

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

Inspiring Possibilities.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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3. Welcome

5. The Planning Process

6. A Word from People Supported

8. Trends and Themes

12. Assets

13. Strategic Priorities



## WELCOME

Dear Stakeholders of Community Living Grimsby, Lincoln & West Lincoln,

Since our last Strategic plan, envisioned in 2017 and carried out through 2022, a lot has changed in the landscape of Developmental Services in our Province, and we have lived through a global pandemic, which has necessarily transformed much of the way we do business in this sector.

Our Board embarked on a new Strategic Plan early in 2022, and are excited to launch this plan for 2023-2025. We purposefully selected a 3-year plan window due to the rapidly changing political landscape with regard to the direction that Developmental Services is taking over the next 7-10 years through Ministry Reform (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/journey-belonging-choice-and-inclusion>). As you will see in this report, our Board heard feedback from staff, families, people supported, and external stakeholders, to form the future direction of the services offered at Community Living Grimsby, Lincoln & West Lincoln.

People Minded Business (PMB) facilitated our work, and have provided valuable sector-wide insights alongside complete and truthful data, which represents our constituents and their opinions, beliefs and desires. One thing that was loud and clear through all data collection and planning meetings, is that we share strong and passionate values at this agency. These shared aims, values and core beliefs become the foundation of a new strategic plan.

Our ultimate aims are four-fold:

1. To make this agency a workplace of choice.
2. To become a collaborative partner in housing and transit in our region.
3. To co-design community inclusion and choice in service delivery.

4. To explore financial growth and sustainability.

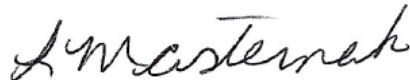
These pillars will shape the work that we do in the coming three years at Community Living Grimsby, Lincoln & West Lincoln.

We have not stopped at the formation of four pillars, however. At Community Living Grimsby, Lincoln & West Lincoln, we have drilled down to create actions specific to the “who, what, where, when and how” of getting there. We made our goals aspirational, and we are looking forward to moving forward in our provision of person-centred services which support people living with intellectual disabilities.

Special thanks to PMB, to our volunteer Board, to the 113 voices recorded, which helped us form our direction. Thank you for being part of the transformation. We are one agency in service to many people; let us move forward, together!



Cathy Turner  
Executive Director



Lilia Masternak  
Board President

# THE PLANNING PROCESS

Beginning in early 2022, CLGLWL, 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 2025. PMB researched the environment in which CLGLWL operates including local, regional, and provincial trends. Using an inclusive process of consultation, collaboration, and co-creation, CLGLWL learned first-hand about what matters most to over 113 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

CLGLWL's purpose is to "provide person-centred services that support people living with intellectual disabilities", so it's only appropriate to give them the first word before we get into details.

7 people who use CLGWL supports participated in an in-person focus group session:

- Joey (who loves to bowl 10-pin)
- Shane (who likes making money at Well Preserved)
- Marcus (who loves the Golden State Warriors)
- Alexis (who enjoys time with her cat and her friends)
- Lynn (also likes bowling, and has a pink room that she loves)
- Clem (married to Jody, and is a fantastic impersonator)
- And Jody (married to Clem, and smiled throughout our time together)

All participants were given an identical bag of Lego and after some warmup exercises were asked to build something that symbolized what they love most about Community Living Grimsby Lincoln West Lincoln.

They told us:

- Low-cost housing, "although more would be great."
- That CLGLWL helped them to communicate better and get along with each other.
- They LOVED the social connections they get through CLGLWL (and number of this group hadn't seen each other in a long time, and they really enjoyed getting back together).
- They had learned how to eat healthier and cook for themselves.
- Playing sports together (soccer, bowling, etc.)
- Their staff person (everybody is nice and kind)
- They were helped to meet their goals and live to their full potential.
- An opportunity to advocate for themselves.
- And they appreciated that they "ran their own show" at the jam enterprise.

When asked what they wanted more of responses spoke to:

- Better transportation options to local places.
- Getting back to their programs - they missed their friends.
- More low-income housing.



## 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."<sup>1</sup> 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 indicates<sup>2</sup> 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."

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<sup>1</sup> Fleming et al., 2019.

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



## **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 impact as these prices ripple through to CLGLWL will be in the form of higher wage expectations/demands in an already constrained sector as staff watch their real wages decrease.

## **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 residential 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. In the Niagara region, 18.3% of people are newcomers to Canada (lower than the provincial average of 29.1% but catching up). Most (34.5%) of newcomer families are in their prime family years (25-44 years old).

## **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.<sup>3</sup> 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.

Niagara expects to add another 168,000 people by 2041, which is about the same as the current populations of St. Catharines, Thorold, and Niagara-on-the Lake. If demographics hold the same that would mean a roughly 33% increase in the number people CLGLWL would need to be able to support by then.

## **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-

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<sup>3</sup> [www.ontario.ca/document/ontarios-long-term-report-economy/chapter-1-demographic-trends-and-projections](http://www.ontario.ca/document/ontarios-long-term-report-economy/chapter-1-demographic-trends-and-projections)

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 olds 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 CLGLWL 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, CLGLWL may wish to ensure that staff feel cared for and respected; CLGLWL couldn't function without them.

### **Rural and Remote Settings**

For many people supported in rural and remote settings, the challenges of inclusion and choice are even more pronounced. Transportation options (lack of public transit, no ride-sharing apps, etc.) limit people's ability to get to community activities and increase their cost of living. Small populations often mean that community activities are limited to evenings and weekends, which is the opposite to most staff schedules. Also, relatively low internet speeds can limit participation in virtual or hybrid activities.

## 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

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CLGLWL's stakeholders told us the key Assets we could build on were our:

- Person Centredness.
- Committed and hard-working staff.
- Staff love working with each other.
- Integrated and connected to the communities served and partnerships.
- CLGLWL is well respected by MCCSS.
- 'All Hands In' social enterprise is well perceived.
- Seen as being advocates for housing, pay equity, and individual people supported.
- Welcoming to all.





## CLGLWL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

On August 26th, 2022, the Board of Directors and Senior Leadership of CLGLWL 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 Community Living Grimsby, Lincoln, and West Lincoln from 2023-2025.

### 1. Adopt best in class practices to become a workplace of choice for the area's employees.

It hasn't been smooth sailing for our teams which have faced inconsistent application of policies, departmental silos, and regrettably unchecked incivility in workplace. We don't want to just be 'better'; we have set our sights on being a top choice for employees in the areas we serve.

- Identify and retain our great employees by offering them professional development, recognition, and career paths.
- Improve our recruiting efforts while ensuring those who choose to join us have an amazing onboarding experience.
- Strengthen and develop CLGLWL's leadership to ensure it performs at a consistently high level across the organization.
- We will research, pilot, and integrate best practices in EDI that ensure an authentic representation of our changing community and an equitable and inclusive organization where everyone feels welcome.

## **2. Strengthen our options by being a collaborative partner in the Niagara region's housing and transit plans.**

CLGLWL recognizes that advocating isn't enough. We must support local partners to help co-create transit and housing options that will improve the lives of the people we care about.

- Initiate, promote, and participate in community discussions about Affordable Housing and Transit.
- Improve our housing and transportation solutions by reducing the number of people in our homes, and sharing our hopes and needs with regional partners to help them explore and find solutions for the people we support.
- Work with local developers to share knowledge, gain insight, and support them to create new affordable housing options.

## **3. Re-imagine and co-design community inclusion and choice in service delivery.**

The world around us is changing and the people we support want to be part of it. We will work with everyone affected - people supported, families, and staff - to help design attractive choices for everyone.

- Re-imagine and redesign our individual support plans (ISPs) and policies, and the processes we implement in working with the people we support, to ensure everyone can have a life well lived.
- Explore how providing purchased services can bring a better life, filled with choice, to both people we support and others in our community.

**4. Explore new opportunities that will provide both sustainability and growth.** CLGLWL recognizes that for us to provide the best support for the people we care about we need to have financial sustainability, both now and in the future. By focusing on how to grow our funding we will be able to continue to do so for as long as there's a need.

- Research potential new services for CLGLWL (options to explore: Transitional Aged Youth programming and enhanced SIL services).
- Actively promote CLGLWL, the people we support, and its services throughout the community.
- Research, develop, and pilot new funding opportunities while we build fundraising capacity.