

KEY MESSAGES

Key Message #1: ALIGN is a membership organization that supports member agencies and their services, which are a vital part of Alberta's social infrastructure.

Supporting points:

- ALIGN is committed to a healthy sustainable workforce system and organization of its member agencies. This is a critical component of high value service delivery.
- ALIGN member agencies are agencies contracted by the government to provide services for Albertans who need them.
- In 2012-2013, ALIGN member agencies served 120,000 children and families, and administered "Children and Youth Services" contract funding of approximately \$260M¹.
- ALIGN continues to advocate for competitive wages and to raise the professional profile of its members' workforce.
- ALIGN promotes the use of leading practices.
- ALIGN is a way for agency members throughout Alberta to come together and address systemic issues.
- ALIGN is a vehicle for creating a sense of community and unity among agency members amid the competitive nature of the agency landscape (i.e. the spirit of partnership vs. competitiveness. We care for each other.)

Key Message #2: The Government of Alberta's commitment to children and families services must not be compromised. The Government of Alberta's commitment to children and families must be driven by need, not by economic conditions good or bad.

Supporting points:

- Now, more than ever, is the time to invest in child and family services. In 2014, there was an 84% increase in the demand for social services but only a 31% ability to meet the demand².
- There is a direct correlation between economic difficulty and the demand on our members' services. For every 1% of unemployment there is an 18% increase in Human Service caseloads.
- Cutting from our sector during a downturn is short sighted.

¹ Boles Consulting. Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families: Comparison of 2012 & 2013 Membership Survey Results. (June 10, 2014), 3.

² Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, 2014 Non-Profit Survey. <http://www.calgarycvo.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/2014-Alberta-Nonprofit-Survey-Web.pdf> (accessed February 3, 2015).

Key Message #3: The wisdom and experience gained through 47 years as an organization have made ALIGN experts in leading practices for the sector.

Supporting points:

- The Government of Alberta recognizes ALIGN as experts in the sector. The organization is consistently asked to participate in important and strategic discussions with the GOA regarding change and policy.
- ALIGN keeps continuous professional development top of mind by acting as a central hub to share information, knowledge, research and resources among its members.
- The wisdom and experience gained from 47 years provides ALIGN with the credibility to spearhead strategic discussions and bring value from experience when meeting with the GoA.

Key Message #4: A critical factor in generating best outcomes for children and families is a healthy and sustainable workforce.

Supporting points:

- Healthy and sustainable systems, which include wages, operating costs and other professional benefits for front-line workers in our sector are low, and the work can be difficult and demanding. This means that our member agencies often have a hard time finding and keeping high-performers, and as a result, outcomes for our clients can suffer. Finding a permanent solution to this issue is critical.
- We need to continue to work with government to create a healthy and sustainable workforce organization.
- Ultimately, it is Alberta children and families who benefit when we have a healthy and sustainable workforce organization.

Key Message #5: The work of our members, as part of the human services sector, is a critical component of a strong economy and healthy population in Alberta.

Supporting points:

- Our overarching philosophy is rooted in the belief that a strong economy is a result of a healthy workforce. Our member agencies provide essential services to Albertans and are committed in keeping Alberta's workforce healthy and the economy strong.
- Alberta is a land of opportunity for many, and we want everyone to be able to share in that opportunity. By supporting healthy families and children we are creating opportunities for the next generation of Albertans for success.
- We all have a responsibility to ensure that children have a fair start. Collectively, all Albertans can make the choice to invest in our children and families by supporting the work of the child and family services sector.
- The continued prosperity/economic success of Alberta requires that we have a healthy and sustainable workforce services/organization/systems. Supports for children and families are critical in ensuring our province's continued prosperity in the future.
- Strong communities are the backbone of our province. By supporting children and families, we're strengthening the social fabric of Alberta and making the province a better place for everyone.

APPENDIX: KEY MESSAGES AT-A GLANCE

| KEY MESSAGE | SUPPORTING POINTS |
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| <p>Key Message 1:</p> <p>The services provide by our member agencies are a vital part of Alberta's social infrastructure.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALIGN is committed to a healthy sustainable workforce system and organization of its member agencies. • ALIGN member agencies are agencies contracted by the government. • In 2012-2013, ALIGN member agencies served 120,000 children and families⁶. • ALIGN continues to advocate for competitive wages and to raise the professional profile of its members' workforce. • ALIGN promotes the use of leading practices. • ALIGN is a way for agency members throughout Alberta to come together and address systemic issues. • ALIGN is a vehicle for creating a sense of community and unity among agency members. |
| <p>Key Message 2:</p> <p>The Government of Alberta's commitment to children and families must be driven by need, not by economic conditions good or bad.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2014, there was an 84% increase in the demand for social services but only a 31% ability to meet the demand⁷. • There is a direct correlation between economic difficulty and the demand on our members' services. • Cutting from our sector during a downturn is short sighted. |

⁶ Boles Consulting. Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families: Comparison of 2012 & 2013 Membership Survey Results. (June 10, 2014), 3.

⁷ Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, 2014 Non-Profit Survey. <http://www.calgarycvo.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/2014-Alberta-Nonprofit-Survey-Web.pdf> (accessed February 3, 2015).

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| <p>Key Message #3:</p> <p>ALIGN are experts in leading practices with 47 years of experience in the sector.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALIGN is consistently asked to participate in important and strategic discussions with the GOA regarding change and policy. • ALIGN keeps continuous professional development top of mind by acting as a central knowledge hub among its members. • ALIGN has the expertise to spearhead strategic discussions when meeting with the GoA. |
| <p>Key Message #4:</p> <p>A critical factor in generating best outcomes for children and families is a healthy and sustainable workforce.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our member agencies often have a hard time finding and keeping high-performers, and as a result, outcomes for our clients can suffer. • We need to continue to work with government to create a healthy and sustainable workforce organization. • Alberta children and families benefit when we have a healthy and sustainable workforce organization. |
| <p>Key Message #5:</p> <p>The work of our members, as part of the human services sector, is a critical component of a strong economy and healthy population in Alberta.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our overarching philosophy is rooted in the belief that a strong economy is a result of a healthy workforce. • By supporting healthy families and children we are creating opportunities for the next generation of Albertans for success. • We all have a responsibility to ensure that children have a fair start. • The continued prosperity/economic success of Alberta requires that we have a healthy and sustainable workforce services/organization/systems. • By supporting children and families, we're strengthening the social fabric of Alberta and making the province a better place for everyone. |