



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2023-2027

**RECRUITMENT
and RETENTION**



**OPERATIONAL
RESPONSIVENESS**



CONNECTION



HOUSING



Message from CLS Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer

Our organization was founded in the 1970s by a group of parents who dreamed of a better, more inclusive future for their children. Together they fought to move their loved ones out of Woodlands and into community. For Community Living Society (CLS), this history lives on in everything we do, and the strategic planning process was no exception. During interviews and focus groups, our stakeholders were clear that our past must continue to inform our future work as we act to achieve true community inclusion for all and **Support People to Live as Full Citizens**.

At the heart of this Plan is the time, energy, and honesty of nearly 100 people. In partnership with an external facilitator, we spoke to supported individuals, families, employees, our leadership team, our Board of Directors, and partner organizations. These conversations were informative and revealing, and we are grateful to everyone who participated. Over the course of our outreach, we learned about CLS' core strengths and opportunities for change and evolution. Across all conversations, several key themes emerged including:

1. CLS and the community living sector are facing unprecedented recruitment and retention challenges that must be addressed immediately.
2. Housing is top of mind for our stakeholders – specifically how we create more independent housing solutions for individuals and, ensure seniors can age comfortably in place.
3. Three years into a world pandemic with COVID-19, supported individuals are eager to get back into community and rebuild genuine connections.
4. CLS is a large organization with broad reach. Its systems and processes need updating, modernizing, and streamlining so that the organization can continue to best support individuals and families.

This plan is designed to strengthen organizational foundations and renew outreach after three years of COVID-19. We are excited by our strategic priorities, and the opportunity to make positive and meaningful change for the individuals we support in the ways that matter most to them.

Sincerely,



Darius Maze
Board Chair



Janice Barr
CEO



We acknowledge that the work of the CLS takes place on the traditional and unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples who have been stewards of this land since time immemorial. It is important that we recognize our privilege to work, learn and live on these traditional lands.

Our Story

In the 1970s, a small group of parents with children then living in Woodlands came together to champion a new vision for their loved ones – one that would see their children leave institutional life in favour of receiving the direct funding and supports needed to live as full citizens in their home communities. To achieve this, the Woodlands Parents' Group (as it was known) created the Community Living Society – an organization dedicated to identifying, developing and providing supports to help people with disability live full, empowered, self-determined and inclusive lives within their communities.

Today, thanks to the ongoing leadership of families and self-advocates, the guidance of our dedicated Board, and our team of skilled and passionate employees, the Community Living Society (CLS) is a leader in the provision of unique and flexible support services for people with intellectual disabilities and acquired brain injuries.

The CLS provides services to adults (over the age of 19) with an Intellectual Disability (ID – previously referred to as Developmental Disability (DD)), Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) or Personalized Supports Initiative (PSI) designation. Currently, CLS provides support to 450 individuals and their families with a workforce of approximately 500 employees. The CLS is dedicated to connecting people with the unique services and supports they need to live a full, happy, empowered life.

The CLS offers a wide range of home and community-based supports, individual (or shared) support to access the community, learn independence skills or find paid or volunteer work.



Vision, Mission and Values

The Strategic Planning process and directions are built on the strong foundation of our Vision, Mission and Values which will remain unchanged as we endeavor to implement our new Strategic Plan over the next five years.

VISION: What we are trying to achieve.

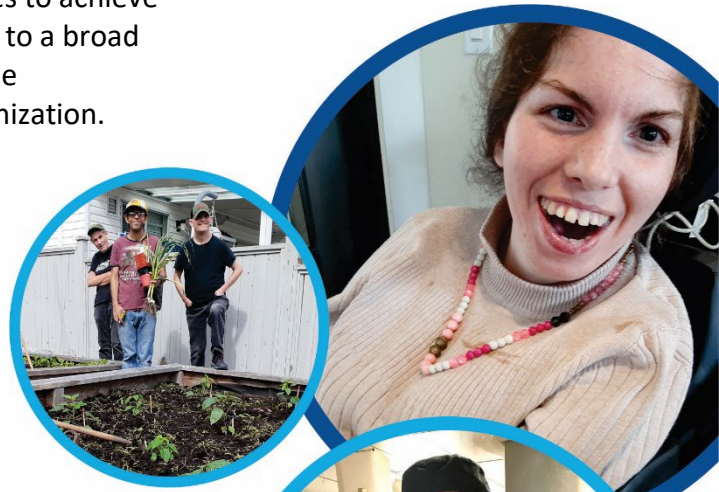
A vision statement identifies what an organization hopes to achieve through its actions. Importantly, vision statements look to a broad social outcome, the achievement of which is not the sole responsibility, or within the capacity of, any single organization.

“Communities where every person lives with dignity and enjoys a full life”.

MISSION: How we will contribute to achieving our vision.

A mission statement guides an organization’s actions, spells out its overall goal, provides direction and focuses decision-making at all levels. It provides the context within which an organization’s strategies are formed and carried out.

“Supporting people to live as full citizens”.



VALUES: The beliefs that will guide our actions.

Values are the building blocks of our behaviour and provide a focus for how we approach our work. They can also inspire behaviour that creates a dynamic and performance-oriented organization.

Accordingly, the values of respect, community, integrity and accountability will guide our efforts in everything we do.



RESPECT

- Every person is a unique individual, with strengths, abilities and value.
 - Making choices is a right, with support as necessary from friends, family and trusted advisors.
 - Each person is entitled to live with dignity and equality in a safe and secure environment.
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COMMUNITY

- Community is where we are known as individuals and as citizens.
 - Each community is strengthened by the inclusion of people from all walks of life.
 - We support social change that contributes to stronger, healthier communities for everyone.
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INTEGRITY

- We are honest and dependable in our interactions with others.
 - We support staff through training and engagement to advance our Mission.
 - Best practices guide our efforts to provide flexible and responsive supports and services.
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ACCOUNTABILITY

- Personal outcomes of the people we serve guide decision making.
- We use feedback to learn, grow and improve performance.

Development of this Strategic Plan

Using an Appreciative Inquiry Process, CLS worked with an external facilitator to engage nearly 100 stakeholders in conversations about the organization over the next five years. In a series of interviews and focus groups, people were asked to share:

- Strengths of the organization – what does CLS do well?
- Opportunities – what opportunities exist for growth, change and improvement?
- Aspirations – what are the greatest hopes and dreams for the individuals CLS supports, and their families/networks?
- Results – how do we measure progress on our opportunities and aspirations?

Conversations and questions were customized for each audience – as was the form of engagement. For example, most conversations were held in a group setting but for families we offered individual phone or Zoom calls to better suit busy work/life schedules.



Planning Context

The first step in creating this Strategic Plan was to review different factors that have the potential to impact our success in executing this plan. These factors, which capture the context in which we will work over the next five years, are presented below.

Changes in the Community Living Sector

There is a growing recognition in Canada and internationally that our efforts and resources have not resulted in achieving full citizenship for many individuals with intellectual disabilities. Some changes in perspective now occurring in the community living sector are:

- “Real Work for Real Pay” - is the greatest access to meaningful involvement and inclusion. Significant efforts and resources have been committed over the last few years to advance employment opportunities for people with an intellectual disability.
- The world pandemic has changed the way we work, live, and provide support. Technology has become more integrated into our daily life and work. This has also created a “digital divide” for many people with an intellectual disability who may not have access to, or the ability to use, the technology.
- The younger generation has had access to many more opportunities and support in their early years. Consequently, their expectations for services and support are different from previous generations. Supported and Independent Living and Employment Services are increasingly becoming preferred models of support for younger people with an intellectual disability.

Changes in Government Policy, Legislation and Regulations

We do not anticipate any major changes in government policy, legislation or regulation related to community living services or the provision of other social services at this time. However, we will continue to monitor the following issues:

- Public funding is likely to increase at a rate that is lower than the growing rate of individuals and families seeking funded services.
- The current provincial government, which has been in power since 2017, has made many changes and decisions to support a unionized workforce. Many of these decisions have benefited the unionized public sector but have not been extended to the non-union sector that is also funded by provincial government. These decisions have placed significant strain on the recruitment and retention efforts of non-union organizations providing the same social services as their unionized counterparts.
- All levels of government have recognized the need to increase support and funding for the development of affordable housing. These commitments are expected to benefit people with intellectual disabilities.

Demographic and Societal Changes

Several demographic trends are likely to shape our work in the coming years. While these are largely focused on the individuals we support, some will be reflected in our employees and external partners. A few of these trends include:

- The general population is aging and so are the people we support. This will challenge us to modify our current service to accommodate people's changing needs.
- The nature of nuclear families, and their ability and interest in engaging with us, is changing. Engagement will need to be easier and less time-consuming for families, many of whom are already stretched with competing demands.
- Employees are aging and, for some, their jobs may become more physically challenging. We need to find ways to address this potential conflict.
- The families of older individuals we support are also aging. They need to be engaged with sensitivity because they may fear losing what they have fought to put in place for their loved ones.
- Increasingly our Society is recognizing and learning about the tragic impact of colonization on the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. In the coming years, CLS will need to make a conscious commitment and take meaningful actions to move us towards truth and reconciliation.
- The broader community is becoming increasingly multi-cultural, as are the individuals we support. This will require us to provide services that are not only responsive, but also culturally accessible.

Economic Trends

In the past few years, the economy has experienced significant turbulence globally and locally. There is no sign of this changing in the next few years. Post pandemic inflation has significantly impacted the people we support and staff alike. The CLS has made some operational changes to enhance our economic sustainability. While we are in a stable position to weather ongoing economic uncertainty, we recognize that:

- Resources will continue to be an issue, requiring us to focus on being cost effective.
- The increased cost of living in Vancouver (and the suburbs and Fraser Valley to some extent) will increase financial pressures on our employees and the people we support. Younger employees living in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland find it too expensive and are moving to areas that are less expensive. This has created labour shortages in some communities.

Technological Trends

Technology presents both opportunities and challenges. Technology is an increasingly important aspect of our work. We will have to balance a host of issues such as:

- Many of the work processes and reporting requirements are now fully reliant on technology. CLS must continue to update and remain current in this changing work environment.
- With the constant need to update and replace technology, we will need to address how this can be sustainably funded.
- Although technology is becoming more affordable and increasingly seen as a "must have", many individuals we support have not had access to new technology.
- Training for employees and supported individuals to use technology appropriately is required to maximize its potential.
- Risks to supported individuals include privacy, and physical and emotional safety. These will need to be mitigated.

Our Plan

Over the course of listening to dozens of conversations and reading hundreds of pages of session notes, core themes became clear including:

1. Sector challenges with recruitment and retention are impacting CLS. Importantly, for the first time in our strategic planning history, supported individuals and families were nearly unanimous in their feedback on the need for enhanced hiring efforts.
2. Housing is a critical issue for supported individuals and families. Both groups spoke of the need for more innovative housing solutions that will allow some people to live more independently and others to age comfortably in place.
3. After three years of COVID-19, supported individuals and employees are keen to reconnect with community, rebuild genuine friendships and engage in a wider variety of activities than ever before.
4. CLS is a large organization with a broad reach. For us to continue delivering supports and services at the highest quality, the organization must invest in modernizing, streamlining, and updating its systems, technologies, and processes.

Across all sessions and interviews, stakeholders also shared the need for enhanced communications at CLS, and an organizational commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging that should drive every priority and tactical decision over the next five years and beyond.

Strategic Direction #1: Recruitment and Retention - At CLS, we recognize our recruitment and retention efforts directly impact our ability to support individuals and families. We are committed to enhancing recruitment and retention to ensure prospective candidates want to work with us and existing staff members want to stay with us.

Strategic Direction #2: Housing - We believe every person deserves a safe, inclusive, welcoming, and dignified place to live. CLS wants to create innovative housing solutions that meet the specific and ongoing needs of the individuals and families we support. We know that some people want more independent housing solutions while others are looking to age comfortably in place.

Strategic Direction #3: Connection - The individuals we support are clear in their desire for greater connection and friendship. The last three years of COVID-19 have made genuine connection much harder to maintain. CLS wants to recalibrate and rededicate ourselves to being collaborative, creative, and thoughtful as we develop programs and projects that nurture genuine friendships, connections, and a true sense of belonging for supported individuals.

Strategic Direction #4: Operational Responsiveness - CLS is a large organization with broad reach. As we move forward, CLS wants to enhance operational responsiveness by streamlining, and modernizing the systems and processes we use to deliver our services. By doing this work, we can best advocate for and support individuals and families.

All strategic priorities are unpinned by an unwavering commitment to:

- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging.
- Meaningful action towards Indigenous reconciliation and self-education.
- Strategic, accessible, and plain language communications.

2023-2027 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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Strategic, accessible, and plain language communications

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OPERATIONAL RESPONSIVENESS

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Communities
where every person
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Next Steps

Actions the CLS will take to advance the strategic directions in this plan include:

- The Strategic Plan, including a plain language version, will be posted to the CLS website and actively communicated to supported individuals, families, employees, stakeholders and the broader community through the CLS newsletter, posters, video address from the CEO, etc.
- Management will cross-reference the strategic directions with the current goals in the Business Improvement Plan. Additional operational goals will be developed following this process to address any gaps.
- Operational goals that relate to the Strategic Plan will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors.
- The Board of Directors will receive an annual update on the Strategic Plan, including the completion operational goals and any additional goals added to the Business Improvement Plan that relate to the Strategic Plan.
- The annual budget process will consider cost implications related to the implementation of operational goals related to the Strategic Plan.

