACDS Vision and Impact Framework



RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Community service delivery thrives when government and agency relationships are built on a foundation of trust. Maximizing the impact of this partnership requires collaboration, transparency, and fair distribution of roles and responsibilities.

IMPACTFUL INVESTMENTS

Investing in community service delivery benefits individuals, communities and the economy. Maximizing the impact of this investment requires flexible and responsive funding, a skilled workforce, support for innovation, and consistent quality assurance across service models.

SEAMLESS SYSTEMS

Individuals intersect with multiple programs and policy areas. Maximizing the impact of intersections requires systems with seamless access and addressing how changes in other areas impact people with disabilities.

Advocacy Priorities and Milestones

Effective mechanisms for collaboration

1. ACDS and GoA Partnership Committee reflects shared vision and values, promotes trust, and invites input from diverse ACDS members
2. Agencies have skills and opportunities to forge government relationships
3. Mechanism is created to engage families of individuals supported by member agencies
4. Collaborative mechanisms result in supportive regulations and policies, clear roles, effective processes, and positive outcomes for individuals

Flexible, responsive funding

5. Contract terms and processes for 2020/21 are more flexible, less burdensome, and include input from ACDS members
6. Long-term framework is developed for flexible, responsive and streamlined funding

Comprehensive HR strategy for a stable, skilled and professional workforce

7. 2019 membership engagement findings are compiled and next steps identified
8. Collaborative mechanism is created to address HR priorities for the sector

Consistent quality assurance system

9. Community services and FMS have same quality assurance standards and processes

Integrated systems, and a disability analysis of programs and policies

10. PDD and related program data is shared with service providers so services can be proactively designed and planned
11. The impact of specific service models, policies or systems is substantiated from real-life stories
12. Emerging themes from critical incidents are compiled and shared to identify cross-system improvements
13. Sources of red tape are identified and collaboratively addressed

STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN TO ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS	
STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN	GOALS AND PRIORITIES (P)
<p>P1. ACDS and GoA Partnership Committee reflects shared vision and values, promotes trust, and invites input from diverse ACDS members</p> <p>Service Provider Partnership Committee is a key central mechanism to address priorities. Established during the previous government, in response to ACDS' advocacy for an MOU, this formal structure provided an important mechanism surviving the change in government. During the pandemic, communication and collaboration was elevated due in large part to the existence of this existing structure. The Committee and its working groups provided opportunities to engage ACDS members to share their diverse perspectives and experiences to address emerging issues such as COVID impact, contract processes, vacancy management, records management, and staffing issues.</p> <p>ACDS was a core member of the PDD Transformation Review, and consulted to identify members for working groups for activities flowing from it (e.g., the new Assessment of Needs group). ACDS' role as a conduit and voice for the sector was especially valued during the pandemic. Currently, ACDS participates in weekly discussions with Health, AHS and public health for discussions related to lifting pandemic restrictions.</p> <p>Elected officials and government staff were provided evidence-based policy options. Examples include: written submission to the PDD Transformation Review (2019), workforce data to the Minister to support Covid-related wage top-up advocacy (2020), <i>COVID Impact and Insights</i> (2020) and <i>COVID Year 2 stories</i> (2021) reports, and a formal submission to Continuing Care Legislative Review (2021).</p>	<p>P4. Collaborative mechanisms result in supportive regulations and policies, and positive outcomes for individuals</p> <p>GOAL A ACDS is recognized as a collective and credible voice of community disability services</p>
<p>P2. Agencies have skills and opportunities to forge government relationships</p> <p>During the pandemic, all service providers were provided frequent and timely updates to interpret public health orders, identify emerging issues, and understand legal implications of developments such as vaccination policies. Sector-specific Town Halls were organized with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other experts to provide service providers with accurate information through changing circumstances.</p> <p>Website and social media stats (Apr 1 to Dec 31, 2021): 50,018 website visits; 1,233 Twitter followers; 49 sector updates to 330+ recipients.</p> <p>ACDS members were provided opportunities and support to participate on the Partnership Committee and working groups. Members were informed of advocacy-related webinars hosted by ACDS collaborators (ABNN, ECVO, CCVO, etc.). ACDS will co-host a webinar with ALIGN in spring 2022 for members to get insight from Alberta Counsel on Alberta's political landscape, and implications for advocacy opportunities.</p>	<p>GOAL C ACDS members have the knowledge and capacity to engage in government relations and policy advocacy activities with a collective voice</p>
<p>P3. Mechanism is created to engage families of individuals supported by member agencies</p> <p>ACDS Family Advisory Council is close to being established. Terms of reference are being finalised, and ACDS member agencies will identify interested family members to apply to be selected for the council. The council will provide a mechanism for ACDS to consider the priorities and needs of families and individuals in policy or program recommendations made to government regarding PDD supports and services.</p>	<p>GOAL F ACDS shows leadership by convening members and stakeholders for collective action</p>
<p>Collaboration with nonprofit sector and other partners to advance common goals</p> <p>ACDS collaborates with and supports allies to advance common goals. Examples: Co-hosting with ALIGN engagement sessions with candidates leading up to provincial election (2019); with ALIGN and ECVO, producing list of pandemic-related programs and benefits (2020); amplifying ADWA's campaign to promote frontline work, advocate for wage top-ups (2021), and current wage increase campaign (2022).</p>	<p>GOAL E ACDS is viewed as a key strategic partner in collaborative activities</p>

IMPACTFUL INVESTMENTS	
STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN	GOALS AND PRIORITIES (P)
<p>P5/P6. Contract terms and processes are flexible, less burdensome, and contract framework is responsive and streamlined</p> <p>The Partnership Committee's Contract Management Working Group collaborated to revise invoice process, address vacancy handling, and create consistency for service profiles and codes. The group continues to work on improving contract process and inform PDD of issues. The successes to date have encouraged PDD to consider not just changes to processes, but to exploring changes to the contract template itself.</p>	<p>Flexible, responsive and streamlined funding</p>
<p>P7/8. Comprehensive HR strategy to achieve a stable, skilled and professional workforce</p> <p>Member engagement sessions in spring 2019 resulted in a Discussion Guide for next steps toward the development of a comprehensive HR strategy. Building on this, conversations were held with members in fall 2019 to explore in more depth some specific areas for consideration. The 2020/21 pandemic halted this process. In Feb 2022, ACDS successfully applied for a one-year grant from CSS to contract a top-ranking firm to conduct labour market analysis, provide recommendations, and facilitate collaborative development of a comprehensive HR strategy, with immediate measures for urgent needs. Project Blueprint CDS will result in a sector-driven strategy and implementation plan.</p>	
<p>Evidence-based planning, advocacy and sector-profiling</p> <p>ACDS regularly produces data for planning and advocacy purposes. Examples: pandemic learnings and implications for CDS workforce (2020, 2021); 2020 Workforce Survey on COVID impact on organizations and workforce; 2021 Workforce Survey on workforce and organizational sustainability; prevalence and impact of rising administrative and indirect costs (Mar 2020).</p>	<p>GOAL B ACDS policy positions and solutions are based on well-researched information and evidence</p>
<p>Stories were shared to demonstrate impact and value of the sector. Examples: photos collected from member agencies to showcase innovative support strategies for individuals during the pandemic (Mar 2020); #QualityCDS campaign launched to share CDS sector facts and stories from the frontlines (Oct 2020).</p>	
<p>P9. Community services and FMS have same quality assurance standards and processes</p> <p>ACDS' position is for community services and FMS to have the same quality assurance standards and processes. The need for consistency was part of the written recommendations from ACDS to the PDD Transformation Review. No further action has been taken on this.</p>	<p>GOAL D Sector's impact, standards and professionalism are valued</p> <p>P9. Consistent quality assurance system across all service models</p>
SEAMLESS SYSTEMS	
<p>P10. PDD and related program data is shared with service providers so services can be proactively designed and planned</p> <p>ACDS advocacy played a critical role in PDD program data being made available via the Alberta Government Open Data Portal starting in 2020.</p> <p>The priority to establish a Partnership Committee group to develop a data strategy was set aside due to pandemic demands.</p>	<p>GOAL B ACDS policy positions and solutions are based on well-researched evidence</p>
<p>P11. The impact of specific service models, policies or systems is substantiated from real-life stories</p> <p>COVID <i>Impact and Insights</i> reports (2020, 2021) captured significant impacts of PDD's overlap with other systems, particularly Health. The Partnership Committee's COVID Learnings working group recommendations to the committee included addressing cross system issues.</p>	
<p>P12. Emerging themes from critical incidents are compiled and shared to identify cross-system improvements</p> <p>(This activity was eliminated due to pandemic demands.)</p>	<p>Integrated systems designed with a disability lens to address gaps and provide seamless access</p>
<p>P13. Sources of red tape are identified and collaboratively addressed</p> <p>Partnership Committee working group has been established to identify red tape reduction opportunities.</p>	