



## Business Plan: 2019-2020

### Introduction

The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton (CCAS of Hamilton) is committed to protecting the children and youth of our Catholic community from abuse and neglect. We work in collaboration with community partners through our community-based lens to ensure the well-being of children and youth and to strengthen the capacity of families in the Hamilton community. The Society has operated for 65 years and continues to evolve and adjust based on the needs of our local community and our legislative requirements. The Society's professional and well trained staff provides a complete range of child protection services to children, youth and families.

The 2019-2020 Business Plan for the CCAS of Hamilton examines the provincial context, local strategic directions, work processes, pressures and operational requirements in order to determine the opportunities and/or challenges that the organization should address over the 2019-2020 year.

To accomplish this, the agency looks back over the past year, examining corporate and services performance over the past year, including quality assurance, organizational development accomplishments, strategic activities and results as well as provincial influences. We developed the 2019-20 organizational business plan based on our Catholic mission, strategic map and organizational priorities.

### Mandate

Children's Aid Societies are independently governed agencies that are responsible for providing mandatory and critical services, which are a safety net for the most vulnerable members of our society – infants, children and youth who are at risk of or are experiencing physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse, neglect or abandonment. CASs are mandated to intervene if a caregiver cannot adequately care for or provide for a child.

Children's Aid Societies protect and safeguard most children while they remain with their families in the community. This family-based support takes the form of intensive assessments and service plans, contacts with numerous other professionals and service providers, as well as ongoing supervision of the child while he/she remains in the family home. These are complex cases in which child protection concerns have been verified and there are risks of, or actual, abuse and neglect. As such, the work must be performed by skilled, qualified child welfare staff. Serving these children in the context of the home – when it is safe to do so – is consistent with the legislative and regulatory mandate and with the policy direction of government.

Child Welfare agencies such as ours, are legislated to perform certain functions under the provisions of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA)*. On April 30, 2018, the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*, came into force. This legislation provides a strong foundation to support the transformations underway to improve the service experience for children, youth and their families with particular attention to the following:

- Putting children and youth at the centre of decision making by outlining a clear set of rights that apply to all children and youth receiving services. These rights include the right for children and youth to participate in decisions that affect them and to have their voices heard.
- Making services more inclusive and culturally appropriate for all children and youth by requiring service providers to take into account the many elements of a child or youth's identity when making decisions about their care – including ancestry, language, sexual orientation, race, creed, disability, gender identity and gender expression.
- Supporting better outcomes for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and youth by:

Replacing outdated terms with more inclusive language that includes all First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and youth.

Requiring children's aid societies to make all reasonable efforts to pursue a plan for customary care for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and youth in need of protection.

Requiring service providers to recognize the cultures, heritages, traditions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and their families, their connection to their communities and the concept of the extended family when providing services.

- Supporting better outcomes for Black and African Canadian children and youth, including:

Implementing the One Vision One Voice plan in children's aid societies.

- Requiring children's aid societies on the Child Protection Information Network (CPIN) to collect self-reported identity-based data from children and youth, including information on race, ethnic and cultural origin, and religion or spiritual affiliation.
- Collecting identity-based data will help to better understand who is receiving care and support planning across the provincial child welfare system and at individual societies.
- Supporting better outcomes for LGBT2SQ children and youth, including:

The release of a resource guide to support the child welfare sector to respond to the needs of LGBT2SQ children and youth.

The resource guide provides practical information and tools to help child welfare workers, caregivers, children's aid societies and residential service providers better serve LGBT2SQ children and youth when they are coming into care, when they are in care and when they are transitioning out of care.

The mandate of CASs, as described in this section of the *CYFSA*, also includes the following functions:

- Investigate allegations or evidence that children who are under the age of sixteen years or are in the society's care or under its supervision may be in need of protection;
- Protect, where necessary, children who are under the age of sixteen years or are in the society's care or under its supervision;
- Provide a full range of child protection services to 16 and 17 year old youth to increase protection services for more vulnerable youth in unsafe living conditions, to support their education and to reduce homelessness and human trafficking;;
- Provide guidance, counselling and other services to families for protecting children or for the prevention of circumstances requiring the protection of children;
- Provide care for children assigned or committed to its care under this Act;
- Supervise children assigned to its supervision under this Act;
- Place children for adoption under Part VII; and,
- Perform any other duties given to it by this or any other Act.

This legislation and the supporting regulations, directives and standards prescribe specific and detailed requirements for what services CASs must provide, how they must provide these services, including services to Aboriginal children and families and French language services, as well as the timelines in which these mandatory services must be provided.

## Vision, Values and Strategic Direction

### Our Vision

Safe and Thriving Children and Youth. Empowered Families. Stronger Communities.

### Our Mission

Guided by Catholic values and teachings, we serve and offer bilingual (English/French) services to children and youth within the Hamilton community by protecting their safety and well-being, strengthening their families and nurturing lifelong relationships.

### Our Values

Compassion and caring for one another and the people we serve

Equity and Inclusion

Family, church and community partnerships

Shared Accountability

Social Justice

Success for Children, Youth and Families

Transparent communication and collaboration

## CCASH Strategic Directions

Our ongoing priority is supporting the safety, permanency and well-being of children and youth in the family and community. To achieve this CCAS of Hamilton is committed to a strategic plan that embodies the immense power of collaboration. The plan builds on our assets and directs our efforts and resources towards our most critical priorities.

The strategic planning approach we use is the Balanced Scorecard methodology. This model identifies strategic directions in direct alignment with our vision and mission from four distinct pillars:

1. Brighter Futures
2. Passionate and Prepared Team
3. Excellence in All We Do
4. Public and Stakeholder Confidence.

Goals are established to link with the strategic directions and ultimately performance indicators are created that allow us to measure our progress once we move to implementing the plan.

## Key Activities supporting Strategic Directions for 2019-2020

CCAS of Hamilton has identified the following three initiatives as our Priority Projects for 2019-20:

Strategic Direction Goals for Excellence in All We Do

- Implementation of the Signs of Safety across the organization.
- Diversity, Inclusivity and Equity with particular attention to our Indigenous Reconciliation and One Vision One Voice commitments.
- Strengthening our Faith-Based Services

Each of these priority projects is aligned with provincial priorities in child welfare and will impact all staff across the organization. CCAS of Hamilton will continue to adopt change management strategies to support the successful achievement of these priorities.

## Our Key Accomplishments in 2018-2019

A Service Plan advancing the strategic priorities is developed annually and incorporates key projects to support the Strategy Map on an annual basis. The Service Plan meets the requirements of the Accountability Agreement with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

As an agency we continue to move key initiatives forward. Throughout the year the overriding objective has been maintaining capacity for quality service delivery and improved outcomes in an environment of reduced funding and increased administrative burden. This past year our key projects emanating from the Strategic Map were in three key pillars:

*Excellence in All We Do*

- Child, Youth and Family Services Act Implementation

*Passionate and Prepared Team*

- Child Protection Information Network Sustainment
- Signs of Safety Practice Model Implementation

*Public and Stakeholder Confidence*

- Diversity, Inclusivity & Equity (Indigenous Commitments and One Vision One Voice)

All the projects achieved good outcomes in moving the agency forward and each of the project outcomes is outlined as follows:

### **Child, Youth and Family Services Act Implementation**

The Society staff have been actively engaged in the implementation of the new Act in the first year since proclamation in all aspects of policy, procedure, practice and in particular training.

All direct service staff and supervisors were oriented on the CYFSA and practice implications. Training was delivered to direct service staff on children's rights, children's participation in decision making and understanding and supporting a child's identity. Other training has occurred with resource parents. Key stakeholders were provided information on the CYFSA such as the Hamilton Police, Indigenous agencies and other key sectors that intersect with child welfare.

Legislation regarding extending the age of protection to 16 & 17 year olds came into effect in January 2018 and a Community Partnership Committee was formed and continues to meet bi-monthly on how the community will be providing service to this age group.

The leadership team continues to review the legislation and regulations to determine changes that need to occur in practice. Finally, the agency is actively working to implement Part X of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, which will come into effect on January 1, 2020 that will establish new rules for the collection, use, and disclosure of, and access to, personal information held by the agency.

### **Signs of Safety Practice Model Implementation**

Signs of Safety is a practice approach to engage families, youth and children in decision making and one of the agency's key strategic direction in the delivery of services. Through the use of various tools and inquisitive questioning, child protection staff can become clear about our concerns, identify strengths and develop robust safety and case plans with families, youth and children.

Our agency has made a significant investment to adopt this approach. All front line and supervisory staff have attended training opportunities to learn and practice Signs of Safety. There has been significant uptake in protection services, and changes are noticeable in file documentation and interactions with families. Enhanced collaboration has created better outcomes for families, youth and children.

The Child, Youth and Family Services Act focuses on the rights and voice of youth and children. Signs of Safety practice is consistent with our legislative requirements and recognizes the importance of the involvement of youth and children in planning for their safety and achieving their goals.

Enhanced collaboration with families promotes a better understanding of their circumstances and the barriers to success. Our Signs of Safety initiative will include the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion principles and practices that our agency strives to achieve.

Our measure of success was to ensure that staff are utilizing the Signs of Safety framework more regularly in documentation and internal conferences, have identified the strengths and benefits of using a Signs of Safety approach with families

### **Child Protection Information System Sustainment (CPIN)**

The agency continues to support staff and develop tools that will develop their expertise, confidence and shared responsibility in the use of CPIN. Staff continue to be provided with the broader context of CPIN through participation in the Harmonized Business and New Release processes to garner a better understanding of the enterprise system and shared responsibility to the system to keep children and youth safe.

### **Diversity, Inclusivity & Equity (Indigenous Commitments and One Vision One Voice)**

Equity work continues to be a focus of execution in our work as we continue to increase service effectiveness, in particular to reduce the number of Indigenous and Black Youth in care, while supporting other marginalized service recipients.

The agency has committed and hired staff (an Indigenous Lead and One Vision One Voice Coordinator) to move forward on the key activities to support our equity service practices. The agency has also developed training curriculum for staff to address key issues of diversity, inclusion and equity. As an agency we are actively engaged in unlearning racism and discussing whiteness in relationship to racism in the Child Welfare sector. Finally the Employee Resource Groups (French Language Services, LGBTQ2S+, African-Canadian, Indigenous, and Newcomer-Immigrant) continue to be supported by the board and leadership. The groups provide important support to achieving equity and inclusion of marginalized groups.

## Contact Information

For more information about CCAS of Hamilton, please visit our website at:  
[www.hamiltonccas.on.ca](http://www.hamiltonccas.on.ca)

For media inquiries, please contact:

Rocco Gizzarelli, Executive Director

905-525-2012 x 3110