

# **ADVANCE 2021–2023**

**Moving forward with purpose**



**YMCA of  
Northern Alberta**

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## ► THRIVING WITH PURPOSE

*Advance 2021–2023* is an evolving strategic plan that outlines the priorities and key initiatives that will guide YMCA of Northern Alberta from 2021 to the end of 2023. It serves as a bridge from the last strategic plan, *Transforming Our Communities*, which expired at the end of 2021, and considers the unique challenges and opportunities facing Albertans and our YMCA during and post COVID-19 pandemic.

The immense impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic, political and social movements, and economic downturn that began in 2020 could not be predicted. The pandemic has created a “perfect storm,” presenting as a health and economic crisis resulting in a social cohesion crisis. Understanding this dynamic and actively rising to meet challenges and opportunities is critical to our ability to navigate the issues of today and tomorrow and to create a positive impact on the lives of individuals, families and communities.

This strategy lays the groundwork to ensure YMCA of Northern Alberta can not only survive the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also find new ways to thrive as an association, ensuring financial health and maximum community impact.

## ► OUR MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

YMCA of Northern Alberta has a history that spans 115 years. We have supported communities through global shaping events including world wars, economic depression, floods, wildfires and pandemics. Our YMCA’s commitment to helping communities, families and individuals of all ages to connect, belong and thrive has not wavered.

We believe people and communities need the YMCA and all that we offer and stand for, now more than ever.

**MISSION:** We create life-enhancing opportunities for the growth and development of all people in spirit, mind and body.

**VISION:** Strong kids, healthy families, thriving communities.

**VALUES:** Respect, Honesty, Caring, Responsibility, Diversity & Social Inclusion

# ► GUIDING STATEMENT, PRINCIPLES AND ASSUMPTIONS

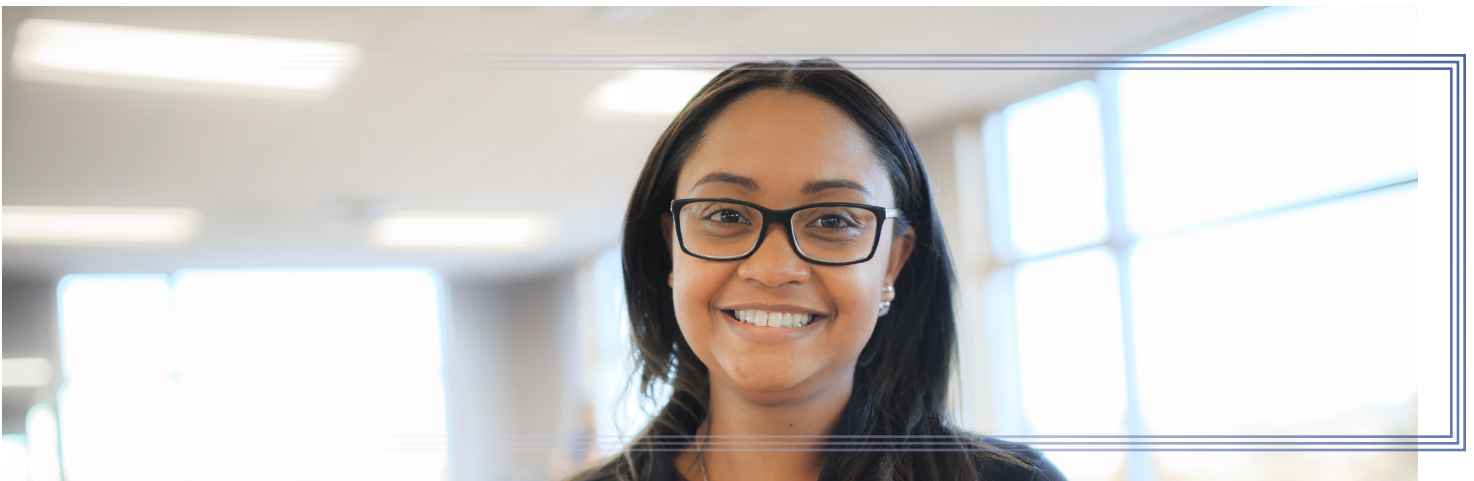
## GUIDING STATEMENT:

Advance 2021–2023 provides focus for YMCA of Northern Alberta to deliver on our mission and vision and stresses the urgency in which we must work to achieve financial sustainability for our YMCA and maximum impact for the communities we serve.

This plan balances the immediate actions needed to protect and preserve our YMCA, while providing space and direction for new, innovative ways of thinking, serving the community and realizing the emerging opportunities presented by the changing landscape.

Ultimately, we must act quickly and boldly to create a sustainable and forward-focused operating model that considers and predicts the changing needs of Albertans, the health and safety of the YMCA community and the development of our employees and volunteers while elevating our position as a leading and top-of-mind charity and as a community service provider of choice in central and northern Alberta.

**We, at YMCA of Northern Alberta, do not aim just to survive the current local, provincial, national and global realities — we will thrive.**



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

### *Advance 2021-23 is...*

#### **INTEGRATED**

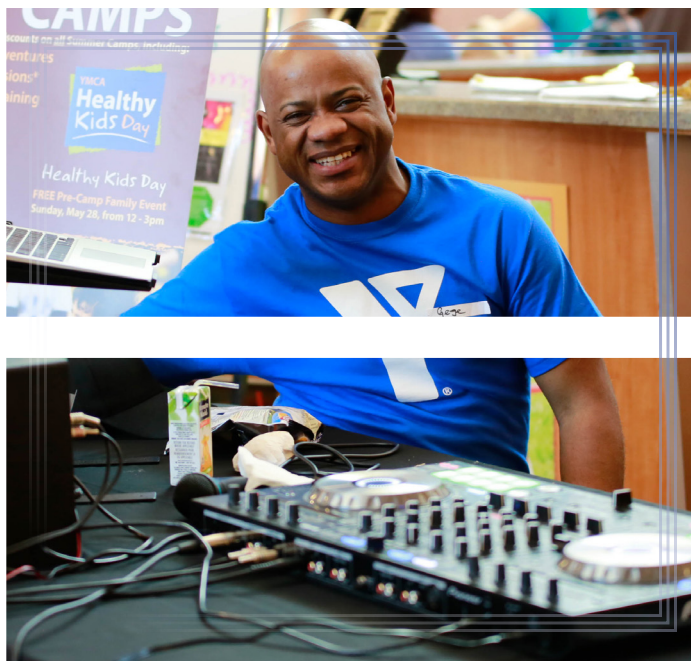
This plan is structured to reflect an association-wide approach to program, membership and service delivery, operations and branding rather than separating initiatives, opportunities or communication into the traditional silos of individual operational areas (health, fitness and aquatics, YMCA Child Care, community & housing initiatives and fund development). A united, resounding YMCA story and approach to community service is needed to be successful.

#### **DYNAMIC & OPPORTUNISTIC**

This plan is the continuation of current priorities and initiatives proven prior to and during the pandemic and requires us to explore new and transformational priorities and initiatives. In accepting the risk and distress imposed by the pandemic, we also see the opportunity. We are focused on acting quickly and boldly to protect resources and pursue new opportunities and partnerships revealed by the pandemic. The intention is that this plan will be assessed regularly and will evolve and flex just as our communities will continue to do so.

#### **PRIORITY SETTING**

While keeping a flexible posture, this plan prioritizes what is most important among many important concerns. To this end, some priorities once considered important have been or may be abandoned while others have been accelerated. Advance 2021–2023 assumes the prudent management of priorities over the next two years and will position the association to advance a comprehensive plan and process going forward.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

*Advance 2021-23 is not...*

### TACTICAL

This is a strategic-level plan highlighting directions and key initiatives for the YMCA spanning 2021–2023. Operational-level plans have been or will be created to direct the execution of the key initiatives included. YMCA Board of Directors will be informed of these operational-level plans, receive regular progress reports and will be involved as appropriate

### DECISION-MAKING MATRIX

This plan does not include details of the decision-making process and matrix used by the Association. However, leadership recognizes the importance of a thorough decision-making process to ensure a careful balance of responsible decision making, quick action and innovative risk taking.

### ASSUMPTIONS

YMCA of Northern Alberta must continue to work to understand our changing environment, be proactive in our planning and be ready to act regardless of uncertainty. Advance 2021–2023 was developed under the following assumptions:

- There is, and will continue to be, an increase in acute social issues (such as mental health, unemployment, homelessness, poverty, etc.). At the same time, all levels of government will struggle financially, and fewer charities will survive, leading to gaps in support, services and programs.
- Alberta is facing immense economic pressure with no sign of improvement before the end of 2023. This includes the highest inflation rates in 15 years, high unemployment rates, supply chain issues and high interest rates.
- A United Conservative Party (UCP) leadership election occurred October 6, 2022, and a provincial government election is tentatively set for May 29, 2023. There is much uncertainty and polarization between parties as well as within the UCP.
- A federal government election is unlikely before the end of 2023, with an election expected in the fall of 2025.
- The labour market in Alberta is in flux, with some employees looking for new opportunities outside the YMCA and a lack of trained professionals to fill needs in other areas — such as child care and aquatics.
- Emerging variant strains of the COVID-19 virus may affect economic recovery and current methods of programming and service delivery.
- In times of crisis and community need YMCA's step up, we don't step back. Our YMCA is committed to helping the communities of central and northern Alberta connect again, belong again and thrive again.

## ASSUMPTIONS CONTINUED...

- There is an opportunity to be aggressive in our service delivery model and our philanthropic case, to position ourselves as a significant contributor to the solutions to the many problems facing individuals and communities, alone, or in partnership with others. We will take an entrepreneurial approach to be fast to try new things and accept that failure will sometimes happen.
- In this time of political and social polarization, the YMCA values of social inclusion and diversity are as relevant and important today as they have ever been.
- There will be increased opportunity and benefit to partnerships within and across sectors and to advocate alongside other YMCA's and organizations with similar interests and needs.
- No area of our pre-2020 operations is untouched by the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some operational areas such as health, fitness and aquatics, housing and child care are more severely affected.
- We will need to continue to make difficult decisions. Organizational recovery may require stabilization investments and or short-term or permanent closure of select programs, services or facilities to better utilize our human, financial and facility resources.
- Over the time span of this plan, the behaviours of Albertans will continue to change and evolve. How employees work, how members access recreation and how families need and use child care will not be the same as it was prior to 2020.





# ► STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, GOALS AND KEY INITIATIVES

The strategic directions, goals and key initiatives presented in Advance 2021–2023 are a mix of priorities and initiatives proven prior and during the pandemic, as well as new and transformational initiatives that will push our YMCA to make the greatest community impact







and gain financial viability in the short- and long-term. Key initiatives will be continually assessed, evaluated, prioritized and reported to evolve and adapt to a dynamic environment.













## 1. BE ENTERPRISING TO CREATE MAXIMUM, POSITIVE IMPACT

We will be proactive and innovative to evolve our approach and delivery model to create positive change in the lives of individuals, families and communities.

Goals	Actions	2021	2021	2021
<div>Be financial sustainability through a deliberate, targeted and innovative review of:</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Existing operating models/ facilities, programs &amp; services.</li><li>New and emerging program and service delivery and facility expansion opportunities.</li></ul></div>	<div><b>Financial sustainability, expansion reporting:</b></div> <div>Exceed operating financial targets identified in the annual operating plans and budgets.</div> <div>Protect operational and financially sustainability for 2022 but for 2023 and beyond.</div> <div>Continue to be responsive and adapt annual planning and reporting process to better inform decision making.</div> <div>Create and action plan for areas of existing operations and facilities that are facing financial risk.</div> <div>Assess opportunities relating to facility ownership to increase financial sustainability.</div> <div>Continue to explore partnership opportunities for facility operation and/or program and service delivery (ex: Grande Prairie, Red Deer, Edmonton Public Libraries child care, Winspear child care, Castle Downs Family YMCA, St. Albert, Spruce Grove).</div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div>







Goals	Actions	2021	2021	2021
	<p><b>Health, Fitness &amp; Aquatics:</b></p> <p>Implementation of the two year (2022/23) operational plan that presents and evaluates options; creates a vision for the future of membership, programs, services and facilities; and explores new ways to use, leverage and partner to increase community impact and financial sustainability.</p> <p>Implementation of new membership model &amp; pricing.</p> <p>Create new or modified programs and services, and/or discontinue the delivery of some programs to respond to emerging and/or changed community needs.</p> <p>Action plan to stabilize HFA workforce needs, recruitment &amp; retention. I.e., aquatics, volunteers, membership services, etc.</p>			
				
	<p><b>Community &amp; Housing Initiatives:</b></p> <p>Increase Melcor housing occupancy rates and partner and advocate to secure financial operating support for 2022 and 2023.</p> <p>Determine future operating model of Melcor to best respond to the homeliness and housing needs in Edmonton.</p> <p>Identify, apply, and implement new and expanded program offerings as awarded. Ex: Y Mind, YMCA Alternative Suspension, Youth Transitions Program, etc.</p> <p>Action plan to stabilize CHI workforce needs, recruitment &amp; retention.</p>			
				

Goals	Actions	2021	2021	2021
	<b>Child Care:</b>			
	Successfully advocate for and implement \$10/day Child Care Program.			
	Action and advocate plan to stabilize early childhood educator workforce needs (recruitment & retention).			
	Continue to evaluate & assess financial viability of all child care programs and centres.			
	<b>Association Services:</b>			
	Develop a multi year operational and strategic IT plan and enhance leadership capacity to the IT area.			
	Successful implementation of the new financial software system.			
	Develop plan to identify levers to reduce overhead costs and action should financial performance be off plan.			
	Advocate all levels of government and sectors to be a player in community service opportunities (ex: COVID-19 vaccine distribution, Pan-Canadian Child Care system, not-for-profit sector).			
	<b>Marketing &amp; Communications:</b>			
	Create and implement annual and quarterly marketing plans and campaigns to support all programs, services, memberships, facilities and fundraising in all regions.			
	Continue to enhance internal communications and launch a YMCA Intranet.			
	Provide communications support for emerging issues, crises and change management needs.			
	Launch a refreshed consumer website.			

## 2. BOLDLY AFFIRM OUR STORY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

We will demonstrate and communicate our impact on the lives of individuals, families and communities and why it matters—so everyone can support (recognize, participate in, donate or volunteer) the achievement of our vision.

Goals	Actions	2021	2021	2021
Position YMCA of Northern Alberta as a charity of choice and develop our philanthropic culture, capacity and performance.	Meet or exceed the Funds Development Targets as outlined in annual operating plans.			
	Continued implementation of the three-year Funds Development plan to grow our donor & partner base to maximize community impact. The plan will include but will not be limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leverage opportunities for grants, contracts and sponsorship for the delivery of programs and services which will also assist in covering operational and administrative costs.</li><li>• Develop and implement a major gifts plan.</li><li>• Re-imagine YMCA events and find new ways to engage and connect with the YMCA community, donors, sponsors and partners.</li></ul>			
	Continue to evolve the YMCA story (brand and case for support) to make an emotional appeal that highlights the full community impact of the YMCA and resonates with internal and external stakeholders and the broader community, and then, tell that story broadly.			
	Implement a federation brand platform to support the position of the Y in our respective communities and across the country.			

### 3. CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF LEADERSHIP, INCLUSION AND DIVERSTIY

We will work to accurately represent the communities we serve and work together to develop and support our staff and volunteers to build healthy communities.

Goals	Actions	2021	2021	2021
	<p>Implementation of the multi-year People &amp; Culture strategy that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employee Experience Review</li><li>• Workforce Planning</li><li>• Diversity, equity, inclusion and Employee Belonging</li><li>• Leadership development</li><li>• Succession Planning and High-Potential Development</li><li>• Association-wide structure review</li><li>• Technology Integration</li></ul>			
	<p>Create and implement a plan to ensure the Board and executive leadership team are working effectively, collaboratively and nimbly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to improve the accurate and prompt financial and program reporting.</li><li>• Establish a timely and effective response plan based on performance.</li><li>• Develop monthly reporting of key metrics which includes key risk and organizational impacts and solutions.</li></ul>			
	<p>Continue to create and report on Advance strategic planning, direction and initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Extend Advance plan to end of 2023.</li><li>• Create 2024–27 Strategic plan.</li></ul>			

## ► OUTCOMES

*Advance 2021–2023* views the strategic directions of 2017–2021 through a current and pragmatic lens, respecting the efforts of the past and acknowledging how our communities, province and globe have changed since the pandemic began in 2020 and how they will continue to change.

Building on our 115-year legacy of helping people connect and belong and communities thrive, this plan bridges the YMCA we are today with the YMCA that we need to be in the future and affirm the urgency in which re-imagining must occur.

We are committed to being bold to meet the fast-changing and emerging needs of the communities we serve, while also laying a solid foundation to achieve immediate financial viability and long-term sustainability for YMCA of Northern Alberta.

Our goal is to measure our progress on a monthly and quarterly basis (as results allow) to ensure we can respond, adjust and direct our efforts and energies to areas that provide the greatest community impact, secure our organization on the road of financial sustainability, and nurture and protect our employees and volunteers.

