Action for Healthy Communities Society of Alberta- AHC Alberta

Strategic Plan 2022-2026

ACTION FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

People and Communities in Action

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Introduction

Action for Healthy Communities Society of Alberta (AHC- Alberta) is a registered not-for-profit organization with charitable status. Since 1995, the organization has worked with Albertans to strengthen community capacity and build healthier and stronger communities. In 2020, AHC expanded its reach outside metro-Edmonton to several small towns/cities including: Beaumont, Leduc, Camrose, Cold Lake and Bonnyville and plans to continue this expansion in central and norther Alberta in the coming years.

While working with marginalized communities for more than two decades and through extensive community consultation, AHC has learned that health and wellbeing of the individuals is affected due to challenges related to gaps in one or more of key important Social Determinants of Health (SDH).

To address these related gaps, the programs and supports needs to be focused on improving the related SDH by reducing challenges/barriers and fostering strengths – assets of the individuals and communities.

Based on this learning and recommendations from a recent organizational evaluation, AHC team developed a Theory of Change (ToC) which will guide our planning process to be more focused on addressing these challenges and create required outcomes from all its programs and services through capacity building supports across the organization. The following overall outcomes achieved through AHC strategies are focused on the capacity building of individuals and communities and aligned with the primary priority areas of AHC's mandate:

- People and communities are able to access and afford resources for a healthy and active life.
- Regional and local communities have stronger cross-sector receptive capacity to proactively engage in society wide measures and address all forms of inequalities including systemic inequities affecting health and wellbeing; ensuring equality of opportunities & outcomes for all
- People have wider social networks, sense of belonging and meaningful participation in the community.

Achievement of above mentioned outcomes will lead towards creation of an inclusive society with engaged individuals and communities who can fully participate in society.

AHC uses following major strategies (programs and services) to build individual and communities' capacity in greater Edmonton area Central and Northern Alberta:

1. Settlement &Integration
2. Community Capacity-Building

3. Employment supports
4. Healthy Children & Youth
5. Entrepreneurship supports
6. Adult Literacy & Skills development and
7. Mental Health supports

Purpose of the Strategic Plan

The Board of Directors and Staff of AHC developed this strategic plan through several planning sessions. The plan was developed to ensure we leverage our strengths and opportunities while mitigating our weaknesses and threats. See Appendix A& B to review AHC's SWOT Analysis and Theory of Change (ToC).

AHC's Strategic Plan is and will continue to be used as a tool for: continuous planning, program management and evaluation, and communication. This is an updated working version of the Society's Plan for the next 5 years 2022-2026. It will be reviewed and updated by the Board of Directors and staff annually to reflect and guide the evolution of AHC programs.

AHC Vision

Active individuals and groups committed to using their skills, knowledge, culture and values to build a stronger and healthier society.

AHC Mission

AHC works with all people but especially with marginalized and disadvantaged individuals and communities, to build their capacity to address the determinants of wellbeing and prosperity.

Values and Guiding Principles

As an organization, AHC will achieve its vision through steadfast adherence to its core values and principles:

- **Inclusion**: – AHC is committed to inclusion through honoring and embracing diversity with humility and respect, to ignite and increase innovation, drive smart decisions to promote a sustainably equitable society.

- **Collaboration**: - We strive to facilitate collective actions to drive proactive supports and developmental engagements aimed at moving people forward towards achieving impact and excellence together.

- **Participation**:- AHC is committed to foster participation to drive ownership of meaningful engagement and collective accountability

- **Personal Development/Empowerment**: - AHC is dedicated to foster personal development /empowerment through capacity development, and strongly believes that continuous reflection and learning is essential for self-motivation and reaching potential.

- **Innovation and Excellence** –AHC strives for a just and non-judgmental culture that respects people as individuals and paves the way to genuine learning and improvement. We seek to do good things well, to make a positive difference in our own lives and in the lives of those around us.

Strategic Direction

The following are AHC's Goals to achieve its vision over the next 5 years.

Goal 1: AHC maintains its current excellence and growth trajectory, being mindful of gaps that currently exist with respect to certain underserved populations
Description: AHC will sustain the quality of our existing programs while pursuing opportunities to expand our support to other populations facing barriers. We will evaluate all programs to ensure they meet high quality standards and align with our mission and vision.

Actions	1. Keep on the current growth trajectory
	2. Strengthen existing strategic initiatives
	3. Continued geographic growth throughout Alberta by increasing service locations in other parts of province
	4. Responds to the needs of people in other geographic locations by developing additional supports, strengthening relationships with existing funders, while expanding our reach,
	5. Consolidate our existing supports, including building our internal capacities

Goal 2: AHC implements its Community Development (CD) model across all program areas and works with partners to respond to emerging trends in social sector
Description: AHC will continue developing its strategies focused on addressing key Social Determinants of Health/Wellbeing (SDH) adopting an organization wide community development framework, a Theory of Change (ToC) and continuous learning and development

Actions	1. Establish and strengthen the Community Development Unit (CDU)
	2. Develop and implement the CD model across the organization including an evaluation, measurement and learning framework.
	3. Adapt social changes and trends to strengthen responsive programming.
	4. Build more close relationships with community groups to implement community initiatives and provide required support
	5. Create innovative programs based on community needs
	6. Add more support services - such as childminding.
	7. Focus on more innovative and responsive programming.

Goal 3: AHC strengthens people's capacity to best serve their communities through training, engagement and support
Description: AHC will continue to build the strength and diversity of the Board and Staff to ensure they are responsive to the present and future needs of the organization.

Actions	1. Focus on Strategic organizational development

	2. Strengthen existing human resources development practices
	3. Expand opportunities for professional development of AHC team to improve the quality of services
	4. Explore resources to establish human resource development section
	5. Succession planning for Board and staff across all programs

Goal 4: AHC is technologically advanced, delivering responsive programs through webinars, videos, social media and other online learning platforms.

Description: AHC is able to be more responsive and meet the needs of the individuals and communities it serves by providing required supports including online options on sustainable basis

Actions	1. Identify and assess technology needs within AHC programs and operations
	2. Acquire required technology and ensure it is being used in a standardized way
	3. Increased use of technology to deliver programming across all programs

Goal 5: AHC implements an effective communication strategy to ensure we are the partner of choice in Alberta.

Description: AHC continue to develop its brand with the intention to increase the visibility of the organization nationally. We want AHC to be an Alberta household name with a reputation for quality programs and services.

Actions	1. Improve communication strategy and increase the public awareness
	2. Strengthen our existing partnerships
	3. Expand our network of partners and stakeholders and develop new partnerships
	4. Focus on strategic communications at national level
	5. Developing strategic communications using all available medium

Goal 6: AHC builds stable financial capabilities through innovative entrepreneurial initiatives to support new programs

Description: AHC developed its financial capacity and sustainability by diversifying its funding base and focusing on new revenue streams and resources

Actions	1. Fund development planning focused on diverse sources of revenue
	2. Financial capacity building as we expand our services at provincial and national levels
	3. Social Enterprise Development Strategies
	4. Explore opportunities for fee-based programming
	5. Formalize risk assessment and risk management plan

Appendix -A

AHC's SWOT Analysis

The following chart identifies AHC's existing strengths that need to be maintained, built upon or leveraged and AHC's existing weaknesses that need to be remedied or improved.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Diverse client base • Governance/Board: Diverse, highly qualified, dynamic, active, supportive board members • Policies: Good bylaws and required policies in place • Staff: experienced, diverse, passionate, dedicated, well-trained, educated, • Knowledgeable and experienced Executive Director and management team • Volunteers: strong presence and relationships within nonprofit sector, educational institutions and private sector • Social Capital: staff connections in the communities; strong relationships within non-profit sector and public funders • Organizational Experience: over 26 years of experience and expertise in capacity building and community development work, pro-active and expanding its operations (both geographically and in scope) • Agile organizational structure to provide staff with growth opportunities, adaptability to changing trends, ability and experience to respond to emergencies quickly and find necessary resources • Culture: Inclusive, adaptive organizational culture, shared values among staff and AHC as an organization, harmonious working environment • Funding/Financial: stable and long-term funding, relationship development with funders, working towards revenue generating social enterprises, transparent financial management system • Diverse and stable funding base due to high quality programs • Physical Resources: Inclusive work spaces, equipped with all required resources for community and staff use • Programs: Client and outcome focused, participatory approach, responsive, diverse and	• Lack of dedicated HR section • Human resources - finding right people for some roles in Community Development technical supports • Limited ability to obtain additional unrestricted funding • Middle management capacity gaps due to huge growth and expansion of the organization during last five years • Needs strategic communication/marketing for more public awareness and increased visibility

- Innovative programming, Capacity building as opposed to direct service delivery using a unique Community Development model
- Human Resources: Lower staff turnover due to work culture and market-based remuneration and benefits, and stable core
- Partners and stakeholders: Relationship with abroad range of partners and stakeholders in nonprofit sector, educational institutions, and for-profit sector across province and with some national initiatives
- Organization's visibility: positive image and boarder visibility of AHC within Edmonton, across province and nationally

The following chart identifies AHC's potential opportunities and threats. Opportunities will need to be prioritized and optimized, and threats will need to be countered or minimized.

Opportunities	Threats
- Demand: great need for AHC programs and supports due to continuous flow of new people (immigrants) to Canada and Alberta who want to find resources to successfully integrate into their new home - Funding: new government sources for funding, government priorities in line with mandate (e.g. capacity building and community development) - Social Innovation and Finance Strategy: money and support for organizations and entrepreneurs - Social Finance - opportunity to fund programs and overall organization's growth - Social Enterprise options to create new revenue streams - New Partnerships: corporate funders and individuals, non-profit, educational institutions - Growth: motivation amongst staff and board for social enterprise; opportunity to share our existing community building and education institution model to have a larger impact on communities and enhance our visibility - Marketing: using social media to promote ourselves - Opportunity to expand to other parts of Alberta - Maintaining and leveraging our current downtown location as it is strategically located to attract more participants due to easy access	- Changing political environment - Incessant inter-province mobility - Funding from Government might be impacted (fewer newcomers choosing Alberta) - Economic downturn in Alberta - Keeping up with rapid changes in technology could be a challenge - Competition among settlement agencies - Increased online presence also increases security risk - Insufficient resources as compared to community needs may affect program quality - Downturn in the economy- oil and gas price crash, cancellation of Keystone XL pipelines - Change in government funding priorities

Appendix –B

AHC Theory of Change

ACTION FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
People and Communities in Action

AHC THEORY OF CHANGE

AHC Mission
AHC works with all people but especially with marginalized and disadvantaged individuals and communities, to build their capacity to address the determinants of wellbeing and prosperity.

AHC Values and Guiding Principles
Inclusion, collaboration, participation, personal development (empowerment), innovation and excellence.

Objective of Change
Improve social determinants of health by reducing challenges/barriers and fostering strengths/assets.

Problem Statement
Health and wellbeing are negatively affected due to challenges resulting from gaps in one or more of the Social Determinants of Health (SDH).

Target Population

How will the change happen?

Organizational Strategies
The AHC team will utilize the following strategies to achieve its outcomes:

OUTREACH

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

CAPACITY BUILDING

STAKEHOLDER INTERACTIONS

PATHFINDING

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

ADVOCACY

What will change look like?

#1
People and communities are able to access and afford resources for a healthy and active life.

#2
Regional and local communities will have more robust cross-sector capacity and proactively engage in measures to address all forms of inequalities affecting health and wellbeing, ensuring equality of opportunities & outcomes for all.

#3
People have a wider social network, a sense of belonging and meaningful participation in the community.

What will happen after anticipated changes?

AHC Impact
An inclusive society with engaged individuals and communities, full participation, and improved quality of life.

AHC Vision
Active individuals and groups committed to using their skills, knowledge, culture and values to build a stronger and healthier society.