



Strategic Plan

APRIL 2017



OUR *Vision*

EQUALITY THAT PROMOTES A WOMAN'S SENSE OF SELF IN HER JOURNEY THROUGH LIVED EXPERIENCE TOWARDS INFINITE POTENTIAL.

OUR *Mission*

THE ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETY OF CALGARY OFFERS PATHWAYS TO HEALING, THROUGH SUPPORTS AND ADVOCACY, FOR WOMEN WHO ARE AFFECTED BY SYSTEMIC SOCIAL ISSUES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR CRIMINALIZATION.

OUR *Purpose*

TO MAKE CALGARY A BETTER PLACE BY ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF POVERTY, ADDICTION, HOMELESSNESS AND TRAUMA. WE ARE COMMITTED TO BREAKING THE CYCLE OF POVERTY AND DEPENDENCY FOR VULNERABLE WOMEN AND YOUTH AND SUPPORTING THEM TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES.

STRATEGIC PLAN *Process*

The last strategic plan for the Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary (EFry) was written in 2012 and focused on key recommendations around Board practices to support the operational needs of the agency. In 2016 we began the process of forging a larger scale strategic plan that would look at the agency, board, community, as well as our national membership of the EFrys across Canada that are affiliated with the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS) to address recommendations that are meant to focus on community collective impact.

A review of all the available strategic plans for Canadian Elizabeth Fry Societies was conducted to identify the similarities and differences to EFry Calgary. In addition an internal review of documents, board binders, annual general reports and financials provided further data to compare to the agency and support the development for the direction of the organization. Additional documents were researched within the agency including evaluation methods, program documents and processes, as well as training manuals.

A SWOT analysis was conducted with administration, staff, volunteers, clients and board of directors that were both conducted individually and in groups to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the agency.

An external environmental analysis was conducted as well reviewing key statistics relative to the work that we do to understand changes in the Macro Environment that will impact sustainability of the Agency the EFry Calgary's ability to achieve measurable outcomes from our work.

A survey was conducted to community partners with 49 responses that contributed to an understanding of how the community perceives the agency and what areas may be important to build upon or to market.

The final step of the strategic planning process consisted of identifying local, regional and national documents and plans, legislation, and community initiatives that had direct effect upon the agency and build upon the recommendations to support a collaborative focus in the community as a priority for our future work on an organizational level.

OUR *Commitment*

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary is committed to utilizing the recommendations of the plan as a priority for our work from a board and operational level. Currently in the city there are several initiatives and plans that affect the overall work of non-profit agencies in Calgary. EFry identifies the importance of understanding how we fit within the existing structure and how as an agency that provides unique services and supports we can integrate ourselves more efficiently within the networks of the non-profit sector.

In addition we are committed to a concentrated focus on Indigenous client populations and the importance of recognizing and aligning our agency structures towards an Indigenous worldview utilizing parallel organizational systems to increase our capacity in working with Indigenous populations. The Truth and Reconciliation Recommendations and the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples are essential to supporting and guiding future work of the agency.

EVALUATION & *Reporting*

Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary will align evaluation processes to ensure that recommendations of the 2017 Strategic Plan will be incorporated into our evaluation processes in order that we may be able to report annually upon our progress.



KATELYN LUCAS
Executive Director



VIRGINIA ASHLEY
Board President

OUR *Work*

“We are honoured to carry on the legacy of Elizabeth Fry, a passionate advocate for those without a voice and champion of prison reform for women. Born in 1780... Elizabeth Fry worked tirelessly for the humane treatment of prisoners, and was successful in striking reforms, greatly improving the way in which women and children were treated in London’s Newgate Prison. Since 1965, the Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary has helped hundreds of thousands of women in prisons and in our community to find new hope and rebuild their lives”

At the Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary we recognize that many women struggle with trauma and abuse and long-term poverty which often traps them in a continuous cycle of vulnerability and marginalization. We also recognize that the women we support are mothers, sisters, daughters and friends first and are strong and resilient. Our work is to challenge structural barriers caused by discrimination, inequity and injustice and to bridge gaps and help youth, women and their children to change their futures.

“The cultural programs are very important... they provide a sense of identity and belonging”

- QUOTE FROM A WOMAN ACCESSING EFRY

Our organization has been recognized as a leader in ensuring Indigenous worldviews and ways of being are at the forefront of our organizational culture, approach, goals and priorities. Women who come to the Elizabeth Fry Society are supported to reconnect with their cultural identity, address intergenerational trauma, and begin the healing journey. We support our women with Indigenous ceremonies, cultural teachings, monthly sweatlodges, and conversations with Elders.

“Elizabeth Fry’s programs are inclusive, creative and important... staff are non-judgmental and inclusive, meeting women where they are at”

- QUOTE FROM A COMMUNITY PARTNER

We strive to provide an inclusive and non-judgemental atmosphere that embraces diversity of culture, race, gender and sexual orientation. All of our work is guided by the knowledge that women are valued, deserve respect and to be treated with dignity.

We recognize the need to collaborate and partner with organizations and community initiatives working towards reducing poverty and homelessness and those who are supporting healing and reconciliation for Indigenous peoples.

“Elizabeth Fry has strong leadership and they play an important role in the community.”

- QUOTE FROM A PARTNER ORGANIZATION

OUR *Commitment*

Our strengths lie within our people and our commitment.

“The diverse educational and work background of the EFry staff creates an environment where there is a wealth of knowledge within the organization that staff can rely on to provide services... There is great collaboration... resulting in a cohesive and effective approach to supporting women”

- QUOTE FROM A PARTNER ORGANIZATION

“Staff are friendly and dependable. No matter what issues women face, they know they can rely on EFry staff to help resolve them”

- QUOTE FROM A WOMAN ACCESSING EFry

THE CONTEXT THAT WE WORK *Within*

Calgary is both a city of opportunity and of struggle. A downturn in the economy has led to a rise in unemployment rates, domestic violence rates and the demand for services including basic needs. The downturn increases demand for services and supports for people who are vulnerable but also limits the availability of public and private funds to respond.

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary will...

- Continue to be leader in Indigenous ways of being by embedding cultural awareness and safety within our work and our decision making.
- Continue to be a learning organization by evaluating and adapting our programs towards best practice approaches.
- Continue to follow exemplary financial practices and fiscal prudence.
- Continue to expand our community connections and partnerships to leverage resources for women and youth.
- Continue to be champions and provide a voice for women and youth who are marginalized by poverty and who are trapped by exclusionary systems and ideologies.

“Eighty percent of women are convicted of non-violent drug or property crimes. The motivation of many of these crimes is often... related to the prevalent social and economic conditions of poverty... mothers constitute more than eighty percent of the women in prison. When mothers do time, their children do time with them... [Incarcerating women]... prevents them from playing any role in the lives of their children as they grow... Children of incarcerated mothers are more prone to become ensnared in the vicious cycle of musical-chairs foster care, juvenile detention centers, and, ultimately, prison.”

- THE CRIMINALIZATION OF WOMEN

Several opportunities have emerged and are highlighted below to help us align our work with community initiatives and policy and legislative changes that influence poverty and crime.

“In the last ten years, the number of women admitted to federal jurisdiction has increased by almost 40%... It is a growing and increasingly complex and diverse population”

- OFFICE OF THE CORRECTIONAL INVESTIGATOR

Bylaws

Municipal bylaws include penalties for infractions related to panhandling, loitering, transit and public intoxication. We are currently in a partnership with Vibrant Communities Calgary/ Justice Constellation on a research project to assess the impact of giving and receiving tickets for minor offences. Findings will be used to influence policy development related to bylaw enforcement processes and alternatives to ticketing and will include an examination of the financial and social returns on investment for proposed alternate approaches.

Alternatives to Incarceration

The Alberta Provincial Government addresses issues of Incarceration by publically stating an interest in increased community-based alternatives and programming in jails.

Bill 9, An Act to Modernize Enforcement of Provincial Offences, has drawn both praise and criticism. It eliminates jail time for inability to pay fines. However, the alternatives proposed in the Bill may do more harm than good. Failure to pay fines may result in an inability to register a vehicle until the fines are paid, as unpaid tickets under \$1000 will be referred to Registry agents. These measures may have a severe impact on low income individuals who cannot afford to pay the tickets and are therefore forced to drive without registration and insurance.

Increasing Incomes

The Canada Child Benefit (CCB) is a tax-free, monthly payment provided by Canada Revenue Agency to eligible families. This benefit is designed to assist parents with the cost of raising children under 18 years of age.

Alberta has recently implemented a provincial child benefit. All families earning less than \$41,220 per year are eligible to receive the new benefit. The maximum annual benefit is \$1,100 for families with one child, and up to \$2,750 for families with four or more children^{iv}.

Community plans to end homelessness and reduce poverty

Calgary's Plan to End Homelessness^v calls for system wide approaches to address the intersections of social issues including poverty and family violence and involvement in the health and justice systems. One of the strategies is to target policy change to incentivize the development of affordable housing options and a call for collaboration and integrated service delivery amongst public systems including the Justice system for adults and youth.

There is also a locally developed Plan to End Aboriginal Homelessness, an initiative by the Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, which is supported by the Calgary Homeless Foundation. This Plan highlights the link between structural issues and vulnerability for Indigenous peoples. Specifically, this plan calls for culturally appropriate discharge planning from public institutions including jails and expanded housing programs designed specifically for and by Indigenous peoples.

Vibrant Communities Calgary is the steward of Calgary's poverty reduction strategy, Enough for All (E4A)^{vi}. E4A includes several strategies targeted at increasing access to services and social supports, reducing barriers and increasing income and assets for vulnerable Calgarians. One of the working groups for E4A is specific to the Justice sector, this group is involved in streamlining access to legal services for low income Calgarians, providing training to justice officials of the effects of poverty and advocating for changes to improve collaboration. Within E4A is a strategy specific to reducing poverty for Indigenous peoples. This group is hosting a number of Elder teaching circles on the effects of colonization including residential schools, is developing an Indigenous gathering place or cultural centre, and calls for multi-sectoral collaboration to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in Canada's public systems including child welfare, emergency shelters and jails.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action

In 2015 TRC released a report that included 94 calls to action to “redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of reconciliation”.^{vii} The calls to action are focussed on public systems that affect Indigenous populations such as child welfare, health, education, language and culture and the justice system. The TRC has developed 18 calls to action specific to the justice system. They include cultural competency training for lawyers, including human rights and anti-racism; a required course for law students on the history and legacy of residential schools; for all levels of government to commit to eliminating the over-representation of Indigenous adults and youth in custody; to provide funding for appropriate community-based alternatives to incarceration; to reform the justice system to better respond to the needs of people with FASD; to reduce barriers to implementing new lodging houses; to provide culturally relevant services to inmates on substance use, family violence and overcoming experiences of sexual abuse; to publish data on the victimization of Indigenous peoples and to create a public inquiry into the abuses and remedies for the disproportionate victimization of Indigenous women and girls including missing and murdered, and links between victimization and the intergenerational legacy of residential schools.

Increasing crime rates

Overall, Calgary crime rates have increased in the last year after several years of decline^{viii}. Calgary Police Services report that a 30% increase is due to the downturn in the economy and increased issues related to fentanyl and methamphetamine use. Calgary currently leads the country in the Crime Severity Index which measures frequency and severity of police reported crimes. The most commonly reported crimes were break and enter, robbery under \$500 and car theft.

Indigenous women are vastly overrepresented in Canadian jails

Women account for approximately 15% of admissions to correctional services. Indigenous women accounted for 38% of female admissions to provincial/territorial sentenced custody and 31% in the federal system. While the comparable figure for Indigenous males was 24% and 22%.^{ix}

Advocates argue that our justice system is discriminatory

Dawn Harvard, the interim president of the Native Women's Association of Canada argues that Indigenous women are overrepresented in correctional facilities because the justice system lacks an understanding of the impact of poverty on women's crime and that the system is racist and expects Indigenous people to “do bad things”^x. Ms. Harvard argues that there is a lack of understanding of the broader political, social and economic factors that impact Indigenous peoples, and that lack of understanding leads to more punitive responses than for non-Indigenous people.

Incarceration for minor offences is costly and ineffective

According to Alberta Justice, in 2014-2015, 2000 people across Alberta were incarcerated for ‘failure to pay a fine’. The total cost to taxpayers is estimated to be \$800,000 annually. This doesn't include costs associated with policing or the courts. Further, there are an estimated 90,000 outstanding warrants for ‘petty’ offences (jaywalking, trespassing, and riding the c-train without paying the fare)^{xi}. For every dollar spent on alternative measures such as community-based diversion programs, six dollars can be saved in corrections costs.^{xii}

Women, children and youth are particularly vulnerable

- 21% of Canadian single mothers are raising their children in poverty
- 37% of Indigenous women live in poverty
- 28% of visible minority women live in poverty
- 3 million Canadian children (1 in 5) live in poverty^{xiii}
- 50% of Indigenous children live in poverty, this increases to 60% for Indigenous children living on reserves^{xiv}
- youth aged 16-24 make up about 20% of the homeless population

Crime is influenced by poverty and homelessness

Researchers have shown that access to safe, affordable and sustainable housing is a major deterrent to involvement in crime and that the cycle of homelessness, poverty and crime for survival purposes that many women are trapped in, is directly related a lack of suitable housing. Further, the provision of housing is a necessary first step to reducing survival or poverty related crime.^{xvi}

Newcomers face distinct issues

Detention of newcomers and immigrants is argued to be amongst the fastest growing group of incarcerated people in Canada. “The Canadian government jailed 87,317 migrants without charges between 2006 and 2014... including 807 children”^{xvii}. This is the only group in Canada who can be detained without any criminal charges. The federal government has prioritized increasing the numbers of refugees and immigrants to Canada in the coming years.

NOW more than ever...

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary needs to build on our legacy of providing inclusive, safe and non-judgemental services and look forward with confidence in our strategic priorities, actions and approach. As we do, we consider the opportunities and issues highlighted above.

OUR STRATEGIC Priorities

One

UTILIZE AND APPLY EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES TO ENHANCE PROGRAMMING TO BE INCLUSIVE, STRENGTH BASED, AND BREAK CYCLES OF DEPENDENCY AND VULNERABILITY

How will we do this?

Engage in a collaborative process to develop a housing strategy for women who are criminalized through strategic alliances and partnerships. Include timelines, outcomes and an evaluation plan and determine the role of the Elizabeth Fry Society in that plan.

Utilize existing evaluative results of programmatic ‘successes’ for enhanced funding to strengthen existing programs and add skills and capacity for staff to better support people with complex need (e.g. FASD, trauma informed care)

Expand Indigenous and newcomer youth programming.

Two

LEVERAGE AND ENHANCE PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

How will we do this?

Seek out opportunities to partner with Calgary’s Enough for All Poverty Reduction Initiative, Plans to End Homelessness and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to leverage connections, formulate shared actions and partner on public events.

Enhance and strengthen partnerships with agencies to ensure women, children and youth have access to the full continuum of supports they need. Addiction, poverty and justice system involvement are closely related. Elizabeth Fry Society will partner with organizations that provide addiction supports to ensure seamless access to reduce gaps and silos.

Develop and launch a collaborative and collective policy agenda in partnership with existing groups to advance asks to all levels of government in the areas of discharge planning, alternative measures, consequences for bylaw infractions, increasing access to affordable housing options, government financial benefits and initiatives specific to Indigenous and newcomer women and youth.

Three

BUILD OUR BRAND AND PROFILE

How will we do this?

Continue and build on the momentum of the Piper Kerman event to raise our profile, the unique needs of women, children and youth and the relationship between poverty and crime with a follow-up, high profile event in 2018.

Leverage the Board of Directors personal and professional networks to publicize the event and encourage donations.

Four

ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY BY ASSESSING PROGRESS TOWARDS GOALS

How will we do this?

Post the strategic plan on our website and create progress reports annually that will be made public. This could be a resource for other organizations including Elizabeth Fry Society chapters across Canada to share learnings.

Create an evaluation framework with goals, indicators and outcomes to track progress and make adjustments.

Five

EXPAND AND ENHANCE THE ROLE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN FUNDING, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

How will we do this?

Develop an annual plan for our Board of Directors to leverage their personal and professional networks for fundraising and community engagement. Engage local philanthropists and leverage corporate sponsorships to support our work financially and as champions for vulnerable women, children and youth. This plan should be embedded within the evaluation framework and include timelines, key deliverables and an assessment of outcomes.

Seek new partnerships including the faith community for financial and in-kind support including volunteer recruitment.

Review and update governance documents including the Board orientation manual and Terms of Reference.

Implement the 2016 succession plan for senior leadership and the Board of Directors to ensure seamless transition as staff and Board move on from our organization.

Develop Board led volunteer committees and subcommittees for time limited project work to leverage networks for fundraising and increased public awareness.

“The EFry Calgary Board of Directors (The Board) is fully engaged in supporting the realization of the key objectives and tactics laid out in our Strategic Plan. The Board recognizes that the Strategic Plan is a living document, and that achievement of our joint objectives will require our commitment and collaborative efforts between The Board and the Agency.”

Transparency and accountability with our funders and clients is a cornerstone of our strategy and will require consistent measurement and communication.”

- VIRGINIA ASHLEY, ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETY OF CALGARY – BOARD PRESIDENT

