

Windsong Business Plan 2002 - 2005

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1. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTABILITY

This business plan for the three years commencing April 1, 2002 was prepared in accordance with the Government Accountability Act, Child and Family Services Authorities Act, and directions provided by the Minister of Children's Services. All material economic and fiscal implications known at March 31, 2002 have been considered in preparing the business plan.

The Child and Family Services Authority's priorities outlined in the business plan were developed in the context of the business and fiscal plans of the Ministry of Children's Services. We are committed to achieving the planned results laid out in this business plan.

Signed by the Child and Family Services Authority Co-Chairs on behalf of the Windsong Child and Family Services Authority.

Sharon Davis

Dodie Gaudry

2. MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

The Windsong Board continues to believe in the development of services that provide long-term, safe and secure homes for children within our region. Windsong has a dedicated CEO and staff, who are committed to delivering mandated services in an effective and efficient manner, with emphasis on the Four Pillars: community-based, integration, early intervention and improved services for Aboriginal people.

The Board is encouraged by the Government's newly developed "Alberta Response" model which provides directives that reflect our vision for children and families. The Minister of Children's Services, Iris Evans, continues to provide excellent leadership and personal support to our Authority. The Board continues to support the use of interventions that may reduce the likelihood of familial abuse or neglect. There will be enhanced focus on permanency planning and adoption of permanent guardianship children.

The Windsong Board believes in open communication with community members and, in keeping with this philosophy, held community consultations throughout the Region in January 2002 to gather input into this Business Plan.

The Board of Windsong Child and Family Services is pleased with the quality of service that is provided to children and families within our Region and believe that we can further enhance the lives of children through community based, integrated services.

3. MINISTRY VISION STATEMENT

Strong children, families and youth

An Alberta where children and youth are valued, nurtured and loved; and develop to their potential supported by enduring relationships, healthy families, and safe communities. Alberta will be child, youth and family friendly.

4. OUR VISION STATEMENT

All children and their families are valued and supported in a safe, nurturing community that meets their needs.

5. OUR VALUE STATEMENTS

We value all children and believe that their basic needs must be met and rights upheld.

We value a supportive community.

We value services that successfully meet the needs of the child and family.

6. MINISTRY MISSION STATEMENT

Working together to enhance the ability of
Families and communities to develop nurturing and safe environments
For children, youth and individuals.

7. OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Windsong Child and Family Services will support the development of safe, healthy,
responsible, strong children, families, individuals and communities,
while protecting and assisting those in need.

8. THE PLANNING ENVIRONMENT: REGIONAL ISSUES AND PRIORITIES

Strengths of our Authority

The Windsong Authority continues to have a strong working environment with various partners within the Region. Maintaining a consistent staff group has led to solid communication with school personnel, health practitioners, mental health, private agencies and the RCMP. Linkages have also been solidified with the local FCSS directors, and Windsong staff are in regular attendance at inter-agency meetings in many of our rural communities. These relationships have helped to ensure that families in need of assistance receive the appropriate supports from the most suitable agency. Working closely with these partners has also clarified to the community the mandate of the programs carried out by the Authority

Staff retention has become a major asset for Windsong Authority. There has been very little staff turnover in the past year. Staff that were hired earlier have consistently demonstrated their commitment to the “generalist” model. Families, children and youth may enter any office in the Region, and find workers who have knowledge in all areas mandated under the Children’s Services Authorities. The Authority has achieved our goal to have a system set up so families don’t have to tell their story twice. The current staff are not only knowledgeable, they have developed into a cohesive team, with a strong commitment to the families and communities they serve.

An indicator of this cohesion and commitment is the number of adoptions finalized in Region 3. This Region, with one of the smallest populations in the province, has become a leader in the area of adoptions. This could not have happened without a strong team of social workers making every effort to ensure permanency for children is a top priority.

The services and response to the needs of families are enhanced by the continuum of services established in the Region. While it has been necessary to decrease the number of early intervention

programs Windsong financially supports, there remain significant programs in the Region with an early intervention emphasis. Wildrose Community Connections, The Fetal Alcohol Syndrome partnership, and Healthy Moms/Healthy Babies are examples of continuing services that Windsong has been instrumental in establishing and partnering with in the Region. Regionally based in-home support services have been contracted, thereby ensuring the services provided are sensitive to the needs of the families, in whatever community they reside within the boundaries of the Region. Eagle Receiving and Assessment Group Home has become a valued resource for alleviating crisis situations within a family. Windsong takes great pride in the fact that families no longer have to travel out of their home communities in order to attain service.

The Authority has a strong commitment to assisting families to access quality Child Care Services. A regionally based licensing officer increases the Authority's ability to work collaboratively with Child Care service providers to meet provincial standards.

Windsong's ability to respond to after hour crisis has been welcomed by the RCMP and families in the Region. Often, the worker on-call is aware of the family's situation, and is able to provide support in an effective manner because of this knowledge. Many times this has meant the difference for families in being able to overcome a crisis, while maintaining the child in their home.

Windsong has had the benefit of continuity from its Board as well as from front-line staff and management. There has been a growing knowledge and respect of the roles and responsibilities of each group. This awareness of each other's roles within the Windsong Authority has helped to build a trusting, open working environment where each individual employed understands the importance of their role in ensuring the Authority meets the needs of the families living in Region 3.

Issues and Priorities:

Windsong Region is a largely rural that has an area of approximately 27,000 square kilometers. Population for the Region as of 2000 (as provided by Headwaters Health Authority is 75 549, as compared to 71038 (1998). Significant growth has occurred in the age group of 15 - 18 year olds. Within this population there has been an almost 8% increase from 1998 to the year 2000. Rapid growth continues in the main centers of the Region: Canmore, Okotoks and High River. Smaller townships such as Nanton and Vulcan have also been growing, in large part due to the lower cost of living, while still being close enough to commute to larger urban centers. This increase in population has led to a higher need for support services at the same time that the need for cost containment measures has become a priority. Continuing to provide professional, timely, effective service within this large rural Region will be a challenge as the demands of the communities increase, while financial resources become more scarce.

Successfully achieving previously set goals to establish a collaborative, responsive, effective service delivery model has created Another challenge which will require striking a balance. Services are available in all the communities within the Region, not only the larger urban centers. This effectiveness has led to an increase in the expectation of Windsong to provide services which may not strictly fit into the eligibility for mandated service. While workers are prepared to be involved in mediation with families, and address short-term needs which are not strictly child protection, there needs to be a balance between what a community social worker should be doing, and what issues should be addressed through other community services. There also needs to be a way of tracking the work that is done, and measuring the benefits of these interventions over the long term, both for the family, and in terms of financial benefit. The implementation of the Alberta Response Model will be a strategy utilized to aid in addressing this issue.

Parents of children with disabilities have come to expect a high degree of service and advocacy from Windsong social workers working with these families. A consistent theme for these parents is the lack of professional trained support services in the Region. While Windsong is not responsible for direct service implementation, we do understand the irony of a parent who has an agreement under Resources For Children With Disabilities, but cannot use this agreement because there is no service provider available. This is especially true in the most rural areas of the Region. This issue is not viewed solely as the responsibility of the parent or the social worker. The need to coordinate services across ministries is a given, but it is never more apparent than in the area of services to special needs children and their families.

Windsong has increased the number of foster placements available as a resource. Where before children in need of a placement often had to be moved out of their community, including their home school, most of these children can now be served without having to travel great distances. This has made the transition back home much easier. The percentage of children in care remains higher than the provincial average, partly due to the number of Permanent Guardianship Order children transferred to this Region since the Authority was established. Windsong is situated adjacent to Calgary Rockyview. Many of the children who are placed within the Windsong Region have Permanent Guardianship status and become the case management responsibility of Windsong as per inter-regional protocol. This creates increased pressure on our caseload and finances which the Authority has little control over, this needs to be recognized and addressed at the inter-Authority level. The implementation of the Alberta Response Model, particularly focusing on the front-end delivery of service should result in a decrease of the percentage of children in care, provincially. This model will certainly be a strong focus of training and implementation by Windsong staff in the upcoming year and beyond.

Windsong also must consider the findings outlined in the 2000/2001 Special Case Review Highlights Report. The review of untimely deaths of children with child welfare history included identifying

factors that have been found to be significant in these deaths. These included: substance abuse, alcohol use by family members, lack of resources for youth with mental illness and special needs children, and chronic neglect. Recommendations arising from this Report include:

- The need for integrated services and information sharing
- The need for staff support and resources
- A systematic approach to risk assessment and the early identification of children at risk
- The need to consider changes to the Child Welfare Act,
- The need for Agencies serving off-reserve First Nation children to meet standards.

The above listed factors and recommendations will be considered when the Authority is providing services to children in care, and community consultations.

The major issue, which will impact Windsong's ability to meet its goals and objectives as defined in the business plan, is the financial stability factor of the current environment. Windsong staff will have to be creative in continuing to provide services to families and communities. Initiatives already established and working well need to be continued and enhanced in all communities. Where it is necessary to decrease direct funding, Windsong needs to remain an active partner in a consultative role.

The Four Pillars

The Regional Authority will continue to incorporate the four pillars into the service delivery model: community-based, integrated services, and improved services for Aboriginal people and early intervention. The utilization of the Alberta Response Model will need to incorporate the values upheld in these four pillars. In many ways Windsong staff are already trained in this way of approaching families and making decisions concerning case management. Examples of this practice are as follows:

Community-Based Services

- Social workers visible in all communities in the Region, even the most rural and scarcely populated.
- Continuum of services available within the Region. Families do not have to travel to larger urban centers for service.
- Advocating with other agencies, including early intervention initiatives, to provide services in client's homes, rather than in an office setting.

Integrated Services

- Attendance at regular school-based consultation meetings with other partners, such as Mental Health and police services.

- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome partnership with Windsong, as a member of the board, and also consulting with front-line workers on case management issues for children and/or parents where Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is a factor.
- Attendance at inter-agency meetings in all communities that hold these meetings.
- Frequent communication with community service providers, such as FCSS directors, AADAC workers, and Family School Liaison workers to ensure that families are receiving the services which may be required, before a protection risk is present.

Early Intervention

- Use of mediation services by social workers, particularly for parent/teen conflict situations.
- Rigorous diversion of non-protection issues to appropriate community resources.
- Active partner with Healthy Moms/Healthy Babies.
- Financially support and work closely with Wild Rose Community Connections whose focus is on working with parents whose children are in the 0-5 age group.

Aboriginal Services

- Ensuring all Windsong staff have been trained in cultural sensitivity.
- Ensuring that when an Aboriginal family is referred to Windsong for protection reasons, staff are diligent with obtaining all information pertaining to Aboriginal supports, band delegation, and needs of the family within the context of the community they reside.
- When an Aboriginal child must be taken into care, attempt to place the child in an Aboriginal home, or a home where the child background will be supported and nurtured.
- Working closely with Best Practices and Inter-Provincial staff to ensure that Aboriginal children placed in our Region from another province retain contacts to family whenever possible.
- Ensuring that permanency plans for Aboriginal children are done in consultation with bands and extended family members.
- Providing timely supports to neighboring Delegated First Nations Authorities when they request this.

These are just a few of the examples of ways that Windsong is ensuring that the values of the four pillars are a part of the every day social work practice in Region 3. We look forward to building on the successes already evident, and meeting the challenge of implementing strategies in a somewhat unstable environment for Children's Services.

9. REGIONAL AUTHORITY GOALS, MEASURES AND STRATEGIES

Core Business 1:

Promoting the development and well being of children, youth and families.

Goal 1.1: Children and youth will have a healthy start in life and the supports they need to reach their potential.

Outcomes:

- Children and youth are physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually and intellectually healthy.
- Children and youth meet individual developmental milestones.
- Families will be supported to meet their children's needs
- Family relationships will be supported and enhanced
- Children, Families and Stakeholders will have relevant input into meeting the needs of children served within the Authority
- Children and families are healthy and self-reliant.

Performance Measure (s)	Target	Data Source(s)
A Percentage of community-based child care centers that provide a developmentally appropriate environment for children	100%	Child Care Information System
B Percentage of families accessing Ministry programs who indicate positive outcomes for their children	85%	Resources for Children with Disabilities Survey, 2002/03 Adoption Program Survey, 2002/03 Foster Care Program Survey, 2002/03 Day Care Survey, 2002/03
C Percentage of children served within their family setting	% of children in care will be reduced by 10% as compared to 2001	Child Care Information System

D Percentage of children, with open child welfare files, who maintain contact with families or relatives where appropriate	90% of children with open child welfare files will maintain contact with a member of his or her family	Case Files
E % of children served within extended family setting when in care.	There will be a 10% increase in the number of children placed with extended family	Child Welfare Information System

Strategies

- 1.1.1 Support early intervention and prevention strategies.
- 1.1.2 Determine the effectiveness (cost benefit) of all services.
- 1.1.3 Collaborate with partnering Authorities, communities and other stakeholders in their efforts to respond to the needs of children and families in a flexible integrated manner.
- 1.1.4 The Authority will utilize ministerial resources for optimum service delivery.
- 1.1.5 There will be shared involvement, ownership and responsibility between Regional Authority, community, the child and the family for meeting the child's and family's needs.
- 1.1.6 The Authority will assist in identifying and reducing barriers to services, particularly in the area of services to special needs children.
- 1.1.7 To support a continuum of services within the Region to meet early intervention and child protection mandate.
- 1.1.8 The Authority will place greater priority on serving children in their home.
- 1.1.9 Establish a support program for extended family placements.

Core Business 2:

Keeping children, youth and families safe and protected.

Goal 2.1: Families will be safe, healthy, and able to promote children's development.

Outcomes:

- Children, youth and families at risk overcome their circumstances.
- Children, youth and families are safe, healthy, and self-reliant.
- Allegations of abuse to be responded to in a timely manner.
- Services to children and families will be humane, pleasant and effective

Performance Measure (s)	Target	Data Source(s)
F Percentage of families receiving family violence shelter services, within region 3, who report these are having a positive impact	100%	Women's Shelter Exit Surveys (as developed by Office of the Prevention of Family Violence)
G Percentage of screening and investigations completed within 20 days.	To meet or exceed the provincial average of screening and investigations completed within 20 days.	Child Welfare Information System
H % of family members who must travel outside the Region to access emergency shelter	10 % increase in the number of families who utilize "in-Region" shelter beds when in need of protection	Women's Shelter Information System

Strategies

- 2.1.1 To invest stakeholders in a preventive approach to family violence and to reduce tolerance for abuse.
- 2.1.2 To work collaboratively with Regional family violence groups such as Society Against Family Violence.
- 2.1.3 To encourage communities in Region 3 to be intolerant of activities that may harm children and families
- 2.1.4 To support Regional services to respond to the needs of family members exposed to domestic violence
- 2.1.5 To support culturally appropriate services to meet the needs of victims family violence.
- 2.1.6 To provide that services provided by the Authority are safe effective, pleasant and humane.
- 2.1.7 To provide services provided to families with special needs children will be flexible, consumer driven and accessible.
- 2.1.8 To develop a team of professionals able to deliver mandated services and the business plan as defined by the Child and Family Services Authority. Review and develop Regional based policy and standards to deal with Regional needs.

Core Business 2:

Keeping children, youth and families safe and protected

Goal 2.2: Children in need will be protected and supported by permanent, nurturing relationships.

Outcomes:

- Children and youth in need are protected from abuse.
- Children and youth in care are placed in secure, life-long relationships and stay connected to family and community.
- Allegations of abuse responded to in a timely manner
- There will be an aggressive, coordinated approach to permanency planning for all children

Performance Measure (s)	Target	Data Source(s)
I Percentage of children free of abuse or neglect while receiving child protection services	100%	Child Welfare Information System
J Percentage of children and youth in care who were reunited with their families or placed with other stable, long-term, living arrangements (3 part measure; data may not be available for all categories for all regions)	Increase by 10%	Child Welfare Information System

K % of Permanent Guardianship Children referred for Adoption	100 % of all Permanent Guardianship children where appropriate for adoption under the age of 6 will be referred to Edmonton Adoption Headquarters	Adoption Headquarters
L # of times a child must change placements during his/her time in care.	Children under 12 will have a maximum of two moves before they reside in a specified permanent placement	Child Welfare Information System

Strategies

- 2.2.1 To strengthen Permanency Planning Initiatives, such as the foster/adoption program, family ties and caring families to ensure that children in care have stable homes and enduring relationships.
- 2.2.2 To provide training and support to enhance the Authority's ability to respond to allegations of abuse in a timely manner.
- 2.2.3 Implement the New Provincial Standards for Service Delivery for Child and Family Services Authority's.
- 2.2.4 Continue to implement the Alberta Response Model, particularly at the intake stage.
- 2.2.5 To employ a continuous improvement process to providing services to Aboriginal children
- 2.2.6 To provide services that are safe, respectful, and caring.
- 2.2.7 To provide services to families with special needs children will be flexible and accessible.
- 2.2.8 To ensure child care services are flexible and suited to the unique needs of families in Windsong
- 2.2.9 Maximize the use of Post Adoption Support Agreements where appropriate.

Core Business 3:

Promoting healthy communities for children, youth and families

Goal 3.1:

The well being and self-reliance of Aboriginal children, families and communities will be promoted, supported and comparable to that of other Albertans.

Outcomes:

- Aboriginal communities have the capacity to meet the needs of children, youth and families.
- There is a reduced percentage of Aboriginal children represented in the child welfare caseload.
- Aboriginal children, youth and family receive culturally appropriate services.
- Aboriginal child in out-of-home placements stay connected to their family and community

Performance Measure (s)	Target	Data Source(s)
M Percentage of Aboriginal children free of abuse or neglect while receiving child protection services	100%	Child Welfare Information System
N Percentage of Aboriginal children in care who were reunited with their families or placed in other stable, long-term, living arrangements (3 part measure; data may not be available for all categories for all regions)	Increase of 10%	Child Welfare Information System

O Percentage of Aboriginal children living in out-of-home placements who maintain contact with families, relatives or community members	90% of children with open child welfare files will maintain contact with a member of his or her family	Case Files
P Percentage of Aboriginal children served within extended family.	To achieve a 13% increase in children served in extended or natural family settings over percentage served in 2000-2001	Child Welfare Information System

Strategies

- 3.1.1 Meet the needs of Aboriginal children in a manner that is culturally appropriate and fosters connection to family and community
- 3.1.2 The Authority will utilize ministerial resources for optimum service delivery.
- 3.1.3 Aboriginal children will have access to services that are culturally sensitive.
- 3.1.4 The Authority will place greater priority on serving children in their home.
- 3.1.5 Work collaboratively with delegated First Nations Authorities
- 3.1.6 Develop mechanisms to work with Aboriginal groups, communities, and elders
- 3.1.7 Develop mechanisms to receive input from Aboriginal groups.

Core Business 3:

Promoting healthy communities for children, youth and families

Goal 3.2:

Communities will have the capacity to plan and deliver services that promote the well being of children, youth and families.

Outcomes:

- Communities are responsive to the needs, values and cultures of children and their families.
- Children, youth and families have opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them.
- Albertans area aware of and involved in addressing issues faced by children, youth and families.
- Families will be empowered to shape the type of services received to fit their needs.
- Communities will support and demonstrate the importance of a safe community
- Communities take responsibility for the safety of all children
- Children and families know where to go if they feel, or are, unsafe

Performance Measure (s)	Target	Data Source(s)
Q Percentage of community stakeholders reporting an increase in the community's ability to meet the needs of children, youth and families	70%	Community Survey , 2002
R % of investigations closed and referred to community agencies	Baseline to be established in office data collection	Child Welfare Information System Nominal Rolls from Early Intervention providers

S The number of family's receiving services through Resources for Children with Disabilities Program reporting satisfaction with their involvement in planning.	90%	Resources For Children With Disabilities Survey
T. The number of family members reporting satisfaction in Early Intervention service delivery.	90%	Exit Interviews from Early Intervention Services

Strategy

3.2.1 To employ the use of focus groups to shape project planning/implementation.

Core Business 3 continued

Goal 3.3

To empower communities and families to find responsible solutions.

OUTCOMES:

- Parents will be empowered to access services to meet their children's needs in a manner that is respectful and as non-intrusive as possible
- The community will be mobilized to support children & families

Performance Measure (s)	Target	Data Source(s)
U. The percentage of children and families accessing Early Intervention Services relative to the number receiving services in mandated programs.	A 10% increase in the proportion of families receiving "least intrusive" services possible.	Child Welfare Information System
V. Formal co-ordination of service meetings established in key areas throughout the Region. Each community will have co-ordination of service meetings which will be attended by staff from Health, Education and Windsong	100%	Record of Attendance at meetings.
W. Community Inter-Agency Meetings. All inter-agency meetings will be attended by a Windsong staff member.	100%	Interagency Minutes

Strategies

- 3.3.1 Encourage communities and families to develop support, advocate and/or facilitate solutions for children and families in their community.
- 3.3.2 To initiate a problem solving approach to working together with related stakeholders to service children and families.
- 3.3.3 Utilization of “family group conferencing”
- 3.3.4 Integration of Alberta Response Model with Early Childhood Development programs, home visitation, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome resources, and other community resources.
- 3.3.5 Continue to develop and implement the Regional Service Plan in support of the Aboriginal Pillar
- 3.3.6 To support the capacity of communities to provide a supportive environment for off reserve Aboriginals.
- 3.3.7 Effective and culturally appropriate services are available to meet the needs of children and families.
- 3.3.8 To increase public understanding and knowledge of issues affecting children and families.

Windsong Child and Family Services Authority
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 2000-01 Actual	Comparable 2001-02 Budget	2002-03 Estimate	2003-04 Target	2004-05 Target
REVENUE					
Internal Government Transfers					
Operating Grant from the Department	7,243	7,860	7,719	7,749	7,749
Other Revenue					
Inter-Authority Services	979	640	500	500	500
Other Revenue - Donations/External	136	-	80	80	80
Total Revenue	8,358	8,500	8,299	8,329	8,329
EXPENSE					
Program					
<u>Program Support:</u>					
Board Governance	78	150	150	150	150
Management and Program Support	147	286	386	400	400
Community Coordination	5	-			
<u>Services to Children and Families:</u>					
Child Welfare	4,897	4,611	5,291	4,959	4,983
Services to Children with Disabilities	877	819	990	1,100	1,125
Child Care	502	497	370	455	480
Early Intervention	726	984	476	205	135
Prevention of Family Violence	107	263	24	160	165
Fetal Alcohol Initiatives	-	80	19	90	70
Mentoring for Parents (Home Visitation)	-	170	93	275	285
Inter-Authority Services	979	640	500	500	500
Valuation adjustment	32	-	-	35	36
CFSA TO ALLOCATE AMONG PROGRAMS					
Total Expense	8,350	8,500	8,299	8,329	8,329
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	-	-	-	-	-
NET REVENUE (EXPENSE)	8	-	-	-	-

CHANGE IN ACCUMULATED NET REVENUE (EXPENSE)

Accumulated Net Revenue (Expense) at Beginning of Year	426	-	434	434	434
Net Revenue (Expense) for the Year	8	-	-	-	-
Accumulated Net Revenue (Expense) at End of Year	434	-	434	434	434