encompass
support
services
society

strengthening community

ESSS Agency Two Year Strategic Plan
2015 – 2018 (Extension and Review)

Introduction

The Board of Directors and members of the Leadership Team of Encompass Support Services Society convened a Strategic Planning day on May 26th, 2015. The purpose of this day was to conduct an environmental scan and to establish new strategic directions for the organization.

The meetings covered the following areas:
- ❖ Review of the Strategic Planning Context
- ❖ Review of Organizational Strengths and Advantages
- ❖ Review of Internal Barriers to Success
- ❖ Review of External Challenges to Success
- ❖ Review of Aspirations and Opportunities
- ❖ Identifying New Strategic Directions.

Review of Mission and Vision

The Mission and Vision of Encompass Support Services Society were reviewed as touchstones and grounding for the strategic planning discussions.   There was consensus that the mission and vision still reflect the organization's overall aspirations. Encompass's current Mission and Vision is;

Mission Statement:

As a neighborhood-based organization, our purpose is to strengthen the health and vitality of community by:

- ○ *Identifying and responding to community needs*
- ○ *Collaborating to enhance the lives of those we serve*
- ○ *Cultivating effective, sustainable partnerships*

Vision Statement:
- ○ *Empowering Individuals*
- ○ *Connecting People*
- ○ *Enriching Lives*

Strategic Planning Context

Accreditation

The agency successfully attained a three year accreditation with CARF (Children and Youth Services Manual). The Board will continue to review and / or develop strategic plans that are in line with CARF standards. These standards require that ongoing strategic planning of the organization considers:

- a. Expectations of the persons served.
- b. Expectations of other stakeholders.
- c. The competitive environment.
- d. Financial opportunities.
- e. Financial threats.
- f. The organization's capabilities.
- g. Service area needs.
- h. Demographics of the service area.
- i. The organization's relationship with external stakeholders.
- j. The regulatory environment.
- k. The legislative environment.
- l. The use of technology to support:
    - (1) Efficient operations.
    - (2) Effective operations.
    - (3) Performance improvement.
- m. Information from the analysis or performance

(Source: CARF Children and Youth Services Standards Manual, 2015 Section 1.C)

All of the elements above were considered or directly reviewed as part of the planning process and are reflected in the discussion points provided below.

Goals from previous year:

Goal Area One: *Improve Human Resources Capacity – Continue to respond to HR capacity needs of the agency.*

Suggested Tasks	Update
Review administrative infrastructure to ensure that it is aligned with services and capable of providing adequate support to front line staff.	A review and re-tooling of the management structure was completed in 2013. There have been recent changes, with the loss of a dedicated part time HR position. The administration of the organization continues to be relatively lean and efforts are ongoing to maximize existing resources and seek opportunities to add administrative capacity.

Increase HR efficiency and effectiveness	As noted above, the dedicated part time HR position was lost and HR duties are now shared amongst senior management.
Ensure HR support meets the needs of the agency as agency has grown in over the last two years and this growth needs to be supported and controlled	See above.

Goal Area Two: Define & Build Our Brand – Identify a common brand identity and increase its recognition both amongst staff and in the community.

Suggested Tasks	Update
Inform community of agency's new name	Complete – the new name has been well received and there is increasing recognition of the brand in the community.
Revise internal and external communication mechanisms to reflect the new brand (including the agency website).	All agency materials and the agency website have been updated. Further work on the website is planned.
Utilize advertising to enhance brand recognition in the community.	There has been limited advertising due to limited resources.

Goal Area Three: Grow our Services – Identify and capitalize on emerging opportunities for growth consistent with community needs.

Suggested Tasks	Update
Analyze space needs and look for opportunities to access larger spaces or move staff into new facilities through partnering.	The analysis of space needs is ongoing. There are limited options given the relatively tight market for leased space. Best Babies was relocated to PPY, which has been positive. Efforts have also been focused on updating existing spaces.
Explore opportunities to expand services in underserved communities.	The agency has expanded into Willoughby (the hub) and has added a new youth residential program. It continues to seek opportunities to expand in other areas based on needs.
Explore the development of a fundraising strategy.	Staff responsibilities for fund raising and fund development have been assigned. Efforts to increase revenue are ongoing.

Explore opportunities to enhance volunteerism within Encompass	Enhancing volunteerism continues to be a focus of efforts.

Suggested Indicator(s):

   I.   % growth in revenue
- Revenue similar to last year but new contracts are being sought out

  II.   % growth in persons served
- Attendance in programs similar to last year

 III.   % growth in non-MCFD Contract funding
- Applications have been submitted to non-MCFD funders but no confirmation on these new funds to date (Vancouver Foundation)

 IV.   Implementation of new programs/services in new communities
- Engaged in the Langley strategic planning to implement ECD services to Willoughby and reviewing needs of residential care programs in Langley

Data Review

In addition to reviewing mission/vision and progress on achieving strategic goals, the Board and Senior Management also reviewed data from internal planning process. This included;

- Encompass 2015 Accessibility Plan
- Encompass 2015 Technology Plan
- Encompass 2015 Cultural Competency & Diversity Plan
- Encompass 2015 Risk Management Plan

Information from these sources was summarized and presented during the planning session. The highlights are as follows:

Accessibility

- Facilities/Space Issues:
  - Wheelchair accessible/Appropriate washrooms
  - Lack of Space, Lack of storage for some programs
  - Pest Control
  - Heating/Cooling Systems
- Lean Administrative Structures/Lack of Funding for Facilities and transportation
- Website/Agency materials need updating
- Inadequate Public Transit is an Ongoing Issue for Clients

Technology

- Moved to Cloud based operating system
- Passwords updated
- CAMS now in use for Client Information in most programs
- Planned Enhancements to Website (related to branding)

Cultural Competency

- LCSS Refugee Training completed
- Recruitment of culturally specific volunteers
- Identify opportunities specific to Aboriginal populations
- Future: Participants from war-torn countries or from refugee camps

Risk Management

- Financial risk due to size and potential impact of loss of contracts – need for collaboration to ensure that local services are effectively delivered by local agencies
- Rebranding challenges
- Staffing levels may be impacted by lack of full funding for collective agreements and no incremental increases to address increased overall costs
- Health & Safety risks in the HPS/ERH programs due to participant population
- Mixed union/non-union environment creates two tiers
- Potential for increased facility costs that would not be sustainable
- Lack of online/Social Media presence

Environmental Scan

The following reflects the results of a comprehensive scan of Encompass's internal and external operating environment that was completed during the planning meeting. The scan formed the basis for identifying strategic directions.

As part of the Environmental Scan, information from recent surveys of staff, clients and community partners were reviewed. The intention was to bring the voices of these key stakeholders into the planning process in a meaningful way. The results of the surveys are included below.

Organizational Strengths & Advantages

<u>Participant Feedback (93 responses)</u>
- Almost all respondents received services in one week or less
- More than 95% felt that they were treated with respect ALL of the time
- More than 90% indicated that they ALWAYS felt welcomed and valued
- More than 95% ALWAYS felt safe while receiving services
- More than 95% ALWAYS felt that there cultural and spiritual beliefs were respected
- More than 90% felt better able to deal with the challenges or issues that brought them to services as a result of participating
- 100% said they would recommend the services to someone close to them

<u>Staff Feedback (22 responses)</u>
- More than 95% felt that their supervisor supported and evaluated their performance and job expectations
- 100% indicated that that their supervisor always or mostly seemed to care about them as a person
- More than 90% felt that their supervisor was open to new ideas and suggestions always or most of the time
- More than 80% strongly identify with the mission and vision, with the remainder somewhat identifying
- More than 95% agree or strongly agree that the work they do makes a difference in the lives of the people they serve
- More than 90% indicated that they were proud to work for the organization
- 100% were very or somewhat satisfied with their place of work
- More than 90% agree that the organization maintains a positive and supportive culture and climate
- 100% felt that they always or mostly had the opportunity to do what they did best every day
- More than 90% would recommend Encompass services to someone close to them

<u>Stakeholder Feedback (19 responses)</u>
- Nearly 95% (all but one) agree or strongly agreed that the organization's services offered made a positive difference in the lives of those they serve
- Nearly 95% (all but one) agreed or strongly agreed that staff were effective advocates for the interests of those they served.

Discussion:

The following reflects the organizational strengths and advantages based on the discussion and dialogue during the planning meeting and in the context of the feedback from surveys;

- **Collaboration** – Encompass focuses on meeting community needs through collaboration with community partners.
- **Staff Team** – there is a high level of commitment from staff to the organization. This is reflected in the large number of staff that have been with the organization for a decade or more. Although having union and non-union adds complexity and creates two tiers, there are relatively few issues between union and non-union within the agency.
- **Vision** – Despite substantial changes over time and the merger, the organization remains community-based and partnership focused.
- **Leader in the Community** – Encompass is seen as a leader in the community in terms of advocating for the interests of children, youth and families.
- **Strong Culture** – Encompass has a strong, positive internal work culture that supports excellence in service delivery.

Internal Barriers to Our Success

Identifying areas where the organization has struggled ensures awareness of what hasn't worked or where growth or change is needed. The intent is to ensure that the organization avoids setting itself up for less than optimal performance by not acknowledging internal barriers. Areas of challenge and barriers were identified both through surveys and through the planning meeting discussions.

Participant Feedback (93 responses)
- Only 60% were aware of how to make a formal complaint
- Many clients experience barriers to accessing services, which are mainly related to transportation
- Only ¾ felt that the times services were available were convenient for them

Staff Feedback (22 responses)
- More than a quarter of staff felt that their opinion only mattered some of the time
- More than one quarter indicated they weren't sure that they trusted the organization to be fair to all employees
- Nearly one out of five felt that their co-workers only treated them with respect some of the time
- Nearly one out of five indicated that they got adequate support for their work only some of the time.
- More than 1/3 indicated that they weren't sure that their supervisor had talked to them about their professional progress in the last three months

○ Just more than half indicated that they were satisfied with the new brand and name of the society. The remainder were "Somewhat Satisfied"

○ Nearly half indicated that they were unsure whether the new management structure had been a benefit to the agency

Discussion:

The planning meeting discussion highlighted the following internal challenges/barriers;

- **Lean Organizational Structure** – Encompass continues to be challenged by a lack of administrative capacity. Although the current management structure is viewed by both senior leadership and program coordinators as effective, it is acknowledged that everyone is very busy and stretched thin at times. Having additional contracts for services would support being able to resource more administrative support. Replacing lost HR capacity is seen as a priority should resources become available.

- **Lack of Space** – as noted in the review of previous strategic directions and the accessibility plan, space continues to be an issue. The organization requires more space for existing programs, but affordable space in the area is difficult to access. Municipal Governments have not been able to assist to date.

- **HR Complexities** – Related to having a lean administrative structure, the organization is experiencing challenges managing the relatively complex HR function. The loss of a dedicated HR position has been noted by both senior leadership and program coordinators as having an impact on operations.

- **Communications** – Encompass continues to work to develop and maintain effective communication systems within a lean administrative structure. While there are systems in place for internal communication, the reality of having multiple programs across multiple locations can create challenges. The system largely relies on the staff knowing what should be communicated.

External Challenges to Our Success

<u>Stakeholder Feedback (19 responses)</u>

- ○ Only half indicated that the atmosphere in the organization was always welcoming.
- ○ Nearly ¼ indicated that they weren't sure whether the organization's eligibility criteria were readily available to the community
- ○ Nearly 1/3 neither agree or disagreed that the organization was known for its integrity and ethical practices

Discussion:

The group attending the planning meeting explored areas where the organization is experiencing (or could experience in the future) some strain due to external challenges, trends or threats. Challenges may pose a threat to continued growth or to taking advantage of opportunities. Challenges are acknowledged so that planning can account for, or compensate for, these contextual variables. The following external challenges were identified and reviewed:

- **Aging Population** – The general population in Canada is aging and this demographic shift will place some strain on health and human service resources over time. Although there are pockets of population growth in Encompass's service region that include young families, the overall trend will have an impact on services as well as on the ability to hire qualified staff.

- **Risk of Homelessness** – There is a significant and growing population of individuals who are at risk of homeless or who are homeless in the region. Real estate values, the lack of new housing stock being built, and social issues such as addictions and mental health are contributing to the problem.

- **Areas of Rapid Growth & Development (Changing Demographics)** – Some areas in and around Langley have experienced very rapid growth in single family dwellings. It has resulted in encroachment into rural areas. The growth is creating large pockets of underserved populations, which is both a challenge and potential opportunity for the organization. It is also creating some tensions with existing residents in the rural areas.

- **Diversification of Needs** – agency staff have noted a diversification in the types of needs being brought forward by clients and prospective clients. As natural support systems are increasingly strained, there seems to be a greater level of need (more severe and intractable issues, such as addictions) and range of needs (need for full range of supports, from housing to counselling).

- **Diversification of Culture** – The rapid growth in the area has also meant greater cultural diversity being represented in the community. It isn't clear how successful the agency has been at reaching out to various cultural communities, though efforts are being made.

- **More Grandparents Parenting** – Staff have noted a general trend of more grandparents having to step in to parent their children's children. This has been a trend both inside and outside of the communities served by Encompass.

- **Transportation** – As noted above, transportation is a significant barrier in the communities served by Encompass. There simply isn't adequate public transportation in the communities, and this poses major issues for those with limited incomes. That often includes young single parents, and it impacts their ability to participate in services.

- **Change in Sector Leadership** – The social services sector is experience a changeover in leadership as many senior executives retire. This has created some challenges in recruiting skilled leadership for some organizations. It underscores the need for succession planning.
- **Family Breakdown and Social Issues Cutting Across Class** – it was noted that there are pockets of significant wealth alongside pockets of extreme poverty in the region served by Encompass. However, it was also noted that many of the social issues being addressed (e.g., family breakdown) cut across economic classes. This poses a potential opportunity for the agency in terms of offering fee for service supports.

Aspirations/Opportunities

The planning day focused on identifying opportunities that capitalize on strengths, avoid weaknesses (or supports growth in areas of weakness), and demonstrate awareness of the broader external operating environment (including trends, challenges and threats). The following aspirations and opportunities were identified through the surveys and the discussions during the meeting.

- **Growing Service to Meet Community Need** – those attending the planning day saw opportunities for growth, both in terms of new services and growing or evolving existing services. This reflects the reality that there continues to be unmet needs and significant community growth. The potential role of social entrepreneurship in meeting community needs and growing revenue was discussed.
- **Documenting and Communicating Value** – The organization has successfully completed a re-branding process which has been positively received in the community. As a next step, it is recognized that the Encompass must make efforts to enhance brand recognition and to ensure that the community is aware of the value that is delivered by the organization. This could include efforts to utilize social media.
- **Enhancing Administrative Capacity** – while the organization has been successful with a relatively thin administrative structure, this is an area that will require additional resources if the organization is to grow. Some additional resources may come through fundraising, but it is more likely that additional contracted services will be needed to support more administrative capacity.
- **Acquiring More and Better Space** – as noted above, space continues to be a challenge. Many of the programs are cramped and are at their capacity. There is relatively limited space for admin. Some of the spaces being used are less than adequate.

2015 - 2017 Strategic Directions

A number of strategic directions emerged through the planning meeting. These directions reflect current thinking within the Senior Management Team and the Board of Directors. They also reflect thoughtful consideration of the results of the environmental scan process.

Each strategic direction is specifically framed as being directed to achieving Encompass's vision. The rationale for each is provided in the context of the results of the environmental scan.

In Order to Achieve Our Vision of Empowered Individuals, Connected People and Enriching Lives, we will;

Strategic Direction One:

Grow Our Services to Meet Identified Community Needs

Rationale/Discussion:

- Growth in certain communities and cultural diversification of the population are key drivers in the need for service expansion.

- A number of needs and opportunities were discussed that included childcare services, mental health services, fee-for-service counselling supports and expanding residential services. Each potential opportunity will need to be explored further to determine need and viability.

- The potential for entrepreneurial ventures was also discussed. Offering fee-for-service supports or licensed before and after school care services may be opportunities.

- Partnering and collaborating, a key strength of Encompass, should play a key role in growing services. The agency should actively seek potential strategic partnerships to meet identified needs.

- Fund development offers another avenue to support growth, thought his requires initial investments.

Suggested Tasks	Action Items / Success Indicators	Timeline
Review opportunities for "out of sector" partnership opportunities	# of out of sector partnerships or cross-sectoral partnerships formed.	Reviewed Annually in December.
Explore opportunities to expand residential services via MCFD or other funding stakeholders	# of residential beds available through Encompass Support Service Revise executive summary on youth beds in the Langley communities.	Reviewed Annually in December. April 2016
Complete a feasibility study and executive summary regarding social enterprise opportunities and fundraising	Feasibility study completed and business plan developed for review by Board of Directors and Leadership Team	March 2017

Strategic Direction Two:

Strengthen Our Administrative and Service Delivery Infrastructure

Rationale/Discussion:

- As noted in the environmental scan, the agency currently has a lean administrative structure and is stretched. This has been particularly acute with the loss of the dedicated HR position.

- Lack of space or the appropriateness of the space continues to be an issue for the agency. It hampers both service delivery and administration.

- There is a need to continue to update organizational systems and infrastructure, such as the website.

- Building effective communication infrastructure will also be critical to future success. This includes internal communication systems to ensure a quality oversight and external systems such as the website and use of social media. Documenting and communicating value will support future growth.

Suggested Tasks	Action Items / Success Indicators	Timeline
Develop a social media strategy with linkages to the agency website	# of hits on website # of agency social media accounts Develop a list of responsibilities and training opportunities for those employees engaged in social media on behalf of agency	September 2016 and reviewed bi-annually thereafter
Complete a review of organizational structure and systems hosted by the leadership team to find efficiencies	Leadership team meetings will include an ongoing review of structure and systems to identify gaps and supports needed to make sustainable change	Bi-monthly review at Leadership Team meetings
Address workspace issues within agency by expanding services or expanding areas of service through strategic program expansion	# of agency locations / workspaces # of unique services the agency provides Look for opportunities to partner for space with community or develop space to support agency structure.	Develop a baseline April 2016 and reviewed bi-annually thereafter