

2015



ALIGN

Association of
Community Services

[ANNUAL REPORT]

(Formerly the Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families)



ALIGN
Association of Community Services
Together for Children and Families



We are ALIGN

I am sure you have noticed it has been a busy year. Very busy! Fortunately, it has been a good busy. Good because it reflects all the work we are doing, how we are engaged, and how we are contributing to our sector in so many ways, training, planning, and developing new approaches.

A major undertaking this year has been our rebranding as ALIGN Association of Community Services. This is a brand which reflects our strength, Together for Children and Families. We are aligned with each other and those who share our goals the sustainable delivery of services to vulnerable children and families in Alberta. Our logo expresses these theme further, star trails in circular alignment, diversity, and the ripple effect of our work.

Thanks to our staff, partners, and our members for your contribution this past year, and in the year to come.

Jim Pritchard

President

ALIGN Association of Community Services

Strategic Framework 2011-2016

AASCF's Strategic Framework was developed by the AASCF Board of Directors, the executive director, AASCF staff and our members.

Our Mission	Our Values
<p>The Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families works to strengthen member agencies and promotes attitudes, practices and conditions that contribute to quality services for vulnerable children and families. We achieve our mission by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a network of agencies for information sharing, social policy development and advocating on behalf of service providers; • Working to resolve social policy issues with collaboration between various stakeholders; • Developing professional service excellence; • Representing the interests of member agencies on regional and provincial committees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for children, families and communities • Working together; • Service excellence; • Diversity of individuals, cultures, communities and services; • The strength of the community of staff, professionals and volunteer helpers who support children and families.
Our Beliefs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All people must be treated with dignity and respect. • Children and families must live in safe, secure, healthy, stable and nurturing environments. • Children and families need to be supported in developing a sense of pride in themselves and their cultural heritage. • Understanding and supporting people's spiritual beliefs contribute to their sense of empowerment, resiliency and capacity. • Children and families must be given the opportunity to access education that meets their needs. • Services need to be accessible and responsive to all in a timely and proactive way. • People must know what services are available to them. • People have the capacity to make their own decision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All families and communities have the strengths and capacities to grow and change. • Service providers must foster and facilitate growth for children, families and communities. • People must be heard. • Quality Services must be sensitive to all cultures in supporting children in their familiar environments and in their home communities. • Children are gifts and we are all equally responsible for their well-being. • We believe in the integrity of Aboriginal culture specifically. • All cultures' values, language, beliefs, principles and ceremonial practices for the empowerment of children, families, individuals, communities and agencies are important. • Each child and family must be provided the opportunity to maximize their potential.

This year has been one of exciting change with our rebranding activities. We really have 'grown up' and are much more current and trending with our new look and name. As we have begun to revision our strategic plan and meet with the new government we have reviewed our history. I thought that it would be interesting to review this history with you the members.

BACKGROUND

The Alberta Association of Children's Care Centers was incorporated in 1967 by a number of people providing residential services. One of the first issues in 1967 was the training needs of child care worker staff. In 1968, policy implications and training continued to be a main issue. In the late 1970's the Association began working on standards of practice at the request of the Ministry. This Standards work lead to an Accreditation process that was delivered by the Association into the early 2000.

In 1987 the earlier Association became the Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families (AASCF), expanding to include agencies beyond group care providers, including family support agencies, parenting programs and others. The disparity between the public sector and community service sector wages emerged as a critical issue. The issue of wages is key to the recruitment and retention of educated, experienced, and career minded staff. This, in turn, is linked to the quality and sustainable services necessary for vulnerable Albertans.

In 2005 the AASCF split into two separate agencies. The membership organization remained AASCF and a separate accrediting agency- Canadian Accreditation Council on Human Services (CACHS) was born.

Since 2006 the AASCF has focused it work on the relationship with Ministry, focusing on workforce issues of wages, retention and recruitment, leadership, along with policy and legislative issues. We strive to work collaboratively with the Ministry in areas that affect our collective clients and vulnerable Albertans.

In May 2015 the AASCF rebranded as ALIGN, recognizing the essence of collaborating around the cause of serving the children and families in Alberta.

CURRENT SITUATION

For the last 5-7 years we have worked collaboratively with Government of Alberta on a number of key initiatives, projects and policy development activities. This has lead to a much more aligned approach for services in Alberta. We bring the collaborative voice of the contracted community agencies to provincial issues, providing the integral perspective of the front line and our unique communities.

Current provincial activities we are involved in include:

- Membership meetings, chapter meetings, government relations committee
- Rebranding activities
- Conference development
- Foster/Kinship Care Collaboration table
- Training and Knowledge mobilization table
- Workforce Alliance
- Outcome Based Service Delivery (OBSD) provincial table (co-chair Leads table)
- Practice Framework development
- Foundations of Caregiver Support – Reconstructing group and residential care symposium planning
- Procurement/Contracting advise
- Psychotropic Medication project for central and northern Alberta
- Training opportunities for Agencies in Indigenous studies; Family Group Conferencing; Mental Health First Aid; Signs of Safety; Circle of Courage, Allying Indigenous People, and others
- Occupational Health and Safety – OHS Futures Grant and research project
- Alberta Mentoring Partnership – leadership team and child and youth in care mentoring project advisory group
- Leadership Bursary – funds were provided to AASCF in 2007 to support the development of Leadership Bursaries to agencies that provide direct services to child intervention; home visitation; and disability programs.
- Member of Alberta Alliance of Mental illness and Mental Health (AAMIMH) - support by Ministry of Health.



OUR GREATEST ASSETS

People

- Wealth of experience and knowledge of people in ALIGN
- People in ALIGN with long history of established collaborative relationships
- ALIGN members step up to the plate and participate when needed –committed!
- Relationship with Human Services Ministry and Government
- A culture of participation and information sharing
- Relationship with membership
- Membership
- Committee work, i.e. Government Relations, Chapters, etc.
- Small but mighty staff
- Executive Director's leadership, competency, skills and access to a wide range of collateral people
- Annual Conference
- Community engagement

Information

- Presentations by various stakeholders
- ALIGN website
- Informed about resources, i.e. Leadership Bursary, training, articles
- Conference

Technology

- Well-developed website, which is well used by members and others
- Video conferencing abilities
- Amazing, well-managed library resource
- Very good communications; the bulletins and job postings

Facilities

- Extended facilities due to various members around the province
- ALIGN Training Room is always well used

Other

- Independent advocacy that is self-funded
- Reputation and credibility is a great asset
- ALIGN is trusted
- ALIGN is able to focus on the most vulnerable population
- ALIGN is seen as “the” voice when government has questions
- ALIGN is relevant, in touch, and connected to members and their need

LOOKING FORWARD

ALIGNs Aspirations and Opportunities

The Board of Directors have identified two potential aspirations for ALIGN:

- Sustainability for our sector
- Agencies able to provide quality care services to kids and families

ALIGN Foundational Strategic Directions

During the course of discussion, Board members have agreed upon five Foundational Strategic Directions to guide ALIGN's directions and activities over the next few years.

- Training/professional development
- Influence government policy engagement and alignment with service providers
- Advocacy
- Networking internally/externally
- Organizational sustainability

Practice, Policy and ALGINs Support over the last year – see report by Sandra Maygard

Finaancial statements – see separate document

