



WoodGreen Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025





**A Toronto where everyone
has the opportunity to thrive.**

About WoodGreen Community Services and Our Strategic Plan

As one of the largest community agencies in Toronto, WoodGreen Community Services is at the forefront of meeting the need in Toronto since 1937. Serving 37,000 people each year, we help people by enhancing self-sufficiency, promoting well-being, and reducing poverty by creating solutions to critical social needs.

We have a legacy of innovation and entrepreneurship, made possible by the expertise and capability of our incredible staff.

This strategic plan is the next step in this legacy. It outlines how WoodGreen will continue to lead solutions that help vulnerable members of our community thrive, and continue to evolve. Much of this strategic plan is about doing more formally what WoodGreen has long done intuitively: Addressing the social determinants of health that are critical to enabling people to thrive.

The social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age. When we improve these conditions for clients, we not only help them achieve better health outcomes – we also build housing stability, economic empowerment, social ties, and other factors that advance their well-being.

Our Vision: A Toronto where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Our Mission: WoodGreen Community Services enhances self-sufficiency, promotes well-being and reduces poverty through innovative solutions to critical social needs.

Land Acknowledgment

WoodGreen Community Services acknowledges the land we are on is the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat people, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.

We also acknowledge that Tkaronto (Toronto) is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

We are all Treaty people. Many of us have come here as settlers, immigrants, and newcomers in this generation or generations past. We'd like to also acknowledge and honour those who came here involuntarily, particularly those who are descended from those brought here through enslavement.



Becoming an Equity-Centred Organization

Creating a Toronto where everyone has the opportunity to thrive requires us to proactively address race inequities both internally and externally. As a leader in the community sector, we have a responsibility to model what it means to be an equity-centred organization.

As we implement the *Awake to Woke to Work* framework, we will also focus on creating open and ongoing dialogue at WoodGreen about anti-racist work by:

- Making space for difficult conversations to confront, rather than shying away from, deeply entrenched issues of racism.
- Building understanding across our organization of the importance of anti-racism and what it means to be an anti-racist organization.
- Building an organizational culture that equips us to apply an anti-racist lens across our policies and programming.
- Acknowledging and addressing whiteness culture at WoodGreen, recognizing that we are not immune to the racism that exists beyond our organization.



Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025

This new Strategic Plan outlines how WoodGreen will continue to lead solutions that help vulnerable members of our community thrive. In addition to continuing our programs, this plan charts a path for WoodGreen to respond to growing needs in our city that are increasingly diverse and complex.

In the last number of years, WoodGreen has been creating innovative solutions to some of Toronto's biggest issues. As leaders in the city, we are leveraging partnerships, pioneering new financial models, and designing innovative programs. This strategic direction builds

on that momentum while growing our clients, teams and funding.

WoodGreen's new Strategic Plan will focus on four strategic priorities shown on the next page.

Clients will continue to be at the core of our work. While some specific areas for growth have been identified, all other program areas will continue to focus on delivering quality programs and a focus on continuous improvement.



Pillar 1: Expand housing as the foundation for supporting community

WoodGreen will build our portfolio of housing and accompanying supports to match the diverse needs of our community. As one of the largest non-profit housing providers in Toronto, we will leverage our size to provide individuals and families with housing and supports tailored to their needs.



Pillar 2: Champion integrated community health

WoodGreen will amplify our leadership role in the community health sector to provide clients with the coordinated care they need. We will achieve more integrated health care for vulnerable populations by pairing on-the-ground services and expertise with systems-level leadership in health planning.



Pillar 3: Prepare for the future of work

WoodGreen will reinvent our employment services to match the increasing complexity of our clients and on-going changes in the economy. Our redesigned services will focus on achieving long-term success for those furthest from the workforce.



Pillar 4: Help youth to thrive

WoodGreen will provide a holistic suite of services and supports to equip vulnerable youth with the best chance of success. We will help youth to lay a foundation that empowers and enables them to thrive, now and for the rest of their lives.

Expand housing as the foundation for supporting community



Housing is a foundation for building healthy social and physical environments. Homes are the basis from which we work, rest, recover, make connections with our community, and pursue our personal goals.

As the second largest social housing provider in Toronto, WoodGreen is uniquely positioned to help meet the acute need for housing in our community. Alongside our ability to make a significant impact on affordable housing supply, our ability to provide wrap-around services means we can go beyond helping individuals secure housing – and also help them springboard to their own life goals including improved mental and physical health, and economic empowerment.

OUR TARGETS



Increase housing & enhance energy efficiency

Improve operational capacity

Improve support for tenants

PRIMARY STRATEGIES

- Establish multi-sector partnerships to develop new housing.
- Improve the operational efficiency and capacity to manage the existing housing portfolio and support tenants.
- Invest in the refurbishment and modernization of housing assets to ensure the availability of sustainable housing for future generations.

“In housing, we just need to find strategies to invest upfront. Once someone has a home, their experience of everything else changes for the better.”

– Mwarigha, Vice President of Housing and Homelessness Services

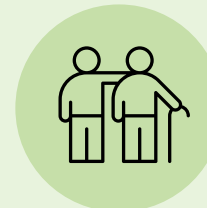
Champion integrated community health



Community health bridges healthcare with community supports to help individuals stay at home, in community, and out of hospitals. When people have access to both clinical and community supports, we see improved health outcomes, reduced health inequalities, and fewer unnecessary hospitalizations and admissions to long-term care homes.

WoodGreen has significantly expanded our delivery of community health services over the last five years. There is also untapped potential for us to have even greater impact on population health in the communities we serve by leading change in how community health services are organized and integrated. WoodGreen has already laid the foundation for this shift through our membership in the East and Downtown East Ontario Health Teams, and through innovations in our own service delivery.

OUR TARGETS



Support
seniors
living at
home

Work with
other
agencies &
organizations

PRIMARY STRATEGIES

- Develop more integrated systems of services that improve client outcomes.
- Showcase successful service innovations and identify opportunities to scale.
- Improve collaboration and data collection across WoodGreen departments.

“Collaboration and cooperation are the keys to improving outcomes for all. When a community comes together, everyone’s health, well-being, and opportunities improve.”

– Anne Babcock, President and CEO

Prepare for the future of work



WoodGreen has provided employment services for more than 30 years – a time in which we have seen clients' needs become more complex, and the workforce more challenging.

This pillar exists to support those furthest from the workforce in finding their place amidst a tumultuous and ever-changing labour market. By leveraging our potential as a fully-integrated service provider, this area of work aims to develop a suite of supports for complex clients, offering the right interventions across the spectrum of social determinants of health, and supporting jobseekers along sustainable employment pathways.

OUR TARGETS



Increase
number of
clients we
serve

Create more
specific
training
programs

Increase our
partnerships
with
employers

PRIMARY STRATEGIES

- Retool employment and workforce development programs to evolve with the changing nature of the workforce.
- Continue to develop focused programming for clients with complex needs and those who are 'far from the labour market'.
- Expand integrated service models that support clients to achieve and maintain employment.

“A job can change someone’s life. And with a rapidly shifting workplace, we also need to design new ways to support job-seekers and employees as well.”

– Patricia Salmon, Senior Vice President of Community Services

Help youth to thrive



The objective of the Youth pillar is to expand the breadth and depth of services and supports available to young people through the integration of services under the umbrella of a “youth wellness centre” model, with WoodGreen acting as an access point and connector for and between young people and the range of supports required.

This pillar seeks to enhance integration, internally and across the sector, bringing program offerings, service providers and other organizations from both the wellness and clinical spheres together in a meaningful way, ensuring that any young person, requiring any support, can access them in a seamless and effective manner.

OUR TARGETS

Increase number of youth served

Create new programs for youth

Improve mental health outcomes

PRIMARY STRATEGIES

- Coordinate and expand upon available youth programming, fostering suite of wrap-around services addressing the social determinants of health, for youth facing multiple barriers. This is a three-pronged approach:
 - Integrate WoodGreen’s existing youth services and supports.
 - Expand WoodGreen’s existing services and supports to youth segments.
 - Round out the suite of services by pursuing strategic partners across the sector (service providers, opportunity building partners, and network partners).
- Champion youth as a priority population, leveraging WoodGreen’s brand and competencies to drive visibility of the impact of helping vulnerable youth to thrive.

“Supporting our youth has never been more important. As we recover from the pandemic, it is imperative that our young people have the support they need to thrive.”

– Maxine Brown, Director of Youth Services

Our Critical Enablers

Excelling in our four strategic priorities for 2020–2025 will require us to keep ears close to the ground in a rapidly changing environment, and equip our staff to execute new strategies, pivot when required, and help us grow and invent.

As we pursue our four strategic priorities, we will be committing energy to these critical tactics:

1. Investing in our team

2. Becoming a data-centric organization

3. Providing a seamless connection to services

4. Advocating for better public policy

5. Communicating effectively with our community

6. Collaborating with The WoodGreen Foundation

Investing in our team

Our staff are not only the hands and feet of our organization – they are our heartbeat and brain. Equipping and supporting our staff to bring these strengths to new endeavours will be critical to our success as we work collaboratively towards our strategic priorities.

Providing a seamless connection to services

We will identify opportunities for more integrated solutions and barrier-free referrals through improving technology and centering data to better serve clients in coordinated, seamless ways.

Communicating effectively with our community

Sharing client stories that demonstrate the challenges facing our communities, the impacts of our programming, and what is possible when people are connected with the supports they need.

Becoming a data-centric organization

Our new data strategy will help us achieve operational excellence by tracking outcomes, identifying where change is needed, and increasing our response time to respond in pace with a changing environment. Creating a more integrated data infrastructure will act as the foundation to more integrated service delivery.

Advocating for better public policy

Through thought leadership and actively engaging funders and governments, we will amplify our impact and push for the systems-level changes that will create better outcomes for the people we serve.

Collaborating with The WoodGreen Foundation

Continuing to raise flexible philanthropic dollars to support our innovation agenda and contribute to the overall strength of our organization.

These enablers are embedded across the four strategic priorities laid out in this plan. Keeping them in our vision as we pursue our strategic priorities will be critical to achieving the change we want to see in each of these priority areas. The needs of our community and uncertainty of the present moment demand our leadership.

Moving Forward

The pandemic has deepened challenges for those already struggling, and brought about vulnerabilities for a wider and more diverse portion of Toronto's population. In addition to continuing core WoodGreen programs, this strategic plan charts a path for WoodGreen to respond to growing needs in our city that are increasingly diverse and complex.

With complex issues facing our city, our solutions need to focus on integrated services and support. The impact WoodGreen has will continue to grow through strategic collaboration with community members, partners, and stakeholders across the city to help achieve our vision for Toronto.





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