

#BlueprintCDS

Blueprint CDS: A Comprehensive Workforce Strategy for Community Disability Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Updated: July 24, 2023



Project Blueprint CDS

The Alberta Council of Disability Services (ACDS) is a non-profit association of Community Disability Services (CDS) sector organizations in Alberta. ACDS works closely with the Government of Alberta (Government) and other partners to strengthen the CDS sector to benefit Albertans with developmental disabilities, through information gathering, advocacy, accreditation and other avenues.

In spring 2022, ACDS received funding from the Government to lead the development of a sector-driven workforce strategy for the CDS sector. With consultancy services from KPMG, this year-long work included research, labour market analysis, survey administration, and extensive sector engagement to identify key workforce challenges, and co-create a set of recommended strategies and an implementation plan.

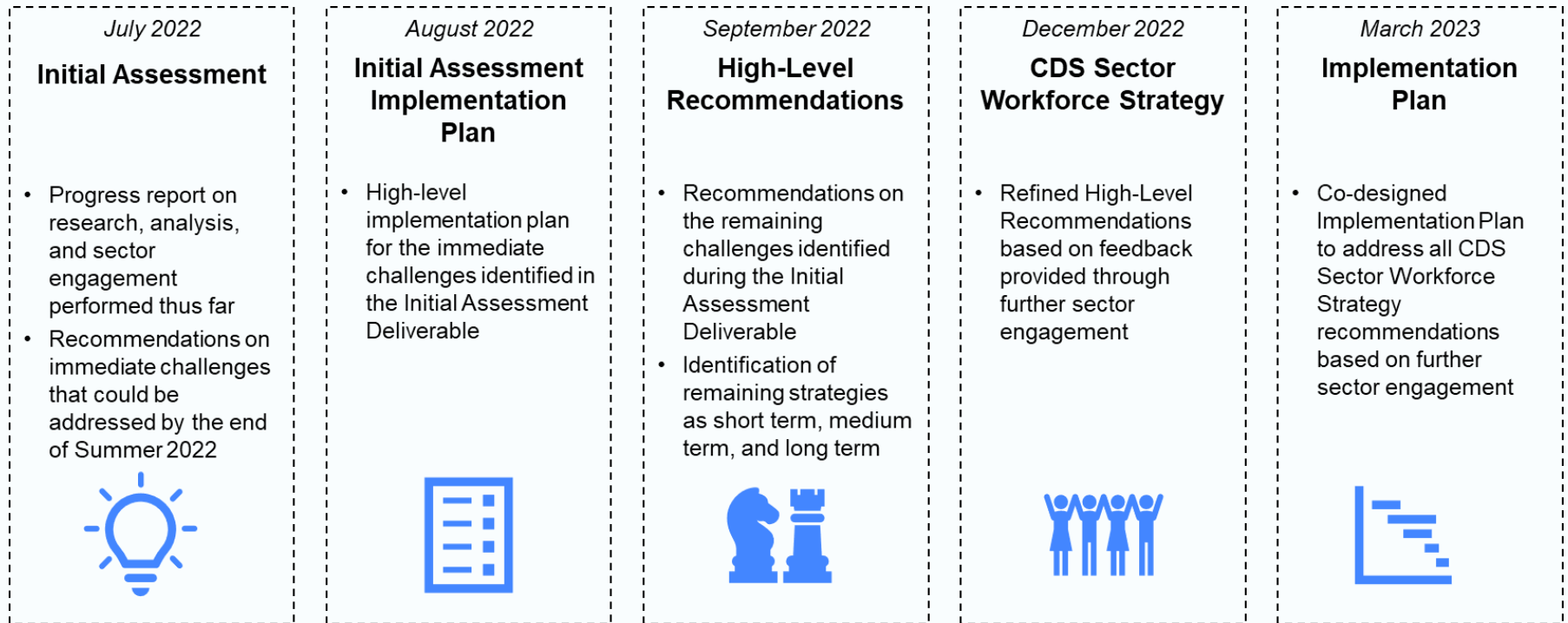
Known as Project Blueprint CDS, this initiative has resulted in *Blueprint CDS – A Comprehensive Workforce Strategy for the CDS Sector (Strategy)*.

ACDS will be using Blueprint CDS as a guiding document to work closely with Government and sector stakeholders to implement the evidence-based recommendations to promote a sustainable workforce to meet the evolving needs of Albertans with disabilities.

- For the complete ***Blueprint CDS – A Comprehensive Workforce Strategy for the CDS Sector***, please see [here](#).
- For the **Blueprint CDS Technical Document**, including background research and analysis, please see [here](#).

Project Work Plan

Figure 1: Project Blueprint CDS Overview



Current State Workforce Challenges

A. Understanding workforce context

The context, purpose, value and functions of the CDS sector workforce.

Lack of visibility and buy-in. There is a lack of visibility into and buy-in to the value and complexity of the work of the CDS sector.



Parallel and duplicate systems. The CDS sector is creating duplicate processes to support individuals to access the supports they need outside of what is delivered by CDS organizations.



Increasingly complex service needs. The scope and needs of individuals referred to CDS sector supports and their families are growing and becoming more complex.



Rural factors. Rural communities experience workforce challenges more severely.



B. Recruiting and retaining the workforce

The things that affect whether workers choose to enter and stay in the CDS sector.

Low wages. Wages are low relative to similar sectors and have been outpaced by the increasing cost of living in Alberta.



Competition from other sectors. There is competition for resources from organizations and support sectors that provide better pay, work environment, multidisciplinary teams, etc.



Work environment. The workforce brings expectations about work environment, supports, working in multidisciplinary teams, etc. that the CDS sector is not currently able to meet.



Leadership gap. Senior leaders in the CDS sector are retiring and there is a lack of experienced, willing staff to take their place.



C. Developing the workforce

The things that affect the CDS sector's ability to deliver quality services.

Barriers to training. There is a lack of funding available for training. Specialized training opportunities can be limited or expensive. Services providers find themselves having to provide their own time consuming, expensive training which is further compounded due to high staff turnover.



Rigid contracts. The current contract parameters with Government are rigid and do not allow for service providers to be flexible about how they deliver services and support their workforce.



Mismatched staff skill sets. It is difficult to find and hire individuals with the skill sets needed by service providers. Competency criteria are not consistent and most new workers do not enter the field with a formal disability services qualification.



Lack of post-secondary training. There is a lack of post-secondary training available as many programs across the province have closed due to lack of demand.



Development of Recommendations

A suite of recommendations was developed as part of the Initial Assessment. A series of workshops were held in Fall 2022 to engage with the CDS Sector to validate, review and add to the recommendations. These workshops were attended by roughly 133 attendees representing 78 CDS organizations, as well as other sector stakeholders.

By engaging with the CDS sector, Project Blueprint CDS gained valuable insights into the sector's needs and concerns. The sessions informed revisions to the recommendations and common themes emerged across the feedback provided:



Overall, the recommendations were supported



Some of the recommendations are dependent on an initial stabilization of the sector, such as through the increase in wages.



There was overarching support for efforts to professionalize the sector, including increasing expectations, wages and training.



There may be an opportunity to leverage existing efforts being made by others in and close to the sector around the province.



There was support for efforts to better understand and document the current state of the sector, as well as to determine if the current state is appropriate for the sector.



There needs to be a balance between consistency across the Province and respect for service provider autonomy to tailor to the unique needs of their organization and the individuals they serve.



Implementation of the recommendations needs to respect service provider time and capacity.

Recommendations



A. Understanding workforce context

The context, purpose, value, and functions of the CDS sector workforce.

- A1. Build a shared understanding of the economic impact of the CDS sector
- A2. Build a shared understanding of the scope of practice of CDS sector services
- A3. Adopt common workforce classifications
- A4. Adopt a network model to support cross ministry coordination
- A5. Develop a forecasting model to support strategic workforce planning



B. Recruiting and retaining the workforce

The things that attract workers to the CDS sector and keep them happy to stay.

- B6. Provide immediate and ongoing wage relief
- B7. Build a compensation scale guide to for frontline service delivery staff
- B8. Engage CDS sector workers to co-design a community of practice



C. Developing the workforce

The things staff and service providers need to provide quality services.

- 9. Increase education and training levels of the CDS sector workforce, including:
 - 9A. Establish a target credential requirement for frontline CDS sector workers
 - 9B. Establish a system for micro-credentialing
 - 9C. Expand post-secondary programming
 - 9D. Identify the current state of training
 - 9E. Develop a provincial training framework
 - 9F. Develop a training catalogue
 - 9G. Expand the suite of training offered by ACDS
- 10. Identify and address barriers to workforce flexibility within the PDD contract structure
- 11. Implement an innovative workforce fund
- 12. Support organizations to build a culture of professionalization

Blueprint CDS: Implementation Timeline



A. Understanding workforce context



B. Recruiting and retaining the workforce



C. Developing the workforce

Immediate Term (within 1 year)	Short Term (within 2 years)	Medium Term (within 3 years)	Long Term (3 + years)
A2. Build a shared understanding of the scope of practice of CDS sector services	A1. Build a shared understanding of the economic impact of the CDS sector	B7. Build a compensation scale guide for frontline service delivery staff	B8. Engage CDS sector workers to co-design a community of practice
B6A. Provide immediate wage relief	B6B. Provide ongoing wage relief	B6B. Provide ongoing wage relief	B6B. Provide ongoing wage relief
C9D. Identify current state of training	A3. Adopt common workforce classifications	C9A . Establish a target credential requirement for frontline CDS sector workers	C9C. Expand post-secondary programming
C9E . Develop a provincial training framework	A4. Adopt a network model to support cross-ministry coordination	C9B . Establish a system for micro-credentialing	
C12: Support organizations to build a culture of professionalization	A5. Develop a forecasting model to support strategic workforce planning	C11. Implement innovative workforce fund	
	C9F. Develop a training catalogue		
	C9G. Expand the suite of training offered by ACDS		
	C10. Identify and address barriers to workforce flexibility within the PDD contract structure		

For more information

- For the complete ***Blueprint CDS – A Comprehensive Workforce Strategy for the CDS Sector***, please see [here](#).
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