

Annual Service Plan Review and Update 2021-22

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INTRODUCTION

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton (Hamilton CAS), in partnership with families and our community, is committed to the safety, protection and well-being of children and supporting families by building on their strengths while valuing diversity and promoting equity. The Society has operated for 127 years and continues to evolve to meet community and provincial needs with a vision that every child in the community is a gift to be valued, nurtured, and kept safe.

In 2019, Hamilton CAS approved a five-year strategic vision. The strategic vision provides a blueprint for leading the Society through 2024. This document, "Service Plan Review and Update: 2021-2022" highlights the strategic priorities and objectives, and the Society's progress in achieving its operational goals in the 2021-22 fiscal year.

This document is comprised of two sections

- Context
- Strategic Priorities, Objectives and Operational Goals

How do we track and report progress?

- Progress on operational goals will be reported to the board twice a year
- Key performance indicators will be reported to the board in September
- The measurement and progress on key performance indicators will aid in the evaluation of our progress towards our objectives and will be used to inform further refinement of objectives over time to respond to the changing context

CONTEXT

Demographics

Hamilton CAS provides child welfare services to the amalgamated City of Hamilton which consists of both urban and rural landscapes comprised of 1,138 km². The socio-demographic composition of the City of Hamilton provides the context within which services are provided to families and underscores the complexity of families we serve. City of Hamilton has two children's aid societies: Hamilton Catholic Children's Aid and Hamilton CAS.

Population

- The 2016 Census¹ found that 536,917 people lived in Hamilton
- Hamilton CAS provides service to approximately 67% of the population in Hamilton
- The population of Hamilton grew by 3.3% over a five-year period from 2011 to 2016
- Approximately 20%, or just over 105,000 0–17-year-olds live in the City of Hamilton.

Indigenous Identity and Visible Minorities

- 2.3% of Hamilton's population identifies as First Nations, Inuit, or Métis
- Hamilton continues to see a rise in the diversity of its population. The 2016 census identified that 20% of Hamiltonians identified as visible minorities. In the upcoming census that number is likely to rise further. In 2016, 5% identified as South Asian, 4% as Black, and 2% as Chinese, Filipino Latin American, and Arab.

Immigration

- Immigrants comprise a quarter of the total population of Hamilton (25%), with 5% having arrived within the last 10 years.
- Hamilton has become a major Canadian destination for immigrants and has been a designated Sanctuary City since 2014.

Language

- 84% of residents in Hamilton speak English most often at home and 73% have English identified as their first language.

Poverty

- Using the Low-income after-tax measure, reported in the 2016 census, 21% of children under 18 in Hamilton live in low-income households. This is higher than the provincial (18.4%) and national (17%) averages for children under 18.

¹ The most recent census was conducted in 2021, however, to-date Statistics Canada has not released all of the data reported in this section. As a result, numbers from 2016 are used.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact service volumes and service delivery in 2021-22. Similar to the previous year, service volumes increased as the year progressed, but remained below pre-pandemic levels in 2019-20. In-person programs and supports for families in the community were limited. Hamilton CAS continued to provide additional clinical and financial supports to families and youth who faced challenges due to COVID-19.

We saw several changes in the reasons for investigations during the pandemic. Notably, we saw an increase in the number of families experiencing challenges with caregiver addiction, mental health, and developmental disability which made up 19% of cases pre-pandemic, 23% of cases in 2020-21 and 22% in 2021-22. Investigations related to “Caregiver - Child conflict/Child Behaviour” increased from 3% in 2019-20 to 5% in 2020-21 and to 7% in 2021-22. These investigations are frequently related to complex mental health, addictions and developmental needs of youth. Conversely, “physical force/maltreatment” investigations have decreased during the pandemic from 20% in 2019-20 to 14% in 2021-22.

As the pandemic moved into its second full year, there was a significant increase in admissions to care for “Caregiver - Child conflict/Child Behaviour”. With many services in the community unavailable, some youth at home for school, and limited resources and social outlets, this led to increased tensions in families with little relief. The average age of these youth was 14 years. With this being an older population. Over 70% of these youth resided in Outside Paid Resources (OPR) Foster and OPR Group placements when they were admitted. Future work will support further engagement with foster parents to increase the percentage of youth placed in family-based care. Hamilton CAS has experienced a lack of residential resources and other community supports because of COVID restrictions, a lack of residential placements with appropriate resources to support the complex needs of youth, and staffing challenges at residences in the community. It is not yet clear if this admission pattern will persist as we come out of the pandemic; it is an area the Society will continue to assess.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services’ directive to support youth on Continued Care and Support for Youth (CCSY) beyond the age of 21 rather than aging out of care remained in effect in 2021-22. As a result, 57 of the 150 CCSY youth we served were over the age of 21. As of March 31, 2022, there were 236 children 0-17 in care, which is a reduction from 385 the previous year.

Strategic Vision 2019-2024

Strategic Priorities, Objectives, and Operational Goals: 2021-2022 Year in Review

The Society has identified six priority areas of focus to guide our journey over the next several years. These strategic priorities and corresponding annual operational goals will support us in achieving our vision for the Society and provide a map of what we aim to do and how we aim to do it.

In 2021-22, 52 operational goals were set across the six priority areas (see Appendix). Highlights of key achievements for each priority area are presented.

Priority 1: Safety and Well-being

Children and youth safety and well-being will be increased within the family through good assessment and planning, capacity building and accessing the assets of the family itself and their community.

Objectives

- a) Shared understanding with others of how we can best contribute to supporting families in the community
- b) Increased capacity of families to provide for their children in their own home and reduce the risk of need for protection through early help and support by CAS and by accessing help from others
- c) Services and other interactions with ethno-specific and linguistic communities reflect well-informed and appropriate practices including with Afro-Canadian and Indigenous people and organizations

Key Achievements

Early help and prevention is a key focus of the Society. A working group was formed in October 2021 to develop an early help service approach and definitions. The working group consisted of front-line staff, supervisors and legal counsel. In addition to developing guiding principles, the group conducted a local, national and international scan examining various early help models. The group also reviewed the 2012 OACAS report "Becoming the Help that Families Need", which informed discussions about what early help means in the context of child welfare, as well as how this work connects to the Eligibility Spectrum and child welfare legislation. Work was also completed to understand Report Received Not Investigated and Community Links data, as well as identity data to determine if this might be an area of focus for a pilot project. A subgroup was created to further explore data that will inform the work going forward. Moving forward, the group will identify opportunities for further engagement with staff, service recipients and community partners to better understand what early help might look like.

Despite an impact on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) processes due to COVID, including limitations on in-person consultation and staffing shortages with ADR facilitators, there has been an increase in the Society's use of ADR over the past year. There has been much discussion and work with the service supervisors and in turn their respective teams as it relates to utilizing processes that are available to families to support a more collaborative approach. There is an expectation that ADR discussed in supervision and explored for all families who are involved with the Society. Where a family identifies as Indigenous, Aboriginal Alternative Dispute Resolution approaches are to be considered and discussed with the family and their supports. Staff have had numerous positive experiences which have also contributed to the desire and commitment to continue to utilize these approaches.

The Society is committed to reducing court involvement with families we serve. Given the over-representation of Indigenous families involved with the court system, in 2021-22 an “Out of the Box” working group was formed with members from across the Society to focus on different ways of approaching service delivery to our Indigenous community, seeking ways to work more collaboratively to reduce the need for Indigenous children to come into care and for the Society to commence child welfare court applications. Four Working Principles were created and nine Service Approaches were identified and recommended. Those recommendations received the support of the Society’s Senior Team. Next steps will be to share the Working Principles and Service Approaches with all Society staff and to review them with the Catholic Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton in advance of presenting them to the leadership of the local Indigenous Organizations.

Integration of service strategies with Hamilton Regional Indian Centre (HRIC) and Empowerment Squared are well established and fully implemented. These two partnerships focus on collaboration and providing culturally aligned service (with the Indigenous community through HRIC and the Black community through Empowerment Squared). The service approaches utilized through these partnerships were identified through a community engagement approach which sought input from community partners and families. Empowerment Squared is co-located within the Society’s building which has created a number of opportunities to explore collaborative work.

Guided by our strategic vision, we have developed a customer service model with principles and core competencies that illustrate our passion and commitment to the safety and well-being of children. Staff came together to choose a name for the model that encompasses our commitment and standard for service excellence. The name selected is the Collaborative Community Relations Model. The model captures how service users and community partners experience the Society whether it is through child protection services, collaborative services, community programs or simply through their interactions with us. The model was developed using feedback through listening tours, surveys and consultation with key stakeholders. It is important for us to understand how we can serve our community better and to ensure the voices of those we work with, foster and kin families, volunteers, our community and our staff are heard. Our principles and competencies incorporate our key values such as equity, collaboration, and professional excellence. Part of this framework also includes a formalized process to hear complaints and concerns from families we work with. This wholistic approach touches each aspect of the work we do and helps us to continually improve the experience of those whose lives we touch. The model was shared with all staff and the Community Relations Specialist continues to meet and work with service teams to integrate the model into practice. Future work will include reviewing our current client feedback process to look for more effective ways of supporting families children and youth in providing feedback to the Society.

Priority 2: Permanency and Potential

Enable children and youth in care to find permanency and reach their full potential.

Objectives

- a) Children in care safely transition to a permanent and stable out-of-care arrangement as soon as possible following admission
- b) Children in care are most often served in family-based settings as close to their homes as possible
- c) Improved educational achievement for all children and youth in care
- d) Plans and decisions are fully informed by youth voice and their input is reflected in service
- e) All transition-aged youth receiving service get the supports they need to reach their full potential as adults

Key Achievements

Over the past year, the completion of concurrent assessments, increased searches for kin connections, as well as referrals to the Kin Connect team members have helped to enhance kinship options for children and youth. Episodic funding for kin service has made a significant difference in how we have been able to support families, such as allocating funds to address immediate safety concerns, access start-up funds for families who may have had to relocate or utilize larger living spaces to support a kinship arrangement. Episodic funding has also been used to help to sustain placements that required additional in-home supports, a measure to mitigate children/youth coming into the Society's care. With the support of the Finance department, we have worked creatively to reallocate supports in order to bridge the gap between times when the caregiver is awaiting assistance from Ontario Works and the child tax benefit. This year we saw a decrease in kinship referrals made to the Kinship team. Although this is consistent with lower service levels overall, the Kinship team has identified the need for further training regarding early identification of potential kinship arrangements and a consultation process for staff to further bolster clinical practice which may increase the use of kinship services to best support families.

This year, the Educational Liaison focused on networking with community partners such as Empowerment Squared, Big Brother Big Sisters of Hamilton and several of the school boards in the region to better understand the educational resources available in the community. The development of an educational brochure for Society staff is underway with information explaining the role of the Educational Liaison, how it intersects with the work of the service teams, and information regarding educational resources in the community.

The Educational Liaison along with some members of the Senior team met with different members of the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board leadership team to discuss educational gaps and a commitment to address them. Currently, all children in the care of Hamilton CAS have an educational success plan and a process is being developed to ensure that they are being reviewed on an ongoing basis. It is important to note that the Ministry is in the process of reviewing the effectiveness of the use of these plans. The Educational Liaison continues to meet with children and youth, assists with school registration, mediation and linking them to external resources. Much work has been done to identify youth who require psycho-educational assessments to better assist them with their educational goals.

Tutoring supports are accessible to all youth, however, all tutoring options are currently provided by external

stakeholders. Moving forward, the Educational Liaison will explore the option to develop an internal program that links children and youth with tutors who are flexible and can support their educational needs on a consistent basis.

Hamilton CAS plans to develop a Youth Advisory Committee. However, it was difficult to engage youth to attend virtual meetings to form a Youth Advisory Committee during the pandemic, which delayed progress on this goal. In 2021-22, the Youth Success Coordinator conducted an environmental scan of other children's aid societies to gather information about the process, programming, and function of their Youth Advisory groups. Steps will be taken next year for the Youth Success Coordinator to send a communication out to all youth about the opportunity to participate in the Youth Advisory Committee, be a part of its development, be a part of a team to bring about changes that will help to improve the experiences of children and youth in care.

Priority 3: Engaged and Inspired

Agency staff, foster parents and volunteers will be engaged and inspired in a healthy workplace

Objectives

- a) Adequate staffing and skill levels are available to serve the needs and volumes of families and children served
- b) An agency-wide learning and development strategy that supports the agency as an evidenced-based place of learning
- c) Develop and implement a Healthy Workplace Strategy

Key Achievements

In 2021-22 enhancements to the Society's onboarding and training process included the development of a self-orientation module. This self-orientation component of the onboarding process is designed to get new employees active in their orientation to the Society and will provide them with an opportunity to meet and learn from people outside of their department. New hires will meet with designated individuals from each department to learn more about what each department does, and how the work of the department is connected to the work of the rest of the Society and our strategic vision. The new hire orientation process will be rolled out in 2022-23.

Over the past year Human Resources worked with a cross-sectional group of supervisors and front-line staff to collaboratively identify the key leadership competencies required for supervisor and front-line positions. As a result, these leadership competencies have been incorporated into all position descriptions. This will allow us to work with staff to better understand their role/responsibilities and key competencies. This work is foundational in supporting our goal to develop a comprehensive succession planning program for the Society.

In 2021-22, steps towards the development of a training plan for foster parents and volunteers included developing a survey that will be rolled out to foster parents and volunteers in January 2023 to assess their training needs. Following this exercise, a training plan and budget will be developed for the training period of April 2023 to March 2024. Human resources staff are working collaboratively with the foster parent training lead and senior administrative assistant, who oversees the volunteer drivers, to develop this plan.

This past year, a new leadership development assessment tool was piloted by Senior Team and Human Resources staff. A small focus group is planned for supervisors to review this tool and provide feedback prior to piloting by a select group of supervisors. The plan is to implement use of this new tool with all supervisors effective October 2023. Next steps include the roll out of the new tool to non-union management and union staff effective October 2024.

The opportunity to include absence management language in the new collective agreement that is set to expire on March 31, 2022 was explored. The proposed language would be based on working collaboratively with staff with the support of their union representative, supervisor and human resources for a safe and early return to work. Should this new language be agreed to through the collective bargaining process, next steps will include review of the absence management policy reflect this collaborative approach.

Priority 4: Strategic Partnerships

Develop and maintain strategic partnerships within the community and across the province that assist in supporting vulnerable children and families.

Objectives

- a) Strategic partnerships with Indigenous and Black communities to support them in keeping their children safe at home
- b) A multi-level strategy (provincial, local, and case level) that supports advocacy, with specific roles defined for each level of the agency including staff and the Board

Key Achievements

The five Specialized Teams in Assessment and Support (Indigenous team, Racialized/Newcomer team, Young Parent team, Adolescent team, and Addictions/Mental Health team) continued to build relationships with key community supports with a view to helping families earlier and reducing the need for more intrusive child protection services. Some of the areas where outreach and engagement occurred in 2021-22 were with police services, the violence against women sector, shelter and housing supports, Jewish Family Services, services geared to young parents, mental health and addictions services, anti-human trafficking services, as well local hospitals. While this work is ongoing, the goal of outreach was achieved with a strong recognition of the need to work in collaboration with our community to provide the best support and service to those we work with. An important component of this work was sharing learnings across the organization through consultation and collaboration. Specialized teams provided consultations across other areas of the Society to explore ways to reduce the need for more intrusive protection services.

Domestic Violence remains an ongoing issue that spans across many areas of the Society's work, impacting many families. In our efforts to ensure we are addressing this issue in the best way possible, a Domestic Violence working group was formed in 2021-22 to explore how we as an organization might work with our community to support those who are impacted by domestic violence. The working group was comprised of representatives from across the Society who have a particular interest or expertise in this area of work. Consistent with the goal set for 2021-22, the working group established guiding principles and explored strengths and gaps in the current service approach to Domestic Violence. While the goal of developing the working group has been achieved there is other work to carry over into the coming year, for example developing recommendations for a service approach as well with an increased focus on developing strategies to support and work with men engaged in Domestic Violence.

Relationship building with the Indigenous Child Welfare Collaborative (ICWC) is ongoing. The ICWC was formed to strengthen relationships and to develop strategies and pathways for a coordinated approach to services and wraparound support for Indigenous children and families involved with child welfare. The ICWC includes representatives from both of Hamilton's children's aid societies and six local Indigenous agencies—Hamilton Executive Directors Aboriginal Coalition, Niagara Peninsula Aboriginal Area Management Board, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, Niwassa Kendaaswin Teg, De dwa da dehs nye s Aboriginal Health Centre, and the Native Women's Centre. Monthly meetings include activities such as joint training, and the review of CAS data, and the development of collaborative working agreement. In the coming year there will be a focus on having a retreat to further define goals for the collaborative moving forward.

In 2021-22 an evaluation of the first year of the Aboriginal Family Support Program (AFSP) which is a partnership

with Hamilton Regional Indian Centre (HRIC) was conducted. The AFSP provides early help and intervention services that meet the needs of the family and are culturally aligned. HCAS refers Indigenous families working with the society to HRIC and HRIC provides service with the goal of supporting Indigenous children in their own homes or assisting with reintegration back home or in their community. From October 2020 to mid-December 2021, 129 referrals were made to HRIC, with the number of referrals being made on a monthly basis increasing over time. The top five services requested were: cultural services; housing/homelessness; social recreational; mental health; and parenting skills. The evaluation included focus groups with staff from Hamilton CAS and HRIC. Staff reported that frequent contact with HRIC workers has facilitated good relationships across the two agencies. Both staff groups also expressed interest in getting together more frequently and they provided a number of suggestions for team-building activities. For example, holding joint events as it helps the community to see the two organizations working together collaboratively.

The Racialized and Newcomer specialized team has been working closely with Empowerment Squared to develop strategies to support their work with families. This included a service agreement with Empowerment Squared (ES) from November 2021 – March 2022 to provide early help and intervention services with a goal of supporting black and newcomer children in their own homes and communities or assisting with reintegration back home or in their community. Features of the service include a Navigation program that increases families' knowledge and confidence in navigating a range of service systems such as education, housing, and immigration. The program also connects families to educational programming and other community resources. In addition, the CAS's Education Liaison and staff from Empowerment Squared have participated in joint meetings with schools to resolve issues. The service also entailed a parenting workshop component that was co-developed by the Society and Empowerment Squared in recognition that families new to Canada need to feel supported while they are parenting in a new country. The workshop covered the role of the Children's Aid Society, acknowledging the disproportionate number of black and racialized families in the child welfare system and that some families are afraid of the Children's Aid Society because they feared that their children would be taken away. The five-week parenting workshop was geared towards promoting healthy and positive relationships between parents and children. There were 50 participants in the navigation and Family support program in 2021-22. An evaluation of the partnership with Empowerment Squared will be completed and there is a plan to have a feedback meeting with the racialized and newcomer community in Fall 2022 to set goals for the future.

The Grand River Zone and the broader membership of Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies continue to work collaboratively with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to develop and implement child welfare redesign. Recently the Ministry released a number of licensing standard changes for implementation provincially on July 1, 2023. Service staff and supervisors are working together to plan for implementation. The goal is to align the new standards with the Society's strategic vision and to provide an integrated approach to implementation.

Priority 5: Continuous Improvement

Enhance systems to support continuous quality improvement, transparency, and accountability.

Objectives

- a) High levels of compliance are achieved on service standards and strategic outcomes are measured
- b) New provincial requirements are implemented
- c) Support is maintained for CPIN integration

Key Achievements

Changes were made to the Society's organizational structure in 2021-22 that support our commitment to continuous improvement, including the recruitment of a Director of Strategy and Planning who joined Hamilton CAS in November 2021. A permanent Quality Assurance Analyst position was approved and posted and the decision was made to convert the two CPIN Subject Matter Expert contract positions to permanent roles and make them part of QA department on a permanent basis. These changes will support the Society to focus on program evaluation and outcome measurement in addition to maintaining high levels of compliance to the Child Protection Standards. Through the identification of common data entry errors in CPIN, Quality Assurance check reports were created to facilitate real-time staff training by the CPIN Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). Recently, fewer data entry errors have been noted, indicating the effectiveness of this approach. As part of the Ministry's Standards QIP process, the CPIN SMEs conducted a manual audit of non-compliant cases and provided detailed information to staff for record corrections, to make sure staff understand the necessary steps to complete accurate data entry in CPIN.

Over the past year, the Society's Quality Assurance and IT teams worked collaboratively to redevelop the Child Protection Information Network (CPIN) Task Report which provides upcoming due dates to staff and supervisors to support timely completion of tasks to meet the Child Protection Standards. The report takes into account the due dates within the Ministry's Standards reports, which increases accuracy and alignment to provincial definitions. We continued to work collaboratively with the other CASs in the Grand River Zone to ensure shareability and multi-society use of the revised CPIN Task Report. In 2021-22 we continued to add additional reports to the Society's self-serve report library available on the Intranet. With the core elements of the library now in place, the reports built this year addressed the more specific needs of individual teams, such as court involvement data, education data, finance planning data. Reports for the self-serve library will continue to be added as needs arise.

A process and timeline for the roll-out of PolicyTech to all-staff in April 2022 was created. PolicyTech is software that centralizes all Society policies and procedures, is easy to search, and ensures staff are accessing current versions. Work was conducted through the PolicyTech Steering Committee, comprised of staff from across the organization, to create a Policy and Procedure framework to review and update all policies. In 2022-23 this work will be supported by a Policy and Procedure Program Assistant who will be recruited for one-year to assist with the roll-out of the policy review and renewal process.

Consistent with the expectations of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC), the Society is committed to ongoing education and skill development for staff related to privacy legislation (i.e., Part X of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act). Activities conducted in 2021-22 included the development of team-based learning workshop focused on clinical writing in the context of privacy legislation. The workshop was developed and facilitated by the Society's privacy lead and privacy lawyer for all service teams including legal counsel. Additionally, information was communicated regularly to staff and supervisors on key topics such as disclosure

during police investigations, how to manage requests for information, and IPC decisions in child welfare. Another key area of work by the Society's privacy lead was to attend team meetings to review IPC expectations. Hamilton CAS also chaired the Grand River Zone's Part X group. Activities related to enhancing education and skill development related to the protection and disclosure of information will be continuous.

Over the past year, a rebranding committee made up of staff from across the Society worked with a marketing firm on a new brand for Hamilton CAS that reflects the strategic vision, our customer service focus, and our commitment to equity and inclusion. Community engagement was an integral component of this work. A brand personality survey was distributed, and a series of focus groups was held with those who work for, with and receive services from the Society. This feedback will help us understand how the Society is currently perceived, any areas that need attention, and will help us to create an identity that reflects our commitment to how we engage, work with, and provide service to families, the community, and each other.

In 2021-22 a report looking at data and trends related to informal and formal complaints was completed and shared with the Executive Director. Next steps will include analyzing the data and trends and identifying gaps and potential opportunities to integrate the findings with the Collaborative Community Relations Model into service.

Priority 6: Resources and Sustainability

Ensure that valuable resources are in place to support service outcomes and ensure financial sustainability.

Objectives

- a) Maximize revenue available including securing and allocating resources for the best possible organizational design, staffing and mix of placement resources
- b) An Information Technology Implementation Plan has been developed and reviewed

Key Achievements

The year-end surplus for fiscal 2021-22 was less than the Ministry Budget and less than the long-term planning forecasts. Additional costs were incurred, primarily related to increased costs to support youth in interim placements. The Society has experienced a lack of residential resources and other community supports because of COVID restrictions, lack of residential placements with appropriate resources to support the complex needs of youth and staffing issues at residences in our community. These factors have increased costs. The Society continues to assess and monitor risks to ensure future sustainability. The most recent organizational risk assessment completed by the Ministry resulted in a "low" risk rating.

All historical debt has been paid using surpluses generated in recent years. Additional surplus funds were contributed to the Society's Balanced Budget Fund in 2021-22 which can be used in future years. The Society continues to use multi-year planning to ensure funds are available to support the strategic vision of the organization.

An initiative was put in place with HR and Service Supervisors to analyze gaps in staffing to support earlier hiring. As a result, we saw a reduction in the time required to hire staff which resulted in the need for less coverage and families being connected to a consistent worker sooner.

Several Society-owned houses that were no longer required by our tenant were sold. These funds have been reinvested in the private fund to support children, youth and families where funding is not provided by the Ministry. Funds are used to provide bursaries and financial support to youth attending post-secondary, gift cards for families to use during family celebrations, summer camp experiences, and other programs. Next steps will include reviewing our investment strategy to ensure that investments achieve the maximum return at an appropriate risk level.

An annual fundraising plan to maximize revenue and revenue generation was developed and presented to the Board of Directors. Key highlights from this plan included:

Surpassing annual fundraising target of \$214,000 by over \$50,000 (as of March 2022)

Empowering over 450 families to make their own purchases for the holidays through The Grateful Hearts program (up from 293 families in 2020)

In collaboration with Service and Finance, forming a Donation Depot collaborative to ensure the needs of families are at the forefront of decision making, provide a continuum of client assistance based on those specific needs, and align the Donation Depot with the Society's strategic vision

Key operational goals related to the Information Technology Implementation Plan were achieved in 2021-22.

Laserfiche is now the primary system for scanned and legacy documentation. All documents stored in Synergize were moved to Laserfiche and Microfiche documents have been added to Laserfiche. A custom disclosure

management database originally developed at the CAS of Haldimand and Norfolk has been installed and configured. This tool will provide a tracking database, checklists with due dates to meet out disclosure obligations and a number of automation enhancements to streamline the disclosure process. A ticketing system is now being used by IT and HR to kick off automation routines and notification for common HR tasks (onboarding, leaves, etc.). Over the past year a disaster recovery site was successfully implemented.

CONCLUSION

Hamilton CAS is pleased to provide this report which highlights the accomplishment of key operational goals in 2021-22 that support progress towards achieving our strategic vision to better support vulnerable children, youth, and families in the Hamilton community.

Appendix: 2021-22 Operational Goals Status

Priority 1: Safety and Well-Being		
Children and youth safety and well-being will be increased within the family through good assessment and planning, capacity building and accessing the assets of the family itself, and their community		
Objective	Operational Goals	Progress
a. Shared understanding with others of how we can best contribute to supporting families in the community.	Seek opportunities to co-locate and/or develop integrated service strategies with at least 2 community service providers in the next year.	Green
	Develop a clear service approach including definitions of early help and support in consultation with families, children, staff members/partners and communities.	Yellow
b. Increased capacity of families to provide for their children in their own home and reduce the risk of need for protection through early help and support by CAS and by accessing help from others.	Specialized teams will develop relationships with key community supports to help families earlier and reduce the need for more intrusive protection services and share this work with colleagues across the organization through consultation and collaboration.	Green
	Develop a committee to identify strengths and gaps within our agency to better respond to women facing intimate partner violence and to provide recommendations related to engaging men who are perpetrators of domestic violence.	Green
	Family safety support networks will be identified for all families during initial involvement and will be involved during ongoing involvement.	Yellow
	Develop a process to support early consideration of Alternate Dispute Resolution and Family Group Conferencing	Green
	Develop a rapid response model in collaboration with the family's cultural community to find out of court resolution prior to initiating a court application	Yellow
	Develop and implement a Customer Service Model that embodies the values of the agency, encompasses diversity equity and inclusion practices and strengthens service to children, youth and families	Green
c. Services and other interactions with ethno-specific and linguistic communities reflect well-informed and appropriate practices including with racialized and Black people and Indigenous people and organizations.	Implementation of Equity training for staff across all levels of the organization.	Yellow
	Development of a data framework related to racialized and Black children in care.	Yellow
	Implementation of Indigenous training to all levels of the organization.	Yellow

Priority 2: Permanency and Potential		
Strategic Goal 2: Enable children and youth in care to find permanency and reach their full potential		
Lead: Director of Service - Permanency & Resources		
Objective	Operational Goals	Progress
a. Children in care safely transition to a permanent and stable out-of-care arrangement as soon as possible following admission.	When children need to come out of the care of their parents, find kin placements.	Green
	Increase opportunities for children to be placed with kin when temporary placements out of the care of their parents is necessary.	
	Enhance kin options when an out of home placement is necessary.	
b. Children in care are most often served in family-based settings as close to their homes as possible	Implement the joint workplan with the FFA to support children in our internal foster care system.	Yellow
	Develop and implement a targeted foster care recruitment strategy for the organization.	Red
	Family based care will reflect the child's culture and race for Black and Indigenous children.	Yellow
	Build on kin Connect Work through family engagement and trauma focussed work	Yellow
c. Improved educational achievement for all children and youth in care.	Continue to fund the Educational Liaison position and participate in Joint Protocol for Student Achievement (JPSA).	Green
	Ensure all children in care have an educational success plan as per JPSA.	Yellow
	All youth will have access to tutoring programs.	Green
	For youth 18+ their placement will be supported pending completion of their secondary school credits.	Green
	Develop and implement a strategic plan to track student success and implement strategies to increase success for children and youth in care.	Yellow
d. Plans and decisions are fully informed by youth voice and their input is reflected in service.	Development of a Youth Advisory Committee.	Yellow
e. All transition-aged youth receiving service get the supports they need to reach their full potential as adults.	Clearly define permanency principles for the organization and develop a strategy to support outcomes related to this definition. All youth in care will have a documented transition plan and established informal support network.	Yellow

Priority 3: Engaged and Inspired		
Strategic Goal 3: Agency staff, foster parents and volunteers will be engaged and inspired in a healthy workplace		
Objective	Operational Goals	Progress
a. Adequate staffing and skill levels are available to serve the needs and volumes of families and children served.	Implement the Employment Equity plan.	
	Enhance the organization's onboarding and training.	
b. Create an agency-wide learning and development strategy that supports the agency as an evidenced-based place of learning.	Continue to enhance succession planning program at the supervisory level.	
	Develop a training plan for foster parents and volunteers.	
	Revise performance appraisals to incorporate the principles leadership competency framework.	
c. Develop and implement a Healthy Workplace Strategy.	Consultation and development of a healthy workplace excellence framework	
	Development and implementation of an absence management support program.	

Priority 4: Strategic Partnerships		
Develop and maintain strategic partnerships within the community and across the province that assist in supporting vulnerable children and families		
Objective	Operational Goals	Progress
a. Strategic partnerships with Black, Indigenous and racialized communities to support them in keeping their children safe at home.	Continue to deepen the relationship with members of the Indigenous Collaborative Working Group and expand membership to include Indigenous team.	
	Development of relationships with Empowerment Squared and other community partners to support the Racialized & Newcomer specialization team's work in the community.	
b. A multi-level strategy (provincial, local and case level) that supports advocacy, with specific roles defined for each level of the agency including staff and the Board.	Work collaboratively with OACAS and Executive Directors within the province to support system redesign	

Priority 5: Continuous Improvement		
Strategic Goal: Enhance systems to support continuous quality improvement, transparency and accountability		
Objective	Operational Goals	Progress
a. High levels of compliance are achieved on service standards and strategic outcomes are measured.	Transition to a self-service reporting model by developing a library of standard reports and interactive Business Intelligence dashboards.	Green
	Develop and integrate next generation interactive dashboards into standard practice.	Red
	Update policy manual for easy of utilization and equity lens.	Red
b. New Provincial requirements are implemented.	Enhance education and skill development regarding protection and disclosure of personal information.	Yellow
c. Broaden the awareness, knowledge and understanding of Hamilton CAS within the Hamilton community	Research and create a new brand for Hamilton CAS to reflect strategic vision, customer service focus and Equity and Inclusion commitments of the organization.	Yellow
	Revamp agency website to reflect new brand, new hosting platform and content management system	Red
d. Provide quality service that embodies the strategic vision of collaboration, strengthening of families and well-being of children	Develop a Customer Service Model that embodies values of Hamilton CAS. Create and collect statistical data to create trends, develop learning opportunities, and better practices. Include client feedback in process.	Yellow
e. Foster a culture focused on data driven outcomes to support continuous improvement in our work	Enhance QA capacity for report development, analysis, support of service staff and research and education	Yellow
	More holistic framework for client feedback & client survey to enhance customer satisfaction	Red
f. Implementation of Electronic Legal processes	Transition to a digital online legal file; implementation of LAD legal process software; Improved electronic legal processes	Green
g. Develop a 5 year equity plan that is focused on equity within the organization and community engagement	To embed equity throughout the organization and build strong community relationships	Yellow

Priority 6: Resources and Sustainability		
Strategic Goal: Ensure that valuable resources are in place to support service outcomes and ensure financial sustainability		
Objective	Operational Goals	Progress
a. Strategies are in place to maximize revenue available including securing and allocating resources for the best possible organizational design, staffing and mix of placement resources.	Strategic use of surpluses to support strategic vision and address historical deficit.	Green
	Resource back office to support service more effectively.	Green
	Develop a plan to maximize donations and revenue generation.	Green
	Review assets in private fund to maximize utilization, diversification and return on assets.	Yellow
b. Develop and review an IT Implementation Plan	Continue to implement systems that fully or partially automate manual processes.	Green
	Successful implementation of business continuity plan and disaster recovery site.	Green