



C I W A

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022

January 2017

Empower Immigrant Women. Enrich Canadian Society.

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Message from the Board of Directors

Since its humble beginnings in 1982, Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA) has responded to emerging needs of immigrant women, developed innovative programs and has come to be recognised as a provincial and national leader in outcome-based gender-specific settlement services. Our passion is developing customized, holistic, gender-specific interventions in all areas of family and community needs from literacy and language supports, youth and seniors programs, counselling, health, employment and support services such as childcare and interpretation and emergency housing for all women that access our programs.

In the previous five-year strategic period, CIWA experienced major growth and expansion. Programs and services increased exponentially in order to address the growing number of immigrants coming to Calgary needing settlement support. Our innovative service delivery had a positive impact on our clients, as well as the Calgary community as a whole. One of the most notable achievements was a passionate and determined approach to supporting the complex needs of low literacy immigrant women. Providing innovative solutions with customised supports for this client group, from foundational and employment literacy to equitable employment opportunities, has positioned us as a nationally recognized leader and expert in this area. CIWA offers over 40 programs and services for thousands of immigrant women, from our downtown location as well as 120 community-based locations in collaboration with our partners.

We are the world. Our clients, volunteers and staff reflect over 100 different countries of origin and speak over 80 languages. Global community is changing rapidly, in line with geo-political trends and developments. In 2016, the number of forcibly displaced people was the highest in recorded history, many of them women and children. Canada is one of the most desired destinations of choice for immigrants around the world. In the last several years, Calgary has experienced unprecedented growth in the number of immigrant families coming to our city.

As we embark on the newest chapter of CIWA history, the Board of Directors and senior management team have championed the development of a Five Year Strategic Plan for 2017 – 2022. The plan will provide a strategic roadmap for the organization and challenge all of us to continually be a sector leader in the provision of effective and relevant programming and services, while anticipating and adapting to emerging needs and trends. This is aligned with our approach that change is constant and there is space for continuous improvement in everything we do. We owe it to our clients and our community to strive for excellence, create new opportunities for immigrant women that will expedite their integration process and open up the path to success and dignified life for themselves and their children.

The planning process for the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan involved consultation with our stakeholders including funders, community and corporate partners, clients, board members, staff and management. We conducted an environmental scan to review and analyze the current state of CIWA. CIWA middle management team, senior management team and Board of Directors participated in brainstorming sessions facilitated by an external consultant. The result of our work is a clear vision and mandate for the organization to boldly take on new and exciting challenges and work towards a more prosperous future for newcomer families in Calgary.

We plan to *build human and social capital for successful settlement of immigrant women* by responding to current and emerging social, political, economic and cultural trends that impact our clients and their families. Immigration is a two-way street. Its success depends on the effort of newcomers to learn, connect, integrate and model citizenship. For host communities and neighborhoods, creating a welcoming and supportive space for immigrants, result in the benefits and assets of immigration being realised. We will be focusing on supporting appreciation of diversity, acceptability and inclusion of newcomers as a collective effort and responsibility of all of us living in Calgary.

Gender violence and domestic violence are prevalent in Alberta, and impact mainstream, indigenous and immigrant women. We will continue to work in *collaboration with our partners* to prevent, educate, respond to and intervene against violence. CIWA will continue to provide support and options for an independent and dignified life for women fleeing family violence.

Professional women have unique needs and, as such, will continue to be an important focus of CIWA's mandate as we ensure that both *highly educated as well as less educated women are integrated into the community successfully*. Training programs and employment supports will be accessible for all immigrant women in line with their education, skills and personal aspirations.

CIWA will continue to ensure continuity and focus on creating *financial sustainability and capacity of the organization*. We will work on increasing our profile within the mainstream and corporate community, inviting them to actively take part in supporting the integration of newcomers, to welcome diversity, and to benefit from successful integration of immigrants. There is much more to be done to promote mutual respect for all members of the community and celebrate multiculturalism, diversity and pluralism.

Focusing on *risk management* as CIWA moves forward over the next five years will ensure that the growth experienced by the organization is being well managed and diligently governed. CIWA will continue to build on its reputation and strengthen its capacity as a *community leader*, as mentors and educators, as preferred collaborative partners in the community and as an industry leader in serving and advocating for immigrant women and their families.

We thank our funders, stakeholders, community and corporate partners, volunteers, clients, staff, donors and supporters for helping us through the process, giving us advice and recommendations, ideas and suggestions in developing this plan.

CIWA Vision, Mission and Values

VISION

Empower immigrant women.

Enrich Canadian society.

MISSION

To engage and integrate all
immigrant women and their
families in the community.

VALUES

Integrity. Equity. Inclusiveness.

Innovation. Leadership.

2017 – 2022

CIWA Strategic Priorities

CIWA Strategic Goals

Build Human & Social Capital for Successful Settlement of Immigrant Women

Enhance holistic approach to client services through a spectrum of social and economic settlement and integration supports

Financial Stability

Ensure financial stability to manage growth

Risk Management

Manage risk in all aspects of organizational structure and business

Capacity Building

Build capacity to sustain and enhance the impact and value of our work

Responsive Community Leader

Contribute to the community as a responsive community leader

Objectives and Outcomes

Priority: Build Human & Social Capital for Successful Settlement of Immigrant Women	
Strategic Goal	Enhance holistic approach to client services through a spectrum of social and economic settlement and integration supports
Objectives under this goal	Recognize and respond to the changing needs of immigrant women and their families. Reduce/remove barriers and increase access to a full range of services for immigrant women and their families.
Outcome	Immigrant women leave CIWA confident and empowered to integrate successfully into the Calgary community/society.
Priority: Financial Stability	
Strategic Goal	Ensure financial stability to manage growth
Objectives under this goal	Respond to unforeseen funding needs. Seek out and secure diverse funding opportunities. Promote CIWA throughout the corporate community. Explore social enterprise.
Outcome	CIWA receives reliable funding from the government and corporate sector to address all financial needs of our clients and secure healthy financial reserve for the future of the agency.
Priority: Risk Management	
Strategic Goal	Manage risk in all aspects of organizational structure and business
Objectives under this goal	Create succession plans for key and critical positions at the agency. Minimize and mitigate risks associated with growth through a strategic approach to growth management. Analyse risks related to sustainability of the exponential growth that took place.
Outcome	CIWA has effective processes and procedures for diligent management of agency risk
Priority: Capacity Building	
Strategic Goal	Build capacity to sustain and enhance the impact and value of our work
Objectives under this goal	Adapt agency infrastructure to keep up with agency growth. Build human capital to maximize agency's ability to address emerging needs. Evaluate office location and space and deliver to a plan to accommodate growth. Develop a brand awareness strategy.
Outcome	CIWA is an agency of choice for immigrant women to thrive and prosper in Calgary, as well as a recognized sector leader and employer of choice for those who join us in supporting immigrant women to achieve excellence.
Priority: Responsive Community Leader	
Strategic Goal	Contribute to the community as a responsive community leader
Objectives under this goal	Share expertise through mentorship. Give back to the community through collaboration.
Outcome	CIWA experience and expertise add value to the collective capacity and impact of agencies that serve immigrant women- locally, provincially and nationally.

Keeping the Strategy Alive and Relevant

A process to continually review and keep the strategy alive and relevant is critical to the success of the Strategic Plan and the outcomes we will achieve. The Board of Directors is committed to conducting regular reviews of the Strategic Plan and incorporating the reviews in the annual Board calendar.

The CEO will be responsible for the operational implementation for all strategies. This will be done through a comprehensive Business Plan for 2017-2022 that will outline the senior management team's responsibilities for outcomes and ensure shared and inclusive implementation of the strategies.

The Board will receive regular monthly updates from the CEO on the progress of all strategic priorities and goals. At the end of each fiscal year, the Board will receive a full report from the CEO on all activities and outcomes for the previous strategic year. The Board will take responsibility and identify action items for all governance related priorities from the plan and deliver outcomes in line with the plan.

CIWA Strategic Plan will be reviewed each year at the annual Board retreat to ensure it is current and relevant. Should there be a need to amend the Strategic Plan to respond to any immediate immigration and/or refugee need, the Board will do that accordingly and inform all stakeholders.

Concluding Remarks

The strategic roadmap as outlined above identifies strategic priorities that will be important to CIWA's success in the next five years. They are a reflection of the challenges and needs immigrant women and their families face in their integration process. Our work on addressing social issues of newcomers is connected with the priorities of the three levels of government that invest in our programs and services.

We work closely with the federal government on expediting the integration process of newcomers for their benefit and the benefit of all Canadians. Immigration is good for Canada. It responds to the country's labour market needs and, more importantly, it is a nation building initiative. One out of five people in Canada's population is foreign-born, which represents over 20% of the total population.

Our work is relevant for all Calgarians and Canadians and their future. All Calgarians and Canadians are important for our work, and for the future of newcomers coming to our country. Future generations of leaders will be as good as we support them to be. Many of them will come from immigrant families. Supporting immigrant women - enhancing their capacity to lead productive and meaningful lives, to contribute to the community, to be role models for their sons and daughters - will lead to successful future for all of us.

CIWA will need help and support to achieve outcomes we set out for ourselves, our clients, and their children. We are confident we will get it.

We look forward to the full and productive engagement of all immigrant women in the community as well as sharing our passion, diversity, knowledge, expertise and zest for learning and improving. We invite all of you to join us throughout the process.

Appendix A – Overview of the Strategic Planning Process

To facilitate and lead the strategic planning process CIWA engaged the services of Salopek & Associates. The process included the following phases:

Pre-planning

A meeting was held with the CEO and the Strategic Planning Committee of the Board to gather all relevant information on governance, previous strategic plans, vision, mission, values, culture, programs and services, research, funding, and stakeholder and employee feedback.

Research

Interviews were held with fifteen (15) stakeholders, funders, community partners, the CEO and members of the Board to conduct an environmental scan and gather information on the perceptions of the current state of CIWA with respect to programs, services, staffing, volunteer, successes and challenges. Emerging trends were discussed and information was gathered on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for CIWA.

A focus group with eleven (11) CIWA clients from the Employment Services Program was held to gather information on what CIWA currently does well with respect to client services and what they might consider doing differently to better service immigrant women with their integration into the community.

Strategic Planning Workshops

A half day workshop with senior and middle management was facilitated by Salopek & Associates to conduct an analysis of CIWA's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT), gain insight into CIWA's vision, mission and values and explore from a management perspective the priorities for the future.

Two evening sessions (each 3.5 hours long) were held to analyze the information gathered during the environmental scan and the management workshop, to conduct a SWOT analysis from the Board's perspective, and to identify strategic priorities, goals, objectives, outcomes and accountabilities.

Appendix B - CIWA: The Current State

Summary of Environmental Scan Results

What did we hear from our Stakeholders when we asked what does CIWA do well and what does CIWA need to manage with respect to challenges?

1. CIWA differentiates itself by its gender specific mandate and its holistic approach to providing services

Our ability to empower immigrant women and help them access any and all programs and services that will give them the tools they need to successfully integrate into Canadian Society, sets us apart from other organizations. This should continue as our mandate and our focus.

Staying abreast of the evolving needs of immigrant women and their families must be an important focus for CIWA; specifically in regards to potential increases and/or more complex issues relative to family and domestic violence, mental health, and the social challenges to immigration. CIWA's programs and service offerings must continue to be responsive and relevant.

2. CIWA removes barriers for immigrant women

CIWA removes barriers by providing childcare and transportation; being centrally located; providing services in multiple languages; offering programs free of charge. Furthermore, taking our programs into 120 community locations to further provide choices to those clients for whom it is very difficult to come downtown.

CIWA must continually consider innovations to further address barriers, broaden its reach to clients, and enhance service to all immigrant women. We must endeavor to be inclusive to all immigrant women including those who are not eligible for services and explore options to address their needs.

3. Staff and volunteers are critical to CIWA's success

Many staff members and volunteers at CIWA are former clients. They have a high level of credibility, which makes them more effective in their roles. Our stakeholders tell us that staff and volunteers show great teamwork, are very professional, supportive, highly engaged and committed to the work they do.

Success for CIWA depends on the expert staff and volunteers that are committed and passionate about the mission and vision of CIWA. It will be important that we continue to build people capacity and their competencies. We must remain committed to continuous learning and development to keep on top of trends, be innovative in our approach and be proactive and responsive to our clients' needs.

CIWA is recognized and has a reputation as an organization that has great leadership amongst its people. Leadership skills, passion, and entrepreneurial spirit have helped elevate the organization and the level of success it has achieved. The focus on creating stronger governance process at the Board level has resulted in a diversified skill set and a high level of Board engagement. Looking into the future, CIWA needs to leverage our capacity to lead in the community, advocate for immigrant women and their families; challenge stereotypes that may exist with respect to immigrants; and create awareness of the importance and benefits of the integration of the immigrant population and pluralistic societies.

4. Collaboration is fundamental to CIWA

Recognizing that women and their families have multiple and complex needs as they move along the spectrum of integration requires CIWA to collaborate with other organizations to effectively address the needs of their clients. CIWA has developed many significant and successful partnerships. We have developed important ties with community partners and businesses to create mentorship and placement opportunities for our clients.

There is potential for greater collaboration as CIWA becomes better known outside of the immigrant-serving sector and increases the awareness of its programs and services within corporate Calgary. Tapping into new sectors will create significantly more opportunities for job placements for graduates from CIWA's employment programs and potentially diversify CIWA fund development.

5. Increasing brand awareness is important for CIWA

As we grow and develop we need to expand our reach to the whole community and promote the value, assets and benefits of immigration. There may be more opportunity for additional funding if corporate and mainstream organizations in Calgary are more aware of CIWA and the services we provide.

CIWA's marketing materials and branding must be elevated to the next level. We will need to leverage resources such as Alumni and their success stories, revise the website to include those testimonials, and leverage volunteers to extend marketing and social media initiatives.

6. CIWA will want to manage growth

CIWA must be cognizant of managing our growth and the potential increase in the need for our services. Proactive planning will be important to ensure we have the capacity and proper processes in place to be responsive. Succession planning for critical leadership roles must also be addressed. Growth will require strengthening and updating our current technology; sustaining growth funding; and exploring social enterprise with respect to potential funding opportunities for CIWA.