



North Eastern Ontario
Family and Children's Services
Services à la famille et à l'enfance
du Nord-Est de l'Ontario

Strategic Plan 2014 - 2017

Together – Building a Strong & Sustainable Future

Executive Summary

Our strategic planning process highlights the direction that all Agency planning activities will take over the next three years. It supports what we know are our key strengths, uncovers our hopes for the future and allows us to envision how we might link our strengths with our future endeavours.

Because of the extensive engagement process that took place as part of our amalgamation efforts in 2011, it was decided we would not embark on a large scale engagement process with staff or other key stakeholders as part of our strategic planning efforts. The engagement process which was undertaken for the purpose of the amalgamation was designed to ensure that all stakeholders (service users, staff, foster parents, board members, volunteers and community partners) had the opportunity to share their hopes and dreams for the new agency (NEOFACS). The engagement sessions further extended to support the commitment by these stakeholders to the guiding principles developed by the Tri-Agency Senior Management at the onset of amalgamation activity and motivated them to contribute to the new organizations' success. The engagement efforts were designed and implemented to create an environment where stakeholders could freely speak and know their participation was appreciated and would be utilized to inform the design of the new Agency. The engagement sessions promoted open communication, clearly-articulated goals and unambiguous expectations.

The Strategic Planning Team focused its attention on the extensive documentation that was available as a result of the amalgamation process (i.e. Engagement Report) as well as many other supporting documents that were readily accessible. Through a comprehensive review of over 30 documents as well as the results of an environmental scan process, we are confident that we have identified seven strategic directions that will support NEOFACS in working together to build a strong and sustainable future.

Through the development and implementation of Strategic Direction Work Teams, (each representative of a Strategic Direction) we believe the goals and objectives defined as part of the seven Strategic Directions will be achieved by building on our strengths to realize better futures for our children, youth and families.



An Overview of North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services (NEOFACS)

North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services (NEOFACS) is an integrated agency, providing services to children, youth and their families in the Districts of Cochrane and Timiskaming. Our client responsive programs and services are innovative, evidence-based, and designed to meet the unique needs of those we serve.

Our Agency provides Child Welfare, Children's Mental Health, Youth Justice, Prevention and Community based programs. NEOFACS is a non-profit charitable organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors whose funding is received primarily from the Ministry of Children & Youth Services. Several other funders also support programs.

NEOFACS is designated under the French Language Services Act and as such provides services in both official languages.

The spectrum of children's mental health services includes intervention, public education/prevention and supportive services to children, youth and their families. We are also the provider of services to children diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Our Agency operates three residential programs for children/youth between the ages of 12-18. One of the residential programs is operated under the Ministry of Children and Youth Services' Youth Justice Division, while the other two provide children's mental health treatment.

Our Child Welfare services include assessment, investigation, placement (when and where necessary) as well as, referral and supportive services to children/youth and their families.

NEOFACS is visible in several communities in Northeastern Ontario. Our head office is located in Timmins. Primary District campuses are located in Kapuskasing and Kirkland Lake; several other communities are also home to NEOFACS campuses with programs and services. NEOFACS is also proud to own and operate a camp facility located in Moonbeam, Ontario.

The staff of NEOFACS is comprised of dedicated professionals focused on making a difference in the lives of children, youth and their families. Currently the Agency employs approximately 400 staff on a full or part time basis.

The foundational pillars on which the Agency has been built and will continue to develop and grow are as follows:

- A service delivery model that provides equitable, measurable and responsive services to children, youth and families;
- An administrative structure that provides the necessary financial, human resource, technical and physical plant supports for staff, foster parents, volunteers and service users;
- Quality Improvement mechanisms that allow for measurable performance outcomes in all of our programs. These mechanisms are supported by a dedicated data collection and analysis component that provides guidance in the allocation of appropriate resources to service needs and to further support the implementation of service strategies to better address evolving needs emerging from our communities; and,
- A Governance structure that is not only representative of the communities we serve but also representative of our linguistic and cultural realities.

These foundational pillars intersect with all of the strategic directions that are outlined in this report.

A Snapshot of the Districts of Timiskaming and Cochrane – Considerations for Planning

The Districts of Cochrane and Timiskaming have a combined population of 113,756 (2011 Census) over a combined geographic area of 154,550 square kms. (representative of a geographic boundary that is greater than the combined land mass of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) resulting in a low population density of 0.7 persons per square km.

The Cochrane and Timiskaming Districts are home to a culturally diverse population. The Francophone community accounts for 38% of the combined population compared to the provincial average of only 4%. Approximately 10% self-identify as Aboriginal, which is significantly higher than both provincial (2.0%) and national rates (3.8%).

Approximately 33,770 families reside in the Cochrane and Timiskaming Districts. Of those families 85% are married/common-law families versus the 15% who report being single parent families.

It is estimated that 34% of the population, aged 25-64 years, do not have a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree.

The communities throughout the Districts are built upon a resource-based economy. The median income (after-tax) for those living in the Cochrane District is \$28,382, while those who reside in the Timiskaming District it is \$24,055. These annual salaries are lower than the provincial (\$28,118) and Canadian (\$27,334) medians. The unemployment rate federally is 7.0%, provincially 7.5% and in the District of Cochrane 8.4% and in the District of Timiskaming 10.6%. (Statistics Canada 2014).



The Strategic Planning Process

With the birth of NEOFACS on April 1st, 2012, the Board of Directors and the Senior Management team of the Agency determined that the inaugural Strategic Plan for NEOFACS would be initiated through a comprehensive planning process early in 2014, with the expectation of a finalized and approved Plan by the fall of 2014. To that end, a Strategic Planning Team was developed, chaired by the Program Manager for Communications and Quality Improvement. The membership of this team was formed through a call for volunteer staff, management, foster parents, volunteers and Board of Director members. In the end the team was comprised of the following individuals:

*(M) denotes a management position

Name	Position	Campus
Andrea Harrington	Intake	Timmins
Ben Cottrill	Foster Parent	Kirkland Lake
Brooke Ballantyne	Communications (M)	Timmins
Carol Larochelle	Investigation, Assessment & Ongoing Worker	Kapuskasing
Catherine Simunovic	Program Manager (M)	Timmins
Dawn Towsley	Foster Parent	Timmins
Doris Losier	HR (M)	Kapuskasing
John Raymond	Director of Service (M)	New Liskeard
Josée Bélanger	Director of Service (M)	Timmins
Michael Cole	Program Manager (M)	Englehart
Monique Levesque	Intensive Service Coordination	Timmins (Wilcox)
Rada Deletic	Quality Improvement (M)	Timmins
Rejéanne Demeules	Board Member	Smooth Rock Falls
Sarah Robinson	Autism and Psychological Services (M)	Timmins
Ted Assad	Board Member	Kirkland Lake
Tracy Ryan	Shift Supervisor (M) Pineger	Kirkland Lake

The membership of the team included representation from the French Language Services Working Group as well as the Aboriginal Working Group.

As part of the first meeting, the Strategic Planning Team was oriented to strategic planning as well the expectation of the development of the Strategic Plan for NEOFACS, for approval by the Board of Directors.

The Planning Team determined that the focus of the inaugural plan would be building a strong and sustainable foundation for NEOFACS. Given that NEOFACS was established in April 2012, it was recognized there is still much to be done to solidify the foundation of the Agency and to ensure that all aspects of service delivery and administration are sustainable well into the future.

The Planning Team identified a wide range of documents that would inform the strategic directions for the Agency. The Planning Team supported 7 members of the Planning Team to read the documents identified by the Planning Team. These 7 members were coached on the process they would adopt for reading the documents and identifying themes. Subsequent to the reading, the 7 members met to identify and agree on the themes that were apparent throughout the documentation. These themes form the first draft of the Strategic Directions.

Listed below are the documents read by members of the Strategic Planning Team:

1. Foster Care Licensing Report 2012/2013
2. Aboriginal Service Delivery Report
3. Child Welfare Report - 2012
4. Child Welfare Report - 2013
5. Board to Board – Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies, April 2014
6. Supervised Access Program Peer Review, 2013
7. Follow up to Peer Site Review – Supervised Access Program
8. Amalgamation Evaluation
9. Serious Occurrence Report - Child Welfare/Child and Family Intervention, 2012/2013
10. Early Help Feedback
11. Engagement Report
12. French Language Services - Final Report
13. Pavillon License Report 2013
14. F. W. Schumacher Residence - Licence Report 2013
15. Pineger License (a) 2014
16. Pineger License (b) 2014
17. Pineger License 2013
18. Successes Review document – Management Meeting (May 2013)
19. Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies - Strategic Plan
20. Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies - Annual Report
21. Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies - Child Welfare Report
22. Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies – Priorities for Advocacy and Public Engagement
23. Ontario Early Years Centres - Policy Framework
24. Recognition Event Survey
25. Residential Framework
26. The Brand Plan
27. North Eastern Ontario Family and Children’s Services - Brand Ex. Summary
28. Children’s Mental Health Ontario - Strategic Plan
29. Children’s Mental Health Ontario - Strategic Plan - Review
30. Moving Forward on Mental Health
31. Accountability Approach and Public Reporting of Child Welfare Performance Indicators
32. Child Welfare Professional – Competency Model
33. Accountability Approach and Public Reporting of Child Welfare Performance Indicators



The Senior Management Team of the Agency moved through a facilitated environmental scanning process. This process allowed for a detailed assessment of our organization's internal and external environments. Specifically, the environmental scan exercise allowed for the early identification of opportunities and challenges that will influence current and future plans for the Agency. As a result of moving through this process, revisions to the draft Strategic Directions were introduced.

The Strategic Planning Team was provided with the final draft of the Strategic Directions as developed at the June 24th meeting. The team approved the directions for the inaugural Strategic Plan for the Agency.

Critical Issues and Realities

As a result of the environmental scan process by the Senior Management of the Agency, a number of items/issues were identified that will have a significant impact on our Agency as we move forward over the next three years. The following is not a comprehensive listing from the environmental scan process, but highlights some of the more significant issues impacting our Agency during the life of this Strategic Plan:

- Protection mandate extending to 18 years of age
- CPIN implementation
- Transformation of Children's Mental Health Services
- Foster home/volunteer recruitment
- Devolution of Aboriginal Services
- Accreditation – on site November 2015
- Accountability Agreement & Funding Formula
- Sustainability of our Residential Programs
- Sustainability of Camp Cadanac
- Provincial Performance Indicators



Our Mission, Vision and Values Statements

Mission: *Working together for the well-being and safety of children, youth and families.*

Vision: *Strong, healthy and safe communities where children, youth and families thrive.*

Values: *North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services is guided by the following values that influence the way we act and the decisions we make:*

- *Accountability*
- *Caring*
- *Client-focus*
- *Collaboration*
- *Innovation*
- *Integrity*
- *Respect*

Our Code of Ethics

Board members, staff, foster parents and volunteers of the Agency shall adhere to the Mission Statement and Values of the Agency in accordance with the following Code of Ethics:

- We will fulfill our duties with honesty and integrity.
- We will protect the right to privacy and confidentiality of all individuals.
- We will respect the intrinsic worth and dignity of individuals and their right to self-determination.
- Our interaction with others will be founded on objectivity, empathy and professional regard for their views.
- We will promote consultation, teamwork and collaboration in recognition that all individuals are valuable resources.
- We will be qualified and accountable in the performance of our duties.
- We accept responsibility for self-evaluation and self-development.

Strategic Directions:



1. Service

Delivering responsive, client-focused, evidence and strength based services to our children, youth and families.

NEOFACS is committed to being responsive to the needs of the children, youth and families that we serve in our many communities throughout our Districts. Our Agency is comprised of staff, managers, foster parents and board members who genuinely care for our service users, as well as the community as a whole.

Though we have the best interest of our service users at the centre of all that we do, we can at times be hindered in our efforts by the many policies, procedures, practices and standards that are inherent to our operations. There is an expressed desire for us to do more. We are proud of treating all service users with respect, integrity and honesty. We are encouraged and supported by our community partners who recognize the contributions we make to the lives of children, youth and families.

We want to be known throughout all our communities as a “community that cares.” This is key in developing resilient children and youth who are productive, healthy, contributing members to society. The Agency is committed to providing a variety of child and youth-driven opportunities and experiences that will result in ongoing, sustainable and meaningful engagement.



2. Partnership:

Building community partnerships through meaningful engagement, involvement and investment.

The Agency is actively engaged in many partnerships throughout the communities we serve. These partnerships are essential to the ongoing development of healthy and vibrant communities whose mandate it is to work collaboratively, develop and implement essential programs and services and maximize the use of community resources to enhance the lives of children, youth and families.

We recognize the value of consistently working together as a community that cares for children, youth and families. Our ability to strengthen our relationships with community partners will serve to provide more client responsive, inclusive and unique services to families. Stronger connections through purposeful partnerships will create a more coordinated focus to service and expand the current network of partners.

We have much to offer the children, youth and families who reside in our service areas. We have heard there is a hunger to know more about us across the community. Our goal is to continue to enhance a creative, caring and engaged community.



3. Communication:

Creating a system of communication that promotes transparency, timeliness and relevance.

NEOFACS is a large Agency spanning more than 154,000 square kilometers. With 22+ Agency offices and service sites it can at times be a challenge to communicate with all stakeholders in a timely and transparent manner. Through the development and implementation of key communication channels the opportunity to enhance and sustain value added communication will be attainable.

In an effort to enhance external communication it is recognized that the Agency is a major contributor to the health and well-being of children, youth and families. However, the diversity of our programs and services are still known to too few, and the lingering image of us as legacy agencies and as only a child protection agency continues.



4. Human Capital

Cultivating our human capital through continuous recruitment, retention and recognition efforts.

The work and responsibility of staff employed with the Agency is challenging and complex. We have demonstrated excellence in many aspects of our work. We have achieved much since our amalgamation only 2 short years ago. Continued efforts in building a strong foundation of mutual respect and recognition at all levels of the organization will propel us toward continued achievements. Our practical support for the overall health and wellness of each employee strengthens our Agency's core and is a catalyst for engaged staff, increased productivity and positive energy networks expanding throughout the workplace.



5. Quality Improvement:

Fostering accountability, transparency and sustainability through effective evaluation and research.

As a social service organization working toward the enhanced wellbeing and safety of all children and youth we must expand our learning about the impact services have on those with whom we work. Our knowledge will be developed through the collection of information, accurate interpretation and continued conversations with all stakeholders. Together these practices will guide the Agency in making data driven decisions for children, youth and families. We will further develop our ability to think strategically and communicate effectively. Measuring performance outcomes is critical in managing the Agency resources effectively and efficiently as well as in providing high quality, evidenced informed programs and services.



6. Culture:

Nurturing a culture that is authentic and respects the diversity of our uniqueness.

NEOFACS is a young Agency, having only been in existence since April 1st, 2012. The development of a unique Agency culture takes time and evolves generatively as we, the collective whole of the Agency, begin to define the values and behaviours that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of our organization.

Organizational culture speaks to an organization's expectations, experiences, philosophy, and values that hold it together. It is communicated in the way work gets done on a day to day basis, interactions with the community, and the articulated vision for the future. Through the promotion of shared and deeply embedded attitudes, beliefs and written and unwritten rules/regulations that are developed over time, our Agency culture will emerge.



7. Infrastructure:

Developing and managing our resources to create innovative and fiscal efficiencies.

NEOFACS has supported the use of many technological tools and resources that encourage efficiencies and effectiveness for use throughout the Agency's programs, services and administration. We must focus on how best to maximize the use of our physical spaces, as well as our technology, recognizing that both space and technology play a critical role in our service delivery and administration due to the geographic realities in which we exist.

The management of our financial resources requires us to consistently rely on accurate data to inform all decisions. The continual development and implementation of innovative and fiscal efficiencies will be undertaken while ensuring the provision of quality services to our service users.

Communication Planning for the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Planning Team supports a comprehensive communication plan to share the Strategic Plan with staff, foster parents, volunteers and other key stakeholders, including community partners. On site presentations of the Strategic Plan will occur once the Strategic Plan is approved by the Board of Directors. The in-person/live presentation of the Strategic Plan at the various Agency campuses will promote a greater awareness and understanding of the Strategic Planning process, the plan itself and the process of development and subsequent implementation of the Strategic Direction Working Teams. It is also anticipated that the presentations will generate interest and excitement around involvement/participation on the Strategic Direction Working Teams.

Implementing, Monitoring & Evaluating the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Planning Team endorses a collective and participative model for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. This model for implementation will involve the development of 7 Strategic Direction Working Teams. Each team will represent one of the 7 Strategic Directions. The Working Teams will be co-lead by two management personnel who will guide and support a volunteer team of staff who have interest and passion in implementing a specific strategic direction.

The Strategic Direction Working Teams will have responsibility to develop, implement and monitor a comprehensive workplan that will address all the issues/tasks/activities identified through the data gathering phase of the Strategic Planning Team's work, i.e. reading and environmental scan (along with potentially additional items identified by the Strategic Direction Working Team). These issues/tasks/activities support the particular strategic direction and through the prioritization of these items and a plan to address/develop/mobilize them, the strategic direction will be accomplished. The workplans will include goals and objectives that are SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely) that will be met throughout the life of the workplan.

The chart below provides an overview of the accountability and responsibilities for the mobilization of the Strategic Plan.

Responsibility & Accountability Matrix	Board of Directors & Senior Management	Program Manager, QI & Communications	Strategic Direction Leads	Strategic Direction Working Team
	Be informed of progress through regular updates.	Monitor overall progress of Strategic Working Teams	Develop workplan for Strategic Direction	
		Review requests for the allocation of financial resources	Complete updates of workplan for Strategic Direction	
		Provide support to Strategic Direction Leads/Teams	Create, schedule and assign tasks for completion by the team members	Provide expertise to workplan tasks and activities
		Review & approve "scope" of changes/requests	Complete & review documentation	Complete assigned tasks/activities
		Provide working templates for use by the Strategic Direction Working Teams	Manage communication between Strategic Direction Working Team and Program Manager, QI & Communications	
		Meet with Strategic Direction Leads as necessary	Ensure Strategic Direction Working Team produces work that is on time, on target and on budget	
		Address organizational issues that may affect Strategic Direction implementation	Chair Strategic Direction Working Team meetings	
		Recommend for approval by the Senior Management and the Board of Directors all workplans		

The evaluation of the Strategic Planning process as well as the related activities/initiatives and their impact/outcome, as articulated in the operational work plans will be required. To this end, tools will be designed and implemented by Quality Improvement staff through consultation with the Strategic Direction Working Team co-Leads. Progress on the development and the implementation of these tools will be provided to the Board of Directors on an annual basis.