



Lethbridge Family Services
Since 1910



Strategic Direction

2021-2024



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A connected and inclusive community where people thrive.

Lethbridge Family Services is a highly-accredited, charitable human services organization that improves the well-being and quality of life for individuals and families in Southwestern Alberta.

Respect - Integrity - Compassion

Land Acknowledgement

Located on the traditional lands of the Blackfoot Confederacy, Lethbridge Family Services is committed to honouring the land from a place of knowing. We honour the Siksikaitsitapi as both the traditional and current Land Keepers of this area, and we welcome all First Nations, Métis, Inuit and non-Indigenous peoples who call Blackfoot territory their home.



who we are

From our beginnings as the Lethbridge Nursing Mission in 1910, Lethbridge Family Services today is the largest non-profit social service and health care organization in the city. Lethbridge Family Services acknowledges the responsibility to bring professional quality services and best practices to those people who we serve. We compassionately assist individuals and families to improve their well-being and offer support to facilitate human potential, choice, and independence.

Today, Lethbridge Family Services has approximately 380 employees, is Lethbridge's 10th largest employer, and stewards an annual budget of over \$21 million. We have the privilege of serving over 8,100 individuals in the community each year.

Lethbridge Family Services provides services through our core departments of Counselling, Outreach & Education Services, DaCapo Disability Services, Home Services and Immigrant Services. The administrative support functions of Advancement & Communications, Business Development, Finance & IT, and Human Resources work with these core departments to support their programming needs.

The families and individuals whom we serve are unique, dynamic and valued. It is a pleasure to be a part of their stories and they enrich our organization with their energy and resilience. To learn more about our clients' achievements, we invite you to read the client stories featured in our Annual Report!



1910
Official Anniversary date of Organization

1940
Lethbridge Nursing mission expands to include Mental Guidance Clinics

1973
Moves towards more counselling and community development

1920
Lethbridge Nursing mission saw impressive growth and expanded

1967
Merge with Catholic Family Services creates first Lethbridge Family Services

1982
The Suicide Prevention and Postvention Program is added in SW Alberta

1986
DaCapo program launched for developmental disability or head injury

1983
Permanently becomes the Lethbridge Family Services

1987
Sexual Assault Crisis Program officially launched with 24h crisis line



what we do

DaCapo Disability Services

DaCapo is an Italian “musical” term that means to “repeat from the beginning.” Our professional Community Disability Support workers assist children and adults with disabilities (developmental, FASD and brain injury) to develop skills and relationships that enhance their well-being, independence, and connectivity to the community.

Immigrant Services

We ensure that regardless of language or cultural barriers, people who arrive in Canada are able to use their existing skills, learn new ones, and participate actively in all aspects of Canadian life. Our certified Settlement Practitioners provide a welcoming environment where newcomers and their families can make Lethbridge their home. We offer programs and services in more than 50 languages.

Home Services

Our Certified Health Care Aides, and supportive RN's and LPN's provide in-home support to enable over 2,000 seniors, individuals with physical disabilities, and the acute, chronically and/or terminally ill each year to remain in their preferred living environment for as long as possible.

We assist individuals and families to improve their well-being and offer support to facilitate human potential, choice, and independence.

Counselling, Outreach & Education Services

Our team of registered professional counsellors and qualified staff provide counselling and psycho-educational services to those affected by family violence, sexual assault, grief and loss, transitional issues and a range of other health and wellness concerns. We provide a supportive and welcoming environment that invites nourishing, transformational experiences.

1988
LFS presents first “Friend of the Family” award on Sept 8

1996
Four Agency programs merged to create the Counselling and Education Department

2005
Domestic Violence program expanded

1995
Inaugural Angel Tree Christmas campaign helps over 150 children

2000
Immigrant Services was established to provide settlement services for immigrants and refugees

2008
Resettlement Assistance Program is added to Immigrant Services

2016
Immigrant Services has a surge in providing direct service to govt assisted refugees

2015
The Garden for Growth project which provides accessible green space is finished

2020
COVID-19 pandemic leads LFS to offer online services

the 2021-2024 strategic plan

Early in 2021, LFS enlisted staff, funders, volunteers and community members to help us envision the future. Through focus groups, conversations, surveys and interviews we shared ideas and stories, experiences and challenges, and ultimately wrote our plan for the future into our strategic plan.

LFS would like to thank members of the LFS Strategic Planning Sub-Committee:

Ginger Arthur Ciesla
Central Administration

Denise Bryant
Home Services

Laura Fast
Finance

Andrea Hlady
Business Development

Brody Prete
Central Administration

Tribikram Rizal
Immigrant Services

Patrick Roach
Human Resources

Shannon Ryant
DaCapo Disability Services

John Thompson
Counselling, Outreach & Education

Members of the Board of Directors Strategic Planning Sub-Committee were integral to the planning:

Leslie Gardner
Director, Consultant in program evaluation and research

Daren Heyland
Director, Physician and University Professor

Wendy Kalkan
Board Chair, Consultant

Marion McEntee
Director, Registered Nurse

Sandra Mintz
CEO, Lethbridge Family Services

Richard Perlow
Board Vice Chair, University Professor

Fergus Raphael
Director, President of Tangle Media Inc.

LFS' Senior Leadership Team worked together to discuss what they wanted for the future of the organization:

Natalie Amyotte
Director, HR, Privacy

Tracey Hanson
Director, Home Services

Andrea Hlady
Director, Business Development

Dianne Kotkas
Director, DaCapo

Lisa Lewis
Director, Counselling, Outreach & Education

Sandra Mintz
CEO

Sonny Zgurski
Director, Finance & Administration

our critical success factors

Recognizing that there are key attributes that Lethbridge Family Services must sustain, we have identified the following critical success factors directly related to achieving our objectives.





strategic analysis

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

Integral to the strategic plan is an analysis of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). This is an occasion as an organization to examine what factors, both internal and external, are currently impacting our work. Through the work of the LFS Strategic Plan sub-committee hosting 16 focus groups, 55 individuals representing all departments participated and provided input. These staff members took the time to share their reflections about the Strengths and Weaknesses of the organization, in addition to the feedback provided through stakeholder surveys in LFS' 2020 re-accreditation through the Council on Accreditation for Services for Children and Families.

Additionally, the voices of those we serve significantly influenced our strategic plan. Each department formally surveys their clients for opinions and level of satisfaction. This constant feedback helps in achieving their immediate service goals, and aids our organization in longer term planning.

It is also vital to gather information from our external environment to determine what Opportunities and Threats we need to consider to ensure our impact in the community is significant. A note of appreciation is extended to the funders, volunteers, clients, and community members who provided valuable insights and helped shape our strategic priorities. Each distinct department benefits from understanding the current directives of municipal, provincial, and federal governments. We also draw on local and regional research and the publications of professional organizations to provide additional information to determine our opportunities and threats.

Situational Analysis

Further to the SWOT analysis a Situational Analysis is conducted to understand how the current climate impacts Lethbridge Family Services. It allows for a complete understanding of our current environment and aids in future forecasting.





Political Environment

Lethbridge Family Services stewards public funds from all three levels of government; municipal, provincial, and federal. We value our relationships with these funders and operate with transparency and timely communication. It is important to be knowledgeable and proactive regarding our relationships with public officials.

The political environment will experience disruption and there will potentially be policy change during this strategic plan cycle as elections will be held at all three levels of government. Locally there will be municipal elections in October 2021. The next provincial fixed election is slated between March to May 2023, and federally an election will take place September 2021. During active campaigning, Lethbridge Family Services takes time to understand each election platform. It is also important to disseminate information to help both staff and clients understand their democratic rights. When the elections results are decided, it is important to prioritize our relationships with each new elected official and provide each representative with information about the services and impact that Lethbridge Family Services has in the community.

Currently, Alberta is being governed by the United Conservative Party (April 2019). The United Conservative Party (UCP) provincial election platform included a section dedicated to “Harnessing the Power of Civil Society”

(pages 72-73). [1] This section included policy changes that, at the time, provided some directives for the nonprofit sector.

The UCP created the Premier's Council on Charity and Civil Society. The Council provides independent advice to government on its relationship with civil society organizations to help these organizations address pressing social issues across Alberta. The Council's main responsibilities include: engaging civil society leaders to explore how civil society organizations can be empowered, consultations with civil society organizations on how the government can build their capacity, advising the government on how it impacts and influences civil society organizations and how to support social enterprises, and developing a framework for the government's partnership with civil society.

The Council's first task was advising on civil society's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council will continue to offer advice on how the province can help at-risk Albertans, and support organizations that work with these individuals. [2]

LFS has had significant success with our positive relationships with all levels of governments resulting in special consultations on issues of the day.



When times are tough and Alberta faces economic challenges, LFS has historically risen to the occasion and helped those in need.



Economic Environment

The global economy is slowly emerging from one of the worst downturns in history, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Countries are in various stages of reopening or tightening public health measures in response to vaccine administration and infection rates. Specific to Alberta, increased vaccine uptake is expected to help the economy gain momentum. There may still exist some public health measures which will limit the recovery in areas such as travel and tourism.

Alberta's financial situation has become bleak over the past years with the deteriorating oil and gas industry. Budget 2021-22 was tabled by the Government of Alberta on February 25, 2021. Since the UCP government's first budget in 2019, it has emphasized spending cuts and an urgency to balance the budget. Because of the detrimental effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the provincial government indicated that balancing the budget was not a priority for the province this year. However, many programs that affect the nonprofit sector have seen a decline in funding in the past and are expected to continue to see budget cuts in future years. Some funding increases are the result of readjusting, shifting, and reducing funds for other programs. The government has a plan to “deliver services more efficiently” while supporting one of their three fiscal anchors to bring “spending in Alberta in line with other comparator provinces.” [3]

The government projects a total of \$18.2 billion in deficits and \$98 billion in taxpayer-supported debt at the end of 2020-21. The fiscal plan estimates \$57 billion in spending in 2020-21, with a minimum of \$1.1 billion allocated to COVID-19 recovery. [4]

The provincial government's Fiscal Plan for 2021 includes recurring themes of economic recovery, economic growth, and job creation. Although the nonprofit sector has a large role to play in recovery, including economic recovery, it remains unmentioned in the Budget 2021 Fiscal Plan. The nonprofit sector employs more than 450,000 full-time and part-time employees and contributes over \$10 billion in GDP to Alberta's economy. [5]

More cuts to major programs will occur through 2021-22, including:

- Community Facility Enhancement Program (CFEP): The program's budget is \$18.5 million to provide financial assistance for the purchase, construction, renovation, or improvement of public-use community



facilities such as sports, cultural, recreational, or other facilities. As of 2019, CFEP continues to decline, down 15% from 2020 forecast.

- Community Initiatives Program (CIP): The program, which funds community groups, is anticipated to receive \$37.1 million for 2021-22. The program increased its budget for COVID-19-related programs in 2020, although the budget for 2021 shows a decrease of \$4.8 million from forecasted spending in 2020.
- Other Initiatives Program (OIP): This program provides funding for community-based projects not covered by other Community Grants funding streams. The OIP's budget for this year is \$2 million and has gradually decreased over the last two years from forecasted spending in 2020. [6]

However, the Government of Alberta is strongly committed to growing the economy and supports our ability to be successful. The recent Alberta's Recovery Plan focuses on building, diversifying and creating jobs. There is a focus on new Albertans to bring an entrepreneurial drive to start new businesses and skills that help employers address labour shortages and revitalize rural communities. [7]

Within the programming at Lethbridge Family Services, DaCapo Disabilities Services and Counselling, Outreach & Education are areas to closely monitor as they remain vulnerable to funding decreases.

Specific to DaCapo, the Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) program must evaluate how they provide services and review the complex needs designation. The Cross Ministerial Committee of the Government of Alberta will need to determine which Ministry (e.g., Justice, Mental Health) should serve complex needs individuals.

In 2020-2021, client feedback surveys indicated that 95% of respondents rated their client experience as 'very good to excellent'.

PDD is currently the default department and complex needs individuals being served in community settings require significant funding. These individuals may need more secure settings for safety purposes. [8]

People with developmental disabilities sometimes have mental health conditions, behavioural issues or complex medical needs. Service providers, Government of Alberta staff and other organizations report there are significant gaps in addressing these complex service needs within the existing PDD structure. [9]

It is also important to be aware of changes to counselling services and mental health supports. The Government of Alberta recently signed contracts with international service providers for increased support during the pandemic. It has not been determined whether funds will continue to support these international firms in the future. [10]

Changes to the economic environment are inevitable. However, Lethbridge Family Services is well-positioned to mitigate changes to funding structures by pursuing new sources of revenue and maximizing our resources. Client care and programming remain our priority throughout an evolving financial landscape.



Social Environment

Lethbridge Family Services' operates in an area that continues to attract people who want to reside and work here. The City of Lethbridge continues to grow in size, although 2020 was the lowest annual population increase in recent years most likely attributed to slow migration and travel restrictions brought on by the pandemic. In 2020, the population of Lethbridge was 101,324 persons. [11]

Lethbridge Family Services is also aware that an opioid crisis is looming in our region. In 2018, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responded to opioid related calls in Lethbridge at five times the provincial average; 491 per 100,000 person years compared to Alberta at 98 per 100,000 person years. Person years is a unit of measurement that accounts for number of people tracked and the amount of observation time. [12]

Per capita, Lethbridge continues to have a much higher rate of drug overdose deaths than the rest of Alberta. According to Alberta Health Services the rate in Lethbridge was more than double the province at 83.9 deaths per 100,000 persons. [13]

Lethbridge recently experienced its highest unemployment rate at 7.8%. The change in labour market needs due to COVID-19 impacted the job market and there were shifts in certain industries. To note, there were significant gains in Health Care and Social Assistance. Demand in these areas grew by 26.1% from 2019 to 2020, caused in large part by the onset of the pandemic. [14] Health care is projected to continue to have the highest labour increases in the market. [15]

Technological Environment

The COVID-19 pandemic changed how services were delivered to the people in our community. Lethbridge Family Services could not suspend operations and needed to rapidly transition to full online platforms and develop and modify in-person services. Although we anticipate a need to return to in-person services, we will continue to keep leveraging many of the efficiencies and improvements made through the augmented use of technology.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need to advocate for increased technology and technology training for clients. According to research initiated by a nonprofit that supports advancing technology in nonprofit organizations, NTEN, the greatest technology needs for nonprofits throughout the COVID-19 crisis are the following: reliable internet access, hardware (including laptops, mobile devices, connectivity), training resources, and flexible funding for reallocation according to needs. [16]



The pandemic highlighted the need to advocate for increased technology and technology training for clients.

Review of Service Population Demographics

Lethbridge Family Services serves individuals and families not only in the city of Lethbridge but also those living in the surrounding areas. Our service area reaches 28 communities surrounding the city that exist within the southwest region of the province.

According to the Government of Alberta, Regional Dashboard, there is a population of 164,427 people in the city and the region surrounding Lethbridge. The life expectancy is 80.4 years. Our Indigenous population includes 13,245 people, or 8.41%, and 8.63% of the population is a visible minority. This area has an unemployment rate of 6.81%. It is a large area covering 34,457 square kilometers and is an agriculture based region with 4,386 farms in operation. [17]

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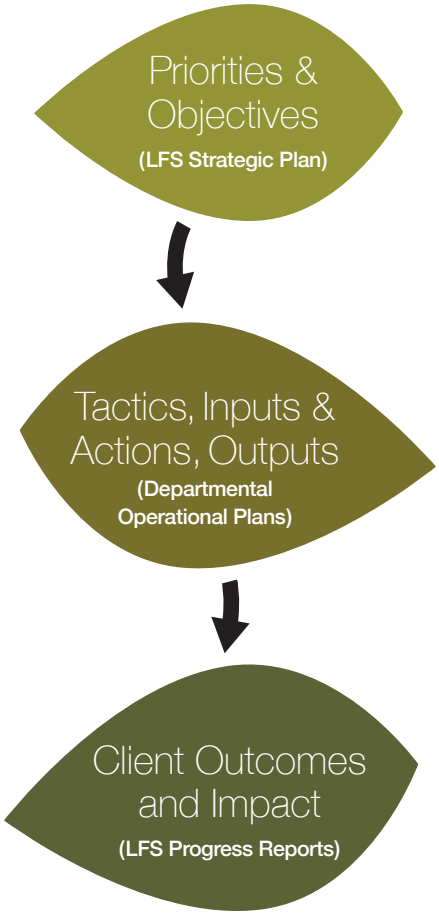
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our strategic priorities

Drawing on our expertise, values, history and capacity, and with the input from the community our work over the next four years will be guided by three strategic priorities:



Priority 1: Drive Engagement

Lethbridge Family Services will intentionally nurture current relations and create new connections to support our vision.

What we believe - Our staff are our greatest asset. We want everyone to feel valued, respected, and appreciated. We will keep them safe. Our staff and clients have a voice and are heard. Strong, caring relationships with our community members will strengthen our work and lift each other up. We will strive to better understand each other's diverse needs and perspectives.

We will be inspired through three distinct objectives:

- Foster an environment of support through authentic leadership, celebration of diversity, and commitment to employee and client satisfaction.
- Encourage a culture of philanthropy that grows commitment and community support for the work we do.
- Be responsive in our community through strong partnerships, intentional outreach, and positive impact.



Priority 2: Be Leaders

Lethbridge Family Services will lead with integrity and a clear vision to guide the community and share our expertise.

What we believe - There is a lot of responsibility in our work. It does not remain static and the needs and trends in our community are constantly changing. We are committed to learning from others and contributing to the knowledge and research of our sectors and consistently searching for ways to deepen our impact.

We will realize this commitment through these objectives:

- Pursue accreditation and certification with rigorous and distinguished professional bodies and exceed standards for performance and quality improvement, strong client outcomes, service delivery, and health & safety.
- Grow our relational capacity with others to achieve more together.
- Leverage and facilitate community collaborations to motivate positive social change.

Priority 3: Meet the Future

Lethbridge Family Services will anticipate new trends & challenges and maximize resources to affect transformational change.

What we believe - We steward many resources. We understand the value and the responsibility of having these resources and aim to maximize these benefits for our clients. We will embrace opportunities to listen, learn and stand with our partners on matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We are committed to meeting the future through these unique objectives:

- Integrate our technology, databases, and information sharing using cutting-edge technology to increase our reach and impact.
- Communicate our collective stories to enable a shared understanding of the work and to empower staff, clients and community.
- Maximize the use of our shared spaces to support growth and innovation.





CEO message



I am so grateful to all staff and stakeholders who helped shape this Strategic Plan to lead our organization forward. It will be an exciting journey meeting our objectives and keeping our strategic priorities in front of us to guide the organization. Before this plan was created, we had the chance to reflect on our past accomplishments completed through the prior 2017-2020 strategic plan. We transform lives each day; our staff grows and excels, our clients are supported and thrive, and our organization evolves to help build a stronger community. We were excited to move into this next cycle of strategic planning knowing our biggest asset, the work family of Lethbridge Family Services, was also ready to meet the future and lead the community.

Just three months into 2020, as we were in our final year of our last Strategic Plan, we were tested by a world-wide and deadly pandemic that caused so many in our communities to face hardship and uncertainty on top of concerns for the health and well-being of loved ones. Our employees stood up to the challenge and we continued to serve the over 8,000 individuals and families who needed us more than ever. Some services moved online, programming and activities changed to adapt to restrictions, and staff adapted to new methods of working with each other. While dealing with the stresses brought on by COVID-19 it was important that we look after the well-being of our employees. We provided enhanced care access to health advice and social supports, and worked individually with many staff members to ensure they could care for their loved ones through an ever-changing climate. It makes me proud that in such a challenging year our employees remained safe and supported.

As we chart a course for our future in this Strategic Plan, we are profoundly aware of the many traumas being experienced by so many; the imperative to heal, and build a bright future as we go forward together.

Engage. Empower. Evolve.

It is my honor and privilege to work with you on meeting the future together!

Sandra Mintz
Chief Executive Officer
Lethbridge Family Services





Lethbridge Family Services 

Since 1910

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