Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto

Integrated Operating Plan

2025-26 through 2027-28

Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto

La Société Catholique de l'Aide à l'Enfance de Toronto

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Integrated Operating Plan

1. Purpose of the IOP

The Integrated Operating Plan of the Catholic Children's Aid Society (CCAS) is a three-year plan, outlining CCAS's strategic priorities and objectives. Included in the plan are the projects underway and planned to advance the strategy, and the resources required to support these priorities within the funding allocation from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and other critical revenue sources such as the Catholic Children's Aid Foundation (CCAF).

FIGURE 1: COMPONENTS OF THE INTEGRATED OPERATING PLAN (IOP)
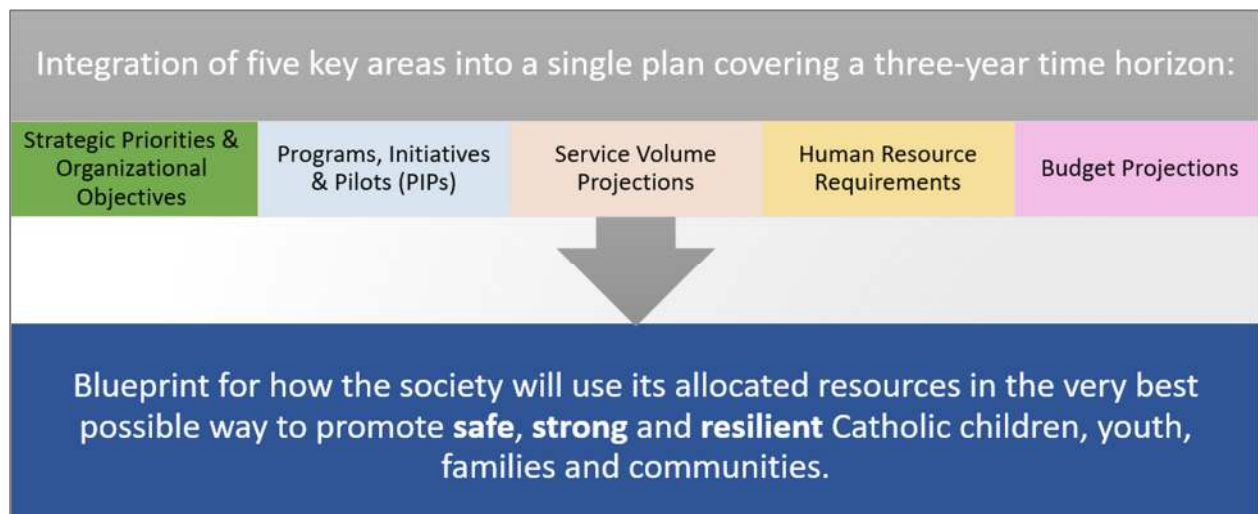
2. CCAS Mission, Vision & Values

The Catholic Children's Aid Society has been serving the Catholic community for more than 130 years. The following statements guide what we do (Mission), what we stand for (Values) and the impact we are hoping to have for the communities we serve (Vision).

Mission: The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto, on behalf of the Catholic community is committed to providing social services that protect children and strengthen family life

Vision: Catholic children, youth, families and communities are safe, strong and resilient

Values: We value:
- ❖ Human Dignity
- ❖ The Courage and Integrity to Take a Stand
- ❖ Partnership & Teamwork
- ❖ Cultural, Racial & Individual Differences
- ❖ Professional Excellence

3. IOP Planning Process

The IOP is developed each year through extensive collaboration across the senior leadership team and with the CCAS Board of Directors. Several meetings were held over the fall (2024) and winter (2025) to consult on strategy, and support volume projections, staffing requirements, budget planning, and decision-making regarding priority programs, initiatives and pilots (PIPs). Figure 2 outlines the steps in the planning process to achieve decisions in each of the essential components of the IOP.

FIGURE 2: IOP PLANNING PROCESS
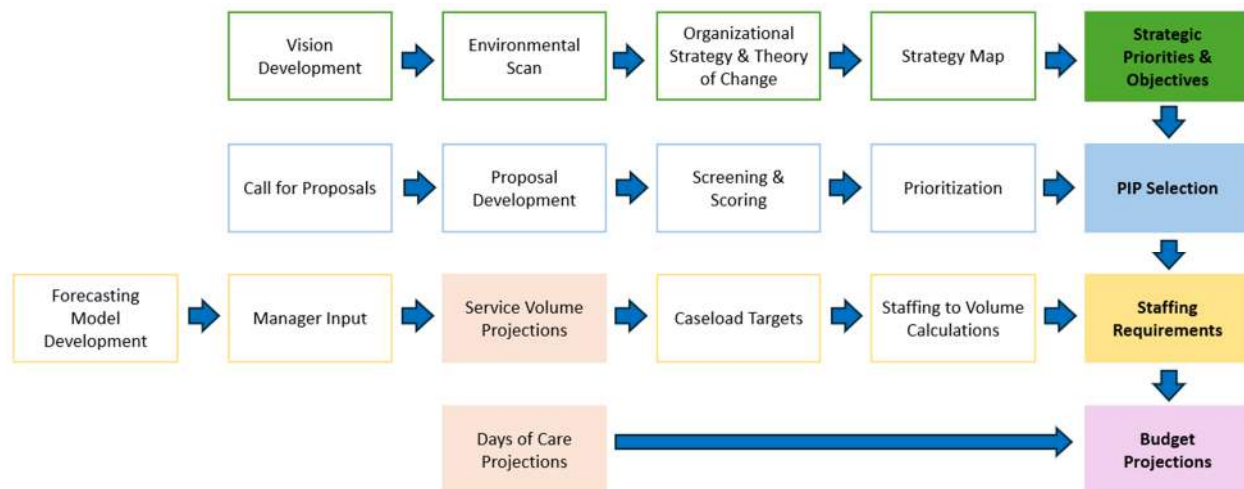
4. Strategic Priorities & Objectives

4.1 Strategic Priorities

In February 2023, the Board endorsed the following strategic priorities, all viewed through the lenses of Catholic Identity, Anti-Racism & Anti-Oppression and Trauma-Informed Practice:

1. **Differential Response (HARP):** ensuring the right services at the right time at the point of referral to CCAS and broadening our range of responses to referrals beyond investigation
2. **Youth Readiness:** preparing youth in care to live interdependently and succeed in life after CCAS, with a range of services that go beyond the minimum required through legislation
3. **Clinical Development:** continuing to hone the clinical skills of our staff, including the incorporation of trauma-informed, evidence-informed practices and principles and drawing on Catholic values as a source of strength and intervention
4. **Organizational Culture:** creating a safe, supportive, accountable work culture at CCAS where people continue to learn and grow
5. **Strategic relationship with the Catholic Children's Aid Foundation:** funding and thought partners to CCAS to help develop innovative ways to change practice, policy and the child welfare system

These strategic priorities continue to inform our work moving forward into 2025-26 and beyond and were instrumental in the development of CCAS's strategy map (shown in section 4.2 below).

4.2   Strategic Objectives

In the fall of 2023, CCAS revised its strategy map, shown below in Figure 3. The strategy map is organized using a balanced scorecard approach and encompasses objectives across four perspectives: 1) Stakeholders; 2) Internal Operations; 3) Key Enablers; and 4) Financial. The map below demonstrates a balance between objectives related to our service delivery (designed to have an impact on the communities we serve) and those related to our organization (designed to build a strong, Catholic child welfare agency).

FIGURE 3: CCAS STRATEGY MAP
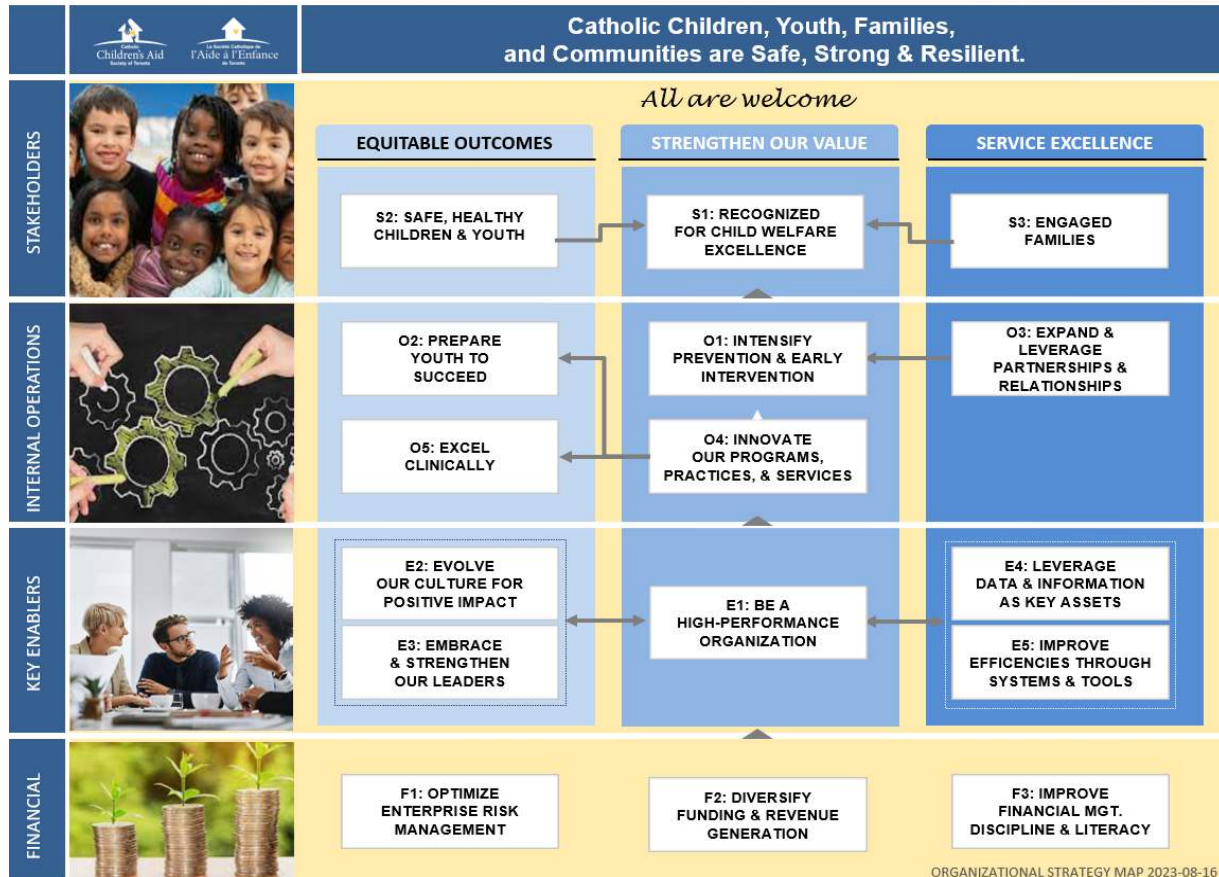
5. Projects, Initiatives & Pilots

Through a process of planning in the fall of 2024, CCAS has confirmed a range of projects, initiatives and pilots (PIPs) to carry out over the next several years. Once implemented, the PIPs support the advancement of the strategic objectives outlined in the strategy map. Figure 4 (following page) outlines PIPs and their associated strategic objectives. Some PIPs were active in 2024-25 and will be carried over into 2025-26, while others are scheduled to begin in 2025-26 or beyond.

FIGURE 4: PROJECTS MAPPED TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Project Name	Link to Strategic Objective	Project Type	Active Q4 2024-25	New in 2025-26
Clinical Development (PACE)	O5: Excel Clinically; S1: Engaged Families	Strategic	x	
HARP* and HARP Expansion*	O1: Intensify Prevention & Early Intervention	Strategic	x (HARP)	x (HARP Expansion)
Youth Readiness 1.0* and Youth Readiness 2.0*	O2: Prepare Youth to Succeed	Strategic	x (Readiness 1.0)	x (Readiness 2.0)
Culture Compass (Phase 2)	E2: Evolve our Culture for Positive Impact	Operational	x	
Male Engagement Worker Program (Phase 2)**	O4: Innovate Programs, Practices & Services	Strategic	x	
Young Parents Wraparound (Rosalie Hall)	O1: Intensify Prevention & Early Intervention	Operational	x	
Pathways to Post Secondary Education (RESP)	O2: Prepare Youth to Succeed	Operational	x	
Data Integrity	E4: Leverage Data & Information as Key Assets	Operational	x	
Access & Family Support*	O5: Excel Clinically; S1: Engaged Families	Strategic		x
Food & Essentials Hub***	O1: Intensify Prevention & Early Intervention	Operational	x	
iExpense	E5: Improve Efficiencies through Systems & Tools	Operational		x
Microsoft Purview	E4: Leverage Data & Information as Key Assets	Operational/Compliance		x
Partnership Strategy	O3: Expand & Leverage Partnerships & Relationships	Strategic		x
Project Management Office	E5: Improve Efficiencies thru Systems & Tools	Strategic		x
Record Check Queue	E5: Improve Efficiencies through Systems & Tools	Operational		x
SharePoint Repository	E4: Leverage Data & Information as Key Assets	Operational		x
Education Strategy	O2: Prepare Youth to Succeed	Strategic		x

*Funded by the Catholic Children's Aid Foundation
**Funded by Child Welfare Innovation & Change grant from the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services
***Funded through a ShareLife Food Security grant

6. Service Volume Projections

Service volume projections are essential to organizational planning for several reasons:

- They help set targets to measure planned shifts in service delivery expected to result in desired outcomes such as admission prevention and reduced length of service
- They signal staffing requirements for case carrying functions across the organization, helping management ensure that there are appropriate staffing levels to meet legislated requirements and caseload volumes
- Both through staffing requirements and direct impact on other costs such as boarding rates, they impact the overall budget.

Ongoing monitoring of projected volumes against actuals occur as part of the agency's Quarterly Review process and is a critical part of overseeing the implementation of the IOP.

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, service volumes at CCAS had been declining for almost a decade. With the advent of the pandemic and the subsequent closure of schools and many other social services for in-person work, CCAS, like most children's aid societies, saw a sudden and sharp decrease beginning in 2020-21, in the first year of the pandemic. While volumes have not returned to pre-COVID levels, the last two years have shown an increase of referrals at the front door. Hypotheses about why we are seeing this increase include some pent-up demand flowing back into the system following COVID, and the well documented impact of the pandemic on mental health (both children/youth and adults) coupled with the rising cost of living, increasing stressors on families.

Figure 5 (following page) shows the volume trends, both historical and projected, using the three-year forecast developed in February 2025. Projected volumes at the front end of the system (Intake and Investigation) show an expected increase year over year while case volumes at Ongoing Family services are expected to continue declining as we close legacy cases and provide more services in collaboration with community partners under HARP. Children in care are expected to decrease incrementally year over year as admissions stabilize and discharges decrease slightly, following the trend of the last several years where we saw significant numbers of young people leaving care.

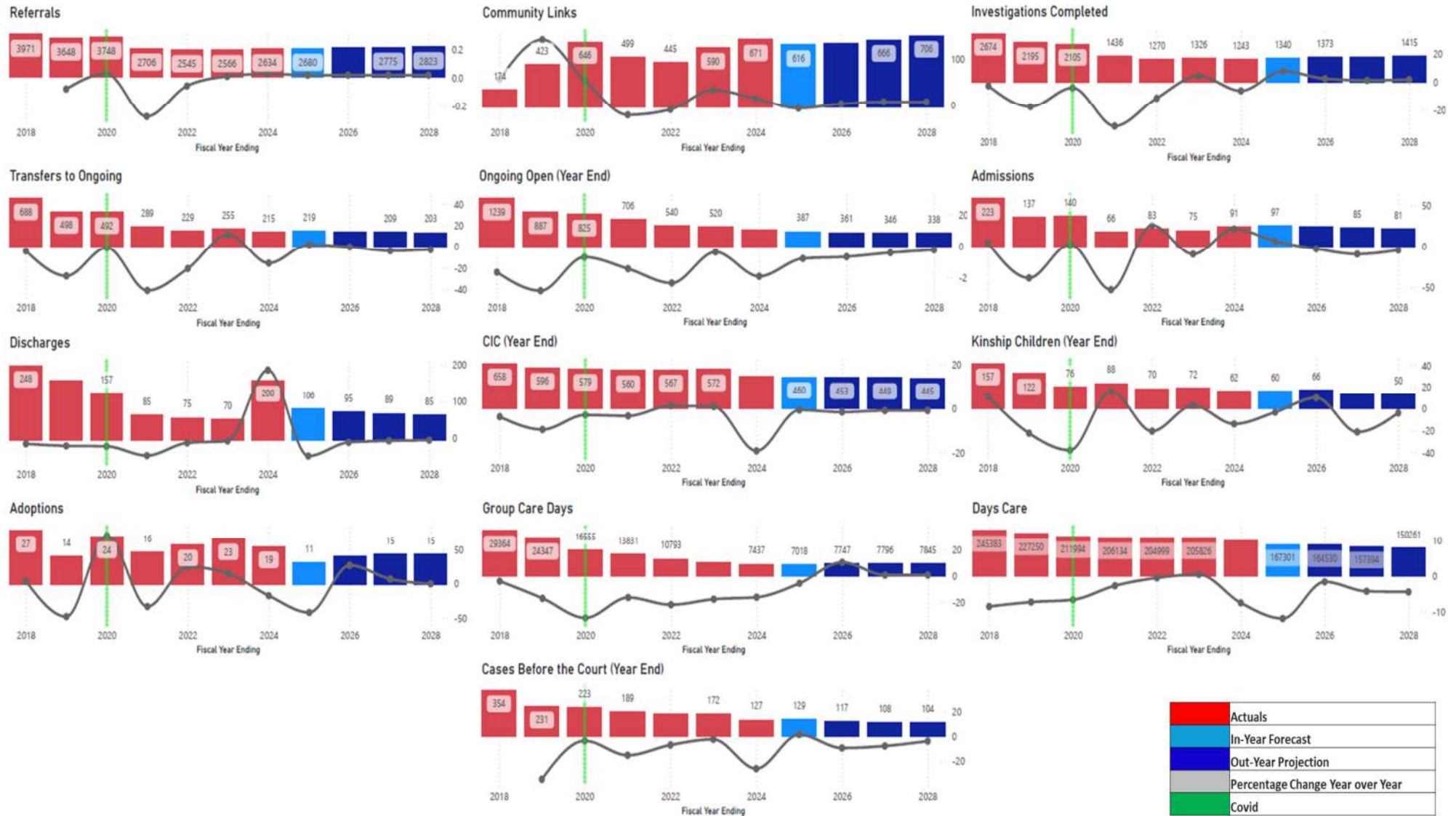**FIGURE 5: VOLUME TRENDS & PROJECTIONS**

Figure 6 (below) shows projections for key service volumes over the three years from 2025-26 through 2027-28. The 2024-25 data represent Q3 forecasts and are presented for comparative purposes. Projections include the assumptions noted above with respect to the impact of the current economic and social context on families, the work of HARP to divert cases away from ongoing child welfare services, and continuing work on admission prevention.

FIGURE 6: KEY SERVICE VOLUME STATISTICS

SERVICE ELEMENT	2022-23 Actuals	2023-24 Actuals	2024-25 Forecast	2025-26 Budget	2026-27 Projection	2027-28 Projection	2024-25 to 2026-27 % Change	2024-25 to 2027-28 % Change
COMMUNITY LINKS	590	671	616	627	666	706	9%	15%
INVESTIGATIONS COMPLETED	1,326	1,243	1,340	1,373	1,390	1,415	4%	6%
ONGOING-YEAR END	520	420	387	361	346	338	-11%	-13%
ADMISSIONS	75	91	97	94	85	81	-13%	-17%
DISCHARGES	70	200	106	95	89	85	-16%	-21%
CIC-YEAR END	572	463	460	453	449	445	-3%	-4%
PAID DAYS CARE	194,301	180,647	160,465	156,984	149,800	142,620	-7%	-12%
GROUP CARE DAYS	8,879	7,437	7,018	7,747	7,796	7,845	11%	12%
# HIGH-COST CASES*	---	---	32	30	30	30	-7%	-7%
CIC-TAY	11	14	11	10	10	10	-9%	-9%

*ALIGNED WITH 2024 OACAS REQUEST OF CHILDREN/YOUTH COSTING $200,000 OR MORE EACH FISCAL YEAR

7. Human Resources Management

Human Resources (HR) plays a pivotal role in shaping and executing CCAS's strategic objectives. By fostering a collaborative relationship with leadership, HR ensures that workforce planning aligns with the agency's mission to protect children and strengthen families. The focus of HR expands throughout the Talent Management Cycle (shown on the following page in Figure 7), and includes the following:

- **Workforce Planning and Development**: HR collaborates with all leaders to assess staffing needs, develop job classifications, and create competency-based hiring processes. This ensures that the agency recruits and retains skilled professionals in the field of child welfare and other key support functions. The approach to staffing includes reviewing historical data, forecasting caseload volumes to determine current and future workforce capacity and needs, and consulting with the senior leadership team for input. We then develop scenarios, align with the operating budget to produce the overall staffing plan which is monitored regularly and adjusted as per business requirements.

- **Employee Support and Retention**: HR implements strategies to reduce turnover and enhance job satisfaction, such as providing professional development opportunities and creating supportive work environments. This is crucial in maintaining a stable and effective workforce.

- **Attrition Strategy and Workforce Optimization:** As an organization that continues to receive decreased funding from the ministry each year, we have developed and implemented an attrition strategy to ensure that our staffing levels are appropriate to meet our workload requirements. This includes offering retirement planning seminars to help staff make informed decisions and identifying opportunities to optimize our workforce through job design, organizational structure adjustments, and creating a more productive workforce.

- **Employer Branding**: Building a strong employer brand to attract top talent by highlighting the organization's culture, values, and employee experience.

- **Comprehensive Onboarding Programs:** Ensuring new hires are integrated smoothly into the organization with structured onboarding processes that include training, mentorship, and clear communication of expectations.

- **Continuous Learning Opportunities:** Providing ongoing training and development programs to help employees grow their skills and advance their careers.

- **Regular Feedback**: Implementing a system for continuous feedback and performance reviews to help employees understand their strengths and areas for improvement.

- **Competitive Compensation and Benefits:** Offering competitive salaries and benefits packages to retain top talent.

- **Policy and Compliance**: HR ensures that the agency adheres to relevant employment laws and regulations, which is essential for maintaining a fair and compliant workplace. Examples include ensuring an open and transparent recruitment and promotion process to adhere to established policies.

- **Data-Driven Decision Making**: By integrating HR data with child welfare metrics, HR helps identify trends and areas for improvement. This data-driven approach supports informed decision-

making and strategic planning. Examples include turnover rate, health and safety performance, efficiency and productivity metrics, along with caseload data and workforce data. Other key performance indicators include efficiency and productivity metrics that help us assess our overall workforce as compared to our peer agencies.

- **Promoting a safe workplace** and complying with all relevant legislation, ongoing training and development to meet legislative requirements and develop leadership capacity.

- **Organizational Culture**: HR plays a critical role in fostering a positive organizational culture that aligns with the agency's culture vision. This includes creating a safe, supportive, accountable work environment at CCAS where people continue to learn and grow. The work of the Organizational Culture Committee continues to be implemented including regular culture surveys and development of action plans to address areas of opportunity to continue to evolve the organization's culture.

8. Budget

CCAS continues to face budget pressures in light of annual funding decline and escalating costs, which are managed each year through ongoing planning and monitoring. Additionally, greater needs are presenting from referrals while there is insufficient capacity in other sectors, contributing to additional budget pressures in the last few years. Examples include mental health, autism and complex special needs children whose families have limited access to resources. The sector is experiencing more challenges finding suitable placements for children and youth presenting with complex needs, and placement costs continue to increase. We are also experiencing greater pressure to admit children and youth where child protection is not the primary reason for service.

Identification of initiatives that will contribute to cost curtailment, savings and cost avoidance over the short and medium term are key underpinnings of the budget planning work of the CCAS Senior Leadership Team, along with aligning resources with our priorities to achieve the desired strategic objectives. Budget initiatives identified by senior leadership include the following activities that will result in cost avoidance and savings in current and/or medium to longer term:

1. Prudent management of salaries and benefits within available funding, including continuing the strategy of attrition and back-fill review.
2. Management of operational costs to ensure that we are meeting the needs of children in the most effective and efficient way. Strategies include scaling up of promising approaches that improve service outcomes and service user experience while containing costs (e.g., Holistic Assessment & Response Pathways model); a focus on admission prevention; and sound oversight of placements and service agreements.
3. Continue to diversify our revenue sources and manage costs through additional strategies.

Figure 8 (following page) shows the budget summary for the following 3 years (2024-25 through 2026-27):

FIGURE 8: THREE YEAR BUDGET SUMMARY

EXPENSE CATEGORY	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Annual Budget	2024-25 Full Year Forecast	2025-26 Annual Budget	2026-27 Annual Projection	2027-28 Annual Projection	2025-26 vs 2027-28	2024-25 vs 2027-28
TOTAL SALARIES	$ 34,354	$ 34,895	$ 34,548	$ 34,817	$ 33,684	$ 33,858	-3%	-2%
TOTAL BENEFITS	$ 11,478	$ 12,138	$ 11,718	$ 11,714	$ 12,170	$ 12,269	5%	5%
BOARDING RATES	$ 23,378	$ 22,840	$ 24,107	$ 23,761	$ 23,368	$ 22,926	-4%	-5%
TRAVEL	$ 935	$ 1,151	$ 1,088	$ 1,098	$ 1,064	$ 1,027	-6%	-6%
STAFF TRAINING	$ 273	$ 198	$ 196	$ 190	$ 188	$ 183	-4%	-7%
SERVICE RELATED EXPENSES	$ 4,857	$ 4,223	$ 4,128	$ 4,100	$ 3,595	$ 3,366	-18%	-18%
CORPORATE SERVICES	$ 6,769	$ 5,899	$ 6,086	$ 5,560	$ 5,561	$ 5,554	0%	-9%
CONTINGENCY PROVISION FOR IN-YEAR LEVERS	$ 2,305	$ 1,925	$ 927	$ 665	$ 500	$ 500	-25%	-46%
SUBTOTAL EXPENDITURES	**$ 84,349**	**$ 83,268**	**$ 82,798**	**$ 81,905**	**$ 80,130**	**$ 79,683**	**-3%**	**-4%**
OTHER REVENUES AND RECOVERIES	$ (1,928)	$ (1,749)	$ (2,196)	$ (2,354)	$ (2,209)	$ (1,946)	-17%	-11%
TAY FUNDING	$ (2,596)	$ (1,825)	$ (907)	$ (1,856)	$ (1,824)	$ (1,788)	-4%	97%
CHILD WELFARE FUNDING	$ (79,822)	$ (79,695)	$ (79,695)	$ (77,695)	$ (75,522)	$ (73,970)	-5%	-7%
PRELIMINARY (SURPLUS) DEFICIT	**$ 3**	**$ (0)**	**$ 0**	**$ (0)**	**$ 575**	**$ 1,979**		
Balancing Intiaitves to be finalized	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ (575)**	**$ (1,979)**		
% of Expenditures					0.7%	2.5%		
Ending Projected Budget Position			Balanced	Balanced	Balanced	Balanced		

9. IOP Measurement Framework: Key Performance Indicators

Figure 9 (following page) outlines the measurement framework for the IOP, i.e., the key performance indicators (KPIs) related to each strategic objective. We will continue to evolve the KPIs throughout the IOP timeframe; as KPIs are achieved and there is a consistent record of sustainment, new ones will be introduced. Currently, the Senior Leadership Team is working on annual targets. Progress against each is reported at the Quarterly Review.

FIGURE 9: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Strategic Objective	KPI
KEY STAKEHOLDERS	
S1: RECOGNIZED FOR CHILD WELFARE EXCELLENCE	TBD
S2: SAFE, HEALTHY CHILDREN & YOUTH	% Of service objectives on target *Sensitivity, Specificity, Recurrence Rate- Investigation, Disparity at Investigation-Black children, Disparity at Investigation-Latin children, Recurrence Rates-Ongoing, Ongoing cases closed w/in 12 months, % discharged w/in 12 months of admission, % child/youth removals placed with kin, % days of care that are family-based, Racial/cultural placement matching*
	Number of Youth and Family Client Complaints Compared to Total Caseloads
	% of children/youth served in care that had 1 or more serious occurrences
S3: ENGAGED FAMILIES	% of children/youth receiving a family centered conference within one month of admission
	% Young people in care where youth centered conference was held
KEY ENABLERS	
E1: BE A HIGH-PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION	Completion of the Balanced Scorecard Project
E2: EVOLVE OUR CULTURE FOR POSITIVE IMPACT	Completion of Culture Compass Check (Part 1) Project
	% Decrease In YOY Employee Grievances
	% Decrease in YOY Workplace Harassment and Violence Complaints
	Overall Staff Turnover Rate
	Staff Promotion Rate
E3: EMBRACE & STRENGHTEN OUR LEADERS	% Completion of Annual Performance Reviews
	% Of Staff That Have Identified Development Objectives
	Completion of Supervisors' Development Program
E4: LEVERAGE DATA & INFORMATION AS KEY ASSETS	Completion of the Extraction & Reporting or Data Integrity Project
E5: IMPROVE EFFICIENCIES THROUGH SYSTEMS & TOOLS	Number Of Continuous Improvement Projects That Are Not Progressing Well Compared To Total

Strategic Objectives	KPI
INTERNAL OPERATIONS	
O1: INTENSIFY PREVENTION & EARLY INTERVENTION	% Of all referrals that are dispositioned as Community Links at the point of screening
	Number of Admissions (intake & Ongoing) --Cumulative
	% Of children investigated that are admitted to care within 12 months of their investigation
O2: PREPARE YOUTH TO SUCCEED	% Completion of Youth Readiness Program Milestones
	% Of young people aged 18 & 19 (separately) who have graduated highschool by the fall of their 18th/19th birthday
O3: EXPAND & LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS & RELATIONSHIPS	% Increase YOY in Formal Partnerships
O4: INNOVATE OUR PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, & SERVICES	% of Programs meeting 90% or above of EIP Criteria
O5: EXCEL CLINICALLY	Completion of the PACE Project Milestones
FINANCIAL	
F1: OPTIMIZE ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT	% Completion of High/Med Risk Action Plans in Place by March 31
F2: DIVERSIFY FUNDING & REVENUE GENERATION	Number of External Grant Applications made in Each Fiscal Year
F3: IMPROVE FINANCIAL MGT. DISCIPLINE & LITERACY	Forecasted Year End Balanced Operating Position
	% Completion of Financial Report Sessions with Service and Non-Service Budget Managers
	Number of Financial Policies Updated

10.   Communication & Reporting

This updated IOP will be shared with the CCAS community at an all-staff meeting in May 2025 and is posted on our internal and external websites. We recently launched an internal site devoted to our projects that is updated quarterly. Senior Leadership has worked throughout 2024-25 to ensure that details of the IOP, the strategic priorities and projects are shared regularly with staff through departmental meetings to help staff see themselves and their contributions in this work, and this approach will continue. Further, staff input is welcomed through the planning process regarding new ideas and proposals to advance our strategic objectives; proposals that cannot be greenlit right away become part of the pipeline.

FIGURE 10: REPORTING PROGRESS TO KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Progress against the major components of the plan (strategic priorities and PIPs, budget, staffing and volume assumptions) are monitored on a quarterly basis and reported through the society's Quarterly Review process. Reporting also occurs through the various Board committees, the full Board, and as part of our accountability requirements to MCCSS.

Appendix A: Organizational Theory of Change

Catholic Children's Aid Society Theory of Change

Vision: Catholic children, youth, families and communities are safe, strong and resilient

For those we serve	We provide	In a way that	So that	Which will lead to
Families who have experienced adversity, and who may be struggling--due to personal challenges and/or structural issues--to safely care for their children and promote their development and wellbeing	•Flexible individal and family-focused intake and assessment •Tailored family and protection services •Services and support to children living with kin or in care •Adoption placement and support •Support to kin, foster and adoptive parents •Advocacy and connection to community services •A broad range of specialized clinical programs	•Ensures voice and choice •Is inspired by Catholic values and teachings •Is culturally safe and identity affirming •Acknowledges and meets the needs of all equity-deserving groups •Recognizes and screens for the impact of trauma including racial trauma •Prioritises and builds developmental relationships and resilience •Engages a broad range of partners in the community •Understands and addresses the role of economic and material hardships in family life •Is informed by the best available evidence, including service user input and feedback	•All children and youth have family and community •All children remain connected to their communities, culture and traditions •Structural and systemic barriers are identified, reduced and eliminated •Families possess the assets and skills to support healthy growth and development for all members and to keep children safe •Children possess the assets and skills that help them grow into healthy, engaging members of their communities	Strong and resilient Catholic families and community with access to the highest quality support, whenever needed, to reach their full potential