



Supporting families, youth & individuals

# Strategic Plan 2018-2022

## INTRODUCTION

Nelson Community Services (NCS) is a well-established, community social service, non-profit organization and a registered Canadian charity which has been providing programs and services in Nelson, BC for almost 50 years (incorporated February 1972). The organization focuses on **supporting families, youth, and individuals**. Programs and services include counseling, outreach support, parenting support, the Aimee Beaulieu Women's Transition House and Cicada Place residential program for youth. The agency is well-respected in the community, and client satisfaction surveys consistently indicate that programs and services are positively received and that clients would recommend NCS to others.

NCS is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, with funding for the work provided through contracts with several provincial government Ministries, community partners, and through donations. NCS is managed by an Executive Director and services are delivered by approximately 30 staff members.

Nelson Community Services was first accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA) in 2006. It was reaccredited in 2010 and 2014. Reaccreditation attests that NCS continues to meet the highest national standards. It also provides assurance that NCS is performing services which the community needs, conducting its operations successfully and managing its funds effectively. NCS is participating in a re-accreditation process in 2018 with COA.

In 2014 a four-year Strategic Plan was developed for the Society and reviewed annually. In 2018 that plan was reviewed and updated, with the assistance of an outside facilitator. This document is the result of that review and update.

## BACKGROUND

As part of the review and updating process, a variety of techniques was used to collect information and develop ideas for this plan.

- The Executive Director was interviewed
- Relevant reports, previous years' plans, brochures, the Society website, and customer satisfaction survey results were examined.
- Staff and Board members participated in an online survey, which collected information about their perceptions of the organization and suggestions for future priorities. The survey was conducted in March 2018 and sent out to 29 individuals. Twenty-one surveys were completed for a very positive return rate of 73%.
- Information was also gathered and analyzed through an evening meeting with Board members, the Executive Director and the facilitator on March 27, 2018.
- On April 10<sup>th</sup>, the Board and staff of NCS took part in a 3-hour facilitated afternoon session dedicated to developing the 2018 – 2022 Strategic Plan.
- Following the large group discussion, a smaller committee made up of the Executive Director, two Board members, two staff members and the facilitator met on April 30 to review and collate the results.

During the information gathering steps, some consistent themes emerged. When asked **“What aspects of NCS and its services are you especially proud of?”** staff and Board survey respondents mentioned: all the programs and services, staff (commitment, skills and professionalism), strong reputation in the community, flexibility, and impact in the community. These comments echoed the responses in the client satisfaction surveys. When asked **“What do you think gets in the way of NCS being able to do as good a job as it might?”** respondents were clear that funding issues – both the lack of sufficient funding and the constraints imposed by the type and structure of the funding – were the major concerns. Waiting lists and insufficient resources were frequently mentioned.

There was a sense that the organization is doing well at delivering its services to those it can reach, but that as with many non-profit organizations, the ongoing challenge of finding adequate funding to meet the demands for service is a constant struggle. Interestingly, when asked **“Where should the organization focus its energy in the next four years?”** people replied with: Maintain the status quo: 33%, Expand to offer new services: 72% and, Look at charging a fee for some services so that we can reach more people: 50% . This suggests that a majority of Board and staff members are hopeful that despite the challenges, NCS can continue to reach more clients and that many are willing to look at some new ways to provide services.

As an established and mature organization, NCS is in a position to move beyond just the provision of existing “core” services, and to take on a leadership role in the local social services sector, exploring innovative ways to improve its own service delivery and its own operations, while collaborating with partners to address some of the larger systemic issues that plague the non-profit sector.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The work of any non-profit agency is guided by a set of principles, usually including such elements as a vision, mission, values and some kind of service philosophy, that help set priorities and remind the group of where they want to go. One of the components of the 2018 review process was to create a new Vision for NCS and to evaluate the current Mission to determine if it still was appropriate, resulting in the following two new statements:

### OUR VISION:

A compassionate and empowered community where families, youth and individuals receive the supports and services they need to live dignified, resilient and hopeful lives.

### OUR MISSION:

To support the well-being of families, youth, and individuals in our community by providing counselling, housing, support, and outreach services.

### **OUR SERVICE PHILOSOPHY:**

Nelson Community Services believes that all families, youth, and individuals, at some time, experience difficulties in their lives and that they have an inherent right to be heard and to be supported. Our relational approach to services delivery is respectful of each person's identity, issues, strengths, culture, needs, and choices.

### **TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

Nelson Community Services acknowledges that the land upon which we offer our services is the traditional territory of the peoples who have lived here for thousands of years -- the Ktunaxa, the Sylix, and the Sinixt. We respect and honour all our relations.

### **OUR VALUES:**

- Community collaboration
- Partnerships
- Bringing leadership to positive social change efforts
- Being responsive to evolving needs of our community
- Service excellence
- Service relevance
- Ethical service delivery
- Innovation and creativity
- Integrity
- Inclusiveness and non-discrimination
- Trauma-Informed approaches
- Diversity
- Dignity
- Respect
- Choice
- Confidentiality
- Gender preferences
- Truth and Reconciliation efforts

- Anti-oppressive approaches to understanding
- Safety and personal control
- Compassion, relationships, and caring
- Staff professionalism
- Responsibility and accountability for our actions

In preparation for identifying changes to the plan, participants at the planning session were asked to answer two questions to provide context. The questions and answers follow.

### **WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE THE LAST PLAN?**

- New governments at the provincial and national level
- Increase in poverty and homelessness
- Increase in housing prices
- Less affordable housing
- The opioid crisis across BC and Canada
- Increase in mental health issues
- Increased need for parenting and family counselling
- Increased demand for youth support and housing
- More single parents, especially more single dads
- More “unschooled” children not being served by the school system
- More complex client needs
- Greater demand from MCFD for our services
- Shift in emphasis for MCFD funding
- Reduced funding from school system
- Greater awareness of impact of technology addiction, digital isolation and digital foot-printing
- Competition from more for-profit providers in the market
- Release of the Government of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Report (2015)

### **WHAT UPCOMING ISSUES AND TRENDS MIGHT AFFECT OUR WORK?**

- Legalization of marijuana (planned for summer 2018)
- Provincial Poverty Reduction plan
- Possible increases in government funding for youth, housing, men's services
- Possible guaranteed wage legislation (min. \$15/hour)
- Possible \$10/day child care

- Increased need to use technology to assist our work and need for training (for staff and Board)
- Aging population
- Implementation of the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation report

## Goals & Objectives

Three goals emerged through our consultation process with members and stakeholders. These goals are interconnected and must be considered together in order for the co-operative to make significant progress towards improving the capacity of our members to serve our communities. Each goal is supported by a number of objectives, activities and desired outcomes that describe how the co-operative will pursue progress towards the goals from 2016 to 2018.

### Goals - Summary

1. **Program and Service Delivery** - Offer a spectrum of relevant and effective services and programs to meet the evolving needs of the community
2. **Service Quality** - Using a PQI approach, continually review, assess and improve programs, services and plans to ensure their relevance and effectiveness
3. **Human Resources** - Build and sustain a qualified team of people to achieve the Vision, Mission and Goals of NCS
4. **Community Relations** - Increase the profile of the organization and the issues it addresses
5. **Partnerships** - Work collaboratively to achieve better results
6. **Fund Development** - Secure, maintain, and responsibly expend the funds necessary to achieve the Vision and Mission of NCS

**1. Program and Service Delivery - Offer a spectrum of relevant and effective services and programs to meet the evolving needs of the community**

- a. Offer core services and programs including counselling for adults, children and youth, programs for victims of family violence, life skills and housing for at-risk youth, family support services, and outreach services
- b. Maintain program flexibility in order to respond to changing community needs
- c. Explore opportunities to offer additional services and programs where gaps in service have been identified such as supporting parents after separation, additional second-stage housing, more youth housing, counselling for men, services for seniors
- d. Increase opportunities for client education through referrals, self-help opportunities, online materials, access to resources
- e. Explore alternative methods for service delivery, such as expanded referral and education options, greater use of technology, creating groups for clients on waitlists or with common issues, revised intake process
- f. Design a set of "ready to deliver" programs that could be offered if funding or partnership opportunities become available

**2. Service Quality - Using a Performance Quality Improvement approach, continually review, assess and improve programs, services and plans to ensure their relevance and effectiveness**

- a. Review assessment tools to ensure relevant questions are being asked and useful information gathered
- b. Track and identify gaps, looking for themes that aren't currently being addressed
- c. Create policy regarding the implementation of Truth and Reconciliation practices (such as acknowledging traditional First Nations territory)
- d. Create policy regarding improving inclusiveness, i.e. gender issues
- e. Become an employer of choice, promoting a staff culture of openness, acceptance, and safety, recognizing the challenging nature of the work, and offering opportunities for learning and growth
- f. Strategic planning – continue to refine the agency's Value statements and change the timing of the strategic plan redevelopment to the year prior to reaccreditation (with annual reviews) to better balance with reaccreditation preparation
- g. Engage in issue identification and problem solving at the systemic level – becoming a champion for causes, taking action, and supporting existing initiatives where possible



### **3. Human Resources - Build and sustain a qualified team of people to achieve the Vision, Mission and Goals of NCS**

- a. Build and maintain an engaged Board of Directors that provides effective leadership and direction to the organization, through targeted recruitment (for specific topic areas such as legal, business, financial, fundraising, media/communications) and ongoing Board development
- b. Recruit, maintain, and develop a highly qualified team of professional staff members, through ongoing staff recognition and staff wellness activities, providing a culture of support in the changing and challenging landscape of the non-profit workplace
- c. Explore additional methods of staff recruitment, such as posting on university and college job boards, consulting with Selkirk College in terms of curriculum development, hosting practicum students (including business and tech, not just social service)
- d. Consider increasing the use of volunteers (with appropriate expertise) to assist with specific assignments, such as fundraising
- e. Ensure that staff and Board members receive the necessary training to stay up-to-date with technology improvements in the agency

### **4. Community Relations - Increase the profile of the organization and the issues it addresses**

- a. Develop a Communications/Marketing Plan, designed to increase awareness of the organization at multiple levels (include social media opportunities, website updates, regular press releases, etc.)
- b. Promote public awareness, understanding, and clarification of what NCS does and the impact of its work
- c. Ensure that other service providers in the region are aware of the work that NCS does
- d. Make the community aware of the needs in the community (housing, mental health, prevention of violence, opioid use, etc.)
- e. Participate in issue-related activities and initiatives (such as Coldest Night of the Year, Take Back the Night)

### **5. Partnerships - Work collaboratively to achieve better results**

- a. Maintain memberships in key organizations that bring together organizations with similar mandates (Community Social Services Employers Association, the Federation of Community Social Services of BC, BC Society of Transition Houses, Ending Violence Association of BC, BC Non-Profit Housing Association, the Kootenay Boundary Community Services Co-operative, SPAN, etc.) with a goal to addressing common sectoral issues
- b. Participate in group initiatives and pilot projects that aim to address common challenges in the social services sector, especially through innovation

- c. Maintain and nurture relationships with key community partners (Nelson CARES, NCOH, Nelson Housing Committee, Nelson Food Cupboard, ANKORS, KATI, Kootenay Kids, Kootenay Career Development Society, etc.) with a goal of exploring options for shared services, co-location, shared benefits, shared programming, and joint training.
- d. Maintain and strengthen relationships with key funders such as MCFD, MPSSG, CBT, SD#8, Osprey Foundation and with other community partners such as Nelson Chamber of Commerce and the City of Nelson
- e. Consider creating relationships with additional groups, agencies, service providers, and institutions as available such as alternative health practitioners, business community, school system, and/or indigenous partners where working together will achieve better outcomes

**6. Fund Development - Secure, maintain, and responsibly expend the funds necessary to achieve the Vision and Mission of NCS**

- a. Continue to access contracts for service
- b. Continue to apply for relevant grant funding
- c. Create a long-range fund development plan
- d. Expand the NCS donor base, through more recruitment, promotion and management
- e. Explore a continuum of fund development options including fee-for-service and social enterprise
- f. Consider contracting out some services such as grant-writing, fundraising

**Conclusion**

Nelson Community Services is an organization with a strong history of serving families, youth and individuals in the Nelson area, adapting to the changing needs of the community over several decades of service. Although faced with the ongoing challenge of increasing demands for service without a corresponding increase in financial support from funders, the organization has a commitment to not just maintaining a high standard, but also to improving its service delivery. The 2018-2022 Strategic Plan is ambitious, and will require participation from all levels of the organization. However, with a new Vision and Mission in place, a strong and engaged Board of Directors, and a staff team with both experience and expertise, the organization is well-positioned to succeed.

Approved by NCS Board of Directors on July 3, 2018.