

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026

Inspiring Possibilities.



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WELCOME

Welcome to the 2023-26 CTRC Strategic Plan.

The past few years have been an exceptional challenge to navigate. However, thanks to our skilled and devoted workforce and Board of Governors, supports and services continued without interruption and people supported were kept well within a climate of unprecedented change. CTRC is an agency tirelessly committed to meet the needs of people supported.

The CTRC 2023-26 Strategic Plan sets a course for the refinement and optimization of services and supports for people with developmental disability that exemplifies our vision and mission toward full citizenship of every person in community. We are committed to leading developmental disability services in the region through fostering people's capabilities, transforming supports and services and strengthening families and community.

We would like to extend great thanks and appreciation for the input and guidance provided by a wide range of stakeholders including individuals supported, families, employees of CTRC, Governors of the Board and community organizations.

We hope you will join us on this exciting journey.



Kim McEntee
Board Chair



Joel McCartney, MA
Executive Director

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Beginning in the fall of 2022, Cochrane Temiskaming Resource Centre, supported by People Minded Business (PMB) a consulting firm with extensive experience working in Developmental Services, undertook a strategic planning process to help prioritize our focus into 2026. PMB researched the environment in which CTRC operates including local, regional, and provincial trends. Using an inclusive process of consultation, collaboration, and co-creation, CTRC learned first-hand about what matters most to over 93 people representing all the key stakeholder groups.



What follows is a summary of what we learned, and what our priorities will be going forward.



A WORD FROM PEOPLE SUPPORTED

CTRC's Mission is to "advance the quality of life of individuals with developmental disabilities through the promotion of supports and services which are person driven, holistic, community based, and accountable", so it's only appropriate to give them the first word before we get too deeply into the analysis.

Among the things they most liked about CTRC was the support they received from staff and from each other. They described their homes as places they enjoyed spending time and that they liked hanging out with the friends they lived with. Two of the three focus group attendees mentioned that they had as a goal to move to an independent living arrangement and that they were working toward that goal. Other things they wanted was to have more outings and more opportunity for activities, though they were not sure what those would be. Overall, they were very happy with the support they received from CTRC and appreciated the people who supported them.

TRENDS AND THEMES

Journey to Belonging: Choice and Inclusion

After extensive research and direct consultation with umbrella organizations, agencies, people with a developmental disability, and their families, Ontario's Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), released its Journey to Belonging (J2B) framework. This document lays out MCCSS's long-term vision for developmental services in Ontario: "People with developmental disabilities are supported by their communities, support networks, and government to belong and live inclusive lives. People are empowered to make choices and live as independently as possible through supports that are person directed, equitable, and sustainable." This is a fundamental transformation of the way developmental services are delivered in Ontario.

Individualized Funding

Individualized Funding (IF) is "an umbrella term for disability supports funded on an individual basis that aims to facilitate self-direction, empowerment, independence and self-determination."¹ Available in a significant number of jurisdictions in the developed world including the UK, New Zealand, Australia, 42 US states and all provinces west of Ontario, in some cases for decades. Research indicates² IF "...enhanced self-determination and autonomy, satisfaction, well-being, enhanced quality of life and more positive service outcomes when compared to more traditional funding mechanisms."

Inflation

This inflation was born out of the COVID crisis and caused by many other issues, continues to be strong. The December 2022 year on year inflation rate was 6.3%, overall down from a peak of 8.1% in June 2022, which was the highest inflation since March 1983. The main impacts as these prices ripple through to CTRC will be in the form of higher wage expectations/demands, increased service operational costs linked to gas, food, utilities, health benefits, etc., and increases to cost of rent, building, and maintenance.

¹ Fleming et al., 2019.

²Stainton, T. (2005). Empowerment and the architecture of rights based social policy. *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities: JOID*, 9(4), 289-298

Funding & Poverty

Across Canada in 2014, 23% of persons with a disability had a low income (compared with 9% of those without a disability). That jumps to 27% for people with a mental-cognitive disability, and 35% of those who have both a physical and cognitive disability. If that person doesn't have a job, that number jumps to 48%. In the last 12 months the provincial government has increased Passport funding by 10% and ODSP payments by 5%, with annual cost of living increases on the latter. There is also optimism as the federal government looks to receive Senate approval for the Canadian Disability Benefit.

Affordable and Available Housing

There are currently over 20,000 people on the DSO (Developmental Service Ontario) waiting list for housing, ranging from complex care and congregate settings to supported independent living. Most of these people will likely never get placed in a supported living setting due to lack of availability. 18% of people experiencing homelessness have an IDD, but Ontario requires another 2M units of affordable housing to meet the projected provincial need by 2030.

Human Resource Crisis

While the DS sector had some challenges with staffing prior to 2020, the 'Great Resignation' began by a fear of catching COVID, a desire to have the freedom to work remotely, and the increase in pay and enticements offered by competitive sectors during an unexpected growth in sales early in the pandemic. For DS sector organizations, which tend to be smaller with fewer career paths this may be challenging to remedy, requiring creativity and working together to open up possibilities. The Ontario DS sector is also challenged by generally lower compensation than other health and human service sectors. Options like the 4-day workweek and partial shifts may also appeal to staff wanting more flexibility and down time.

At the same time COVID accelerated the retirement of the Baby Boomers. In September 2022, Statistics Canada noted that 307,000 people retired in the previous 12 months, a new record high and 50% higher than the previous year.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The emergence of the #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter movements in the latter half of the second decade of this century, and the #Every Child Matters movement with the discovery of the mass graves of Indigenous Children from Residential Schools cemented a long-standing need to improve the response to our changing communities. Immigration is projected to be 86% of the population growth (roughly 4.6M people) in Ontario over the next 25 years, creating a significant influx of different cultural backgrounds into communities across the province.

Timmins is 1 of 11 rural and remote communities across Canada participating in the Regional and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) under a special Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) initiative. As of June 30th, 2022¹, 130 newcomers have arrived across the eleven (11) communities helping address labour shortages. Rural communities employ over 4 million Canadians and account for 30% of GDP. Maintaining a strong labour pool is key and each pilot project community aims to welcome 125 newcomers and their families each year³.

Demographic Changes & Population Growth

Prior to COVID, Ontario's population growth was accelerating, and its population increased by 248,000 (1.7%) from 2018 to 2019.⁴ While the growth is expected to slow to about 1% by 2046 (about 190,000 annually) Ontario's population should have increased to ~20M by then. At current rates this represents an increase of ~55,000 people with an IDD.

Ontario's Northeast continues to experience an overall decrease in its population. Reaching a population high of roughly 582,000 in 1996, it was 510,000 in 2021. Both Cochrane and Temiskaming have experienced about 2% decreases in population from 2016, while experiencing an aging of its population. Relative to the rest of the province, Cochrane and Temiskaming show low levels of immigration. In contrast, both regions show higher levels of individuals identifying as Indigenous compared to the rest of the province.

³ <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/08/expanding-the-benefits-of-immigration-in-rural-and-northern-communities.html>

⁴ www.ontario.ca/document/ontarios-long-term-report-economy/chapter-1-demographic-trends-and-projections

Aging and Developmental Services

The key stakeholders in Developmental Services – employees (as discussed above), families, and the people supported – are aging in line with the general population. As the last Baby Boomers turn 65 in 2029, the people that were de-institutionalized two to three decades ago are now in or close to their senior years. People with IDD are living longer – there's been a 5% increase in 50-to-64-year old's representing 11,000 adults with IDD in Ontario.

Technology, Hybrid Services, and Digital Inclusion

The 'Hybrid Model' of remote and in-person supports and services will outlast the pandemic. In its work with people supported and families, PMB hears a strong desire to keep some form of digital supports. Digital engagement during COVID-19 provided emotional wellbeing among other benefits. At the same time general awareness of digital poverty and digital exclusion of people with an intellectual disability was exacerbated during the pandemic for a variety of reasons. What has become clear during the pandemic is for digital inclusion to be part of authentic community inclusion, people must have access to the tools, training, and support necessary to make this happen.

Supporting Staff Wellness

Since April 2020, the mental health of Canadians is 10 points (or lower) than the pre-pandemic benchmark. 42% of Canadians feel mentally and physically exhausted, and 28% find it difficult to disconnect after work hours. And these results are also about 50% worse for female employees, especially those with children. These stats mirror what some staff at CTRC shared with the authors about their own lives and their concern for one another. They (as well as 70% of Canadians according to the Mental Health Commission of Canada) want their wellness to be made a meaningful priority and in a situation of decreased labour supply, CTRC may wish to ensure that staff feel cared for and respected; CTRC couldn't function without them.

Waitlists

The 2020 Ontario Auditor General's Report highlighted that the number of people waiting for Passport funding had grown by 32%, from over 14,800 in 2015/16 to almost 19,500 in 2019/20 (funding for this program increased from \$184.6 million in 2015/16 to \$434.1 million in 2019/20). The same report showed the number of people waiting for agency supportive services after receiving a needs assessment grew by 80%, from almost 19,000 in 2015/16 to almost 34,200 in 2019/20.

ASSETS

Each organization has a unique ability to act on the future, built on the resources, assets, and strengths (e.g., financial, people & culture, technology, operations, services, etc.) it can deploy against the challenges it is currently facing and the opportunities it is being presented with. Below are frequently mentioned core assets and strengths that surfaced via stakeholder input. They are central to the ongoing advancement and sustainability of CTRC.

Excellent Staff

CTRC's staff were consistently mentioned across all stakeholders as highly skilled, passionate, and dedicated. Staff members frequently said that the individuals they support, and their co-workers were the best things about their jobs. Community partners shared that CTRC staff are easy to work with, accessible, and responsive to inquiries, while families and individuals supported described staff members as largely being caring, compassionate, and helpful.

Professional Resource Team

CTRC's Professional Resource Team was described as a significant asset for both the organization and the community. Psychological services, speech and language, and other supports can be difficult for many organizations to maintain, so having them available to the Cochrane and Timiskaming districts via CTRC was describe as crucial.

Quality Support to High Needs Individuals

Stemming in part from its history as an institutional facility, as well as its in-house PRT, CTRC was viewed as better qualified at providing support to individuals with more complex needs than some of the other DS organizations in the region. As outlined in the trends above, organizations are having to support individuals with increasingly complex needs, and that is often only those in crisis who end up being admitted. As such, CTRC's expertise is an incredibly valuable resource.

Leader in the Region

CTRC was frequently described as a leader among the DS organizations in the region. The expertise housed within CTRC were a valuable resource to the region. Further, CTRC

and its Executive Director were described as a conduit of updates and information back to the region on sector developments from conferences and other events.

Competitive Compensation

Both in the staff focus groups and surveys, total compensation was regularly cited as something staff liked about working at CTRC. While the pay was described as competitive, other benefits, such as vacation, maternity leave top-ups, flexible work opportunities, and more contributed to staff satisfaction.

CTRC'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

On February 6th and 8th, 2023, the Board of Directors and Senior Leadership of CTRC came together and reviewed PMB's analysis of the situation, as well as discussing the opportunities identified during the planning process. The Board then worked together to define and refine the set of strategic priorities for Cochrane Temiskaming Resource Centre from 2023-2026.

1. Rethink and Redesign the Way We Care.

In a dynamic and complex world, we cannot solely rely on the way we've always done things. CTRC will strengthen the most impactful services and adapt and evolve the others to meet the needs of the people we support and their families while preparing for Developmental Services Sector reforms.

- Become the regional leader in the delivery of psychological, speech and language, pathology, case management, and Infant and Child Development Services.
- Increase our fee for service offerings (Passport and private funding).
- Develop a PCP/ISP process that improves both the development and implementation of meaningful plans.
- Deliver equitable services to the remote communities we support.

2. Creating a More Meaningful and Supportive Work Experience.

Many of our people are feeling exhausted and are facing increasingly complex needs of individuals we support. CTRC will provide our teams with the tools they need and a supportive environment that encourages them to use their knowledge and skills.

- Develop stronger employee morale with employees feeling supported, effective, and rested.
- Identify and develop training, tools, and technology for our teams to meet the needs of the organization and the people it supports.

3. Build Capacity in Families and Communities.

Families supported by CTRC are looking for more information, support, and connections to their peers. Working together with families and communities, we will identify needs and co-design ways to share information, connect families, and build their capacity to support loved ones and themselves.

- Support the development of peer, parent, and family groups, building on virtual and distance-based supports for remote communities.
- Improve communication between families or individuals and CTRC.