



# Calgary Alternative Support Services Inc.

## 2021 – 2022 Strategic Plan

Prepared by the CASS Senior Leadership Team:

Mylaine Tsaprailis, Chief Executive Officer  
Tracey Reece, Executive Director  
Stacy Schikowsky, Executive Director  
Radost Alexandrov, Director; Finance  
Mickey Ferguson, Director; CAPSH  
Kyle Maclean, Director; Operations



## Table of Contents

Calgary Alternative Support Services Overview:.....	3
Vision.....	3
Mission.....	3
Mandate.....	3
CASS Values.....	3
Long Term Goals.....	4
Position the Agency for Long-Term Growth and Viability.....	4
To be the Premiere Human Services Agency in Calgary.....	4
Stakeholder Engagement Summary.....	5
SWOT Analysis.....	6
Strengths.....	6
Weaknesses.....	6
Opportunities.....	7
Threats.....	7
Strategies to Use Strengths to Overcome Weaknesses.....	7
Strategies to use Strengths to Take Advantage of Opportunities.....	8
Other Ideas.....	8
Strategic Plan Summary.....	9
Enhance organizational health and safety.....	10
Development of a strategy to create an agency-wide trauma informed culture.....	10
Enhance agency business continuity and resiliency.....	10
Build on proactive response to Covid-19 pandemic.....	11



## CASS

### Calgary Alternative Support Services Overview:

Calgary Alternative Support Services, (CASS) started in 1988 to address the segregation, isolation and limited opportunities available to people with disabilities. CASS enlists and develops human services professionals to support people with disabilities to discover and contribute their unique strengths and talents. Our work is about making community connections. Whether it's a finding a place to live, getting a job, or connecting with opportunities for participation and learning, CASS serves people and helps to make the community accessible to everyone. Our commitment to the people we serve is to help them overcome the barriers which interfere with inclusion. Our commitment to the Calgary Region is to help communities enlist the participation, diversity and human contributions needed for success.

Through the opportunities and connections that CASS facilitates, citizen advocacy for diversity and inclusion is inspired. This is how CASS and the people we serve strengthen community.

*We think community engagement means people working collaboratively, through inspired action and learning, to create and realize bold visions for their common future.*

*As community engagement increases, citizens move from being passive to taking active leadership roles. As leaders, citizens can have a powerful influence and effect on the life of their communities.*

–Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement

People with disabilities experience marginalization, stigma, poverty and limited perceived societal value. CASS works toward decreasing marginalization and increasing the inclusion and value of our clientele.

### Vision

Diverse and inclusive communities where all members are engaged and valued.

### Mission

CASS facilitates connections and opportunities that promote personal development and inclusive communities.

### Mandate

CASS is committed to building diverse and inclusive communities. CASS provides person-centered supports to youth and adults with disabilities or barriers. We support people to have greater overall well-being through housing, employment, life skills development, community involvement as well as opportunities to develop social networks and engage in valued roles in their communities.

### CASS Values

- Community Development
- Self-determination
- Partnership and Collaboration
- Fun
- Authenticity
- Social Inclusion
- Resiliency
- Courage
- Continuous Learning and Development
- Human Rights
- Safety



## Long Term Goals

Agency annual strategic plans and objectives are developed in part based on their alignment with the agency's established long-term goals in order to ensure that progress towards those goals is always being made.

### Position the Agency for Long-Term Growth and Viability

Action items and ideas to advance progress towards this objective:

- Establish stability and diversity of funding
- Establish and maintain an excellent reputation with all stakeholders (clients, staff and prospective staff, funders, community partners)
- Develop robust admin and IT infrastructure
- Develop and maintain robust documentation of all critical tasks
- Establish and maintain excellent quality of service
- Explore pursuit of CET Level 2 accreditation
- Maintain excellent quality of staff (improved recruitment and retention strategy, mentoring, and professional development opportunities)
- Robust succession planning
- Having appropriate physical space that meets our needs, i.e. space that meets programming needs, is accessible, cost effective, and provides room for growth
- Engage in ongoing risk mitigation (business continuity and emergency response planning, hazard assessment and control, improved understanding of potential risks, legal compliance etc.)
- Explore forming a partnership with a society or incorporating a society to operate in partnership with)
- Exploration and development of social enterprise(s)
- Exploration and development of alternative income streams including fee for service ex:
  - Accessibility audits
  - Diversity and inclusion consulting
  - Provision of training to external parties
- Explore pursuit of CET Level 2 accreditation in order to better position the agency to support individuals with complex needs

### To be the Premiere Human Services Agency in Calgary

*(i.e. Be the first choice for clients, staff and prospective staff, funders, community partners)*

Action items and ideas to advance progress towards this objective:

- Establish and maintain an excellent reputation with all stakeholders and potential partners
- Establish and maintain excellent quality of service
- Demonstrate integrity for all stakeholders
- Provide superior total compensation (consider vacation time, benefits, sick days, retirement plans etc.)
- Provide high quality reporting for funders, program managers, senior leadership
- Pursue meaningful accreditation to create new opportunities



- Consider CET Level 2
- Being current, relevant, timely (best practices, industry trends etc.)
- Maintain an ongoing commitment to professional development and growth
- Being a more trauma informed organization
- Maintaining fair and consistent application of policies and practices throughout the agency

## Stakeholder Engagement Summary

1. CASS conducted an anonymous Employee Engagement Survey in February of 2021 with 70 Employee Respondents from all program areas and staff types representing approximately 30% of the total employee population. The CASS Senior Leadership Team has familiarized themselves with the results of this survey and used the results to help inform the development of the 2020-2021 Strategic Plan through the identification of areas of strength and where the agency has opportunity to improve.
2. CASS Human Resources conducts anonymous exit interviews with staff that resign or change positions within the agency in order to solicit feedback about their experiences. HR aggregates and summarizes those exit interviews and provides quarterly reports to the CASS Senior Leadership Team for review.
3. CASS maintains a CASS Advisory Committee comprised of individuals served by CASS. Building self-advocacy skills and creating a platform for 'voices of lived experience' to be formally heard within CASS is the intent behind this group, in addition, the agency benefits as a result of the valuable feedback the committee provides across a range of CASS operations and initiatives.
4. CASS Program areas engage in ongoing client satisfaction surveys which are used by program management and the CASS Senior Leadership Team to determine agency efficacy at meeting client needs and goals and help inform the agency as to its overall quality of service.

The above four engagement opportunities / mechanisms are being reported on and utilized within this strategic plan. Other ongoing engagement mechanisms not formally addressed within this strategic plan include:

- Service evaluation is provided by employers connected to CASS' supported employment program CAES.
- Funders provide direct feedback to CASS Community Support Coordinators and Senior Leadership Team members intermittently throughout the year.
- Guardians, relatives and other involved agencies provide feedback to CASS staff on an ongoing basis. This is often shared with Directors and plays a role in informing our work.
- CASS social media platforms capture stakeholder feedback and commentary about CASS on an ongoing basis. Members of the CASS Communications Committee review and share this information with CASS Senior Leadership on an ongoing basis.



CASS

## SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reputation with:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Funders</li> <li>○ Staff</li> <li>○ Clients</li> <li>○ Other Agencies</li> <li>○ Community Partners</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Engaged Owners and Leaders (hands on), responsive, flexible, resilient</li> <li>• Engaged and Dedicated Staff</li> <li>• Strong Admin Team</li> <li>• Improving Workflow and Processes</li> <li>• Improved Engagement with Satellite Programs</li> <li>• Innovative and Creative</li> <li>• Diverse Staff Population</li> <li>• Admin and IT Infrastructure (improving)</li> <li>• Meaningful Community Partnerships and Collaborations</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Minimal Hierarchy (flat)</li> <li>• Commitment to invest in IT Infrastructure</li> <li>• Good Benefits package</li> <li>• Strong Pandemic Plan and safety protocols</li> <li>• Well trained staff with ongoing professional development</li> <li>• CET Complex Needs designation achieved</li> <li>• Participation in external groups (ex: Service Provider Council, Calgary Workforce Council, Employment First Network etc.)</li> <li>• Proficiency in the application of the Canada Alberta Job Grant</li> <li>• Diversity of funding sources and flexibility in budget allocation</li> <li>• Commitment to breaking down silos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Succession Planning/Backup in Admin (improving)</li> <li>• Robust Recruitment Strategy (attraction and hiring of <u>qualified</u> staff)</li> <li>• Silos (improving)</li> <li>• Coordinated/Consistent tracking of client data across program areas (lack thereof)</li> <li>• Lack of well-defined and tracked performance metrics</li> <li>• Growth Management (improving)</li> <li>• Multiple Funding/Accrediting bodies creates inherent complexity and promotes silos</li> <li>• Communication as identified by some (primarily) frontline staff</li> <li>• Appraisals/Evaluations/Feedback</li> <li>• Compensation (primarily wages) – total compensation is not bad</li> <li>• Limited progression opportunities - due in part to flat hierarchy (improving)</li> <li>• Perception of inconsistency and unfairness</li> </ul>



## CASS

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Funding Opportunities               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Addictions</li> <li>○ Homelessness</li> <li>○ FASD</li> <li>○ Fee for service (consulting, training etc.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• New Community Partnerships &amp; Collaborations</li> <li>• New Inter-Agency Partnerships &amp; Collaborations</li> <li>• New Intra-Agency Collaborations across program areas</li> <li>• Enhancement of existing funding (program growth)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Complex Needs designation (new PDD clients must be critical/urgent)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• New and innovative solutions to existing problems</li> <li>• Professional Development (desire expressed by staff)</li> <li>• ADWA Membership</li> <li>• Recruitment of great staff               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ practicums</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss or reduction of existing funding</li> <li>• Natural Disasters (pandemic etc.)</li> <li>• Lack of disclosure re: clients from funders/referring parties</li> <li>• Reduced number of qualified staff to hire (shrinking post-secondary programs)</li> <li>• Changing Client Demographics               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Change in addictions (increasing intensity/consequence)</li> <li>○ Aging existing population</li> <li>○ Increasing complexity</li> <li>○ Clients coming into service are increasingly younger</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Political changes and uncertainty</li> <li>• Changing client support needs as a result of cuts to external services ex:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ AISH</li> <li>○ Access Calgary</li> <li>○ Low-income bus pass</li> <li>○ DOAP Team, Etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Deteriorating staff mental health due to pandemic (exacerbation of existing problem)</li> </ul>

### Strategies to Use Strengths to Overcome Weaknesses

The following represent ideas and possible actions items to take advantage of our identified strengths to overcome our identified weaknesses.

- Leverage CASS' strong admin team, improving infrastructure and creativity to improve growth management capacity
- Leverage CASS' strong admin team and improving infrastructure to address identified need to improve admin team succession planning and resiliency
- Use CASS' strong engaged leadership to overcome entrenched silos
- Take advantage of CASS' positive reputation, strong admin team, and dedicated staff to develop and implement a robust staff recruitment strategy
- Use CASS' strong leadership and innovation to address lack of coordinated/consistent tracking of client data across program areas
- Use CASS' strong engaged leadership, dedicated staff, and improving IT infrastructure to develop and track more meaningful performance metrics (ex: turn over rates, hazard reports, staff incident reports etc.)



## CASS

- Use CASS' improving admin team and IT infrastructure to overcome inherent complexity resulting from multiple funders and accrediting bodies
- Use CASS' strong engaged leadership and improving workflow and processes to address weakness in present appraisal/evaluation/feedback mechanisms
- Use CASS' strength in innovation and creativity to identify new ways to improve total compensation given the limited opportunity to improve wages
- Leverage CASS' strong reputation with community partners to establish sector wage grid to address weak compensation by create awareness of how we compare favourably in the sector
- Take advantage of CASS' strong reputation with funders and strength in innovation to address limited job progression opportunities by creating new team lead and middle management positions via growth

### Strategies to use Strengths to Take Advantage of Opportunities

The following represent ideas and possible actions items to leverage identified areas of strength to take advantage of identified weaknesses.

- Take advantage of good reputation, diverse and well-trained staff, and admin infrastructure to pursue new funding opportunities and growth of existing contracts
- Leverage participation in external groups (ex: Service Provider Council, Calgary Workforce Council, Employment First Network etc.) to pursue new community partnerships & collaborations
- Use good reputation in the sector as an employer of choice to support recruitment efforts
- Leverage engaged, flexible, responsive Senior Leadership Team to pursue and develop new and innovative solutions to existing problems
- Use commitment to invest in IT Infrastructure to pursue and develop new and innovative solutions to existing problems
- Apply proficiency in the application of the Canada Alberta Job Grant to pursue Professional Development (which is one of the ways that the agency can support staff outside of wages). This also saves the agency funding to be allocated in other ways.
- Make use of diversity of funding sources and flexibility in budget allocation to pursue purchasing of ADWA Membership
- Use commitment to breaking down silos to pursue New opportunities for Intra-Agency Partnerships & Collaborations

### Other Ideas

- Consider purchasing ADWA memberships for staff to help provide them with a stronger voice.
- Consider purchasing app subscription for staff to support mental health and wellbeing





## Strategic Plan Summary

The strategic plan from the previous fiscal year (2020-2021) is largely being carried forward in the new 2021-2022 strategic plan.

The sudden onset of the Corona virus pandemic in March of 2020 required the CASS Senior Leadership Team to shift our strategic focus to respond to that challenge. As a result of some good strategy and a little bit of luck, the 2020-2021 Strategic Plan was already heavily focused on business continuity and improving the agency's infrastructure, responsiveness, and overall resiliency. Consequently, the agency did still manage to achieve significant progress towards last year's objectives.

All strategic objectives from last year's strategic plan are being carried forward in the 2021-2022 strategic plan.

All strategic objectives carried forward from last year have had their corresponding action items and ideas reviewed and updated.

A new strategic objective to "Build on proactive response to Covid-19 pandemic" was added to better track the work that was done on that front in the 2020-2021 fiscal year and also in recognition of the fact that we expect to be contending with the corona virus pandemic for at least the majority of the 2021-2022 fiscal year and possibly beyond.

In the table below detailing strategic objectives for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

- Action items/ideas that have already been achieved in the 2020-2021 fiscal year have been identified with a '✔' symbol.
- Action items/ideas that are already in progress, as of the development of the current plan have been identified with a '🔄' symbol.



	Strategic Objective	Desired Outcomes	Timeline	PMR*	Actions/Ideas
1.	<b>Enhance organizational health and safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risks and hazards are more fully understood</li> <li>Mitigation and prevention strategies are enhanced and address all identified risks and hazards</li> <li>Legal compliance is maintained</li> <li>Staff and clients are safer and healthier</li> <li>Agency liability is reduced</li> </ul>	April 2022	Executive Director (Tracey Reece) and Health & Safety Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete safety inspections of all CASS worksites and respond accordingly to address areas of concern (Main Office, Langin Place, Stepping Stone Manor, CCLA, OSRs) 🔄</li> <li>Complete Occupational Health and Safety hazard assessments and controls ✓</li> <li>Develop an employee safety handbook inclusive of an agency workplace violence and harassment plan and fire safety plan</li> <li>Update Agency Health and Safety Training 🔄</li> <li>Ensure adequate evacuation plans exist for all CASS worksites (CASS Main Office, Langin Place, Stepping Stone Manor, CCLA, OSRs) ✓</li> <li>Ensure adequate training for H&amp;S committee members and review of Terms of Reference 🔄</li> <li>Revamp H&amp;S Committee membership and structure to meet new understanding of legislated requirements ✓</li> <li>Review Health and Safety Forms and update as required</li> <li>Introduce Mandatory Infection Prevention and Control Training ✓</li> <li>Introduce Workplace Violence and Harassment Training ✓</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Development of a strategy to create an agency-wide trauma informed culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SLT is well versed in Trauma Informed Care and how to achieve a Trauma Informed culture at CASS</li> <li>The SLT has a well-developed and actionable plan to achieve an agency-wide Trauma Informed Culture and informs all aspects of the work that we do</li> </ul>	April 2022	Chief Executive Officer (Mylaine Tsaprailis) and SLT**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate best practices around trauma informed culture and evaluate how they might be applied to CASS 🔄</li> <li>Identify current practice within the agency that is aligned with trauma informed culture 🔄</li> <li>Develop an actionable plan to move further along the trauma informed continuum 🔄</li> <li>Senior Leadership to seek out and complete additional training on Trauma Informed Care 🔄</li> <li>Introduce agency-wide mandatory training on Trauma Informed Care and Harm Reduction ✓</li> <li>SLT to Read “A Little Book About Trauma Informed Workplaces by CTRI and The Culture Question</li> <li>Provide Psychological Safety in the Workplace training to Psych H&amp;S Committee 🔄</li> </ul>
3.	<b>Enhance agency business continuity and resiliency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CASS’s admin and IT infrastructure is enhanced and better promotes business continuity and resiliency through increased integration, efficacy and utilization of cloud-based services</li> <li>All tasks critical to agency operations are fully understood, documented and have backups identified</li> <li>The agency Business Continuity Plan is updated and improved upon</li> <li>Ideas and plans for the development of additional revenue streams are established</li> </ul>	April 2022	Director of Operations (Kyle Maclean) and SLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the Sparkrock HR/Payroll module including change management &amp; leveraging the new tool 🔄</li> <li>Identification and documentation of critical tasks 🔄</li> <li>Review and update the CASS Business Continuity and Emergency Response Plan (BCERP) 🔄</li> <li>Update plan to address the threat of a Pandemic as a companion document to the BCERP ✓</li> <li>Explore merit of social enterprise and possible options</li> <li>Explore fee for service opportunities</li> <li>Pursue new funding streams 🔄</li> <li>Pursue the growth of existing funding streams 🔄</li> <li>Pursue grants to enhance infrastructure or address short term funding needs 🔄</li> </ul>



4.	<p><b>Build on proactive response to Covid-19 pandemic</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigation of risk</li> <li>• Physical and mental health, and safety of clients and staff is maintained and enhanced</li> <li>• Service delivery is maintained</li> <li>• Facilitate and expedite a 'return to normal'</li> <li>• Enhanced agency resiliency</li> <li>• Maintenance of strong relationships with funders</li> </ul>	April 2022	CASS SLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated pandemic plan ☑</li> <li>• Created CASS Main Office Codi-19 Safety Protocols document ☑</li> <li>• Overnight Staffed Residence protocols (sanitization, continuous masking etc.) developed ☑</li> <li>• Signage encouraging best practices posted ☑</li> <li>• Issuing payments via EFT (also supports business continuity efforts) ☑</li> <li>• Develop capacity to support client financial administration online ☑</li> <li>• Enhance staff capacity to work remotely ☑</li> <li>• Modification of service delivery (remote supports where possible, safety protocols, webinars/workshops) ☑</li> <li>• Peer led support group for sub-contractors (supported by CASS) ☑</li> <li>• Development of safe transport protocols for individuals receiving support ☑</li> <li>• Procurement and deployment of PPE (explore delivery of some sort to make PPE more easily accessible to frontline staff) ⚠</li> <li>• Develop strategy for development and maintenance of PPE supplies and supply chains (including documentation/inventory system) ⚠</li> <li>• Robust communication: emails, website, social media, staff meetings, townhalls ⚠</li> <li>• Robust staff engagement regarding the pandemic via town halls, staff meetings, surveys ⚠</li> <li>• Wage top ups (CWB and others) ⚠</li> <li>• Advocate for the sector (wage top ups, vaccination priority) ⚠</li> <li>• Support mental health of staff and clients through a variety of initiatives ⚠</li> <li>• Technology adoption (video conferencing, digital signature services, cloud-based services) ⚠</li> <li>• Vaccination strategy (explore strategies to encourage vaccination of clients and staff – ex: draws, consider if/how to track vaccination) ⚠</li> <li>• Staying informed and up to date with changing landscape ⚠</li> <li>• Develop proactive forward-looking solutions that enhance overall agency resiliency ⚠</li> <li>• Introduce new mandatory training added for Infection Prevention and Control, Covid-19 Safety ☑</li> <li>• Modification of existing training requirements from in-classroom to online/self-serve ☑</li> </ul>
----	--	--	------------	----------	---

\*PMR = Person(s) Most Responsible

\*\*SLT = CASS Senior Leadership Team

☑ Represents an action item/idea that was completed during the 2020-2021 fiscal year

⚠ Represents an action item/idea that was started during the 2020-2021 fiscal year, but has yet to be completed