



The Children's Aid | La Société de l'aide
Society of Ottawa | à l'enfance d'Ottawa

Service Plan 2019-22: Annual Update

This annual update to the 2019-22 service plan identifies the goals and objectives, governance and strategic directions as elaborated in the agency's strategic plan. It was developed to provide service managers and the board of directors with a clear list of management expectations for the programs and services they deliver within an overall accountability framework for high organizational performance.

Child protection is an inherently challenging area in which to work. The global COVID-19 pandemic has prompted unprecedented actions by governments and businesses around the world and has impacted the daily lives and routines of people across the globe, especially children and youth. The wellbeing of children, youth and their families is the primary focus of our organization, and this is the driving force behind everything we are doing in response to the pandemic. We know that people's mental health and wellbeing is being strained due to the many necessary inconveniences, increased unemployment, high anxiety and an increased risk of isolation given social distancing practices. We know that children and youth thrive in three types of environments: home, school and community. With COVID, two of the environments have been limited or inaccessible to children and youth and we know that for some children and youth, home is not always a safe place. We are also aware that Racialized and Indigenous people are disproportionately affected by the pandemic and its associated consequences.

In the midst of these inherent challenges, we are especially proud of CASO staff for their adaptability and innovation. At a time when it would be understandable to show anxiety or be overwhelmed, their sense of hope and purpose continues to shine through. As an organization, we can also build on our strengths for further inspiration and buoyancy. As we navigate the uncertain future brought on by COVID-19, there is one thing that we know for certain – our collective commitment to the agency's mission and vision remains unwavering.

In presenting this report, I acknowledge the leadership team, the significant contribution of the agency's many valued partners across the Ministry and the community, and the tremendous passion and commitment of my colleagues, particularly those working directly to support our children, youth and their caregiver. I am proud of our achievements in 2019-20 and look forward to the coming years.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Strategic initiatives are key action programs focused on achieving a specific objective or closing a gap between a measure's performance and its target. They provide organization leadership with a framework to review all current projects, define the expected impact on the mission, and focus on those key projects that will cause significant and measurable changes in how the organization functions. The following strategic initiatives represent the critical projects that are key to improving CASO's delivery on its mission and strategic directions that were confirmed in the agency's most recent strategic plan.

The annual update to the service plan identifies the key three (3) areas that will be targeted for the 2020-21 year. It is these areas that are believed will positively influence the other key performance indicators listed in the Society's strategic plan and shift the agency's overall performance.

Fundamentally, the three key areas involve integrating goal setting, measurement control, evaluation and feedback in a single ongoing process aimed at fostering continuous improvement in the creation of value. A performance management framework usually refers to a specific process to accomplish the performance management cycle. These frameworks usually include:

- **Planning** – identifying goals and objectives;
- **Measuring** – assessing extent to which goals and objectives have been achieved;
- **Reporting** – monitoring and reporting of key performance results; and
- **Decision Making** – using the findings to drive improvement/manage opportunities in the organization, department, program, policies or project.¹

The benefits of implementing this framework to guide our annual updates to the service plan are the following:

- Alignment of activities to the goals and objectives of the organization;
- Achievement of organizational goals and objectives through appropriate allocation and focus of resources on performance drivers; and
- Measurement of the organization's progress towards outcomes.

¹ <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/maf-crg/implementation-implementation/fye-eq/fye-eqpr-eng.asp>

The key performance indicators, initiatives and related activities that are currently in place or are planned to address progress in several areas are highlighted in the following table. The Society will be reporting on the initiatives and key activities to the service, governance, HR/Finance committees of the Board to track and monitor progress in these areas.

PART A: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS & TARGETS

The next two sections, Part A and Part B, detail the key performance indicators, an overview of the strategies adopted to help improve the indicator as well as identify the agencies top three priorities for the next year. The following spreadsheet, in Part A, highlights all 21 key performance indicators as set out in the strategic plan. The spreadsheet also details whether CASO has a baseline measurement or not and lays out the performance goal suggestions.

Key Performance Indicator	Strategic Direction	Readiness to develop improvement measures?	Baseline exists?	Measurement strategy proposed?	Goal Suggestions	Strategic Initiative Overview designed to improve KPI results
Client Satisfaction improvements	Excellence and Innovation	Ready	Yes	Improvement over baseline	Proposing 5% improvement in areas of timeliness of calls, reasons CAS involved, & sought opinion of client.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of Safety/Family Finding trajectory • Client Satisfaction improvement
Number of days in care by placement type	Excellence and Innovation	Ready	Yes	Improvement over baseline	<p>Proposing 5% improvement over baseline (fewer days in care)</p> <p>The province has set a potential target of an 85% of children/youth in family-based care (kin, Customary care, foster care) by 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of Safety • Family Finding • Youth Initiative
Number of children and youth placed with customary care and kin service	Excellence and Innovation	Ready	Yes	Improvement over baseline	<p>As a proportion of "out-of-home care" where child/youth requires placement, % increase in familial placements</p> <p>The province has set a potential target of 85% of children/youth in family-based care (kin, Customary care, foster care) by 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of Safety • Family Finding • FNIM initiative

Key Performance Indicator	Strategic Direction	Readiness to develop improvement measures?	Baseline exists?	Measurement strategy proposed?	Goal Suggestions	Strategic Initiative Overview designed to improve KPI results
Decrease in the use of group care and increase the use of family-based care	Excellence and Innovation	Ready	Yes	Improvement over baseline	85% of children/youth will be in family-based care, excluding CCSY and VYSA youth by 2022.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of Safety • Family Finding • Youth Initiative
Recurrence of child protection concerns in a family after an investigation or after ongoing service is provided	Excellence and Innovation	Ready	Yes	Improvement over baseline	Proposing 1% decrease over 2017-2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of Safety
Number of youth exiting care feeling ready and supported	Excellence and Innovation	Near ready	No	Establish a baseline	10 % increase over a baseline which will be established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPS Connect • Youth Initiative • Youth in Transition Initiatives (CAST, FLIP, Quaranteen etc) • Family Finding
Number of youth in care graduating from high school and achieving post secondary degrees or vocational trade certifications	Excellence and Innovation	Near ready	No	Establish a baseline	<p>Our youth graduation rate is higher than the provincial comparator across child welfare agencies.</p> <p>The province has set a potential target establishing that youth in care are as likely to meet credit accumulation standard by</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POD model for learning • Education Championship • Youth Initiative

Key Performance Indicator	Strategic Direction	Readiness to develop improvement measures?	Baseline exists?	Measurement strategy proposed?	Goal Suggestions	Strategic Initiative Overview designed to improve KPI results
					end of grade 9 and on track to graduate by 2025.	
Degree of disproportionality in outcomes for children and youth from diverse communities	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Ready	No	Establish a baseline	Focus on reducing yr/yr disproportionality of children/youth in care by 5% The province has set a potential target of a 25% reduction in FNIM and Black, racialized children in care by 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Umoja review recommendation implementation • Signs of Safety • Family Finding
Number of children and youth placed by CASO within their community	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Near ready	No	Establish a baseline	Kelly/Jayna to get definitions to inform a measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Umoja review recommendation implementation • Signs of Safety • Family Finding • FNIM Initiative
CASO's board, staff, caregivers and volunteers reflect the various communities served	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Ready	Yes	Establish a baseline	Kelly to work with the board on this KPI, set definitions around "representation"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment initiatives • One Vision One Voice
Cultural safety and security plans are embedded in practice and documented for children and youth	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Near ready	No	Establish a standard	100% cultural plans for Black, FNIM children/youth in care found on case records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Umoja review recommendation implementation • FNIM Initiative

Key Performance Indicator	Strategic Direction	Readiness to develop improvement measures?	Baseline exists?	Measurement strategy proposed?	Goal Suggestions	Strategic Initiative Overview designed to improve KPI results
placed outside their community						
Degree of disproportionality in outcomes for children and youth from Indigenous communities	Reconciliation	Near ready	No	Establish a baseline	Focus on reducing yr/yr disproportionality of children/youth in care by 5% The province has set a potential target of a 25% reduction in FNIM and Black, racialized children in care by 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FNIM
Number of customary care agreements and foster families from Indigenous communities	Reconciliation	Near ready	No	Establish a baseline	Need to work with ANCFSAO for Heart and Spirit and what constitutes a customary care agreement (i.e. some agencies inaccurately categorize non-FNIM caregivers as eligible for CC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FNIM initiative
Identified and addressed barriers / potential barriers to hiring and retaining Indigenous staff (administrative policies,	Reconciliation	Not ready	No		Workforce census to be completed in Sept 2020. This should allow us to compare with results of last census	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Census • HR recruitment and retention initiatives • FNIM initiative

Key Performance Indicator	Strategic Direction	Readiness to develop improvement measures?	Baseline exists?	Measurement strategy proposed?	Goal Suggestions	Strategic Initiative Overview designed to improve KPI results
practices, and procedures, and skills, qualifications for occupational categories)						
Number of partnerships CASO has with diverse communities and their service organizations with demonstrated effective partnership service agreements	Reconciliation	Near ready	No	Establish a baseline	Excel listing all partnerships (formal/informal). Will help to identify gaps in partnerships. Contract Evaluation Framework designed to assess value for service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black francophone community EDI groups - • Race and Faith Based Equity Community Group • ED Circle • Ten Oaks • Wabano support to Indigenous families in contact with Montfort • Inuuqatigiit
Stakeholder feedback surveys reflect enhanced partnership, meaningful participation in service planning and collaboration with CASO	Partnerships and Collaboration	Not ready	No	Establish a baseline	This is dependent on stakeholder group being surveyed. For this year, youth stakeholder survey is focused on setting baseline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent on who we decide to survey in our next stakeholder survey(s)
Evidence in documentation that the voice of the child was obtained and reflected in planning	Partnerships and Collaboration	Near ready	No	Establish a baseline	100% youth voice documented in case records.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice of the Child / Youth initiative

Key Performance Indicator	Strategic Direction	Readiness to develop improvement measures?	Baseline exists?	Measurement strategy proposed?	Goal Suggestions	Strategic Initiative Overview designed to improve KPI results
Staff engagement (respectful workplace, internal stakeholder satisfaction, support)	Partnerships and Collaboration	Near ready	No	Establish a baseline	Guarding Minds in 2021- allows us to compare with previous years results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Census • Guarding Minds
Annual assessment of governance performance and practice	Partnerships and Collaboration	Near ready	No	There have been previous board evaluations completed by TNG.	The governance committee is exploring the board self assessment process as well as the board evaluation procedure. Workplan to be established by December 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board evaluation process to be outlined and detailed

PART B: KEY PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

The following section details the activities and strategies related to three key performance indicators that CASO will focus on for upcoming 2020-21 year:

- 1- Client Satisfaction Improvements: The agency has baseline data available from previous client satisfaction survey responses and has done research regarding whether the questions being asked are drivers of better performance. CASO believes that by prioritizing this key performance indicator we will facilitate the embedding of our practices of Signs of Safety and Family Finding and attain our reach goals of empowering families to make the best decisions for their children.
- 2- Decrease in the use of group care and increase the use of family-based care: There are known risks associated with the placement of children and youth in group care resources, particularly OPR group care resources. These risks, as well as recommendations for risk reduction, have been outlined in reports by provincial authorities including the Ministry of Children and Youth Services in 2017², the Office of the Chief Coroner in 2018³, and the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth in 2019⁴. The agency has a very detailed youth initiative strategy that targets not only this key performance indicator but several others including: number of days in care by placement type; number of children and youth placed with customary care and kin service; and number of youth exiting care feel ready and supported. CASO believes that by prioritizing this initiative we can strive towards two of our three goals, namely that children/youth will not grow up in our care and that our children/youth will not exit into loneliness.
- 3- Identified and addressed barriers / potential barriers to hiring and retaining Black and Indigenous staff (administrative policies, practices, and procedures, and skills, qualifications for occupational categories): In the wake of recent anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racist events⁵, we have renewed and enhanced our commitment to address systemic racism in our agency. One concrete and important step we must take in order to accomplish this is to ensure our staff and board are reflective of the community we serve. The Society has engaged in a robust staff census process over the past four months. The results of the census will be compared with those obtained in the 2014 staff census to determine what progress has been made in addressing identified barriers and will help us to make informed decisions regarding our next steps.

² Ministry of Children and Youth Services, *Safe and caring places for children and youth: Ontario's blueprint for building a new system of licensed residential services*, (2017).

³ Office of the Chief Coroner, *Safe with intervention*, (2018).

⁴ Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, *Investigation report: Johnson children's services inc. (Thunder Bay)*, (2019).

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/14/canada-systemic-racism-history>

1.	Client Satisfaction Survey results	Signs of Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SoS requires clarity for the reasons we are involved with a family and what needs to happen to return the child or close the case. It requires that families engage in the development of the safety goals and plans to address the identified protection concerns. These are specific questions asked in the CS survey. We will be asking supervisors to conduct monthly reviews of a sample of cases served by their staff to look for evidence of this work in the case records. • The research states that SoS is positively correlated with increased worker satisfaction. Staff and client satisfaction are positively correlated.
		Family Finding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients will experience being valued for what they have to offer children and included in plans for children regardless of where children reside and grow up. • Client and network engagement is fundamental to Family Finding • A genogram and family network will be developed at the point of file opening • There will be increased focus on Family Finding through the Youth Initiative: all cases where there is a child/youth in group care will be reviewed to determine whether FF occurred.
		Client Satisfaction Workplan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review on structural equation modeling completed in August 2020.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Testing hypothesis that the following three indicators are drivers to client satisfaction improvement;<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Implementing call return to clients within one business day○ Reasons for involvement clearly understood○ Closure• New requirement to be implemented November 2020 that all calls are returned within one business day. Supervisors will be required to audit a sample of cases on a monthly basis for evidence that this occurred.
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2.	Identified and addressed barriers / potential barriers to hiring and retaining Indigenous staff (administrative policies, practices, and procedures, and skills, qualifications for occupational categories)	Staff Census	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Census completed Sept 30, 2020. There was an 82% response rate. • Analysis of census results in November 2020. Design the Equity Quotient based on the staff census results. • Roll out of analysis and results from Jan-March 2021. Consultations and establishing a work plan
		HR Recruitment and Retention Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be revised based on Staff Census information and consultation with FNIM staff groups. • Roll out of the upward feedback pilot in January 2021
		FNIM Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elder support circles for Indigenous staff facilitated every 6 weeks • Phased approach (workplan) to service delivery informed by front line staff, supervisors, Indigenous consultant • Continue to provide opportunities for FNIM staff to provide feedback to leadership about systemic issues through regularly scheduled meetings • Explore education equivalencies • Upward feedback and succession planning/mentoring for leadership positions

3.	Number of youth exiting care feeling ready and supported	GPS Connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth connected with a natural mentor • Youth exposed to community resources • Youth taught life skills (e.g. cooking, budgeting, etc.) • Third cohort to be completed in the fall of 2020 and fourth cohort planned for winter 2021 using virtual platform.
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	<p>Youth in Transition Initiatives (CAST, FLIP, Quaranteen etc.)</p>	<p>These programs are focussed on helping youth in care develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive social networks • Financial literacy / budgeting skills • Life skills <p>The Quaranteen program will run a second cohort from September-December 2020. CAST continue to meet virtually 1X a week.</p>
	<p>Youth initiative – Youth Leaving Care to Independence</p>	<p>The Youth Leaving Care initiative will:</p> <p>Develop a process to ensure that prior to discharge from CASO care, all youth will be provided with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An identified support network with a key contact person and a concrete plan on how the youth will be supported; • Personal documentation and items that belong to them; • An identified list of resources specific to their unique needs, e.g. mental health supports; • An identified list of concrete community resources and contact information, e.g. housing, education, employment and cultural supports; • Develop guidelines to inform requirements for planning for youth who will be discharged to independent living, i.e. timeline requirements for planning; <p>This process will begin in September 2020.</p>
	<p>Family Finding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FF is designed to search for kin placements as well as grow the network to create a supportive community for youth to help them after they leave care. • There will be increased focus on Family Finding through the Youth Initiative: all cases where there

			is a child/youth in group care will be reviewed to determine whether FF occurred.
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CONCLUSION

This annual update to the service plan outlines the Children’s Aid Society of Ottawa’s evolving approach to safety and wellbeing of children, youth and families, the programmatic/operational directions as well as the three (3) key priorities for the upcoming year (2020-21). It identifies where the organisation can make the greatest contribution and where its energy and resources will be invested. It represents the organisation’s serious commitment to its strategic mission, vision and plan.