

A young boy and girl are smiling and raising their hands in a classroom setting. The boy is in the foreground, wearing a light blue sweater, and the girl is behind him, wearing a light blue dress and a pink headband. The background is slightly blurred, showing a classroom environment.

Igniting Potential

YMCA of Northern Alberta
Strategic Plan 2024–2028

Shine On 

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Igniting Potential

YMCA of Northern Alberta has been serving the communities of central and northern Alberta since 1907. In good times and bad, the YMCA consistently steps up to meet the emerging and evolving needs of communities, helping them move from surviving to thriving.

At YMCA of Northern Alberta, we believe that the next five years are a time to shine. They are an opportunity for the communities of central and northern Alberta to heal from the events of recent history and ignite the potential inside each of us.

Igniting potential and being the best and brightest we can be as individuals and as communities will take work. Across Canada and North America, people of all ages are reporting record high levels of loneliness, isolation and poor mental health.

The good news is increased social connection and community involvement make a direct and positive impact — which is exactly how the YMCA makes a difference. YMCA of Northern Alberta is a charity that ignites people's potential. We help people grow, lead and give back to their communities. We help people on their lifelong wellness journey, to connect, belong and find community.



Through Igniting Potential 2024-2028, we will enhance the well-being of our communities. We will take steps to deliver the brightest work and volunteer experience, we will innovate how we provide services and programs, and how we operate our spaces, and we will spark engagement in the YMCA and in the communities we serve.

Igniting Potential 2024-2028 is the blueprint to create a bright future for the communities of central and northern Alberta, where everyone can shine.



Vision

Thriving communities where everyone belongs and can shine.

Mission

YMCA of Northern Alberta is a charity that ignites people's potential.

Values

Inclusion: We create safe spaces where everyone belongs.

Respect: We create connection through understanding, trust and positivity.

Honesty: We build relationships by doing the right thing.

Caring: We show kindness, empathy and compassion in all we do.

Responsibility: We take personal accountability for our choices, actions and commitments.

Igniting Potential

2024–2028

Our five-year strategic plan is focused on innovating and collaborating to improve community well-being. The strategic directions have been established to ignite people’s potential, helping them grow, lead and give back to their community.

Our vision is thriving communities where everyone belongs and can shine. Igniting Potential provides the foundation for our leadership and Board teams to govern with certainty, plan with purpose and create relevant metrics to measure and report success with accuracy. Our YMCA will be guided by these three Strategic Directions.

Our Strategic Directions

1

Ignite engagement in the YMCA and the communities we serve.

We will grow awareness of who we are, what we do and the impact we make. We will increase participation in, and contribution to, the YMCA and the communities we serve.

2

Ignite lifelong well-being and community connection.

We will innovate and collaborate to help people on their well-being journey, to bring the YMCA to more people and serve communities in new ways.

3

Ignite the talent and potential of our people.

We will create one of the best and brightest employee and volunteer experiences anywhere with a renewed focus on our people and our culture.

Strategic Direction #1:

Ignite engagement in the YMCA and the communities we serve.

YMCA of Northern Alberta is a charity dedicated to igniting people's potential so communities can shine. Sharing our story and the impact of our work helps us engage community, earn philanthropic support, advocate for change and contribute to conversations that shape our communities.

Under Igniting Engagement, we will grow awareness of who we are, what we do, the impact

we make and how everyone can participate in, engage in and contribute to the YMCA.

We will promote our places and programs and advocate on issues of importance where we have relevant experience. We will also elevate and increase our philanthropic ambitions by broadening our donor base, enhancing the giving experience and deepening our relationship with donors.



Strategic Direction #1:

Goals

1. Inspire more people to participate in, partner with and give to the YMCA.
2. Engage YMCA communities, partners and contributors to help shape the YMCA of the future.
3. Be a community leader and advocate for issues of importance to the communities we serve.

Why it matters

47% of Albertans do not know they can make charitable donations to the YMCA. *(YMCA National Brand Survey, YMCA Canada, 2022)*

59% of Albertans do not know that the YMCA offers a wide range of accessible programs and services dedicated to health and well-being. *(YMCA National Brand Survey, YMCA Canada, 2022)*

Canadians are increasingly concerned about rising rates of poor youth mental health, child care accessibility and community health.

Strategic Direction #2:

Ignite lifelong well-being and community connection.

YMCA of Northern Alberta will provide services, programs and spaces that help people connect, belong and shine.

The need for social connection and community has never been greater. The YMCA will be the connector for all people to enjoy the powerful effects of such interactions on their well-being and sense of belonging.

Whether we're in a school, park, or YMCA centre, our priority will be igniting people's commitment to well-being, personal growth, community connection and belonging.

Over the next five years we will provide the community with accessible, inclusive programs and services, a reimagined service experience, and partner and expand to help communities thrive.

To ensure YMCA of Northern Alberta is here to serve communities for the next century and beyond, we will also focus on achieving financial sustainability, creating positive social change and reducing our environmental impact.



Strategic Direction #2:

Goals

1. Provide an outstanding experience for all YMCA participants.
2. Connect more people, partners and communities to YMCA programs, services and spaces.
3. Achieve social, financial and environmental sustainability.

Why it matters

Albertans rank highest in the country for feeling stressed (39%), angry (39%), lonely or isolated (27%), or sad (30%).
(National Monitoring Survey, Canadian Mental Health Association, March 2022).

The mortality impact of social disconnection is similar to that caused by smoking up to 15 cigarettes per day
(Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation, The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community, 2023).

Albertans spend an average of 9.5 hours per weekday and 8.8 hours per weekend day in sedentary activities.
(Sit Less, Centre for Active Living/Healthy Living Alberta, 2023)

Strategic Direction #3:

Ignite the talent and potential of our people.

The YMCA is people powered. The energy, positivity and inclusivity of our employees and volunteers is the spark that helps people belong and communities shine.

Igniting Potential 2024-2028 will focus on building a talented, innovative and inclusive team with a renewed and intentional focus on our people, our culture and how we lead and govern.

We envision the YMCA as a sought-after place to work, volunteer and build a career. We will create a positive, supportive and inclusive culture, where everyone is valued, trusted and respected. We

strive to build a culture where well-being, development and performance are of equal importance, enabling our people to shine.

To support the YMCA experience for employees, volunteers, members and participants, innovation will be central to our work over the next five years. As technology, social expectations and our communities continue to change rapidly, it's more urgent than ever that we keep adapting and innovating for impact and relevance



Strategic Direction #3:

Goals

1. Create a culture of community, well-being, leadership and excellence.
2. Foster innovation in the workplace.
3. Establish the YMCA as an employer of choice and ideal place to volunteer.

Why it matters

Employees who strongly feel their employer cares about their well-being are 71% less likely to experience a high degree of burnout. *(Leaders: Ignore Employee Wellbeing at Your Own Risk, Gallup, 2023)*

When an employee feels heard, that person is 4.6 times more likely to feel empowered to perform to the best of their ability. *(The Impact of Equality and Values Driven Culture, Salesforce Research, 2017)*

Volunteering is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction, irrespective of the amount of time committed. *(Volunteering and health benefits in general adults: cumulative effects and forms, BMC Public Health, 2018).*

Helping Communities Shine

YMCA of Northern Alberta proudly serves communities throughout central and northern Alberta through:

- Health, Fitness & Aquatics Centres
- Community Centres
- Child Care Centres
- Community Programs and Services

Over the next five years, the YMCA will help communities thrive by introducing new and innovative spaces, services, programs and partnerships. We are committed to helping communities address current needs and future challenges. One thing remains unchanged: no matter how or where we serve community, the YMCA is here to help everyone connect, belong and shine.

