



2023

Forward House Strategic Plan

Our Mission

Forward House of London is committed to the lifelong personal growth and choices of each member through:

Supporting member independence

Enhancing member participation and involvement

Community engagement and advocacy

**The future looks like the city of London looks!
Working for a future that creates inclusivity and
service for the diverse community we serve.**

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Forward House is guided by a mission to create lifelong personal growth through choice, independence, advocacy and participation in the community. Historically, the agency was initiated in 1984 through advocacy by parents and community members for a need to provide resources and life-long planning for those who had developmental disabilities and were often marginalized and, for many reasons, could not advocate for their personal needs. Once again, the agency finds itself in a position to advocate for those marginalized individuals and address community issues through decision-making that supports all individuals in the community as a transfer payment agency under the Ministry of Children Community and Social Services developmental sector. Taxpayers have responded during periods of the pandemic, voicing concerns about their ability to participate in systems for all communities in the London area. The government has guided the future through documents "Journey to Belonging: Choice and Inclusion" Framework and "Inclusion and Diversity Blueprint."

The agency has experienced significant success over the last four years; we have modernized our care system, addressed infrastructure concerns, improved operational outcomes, developed better relationships between management and the union and achieved compliance, consistently demonstrating quality care while more than doubling the agency budget and clients in our care. The success results from dedicated staff and managers who are invested and passionate about the outcomes for the clients; along with this, a board that demonstrates good governance in moving the mission forward and meeting the community needs in the developmental sector.

The new strategic plan drives the agency to breathe life and purpose into looking at the need to target these challenges that support our **mission and principles** explicitly; as such, the agency will be, addressing the issue of inclusion in the diversity, along with succession, planning continuity, and the challenges growth bring during this time. The future represents many significant big-picture issues, such as climate change, housing, the need to increase immigration, contributing further demands on the sector, and the realization that decision-making must be efficiently responsive to these matters. The mission requires us to push forward and make decisions that need out-of-the-box planning while stewarding the agency during these issues over the next five years. The strategic plan is how we, as an agency, will continue to serve and ensure we have the right team to do this for the years to come. Forward House continues to continue excellent care for the clients whom we serve as the focal point of the agency's purpose.

In conclusion, the board and I are entirely confident in the staff, the union, the management team, and the board, weathering these concerns and putting our mission at the forefront for the benefit of our clients.

All the best
Mark Gowing, Executive Director



We are excited to share with you the **2023 Strategic Plan for Forward House.**

We undertook a rigorous planning process to get to the point of being able to deliver this final product. We want to share the process and the next steps as you, the front line team are critical in the success and execution of the plan. We understand as an organization that this is a journey and not a destination. We understand what has been created now, may change and adjust as the needs of the organization do. We want you to know we are more committed than ever to ensuring we continue to support our clients and live the mission we have promised to them, in addition to also prioritizing you, our team in your growth, development and opportunities within Forward House. It is critical to all of us involved to move forward in the same direction, knowing that we have work to do AND we are more committed than ever to create a workplace that you are proud to be a part of!

The Process:

The Director team participated in two sessions where the top three priorities to move the agency forward were identified.

You will see these noted as the “Objectives” in the plan.

Objective 1: Creating a Culture of Inclusion

Objective 2: Succession Planning and Execution

Objective 3: Growth of the agency and the number of people we serve

Within each of these Objectives the team of Directors identified the “Key Results” that would be the initial steps in moving the process forward. These represent the “OKR’s” for the agency or the Objectives and Key Results. Within each of these OKR’s there are many possible next steps. We would refer to these as Projects or Tasks. These projects and tasks are the tactical day to day things that need to be executed in order to complete the Key Results, ultimately resulting in the objectives being met.

After meeting with the Directors, a Break Away Day that included; Directors, Managers, and the Board of Directors was held and each Objective and Key Result was reviewed, along with the rest of the plan and this was broken down and adjustments were made.

We are ready to present the first step, a completed high-level plan. We want to let you know that **we are committed to making sure you engage with this plan because we can not move forward without you.**

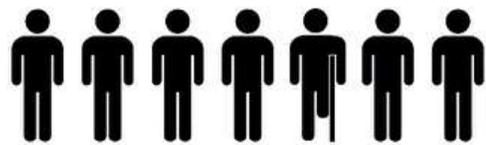
Summary

As London and Ontario continue to grow and change, Forward House must strive to reflect the community we live in by serving **ALL** diversity in that community. Ontario has the most culturally diverse population in Canada, and London is seeing that diversity as well.

When we look to diversifying Forward House, this is more than just simply changing the visual representation of our team and our clients, we are looking to lead the way in ensuring our commitment to diversity and inclusion practises is woven into every aspect of who we are and what we do. We want our team, our clients, our community, and everyone who partners with us to feel included, and this means creating an experience that allows all identities, perspectives, skills, creativity and work is driving toward a more responsive and equitable approach to the services, programs and policies we deliver.

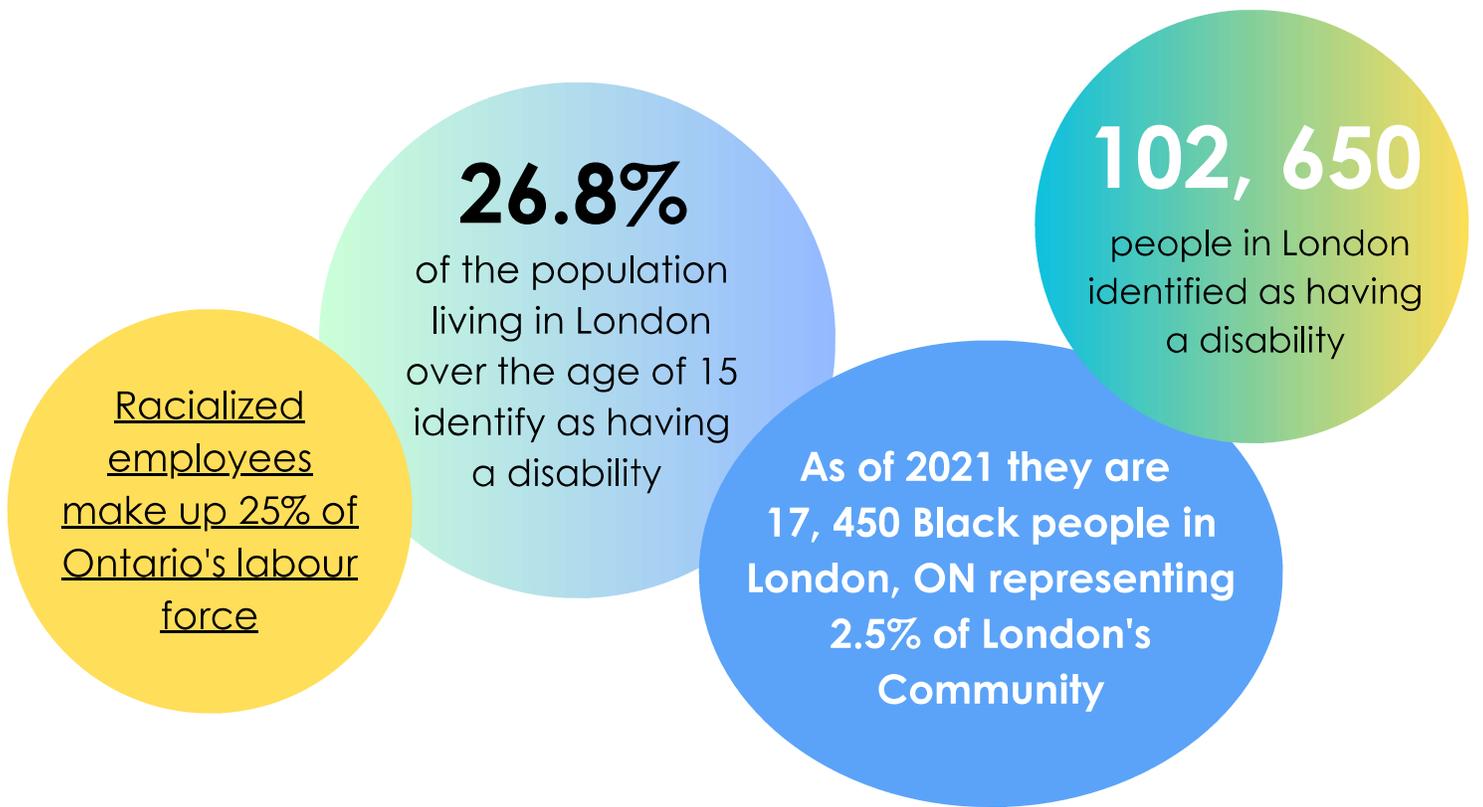
Ontario is home to the largest population of Indigenous people in the country.

1 in 7 Ontarians have a disability



48%
of Ontario will be racialized by 2036

By 2020 millennials will make up half the global workforce



10,960 Indigenous-identifying people live in London, according to the 2021 Census. However, a study by the London Health Coalition indicates that there are **3-4 times more Indigenous adults in London than the number reported to Statistics Canada**. These numbers do not include the Indigenous individuals that reside on the three reserves surrounding the London area – Oneida Nation of the Thames, Chippewas of the Thames and Munsee Delaware Nation.

Currently, there is **no local data on people who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+**. Canada is home to approximately **one million people** who are 2SLGBTQIA+.

Despite the growing diversity of our City, this **diversity is not reflected in senior levels of leadership throughout the City of London**. Primarily, members of equity denied groups are found on the frontlines. **This is also true at Forward House**.

In the next 10 years with retirements anticipated, we have an opportunity to impact diversity in the leadership team in a meaningful way.
Expectations of Workplaces are changing.

We currently have an opportunity to **invest in this strategy** now to effectively set us up for the future!

Why Does Diversity Matter?

Based on an article published by Indeed, diversifying the workplace leads to

Better opportunities for creativity and problem-solving ...

Smarter decision-making ...

An increase in profits and productivity ...

Reduced rates of employee turnover ...

Improved reputation for your business ...

Diverse Talent- better represents the community we serve and sets up future senior leadership succession. A concentration of diversification without also focusing on intentionally creating an inclusive space would be short sighted. Developing an inclusive environment and therefore, inclusive leaders will equip us to support a diverse team and create a pipeline of engaged and growing talent.

As the number of team members grows, **retention will be important.** Collaborating with our team members in planning, conflict resolution and the vision will not only allow for diversity of thought, but also will create a thriving and inclusive workplace that team members are proud to be a part of. It will enable creativity and innovation in the way work is done.

As we respond to the changing needs of our community, it will create **equitable policies, programs and services.**

The Words We Use

Diversity is the range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin, and political beliefs.

Equity is fairness, impartiality, even-handedness. A distinct process of recognizing differences within groups of individuals, and using this understanding to achieve substantive equality in all aspects of a person's life.

Accessibility is the practice of making information, activities, and/or environments sensible, meaningful, and usable for as many people as possible.

Inclusion is the act of including everyone — is a deeper shift towards welcoming and valuing people exactly as they are. It means embracing and celebrating the diversity of experience within your teams and your customer base.

Anti-racism is the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.

Bias is a subjective opinion, preference, prejudice or inclination, formed without reasonable justification, that influences an individual's or group's ability to evaluate a particular situation objectively or accurately; a preference for or against.

Intersectionality is the way in which people's lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations, which, together, can produce a unique and distinct experience for that individual or group, for example, creating additional barriers, opportunities, and/or power imbalances.

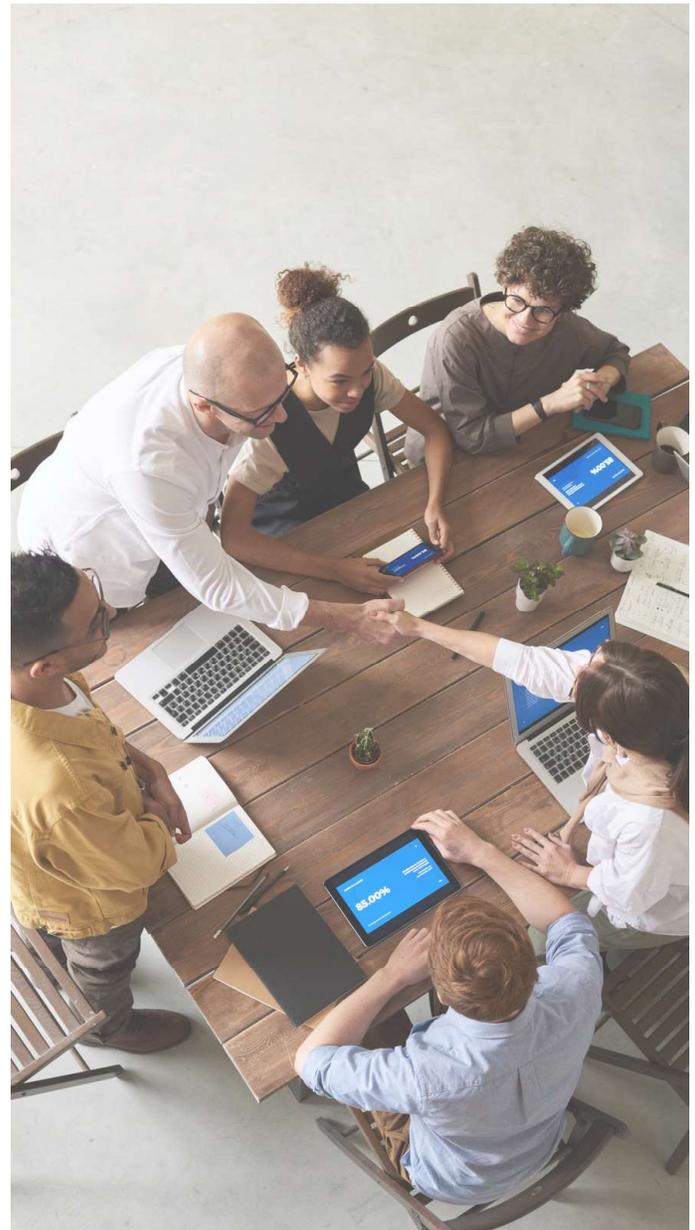
In the **context of race and Indigenous identity**, this means recognizing the ways in which people's experiences of racism or privilege, including within any one group, may vary depending on the individual's or group's relationship to additional overlapping or intersecting social identities, like religion, ethnic origin, gender, age, disabilities or citizenship and immigration status.

An intersectional analysis enables better understanding of the **impacts of any one particular systemic barrier** by considering how that barrier may be interacting with other related factors.

Prejudice is a pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics.

Privilege is the experience of freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities afforded members of the dominant group in a society or in a given context, usually unrecognized and taken for granted by members of the majority group, while the same freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages access and/or opportunities are denied to members of the minority or disadvantaged groups.

Discrimination is treating someone unfairly by either imposing a burden on them, or denying them a privilege, benefit or opportunity enjoyed by others, because of their race, citizenship, family status, disability, sex or other personal characteristics.



The Vision

Forward House is transitioning out of a world pandemic and is looking forward to building the agency of the future. We see a future of inclusion and diversity while providing the expected level of continuity when it comes to service delivery.

Forward House will be the **road map that other agencies will look to follow.** We will be a future hub for the communities we serve.

As Forward House moves forward in this vision we see **three key areas** that will act as the guiding lights for everything we do.



Forward House will **address the systemic concerns** that are complex and historic, in alignment with the vision the Ontario Public Service has for the future.

Forward House will demonstrate as a modern developmental social service agency in the developmental sector by establishing inclusion at all levels and managing growth, establishing expertise in these areas, and advocating for unique solutions to trending concerns impacting the developmental sector in London and the area.

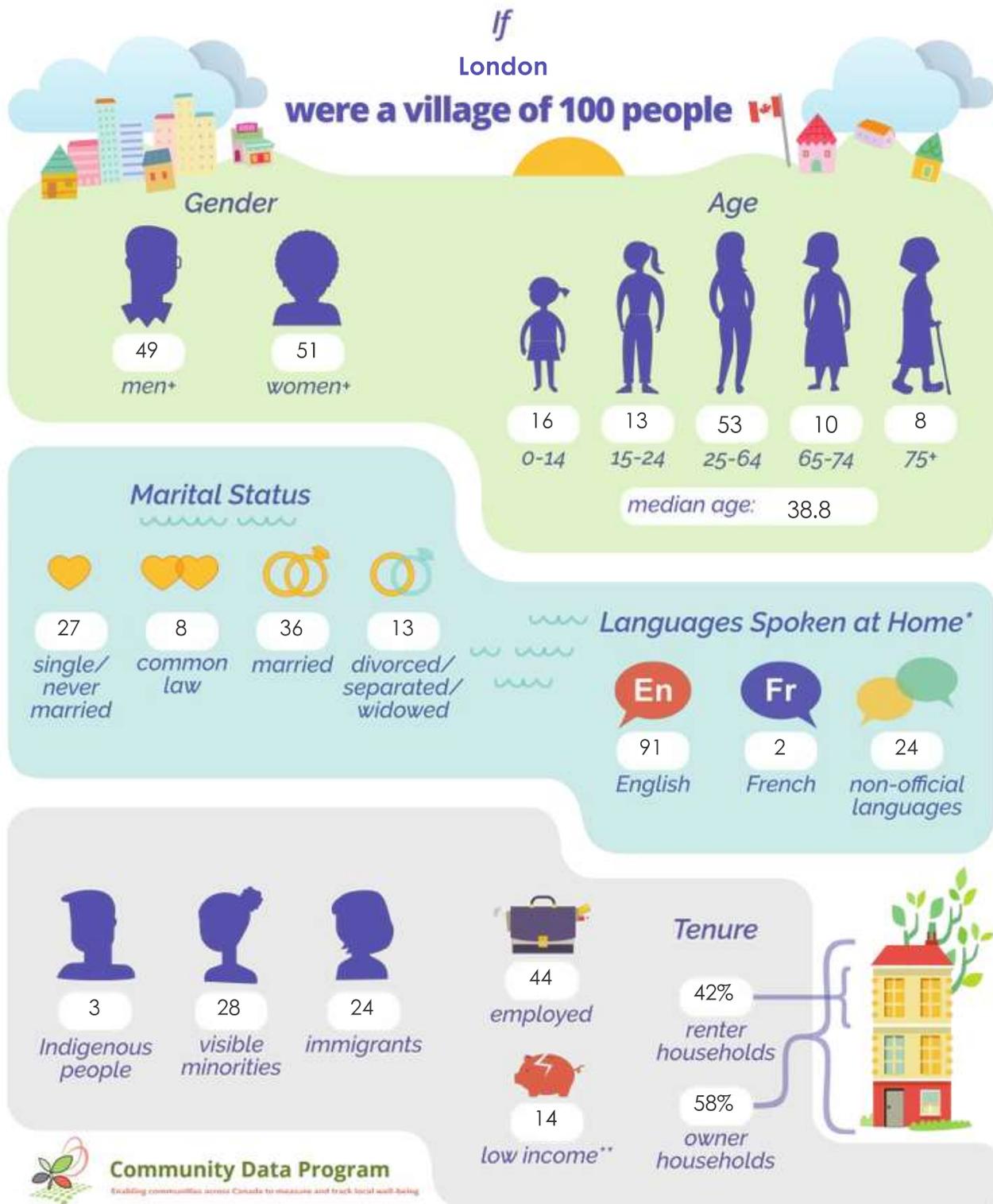
Over the next **five years**, the agency will address the next strategic plan in a structured, targeted process to address these concerns in the Developmental Sector.



Priorities and Actions

Priority 1: Creating a Culture of Inclusion

If London Were a Village of 100 People



Data source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population. This Tableau dashboard was produced by the Community Data Program, an initiative of the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet). Use and sharing of this dashboard is governed by the Data sharing and end use license agreement, to which all members agree upon registration. If they have any questions about data sharing, they should contact information@communitydata.ca.

*Based on "All languages spoken at home" in the Census. Each language's value comes from the total of all options including that language. Because there can be more than one language spoken at home, the values of the three variables may add up to over 100. **Based on the After-Tax Low-Income Measure (LIM).

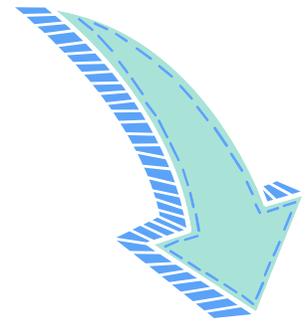
Priority 1: Creating a Culture of Inclusion

Objective

Build an inclusive, safe culture representing all community members we serve.

KR-1

Evaluate the agency's current position in relation to the city breakdown of representation of all forms of diversity in London and Middlesex, building on future trends.



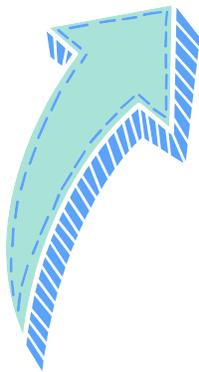
KR-2

Increase commitment by the agency in structuring action and training in committee involvement and financial commitment in the diversity and wellness committees.



KR-3

Communicate and increase knowledge and use of agency benefits. Staff need to feel valued and supported.



Priority 1: Creating a Culture of Inclusion

Outline

KR-1

Evaluate the agency's current position in relation to the city breakdown of representation of all forms of diversity (including physical and invisible disabilities) in London and Middlesex, building on future trends. (statistical analysis)

Forward House will use intention to create a culture of inclusion in order to successfully bring in diverse staff and future leaders within the organization. It is Forward House's goal to **match the diversity of the community it lives** in at all levels - frontline, Board of Directors, Senior Leadership

KR-2

Increase commitment by the agency in structuring action and training in committee involvement and financial commitment in the diversity and wellness committees.

Forward House has employed the services of Gallagher to support an **Environmental Scan** and carry through on the recommendations that come from the scan. Further, Forward House has employed the services of All Women L.E.A.D. and Mojdeh Cox in efforts to **intentionally use services by companies with a diverse lens**.

KR-3

Communicate and increase knowledge and use of agency benefits.

Staff need to feel valued and supported. The work they do is important and can be emotionally and physically taxing. Forward House recognizes the need to **support staff in their wellness**.

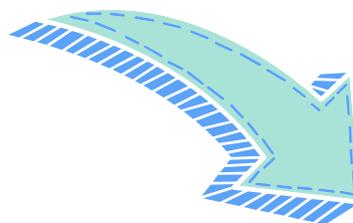
Priority 2: Succession Planning and Execution

Objective

Establish and plan for the succession of key leadership roles while ensuring continuity by creating purposeful redundancy (overlapping knowledge of key job accountabilities necessary for functional leadership duties to have continued uninterrupted service during times of absence or crisis).

KR-1

Directors' functional job roles will have **purposeful redundancy** to transfer fluid knowledge during a crisis of leadership absence or significant community challenges.

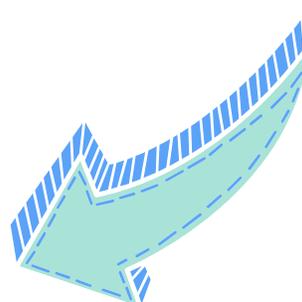


KR-2

Develop and **identify a frontline leadership position and train zone leaders** for each management position to allow for succession and continuity by year 4.

KR-3

Identification and training of frontline staff and managers for succession into essential leadership positions by year 5.



Priority 2: Succession Planning and Execution

Outline

KR-1 **Directors' functional job roles will have purposeful redundancy to transfer fluid knowledge during a crisis of leadership** absence or significant community challenges. i.e. payroll systems, scheduling systems, key decision-making processes, and job scope by year 1.

KR-2 **Develop and identify a frontline leadership position and train zone leaders** for each management position to allow for succession and continuity by year 4.

KR-3 **Identification and training of frontline staff and managers** for succession into essential leadership positions by year 5.

Projects in year one to move us forward:

- New job profiles and responsibilities completed for Director table
- Understanding the succession pipeline that currently exists
- Identify opportunities in the existing team to ensure underrepresented team members have development plans leading to future leadership opportunities

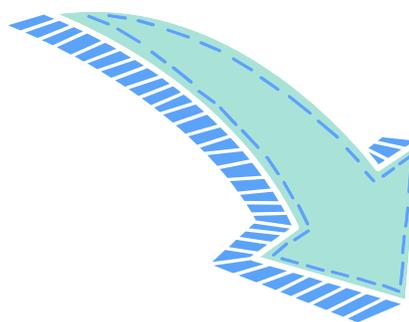
Priority 3: Growth of Agency and Number of People Served

Objective

Forward House will establish **expertise in the developmental sector** in culturally sensitive lifelong planning and for concurrent disorder individuals while advocating regarding these trends.

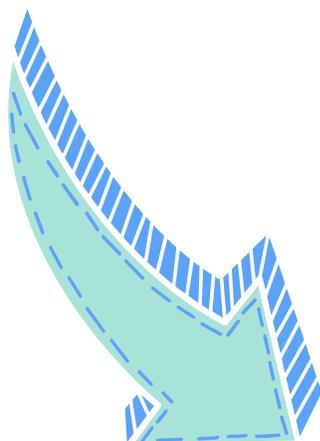
KR-1

Maintain and modernize the pay equity plan to maintain the employer of choice during staffing challenges in the projected future by year 1.



KR-2

While transitioning the agency structure, **the agency will maintain current growth for one year** to establish continuity in solidifying the new hierarchy and path of accountabilities in year 1.



KR-3

The agency will maintain and continue to advocate and **address the needs and trends in the developmental sector** in London and the area in years 1-5.

Priority 3: Growth of Agency and Number of People Served

Outline

KR-1 **Maintain and modernize the pay equity plan** to maintain the employer of choice during staffing challenges in the projected future by year 1.

(As per collective agreement in cooperation with C.U.P.E. 2023-2026)
C.U.P.E. "Pay Equity Maintenance (The Employer shall reach out to a consultant to review the Pay Equity Maintenance Plan and shall cover the cost of this process since it is within their responsibility to address Pay Equity).

KR-2 While transitioning the agency structure, **the agency will maintain current growth for one year** to establish continuity in solidifying the new hierarchy and path of accountabilities in year 1.

KR-3 **The agency will maintain and continue to advocate and address the needs and trends in the developmental sector** in London and the area in years 1-5. i.e. Early transition into adult services, Increased resources for community-based management of hard-to-serve and dual diagnosed clients.

Financial Overview

Culture of Inclusion: D.E.I. Gallagher Plan	\$4,000-8,000.00 /per year (Expensed 2023 Surplus/ Fee for service)	2023 – 2028
Committee Budgets	\$10,000/ per year	2023 - 2028
Succession and Continuity: Western Professional Certificate of Leadership	\$3,290 / per identified (Targeted Development of Leaders) (Mentoring Program)	2025 - 2028
Agency Growth: Pay Equity Plan	\$26,000 (one-time Expensed 2023, Fee for Service) (as per C.U.P.E. Agreement 2023-2026)	2023 - 2024
Social Media Development	\$5000.00 / Development/ Maintenance	2023 - 2028
Projected Growth in Sector	\$2-5 million	2024 - 2028