

## Beyond 2010

## Looking Towards the Future

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To Sustain Workforce Development & Strengthen HR Networks

A Plan to Build Capacity

March 31, 2010

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## 1 **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The need to sustain workforce development is a *priority* for the sector. The vision of a “well-trained and stable Community Disability Services workforce recognized as professionals providing valued service” is still relevant. To facilitate this, the Alberta Council of Disability Services (ACDS) Workforce Council has designed a ***Networks of HR Practices*** model that will strengthen the capacity of the sector to continue to invest in people.

ACDS has a long history of working collaboratively with its strategic partners to address human resource challenges. Drawing on this experience, it has developed a phased approach to identify, develop and implement a workforce strategy for the sector. Foundational research and development was achieved in the initial phase, through the three-year project known as *Workforce 2010*. In the fall of 2007, the second phase began with the focus shifting towards regional implementation of priority strategies and activities. This phase integrates core knowledge and tools acquired through *Workforce 2010* to build human resource infrastructure and sector leadership within regions.

Financial resources to support provincial workforce development are secured until fiscal year end (March 31, 2010) through Alberta Ministries of Seniors and Community Supports and Employment and Immigration. Expectations for the sector to become more self-sufficient in addressing workforce needs and the challenges of project-based funding understate the critical need for a plan to sustain workforce development for the Community Disability Services sector.

ACDS Provincial Workforce Council is well established to provide strategic leadership and facilitate resource sharing across the sector. Regional workforce councils are in place in five (of the six) regions, all regions are represented on the provincial workforce council, and the ACDS workforce team is responding to specific areas of need, such as professional development, for the sector.

This document provides the background and contextual framework for a plan to sustain workforce development for the sector. It provides an overview of information gathered from HR professionals and sector leadership to ascertain support and interest in addressing workforce capacity through a *Network* design.

This ***Networks of Human Resource (HR) Practices*** model is built on the strength of existing provincial and regional workforce councils and committees. Using a *Community of Practise* approach, it increases capacity through sharing of resources and expertise. It establishes and strengthens collaborative partnerships and builds momentum towards common goals. It harnesses social capital within the community by creating opportunities to link existing networks through a system or structure that *interconnects* the sector.

In *Forces For Good*, Leslie Crutchfield and Heather McLeod Grant speak to the impact of nonprofits who recognize the value of adopting and nurturing a network mind-set to have greater impact. “These groups work with and through their non-profit networks in order to have greater impact themselves.”<sup>1</sup> The strength of adopting a network approach is evident through regional workforce council initiatives that support the provincial strategy, such as the provincial tool to track workforce trends that was based on the evidence-based data collected through the turnover template of Central Region’s Workforce Committee. The Calgary and

Edmonton collaborative partnership provides a concrete example of two regions coming together for mutual benefit, utilising shared resources, and building momentum through a coordinated approach. The Northeast Region committed resources to support students in post secondary education which directly supports disability studies programs at Grant MacEwan and Portage colleges. Donated media air time aided the provincial social marketing campaign through a local connection in the South region. Numerous examples exist of work currently underway by regional councils to embed disability studies in Alberta Education and establish minimum educational and credentialing requirements, address leadership development and sustainability, develop employer tools to support culturally competent workplaces, and continue building public awareness and value for the work through coordinated social marketing efforts.

A network approach to sustain workforce development is more than theory. It interconnects existing councils and committees through a formalized system to weave together the strengths of the sector. It builds on the relationships currently established by adopting a structured and strategic approach to engage sector leaders and professionals, post secondary, and government in a network framework. “Leading analysts have even predicted that international networks will be the pre-eminent global public policy mechanisms of the future.<sup>2</sup>” The capacity of the Community Disability Services sector is directly impacted by its ability to attract and retain a *well-trained and stable* workforce. Faced with limited resources and the need for continued focus on addressing workforce challenges, the third phase of workforce development is the introduction and development of a ***Networks of HR Practices*** model.

## 2 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

ACDS, in collaboration with its' strategic partners, has provided a leadership role in addressing the human resource challenges for the Community Disability Services sector through the development and implementation of a comprehensive human resource strategy. The knowledge and tools acquired through the research and workforce development initiative, *Workforce 2010*, provides the foundational framework for developing a strategy to increase human resource capacity for the sector. This strategy recognizes that quality supports for individuals and families require a well-trained and stable workforce to create the kind of communities and quality of life Albertans need and want.

The *Workforce 2010* initiative was instrumental in collecting the information required to inform the human resource strategy. Under the direction of an advisory committee, a series of integrated projects from 2004 to 2007 were initiated to examine human resource issues facing the Community Disability Services sector in Alberta.

### 2.1 Workforce 2010

*By the year 2010, the Province of Alberta will have a well-trained and stable Community Disability Services workforce recognized as professionals providing valued service. (Vision)*



Workforce 2010 was built on the knowledge, experience and lessons learned from previous human resource development work. This includes ACDS's (formerly called AARC) Community Rehabilitation Careers Project (CRCP) and the work done by Provincial Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) Board<sup>3</sup> on the Community Rehabilitation Workforce Strategy. In January 2003, ACDS and the PDD Provincial Board partnered to establish and co-chair a Provincial Workforce Strategy Committee under the leadership of co-chairs Ed Riediger and Dr. Alex Hillyard, with representation from multiple stakeholders. This committee provided direction to the Workforce 2010 project and its deliverables.

The project was based on the premise that a strong and sustainable workforce is essential in assisting people with disabilities to achieve their dreams of being connected and involved. A series of integrated multi-phased projects were conducted to gather information on the work, the workforce, the people supported, and the public image of the work. Each project was designed to gather input from a broad range of stakeholders including employees, employers, families, and people receiving support. Information was also collected through extensive literature reviews, surveys, focus groups, expert panels, one-to-one and telephone interviews, and a review of data available through electronic files.

This initiative resulted in the most comprehensive labour market study in the sector's history. The information provided the sector with valuable knowledge on the current and future workforce, the requirements of the future workforce, and the human resource challenges



facing the sector at a time when Alberta's economic boom was impacting the sector's ability to recruit qualified workers. Critical consumer information provided a profile of the current recipients of services and the future predictions of need. The research established that in 2004 there were over 8,800 adults (through PDD) and 3,900 children (through FSCD) receiving services (approximately 69% and 31% respectively of the 12,700 individuals), with projections showing as many as 17,700 needing services by 2010 (11,000 adults - 62%, and 6,700 children - 38%). Demographic predictors indicated an increase in the prevalence of male consumers, more individuals over 45 years of age, and greater focus on service for individuals with complex support needs that in turn place even more demands on the future workforce.

Recruitment and retention of skilled workers in the rehabilitation sector have long been identified as chronic problems due to the increased demand for community-based staff as a result of de-institutionalization; issues of compensation; demanding work and the devalued nature of rehabilitation work. The most recent data puts turnover in the rehabilitation field in Alberta at just over 32%.

Population estimates suggest that there could be as many as 15,000 positions funded by PDD and/or FSCD (Family Supports to Children with Disabilities) to provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities in Alberta. Over 80% of the workers in PDD services are female and the largest population (close to 30%) are aged 26 to 35 years old; just under 80% are in frontline positions and just over half (53%) are in permanent, full-time positions compared to 15% who are employed on variable/casual/on-call terms. Just over 40% of employees have a high school diploma or less, while only 18% have a university degree or higher. Employers have repeatedly expressed concern that new hires into the field are less qualified and skilled than the position they are filling requires.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to informing the sector on the labour and consumer demographics as well as workforce issues, public attitude research<sup>5</sup> was completed to provide a context for attracting and retaining the workforce. Barriers to positioning the work as a career of choice were identified, and strategies proposed to (1) create awareness and understanding of the sector and career opportunities, (2) brand and market the sector, and (3) raise the value of working in the sector. This information guided the later development of a social marketing campaign and provided the impetus for a name change, along with the visual image, from the label of Community Rehabilitation Services to Community Disability Services with the corresponding tag line Meaningful Work. Stronger Communities.



#### The Visual Image of the Logo:

The dot can be seen as representing a person, surrounded (but not entirely circled) by curving lines that can be viewed as representing services, community, support, love, family, friendship, et cetera. To the left is an open curve, or a "C", representing community. The gold and blue colours were chosen specifically for their proven appeal and success based on market research. The blue is a violet blue - soft yet strong but not corporate, and the gold serves to modify the blue and make it stand out.

The *Workforce 2010* project also included the development of industry-specific human resource management tools to establish benchmark standards for the sector. The result was the creation of the *Workforce Classification System* and *Employer of Choice Self-Assessment*

tools. Both tools were designed to aid service providers to enhance human resource management practices and principles in attracting and retaining a qualified workforce.

The Workforce Classification System built on the CRCP project of the early to mid 1990s to update the job functions, competencies and classifications, to make them more relevant to the current workforce and industry requirements. Through extensive consultation with sector leaders and human resource professionals, the revised job classification system emerged to provide the sector with benchmark job profiles that consistently describe the work, the job responsibilities, and the competencies required to meet the current and future work demands. The six job profiles developed provide a guide for career progression from entry level positions to senior management. The classification system supports organizational resource and compensation management through a job evaluation process that allows for a comparative ranking of jobs based on their relative worth to the organization.

Information sharing and training sessions were held in 2005-2006 in all six regions to provide agencies with the information and resources (in the form of the Job Evaluation Handbook manual) to assist organizations in implementing the benchmark job profiles. The training sessions were attended by 114 organizations and the response was positive<sup>6</sup>.

The second tool developed was the Employer of Choice Self-Assessment tool. It provides the sector with the organizational culture and structural characteristics to support better retention of qualified and desirable employees through staff satisfaction and healthy workplace cultures. Through extensive literature research, this self-assessment tool was developed to provide employers with a guide to identifying and building on the practices that are their strengths and further develop areas of need. This tool was provided to employers in a handbook titled *Be an Employer of Choice - Human Resource Practices that Attract and Retain the Best People*.<sup>7</sup>

During the three year project, a series of three human resource forums were held to bring together stakeholders representing industry leaders, government ministries, colleges, ACDS staff and board members. The forums were facilitated by Graham Lowe<sup>8</sup>, a recognized international expert on work and organizations, and resulted in the development of a long-term Human Resources Strategy for the Community Disability Services: *An Action Plan to Build People Capacity*<sup>9</sup>. The plan was launched at the human resource forum in March 2006.

## **2.2 Human Resource (HR) Strategy**

The HR Strategy was presented as a call to action, with roles for everyone at the provincial, regional, and agency levels. The strategy was endorsed by forum participants as a way to create better quality services and sustain the sector in the face of serious labour market shortages. It provided the provincial framework to achieve the vision of a well-trained and stable workforce recognized as professionals providing valued service. By making the case to link the sector's mission to the quality of its human resource practices, it repositions and strengthens the sector for the future. Stronger human resource capacity is a key contributor to meeting the individuals' needs now, and in the future.

Crucial to the success of this strategy is the investment required by stakeholders including service providers both at the governance and employee levels, families, and funders. The strategy was developed with input from a diverse group of stakeholders who came together through a series of human resource forums. It rests on four pillars aimed to recruit, develop,

engage, and develop people capacity. At the core of the strategy is a total rewards approach to human resource practices, investing in people for the future that will also show results now. It promotes good quality of work life, decent compensation, a workforce that is valued and respected, opportunities for learning and development, and work that provides a sense of pride and accomplishment.

A human resource council was formed under the leadership of ACDS to champion the HR Strategy. The top priorities identified for the council were: (1) to promote sector branding and advertising while developing a common culture and image; and (2) to maintain momentum for the provincial work plan through education, and collecting and communication of data to build awareness. A strong need for a central resource body was identified to provide leadership and ensure the strategy was implemented consistently, and to think long term while considering future demographic, political, and economic shifts.

### **2.3 ACDS Provincial Workforce Council and Regional Networks**

In November of 2006, the ACDS Provincial Workforce Council was formed with representation from emerging leaders, service providers from all six regions, government, post secondary, and ACDS. Recognizing the need to better coordinate and lead the implementation at the agency level, councils were established in most regions, or connections were made with existing service provider committees (that is, Central Region PACE Workforce Committee). The Calgary and Edmonton regions formed a collaborative partnership to build momentum through critical mass and to reap the rewards of a coordinated approach between the two large urban centres.

The initial focus of the ACDS Provincial Workforce Council was to establish leadership, develop implementation teams, processes, and tools. The council also sought to gather feedback from the sector on the priority actions and develop ways to effectively communicate the council's initiatives and share results. In April 2008, the council met with regional representatives to identify key strategic themes to focus on for the 2008 to 2010 period. Three cornerstone themes were identified: (1) branding and marketing, (2) human resource infrastructure, and (3) skilled workforce. These themes closely align with the Alberta Government priorities and mirror the priorities established by the Calgary-Edmonton Collaborative Partnership.

Implementing a social marketing campaign to build awareness and clarity around the work in this sector was seen as critical to attract and retain a qualified workforce. The results of this focus were significant, including the development of websites, targeted recruitment brochures and advertising posts, production of public awareness tools such as radio and television announcements, developing display posters to be used in public forums, and designing career materials for use in multi-media.

A mentorship approach was taken to streamline the implementation of the job classification system across the province. Professionals from the sector were recruited as mentors and trained to provide support to agencies in their understanding and implementation of the job evaluation process. A tracking tool database system tied to the benchmark job profiles was developed and launched. There is continuing effort in supporting agencies to implement this tool to collect and analyze trends and patterns in the workforce; to inform future efforts and provide critical performance indicators for work undertaken by the sector. This information is also important in providing organizations with the ability to track workforce shifts, and



supporting current and future efforts to enhance human resource practices to promote healthy, attractive workplaces.

Research of competitive wage and benefit rates for the six benchmark profiles identified in the Workforce Classification System was completed. The findings were disseminated provincially as foundational information to assist agencies in developing pay rates for the benchmark job profiles.

Gaining recognition as a valued and respected professional workforce is essential to positioning the Community Disability Services sector as a viable career with the public. To facilitate greater access to core skills and knowledge training, a second delivery mode for the successful *Foundations in Community Disability Services (Foundations)*<sup>10</sup> training was developed. *Foundations'* training is now available to students through an on-line delivery mode and through direct instruction provided by trained tutors within the agency setting. The curriculum is aligned to develop the skills, competencies and values identified in the benchmark job profiles.

ACDS also offers an annual spring conference, alternating between north and south Alberta locations. The focus is on the major forces and future trends shaping the Community Disability Services sector. It provides workshop streams that address the different needs of frontline, middle, and senior leadership levels that affords opportunity to develop relationships and enhance skills for all members of the sector. The conference strives to be positive, forward thinking, and a great place to connect and network with like-minded individuals.

### 3 SETTING THE CONTEXT

As indicated earlier, the foundation framework to address the human resource challenges for the Community Disability Services sector was initiated under the Workforce 2010 three-year project. This project was future-orientated and sought to gather the knowledge and develop tools to prepare the sector to meet the workforce demands ahead. The need for a long-term approach became apparent and resulted in the creation of an HR Strategy for the sector. The workforce development was integrated into the ongoing work of ACDS, and the sector as a whole fell under the ACDS Provincial Workforce Council umbrella.

#### 3.1 Leadership

ACDS is well-positioned to provide the leadership to the workforce strategy as reflected by its mission. It has a long history of supporting human resource development and a commitment to professionalizing the sector. Early work to address the human resource needs for the sector commenced in the mid 1990s through the Community Rehabilitation Careers Project (CRCP), a 13-year commitment aimed at providing agencies with access to human resource tools and resources. ACDS has focused on ensuring access to staff training and development by offering core knowledge and skill development for the sector, high quality conferences, and workshops created to promote

##### Mission

The Alberta Council of Disability Services (ACDS) is taking leadership to strengthen the Community Disability Sector consistent with its' mission "*To Lead, Support and Influence Community Disability Services through Education, Partnerships and Accreditation*".

continuous learning and personal growth for the workforce. This training is delivered through a number of delivery methods including online, train-the-trainer models and in workshop/retreat formats.

### **3.2 Resources**

Critical to the success of Workforce 2010 and the subsequent workforce developments under the ACDS Provincial Workforce Council was the support provided by the partners, both financial and in-kind contributions. Sufficient funding was acquired to carry out the projects and engage professional experts to ensure the nature and scope of the work done met the highest standards.

A significant contributor to the Workforce 2010 success and the subsequent implementation of the HR Strategy was realized through the secondment of Maureen Murphy-Black from the Provincial PDD Board. Her strategic leadership and expertise combined with her vision for the sector, resulted in significant milestones achieved within a relatively short period of time. Upon her return to government, a transition plan was supported by the Ministry of Seniors and Community Supports through Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) provincial programs to the end of this fiscal year (March 31, 2010).

ACDS provides the core infrastructure services in accounting, administrative, management and technical areas, as well as administration and coordination of training and development which includes the annual spring conference. ACDS membership is engaged to ensure industry expertise and participation in the work.

### **3.3 Partners**

The approach to addressing the workforce challenges for the sector has been in the spirit of collaboration and partnership. The workforce development drew its success on the commitment and contribution of a broad range of partners, including:

- Alberta Employment and Immigration (AE&I)
- Alberta Seniors and Community Supports through Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) Provincial Programs and all six Region Community PDD Boards
- Alberta Council of Disability Services (ACDS)
- Alberta Association of Community Living (AACL) (contributor to the Workforce 2010 initiative)
- Community Service Providers including 129 member agencies
- Grant MacEwan University
- Alberta Children's Services (contributor to the Workforce 2010 initiative)
- Office of Disability Issues (ODI) (contributor to the Workforce 2010 initiative)

## **4 CREATING A SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**

With estimates of “as many as 15,000 positions funded to provide services to persons with disabilities in Alberta”<sup>11</sup> and the labour analysis provided by the Workforce 2010 project, there needs to be a level of ongoing support to address human resource challenges within the Community Disability Services sector. Looking towards the future, student enrolment in post

secondary institutions has been declining by close to 20%<sup>12</sup>. Coupled with the impact of staff turnover and demographic trends of the workforce, the vision needs to be long-term and avoid the pitfalls of complicity given recent economic trends.

In today's information age, knowledge management skills and intellectual capital are an organization's most valuable assets. We expect industry leaders to use the information provided here as a stepping stone in their journey to do their own research and continually assess their learning. Knowledge managers know that it is increasingly important to "do the right thing" instead of just "doing things right"; they also know that "best practices" of yesterday or today may not necessarily be the "best practices" of tomorrow. Double-loop learning, unlearning and relearning are strategies that leading organizations are embracing. Rehabilitation organizations cannot afford to be exceptions to this trend. (Sonpal-Valias, N. July 2005)<sup>13</sup>

The HR Strategy for the sector developed in 2006 focused on building future capacity by developing a proactive, effective and coordinated approach. It is about investing in the people for the future. This HR Strategy provides the framework for the sustainability plan developed in this report.

The plan looks beyond maintaining an infrastructure to support the workforce initiatives and considers strategies to support sustainable development for the future.

"Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."  
(Brundtland Report, 1987)<sup>14</sup>

Based on past successes achieved through the collaborative partnership approach, the plan is to develop human resource infrastructure to support the industry on a broader context by establishing *Networks of Human Resource Practices*.

This model is designed to increase the capacity of provincial and regional networks to identify, develop and implement strategies that support current and future workforce development. By engaging industry leaders and professionals using a coordinated, systematic approach, it strengthens the sector's human resources practices which in turn support capacity to provide quality services. Implicit in the plan is the ability to adapt to shifts in the labour market and respond to new approaches and learning.

### **4.1 Networks of Human Resource (HR) Practices**

This is a shift away from the traditional hierarchical approach to developing a stronger model of participation at the regional levels. It builds on the strengths of existing workforce councils and committees, recognizes industry competencies, and establishes opportunity to adapt quickly to sector needs. Inherent in this model are roles and responsibilities for strategic leadership, project coordination, communication, and sharing of resources and critical learning.

It is assumed that the networks would assign a lead role. Projects may involve a shared leadership approach, such as a partnership approach to develop training or a leadership forum. The focus of the networks will likely shift towards specialized functions, addressing

specific human resource needs as demonstrated through the job classification implementation process.

An illustration of the proposed network map showing the connections between the existing regional and provincial workforce councils is attached in Appendix A.

### **4.2 Benefits of a Network of HR Practices**

The anticipated benefits of this model include less reliance on government, sharing of resources, and sustainable human resource infrastructure for the sector. The job classification implementation process is an example of this type of model. Initially the expectation was that organizations would implement the new job profiles after receiving the materials and training; however, that was not successful. The plan was then revised and resources were allocated to regional mentors. Provincial support was still required to coordinate the efforts and to maintain focus to achieve the desired targets.

A shared approach to building human resource infrastructure is more likely to result in cost savings, and increased efficiency and effectiveness in addressing workforce needs. The model develops consistency across the sector by building on shared practices and could result in the development of a model of excellence for others. Agencies that do not have dedicated human resource supports in place would benefit from the shared expertise. Agencies that have acquired the human resource expertise would benefit from sharing of information and resources and further developing their internal experts through mentorship opportunities.

### **4.3 Work Plan**

There are many questions that need to be answered.

- What is the work or functions of the networks?
- How will these networks continue to develop?
- Who are the members of the networks?
- What is the governance structure of the network approach?
- Is this different than the current structure?
- What resources are needed and available to support these networks?
- Would agencies agree to participate and support the networks?
- How would these networks interface with other groups?
- What other partners and networks are critical to this network model to be successful?
- What are the external influences affecting the networks?
- Are the networks capable of managing changes and shocks in the internal and external environment?

To address these and other questions, the ACDS Provincial Workforce Council met on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009 to design a framework to assess the sector's reception to this approach, to engage professionals, leaders and board members in a forum, and to seek out resources to support the network structure. Through small group work, the framework was outlined:

- A process for gathering feedback: Initially the thought was to complete a feasibility study; however, the question of *Why?* was raised by the group. The scope of a study would need to be broad-based and should address the very nature of the work. Core questions to ask in a study should consider the value of the sector work, how the work benefits the individual, and why should the work be sustained. Given the feedback from the council members, it was felt that a feasibility study should only be undertaken if it went beyond the network framework and focused on core sector issues.

To support the network development, a *Needs Assessment* was conducted with current workforce council members. Using a pulse check survey, information was gathered on the functions of the proposed networks, leadership roles of the regional and provincial workforce council and resources required to support the network model. Questions were also asked to identify other factors that may be critical to the success of the network including opportunities to collaborate and ways to connect with other groups, external influences that may impact the network and other considerations for the network model.

The results reinforced the benefits of remaining committed to the key initiatives, such as implementing the job classification system, promoting the use of the tracking tool and ensuring sufficient resources are in place to support the work. A challenge may be keeping the networks focused to avoid losing momentum and getting side-tracked with other issues. Seeking out opportunities to connect regularly with other groups or networks was seen as critical to keeping others engaged and informed. Finally, it was noted that the network may benefit from involvement of other funders or groups such as Children Services or Alberta Employment and Immigration (AE&I).

- Engage industry by hosting a Human Resource Forum: The ACDS Annual Conference was seen as an opportune time to hold a Human Resource Forum to bring together industry leaders including board members, human resource practitioners and administrators.

Graham Lowe is scheduled to facilitate a full-day session on the topic of *Creating Healthier Organizations* on April 12, 2010 (first day of the conference). The session is seen as an opportunity to explore ideas and build in ways to collaborate using a topic of interest to many. It also provides input for the workforce council on strategies to strengthen organizational capacity. Input from this session will be useful in informing actions within the provincial workforce council's strategic plan.

- Seek out resources to support development and sustainability of the networks: A third component was the need to secure the financial, human and material resources to develop and sustain these networks. A network approach is seen as a more efficient and effective method to addressing workforce capacity by sharing ideas, tools and resources. It draws on expertise within the sector. Utilizes existing assets within the networks to support development in other areas. It encourages the networks to refine processes, tools or approaches so that the best ideas and methods come forward.

However, the network still needs to be built. It needs to be firmly established, key connectors identified, processes developed and a system to ensure continued focus on the shared vision. It is critical that the model is designed to identify and develop strategic priorities for the sector and that all networks are aware of and engaged in



activities that support the shared vision while maintaining their autonomy to address local and regional issues.

A regional partnership funding request was made to the six PDD Region Community Boards to strengthen human resource capacity by providing financial support to develop and maintain the network model. This proposal was approved and funds were secured for the fiscal year of April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011. The resources will provide opportunity to develop the regional networks and provide project management and coordination support to facilitate the three key strategic priorities.

### **4.4 Phased-in Model**

The process towards *Networks of HR Practices* will be a phased-in based over the next year. Current structures such as regional workforce councils, subcommittees and teams, will be connected through the provincial workforce council and ACDS workforce development team. The provincial workforce council's strategic plan for 2010-2012 will be used as vehicle to identify the role of regional councils in taking the lead or partnering with other regions to address specific strategies.

Building a sustainable network structure and communication framework to support the workforce development will be a priority for this fiscal coming year (i.e., 2010 to 2011). Support will be provided to develop stronger affiliations and build on the strengths of existing structures. Additional resources may be solicited to support regional initiatives as required.

### **4.5 Funding Challenges**

As funding has shifted to a project-based approach and as expectations increase for workforce development to have less reliance on government, the risk is that critical strategies will not be implemented and the priority will shift away from the workforce development. This places the Community Disability Services sector at risk of lowering expectations and diminished capacity to provide quality services. Promoting a well-trained and stable workforce aligns well with the priorities outlined in the *What We Heard*<sup>15</sup> summary of stakeholder discussions, specifically by *Strengthening Community Capacity through Partnerships and Workforce Development - Education, Recruitment and Retention*.

The support of the six PDD Region Community Boards and considerable in-kind contributions provided by sector leaders is vital to sustain workforce development. The *Networks of HR Practices* model provides a viable option to ensuring the sector remains committed to developing the workforce. The focus on regional priorities while retaining a provincial coordinated approach will continue to build momentum and reap the benefits of shared solutions.

## **5 CLOSING**

Workforce development remains a priority for the Community Disability Services sector. ACDS and its partners embarked on a journey with *Workforce 2010* to create a *well-trained and stable Community Disability Services workforce recognized as professionals providing valued service*. The work was long-term focused and expectations were high. In 2010, industry

leaders, government and post-secondary institutions continue to be engaged in forging ahead on creating people capacity to meet current and future workforce demands.

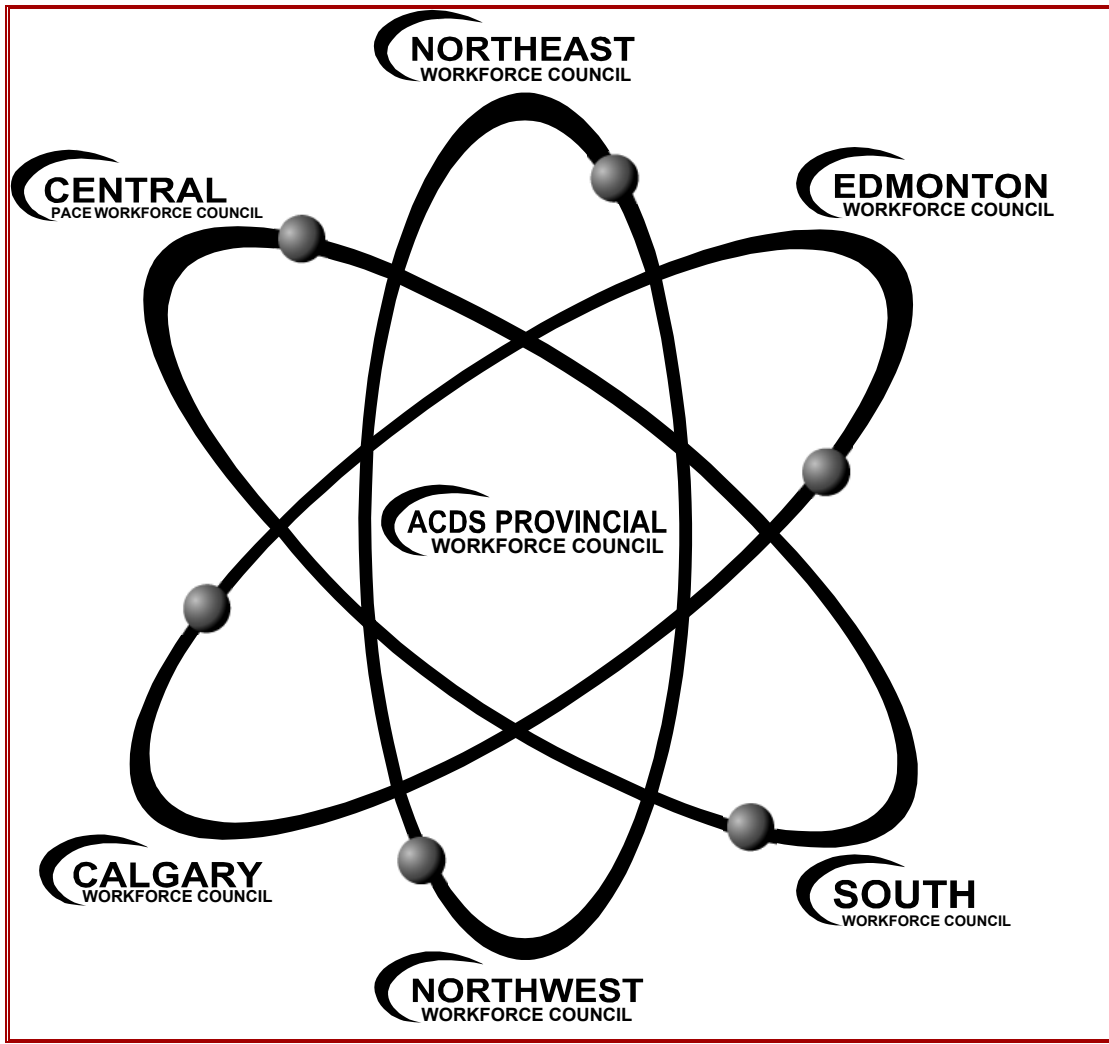
A *Networks of HR Practices* model to sustain the workforce development beyond project-based initiatives is the framework proposed by ACDS. It is based on the premise that strategic collaboration is critical to the success of future workforce development and builds on the existing relationships and expertise of the councils.

This document provides a context for the model by describing the background information, identifying the leadership and network structure currently in place, and proposes a model to continue the work. It does not articulate the structure or the details of how the network will operate. ACDS Provincial Workforce Council and Workforce Team will develop the network over the coming year.

High-impact nonprofits adopt a network mind-set. Great nonprofits collaborate rather than compete with their social sector peers. They don't see other groups as competition for scarce resources. Instead, they understand that only by working collaboratively with like-minded allies can they have more impact.<sup>16</sup>

**APPENDIX A - NETWORK MODEL ILLUSTRATION**

Below is an illustration of the Networks of HR Practices model. Each workforce council is connected to all regional councils and to ACDS Provincial Workforce Council. This promotes regional autonomy while creating opportunities to work collaboratively.



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## 5.1 Acronyms

AACL	Alberta Association of Community Living
AARC	Alberta Association of Rehabilitation Centres (now ACDS)
ACDS	Alberta Council of Disability Services (formerly AARC)
AE&I	Alberta Employment and Immigration
CRCP	Community Rehabilitation Careers Project
FSCD	Family Support for Children with Disabilities
ODI	Office of Disability Issues
PDD	Persons with Developmental Disabilities

## 5.2 List of Endnotes

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  - 8 Graham Lowe, president of The Graham Lowe Group Inc.; consulting and research services designed to help clients create high quality workplaces and build future workplace capacities: [www.grahamlowe.ca](http://www.grahamlowe.ca)
  - 9 ACDS (2006); Calgary, AB ([www.cdsalberta.com](http://www.cdsalberta.com))
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