



ALIGN

Association of Community Services
Together for Children and Families

ANNUAL REPORT

2020/2021



THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF 2020

2020 brought challenging times with the COVID-19 global pandemic. The ALIGN team worked together to keep members informed on important legal, legislative and policy changes and provided numerous communication gatherings, and communication releases. As a result we learned new ways to communicate and developed opportunities to reach out to our members through technology.

March 2020 changed our vocabulary, we learned about flattening the curve, social distancing, viruses, PPE, staying home...and yes, our favorite, ZOOM!

On May 25 George Floyd was killed by police in Minnesota and by early June, systemic racism and protesting became an added factor. Something we all need to ponder and assess our systems about.

Summer brought counts starting to drop, restrictions began to be relaxed and outside became a great place to have a few dates. Our new words were social bubbles. Then September and school decisions came along - in person or stay at home? And then the second wave started to slither in. More restrictions, US election, and then Christmas - to visit or not to visit! Then lockdown again over the holidays.

Through all of that, ALIGN has been here to help keep communication clear and ongoing to members.



OUR MISSION

One voice so children, families and communities thrive.

OUR VALUES

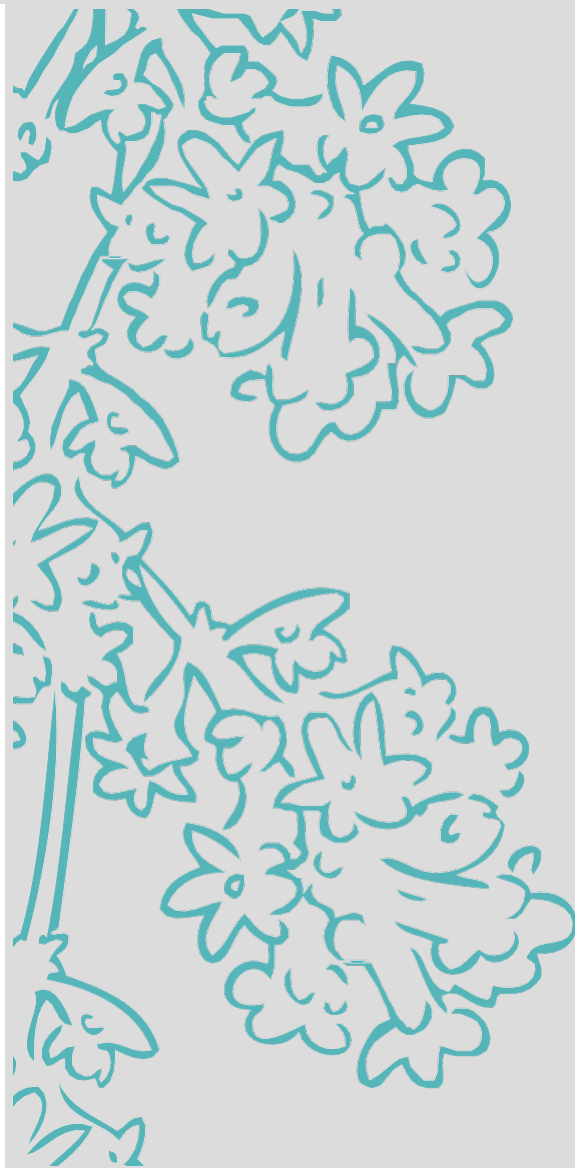
- Excellence
 - Respect
 - Collective
 - Ethical accountability
 - Courage
 - Commitment
 - Integrity
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OUR BELIEFS

- We believe all families and communities have the strengths and capacities to grow and change.
 - We believe each child and family must be provided the opportunity to maximize their potential.
 - We believe children and families must live in safe, secure, healthy, stable and nurturing environments.
 - We believe that children and families should have services based on the best knowledge, practices and wisdom.
 - We believe in respect for the diversity, values and dignity of all people.
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OUR OBJECTS

- To serve as a community of agencies respecting the diverse needs of Alberta's children, youth, individuals and families.
- To act as a collective voice advocating for the rights, causes and issues that directly affect our members and Alberta's children, youth, individuals and families.
- To support excellence in service delivery through shared diverse knowledge, wisdom and evolving practice.
- To influence and collaborate with government in the development of legislation, policy and procedures.



OUR TEAM

Name	Title	Email
Rhonda Barraclough	Executive Director	rhondab@alignab.ca
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Cathy Mitchell	Occupational Health and Safety, ALIGN Journal, Mental Health Projects	cathym@alignab.ca
Katie Whittingham	HR & Finance	katiaw@alignab.ca
Mista Zaugg	Communications and Programs Assistant	mistaz@alignab.ca
Starr Durrant	Website Content Manager	starrd@alignab.ca

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Members,

It once again this has been a challenging year for children, youth and their families. Those that rely heavily on community services and social programs have been impacted severely by the public health measures related to COVID 19. Isolation, illness, uncertainty and fatigue are all concepts we are all getting very familiar with. For agencies, staffing, risk management and constant change are becoming the norm. The ALIGN team and Board worked together to keep members informed on important legal, legislative and policy changes and provided numerous communication gatherings, and communication releases.

Over this year, we have also supported the development of the Family Resource Networks (FRN). ALIGN hosted a task group to ensure that agencies voice was being conveyed in the restart to the program, and then supported communication gatherings while the Ministry and the agencies developed the organizational structures needed to support the program area. We are very excited to see the evolution of the FRN program as the provincial steering committee works to expand and grow the program.

ALIGN has continued our work developing an Indigenous Cultural Understanding Framework (ICUF). We continue to be committed to listen and work respectfully and creatively with Indigenous youth and Elders as we build a framework for care providers.

We had an overwhelming response to our online conference and leadership symposium. We encourage everyone to consider our leadership bursary funds as a support to your organization either for the whole agency leadership or for one of your staff who might want to take a leadership program or course. One of the opportunities of COVID is that many things have gone on line and course, training and symposiums seem more accessible for many.

The pandemic has made your work very challenging. ALIGN has been deeply involved in both communication and guidance processes with CS and the agencies. There will be unknown consequences of the pandemic. Some of those that we are starting to see include: stress and other Mental health illnesses, Human Resource challenges; OHS issues; boundaries between work and home.

Thank you for all of the hard work, dedication and strength given to Alberta's vulnerable families and your staff as we continue to work through these challenging times.

Pauline Smale Board President
Rhonda Barraclough Executive Director



2020/2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Name	Title/Region
Pauline Smale	President
Robecca Chahine	Vice President
Soraya Saliba	Treasurer
Sterling Andrews	Northwest Regional Representative
Hazel Bergen	Member at large
Sarah Fuhriman	Indigenous Representative (South)
Aaron Hachkowski	Northeast Regional Representative
Carol Hrenyk	Edmonton Region Representative
Bjorn Johansson	Calgary Region Representative
Beverly Keeshig-Soonias	Indigenous Representative (Central)
Danielle Ladouceur	Calgary Region Representative
Michelle Meadahl	Edmonton Region Representative
Bruce Rafuse	Central Region Representative
Greg Schmidt	South Region Representative
Cheryl Whiskeyjack	Indigenous Representative (North)

ALIGN FAST FACTS FOR 2020/2021



13

Individual bursaries awarded



15

Agency bursaries awarded to enhance leadership capacity in the sector



116

Members across Alberta



STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Develop and implement organizational sustainability strategies, including targeting and key messages

Communications

- ∞ Completed campaign Summer 2000
- ∞ 12-week social media campaign
- ∞ Letter-writing campaign – 332 letters sent to government mid-August
- ∞ Hired communications support
- ∞ Employed Zoom for Business
- ∞ Instagram account created

Develop strategies on resources, staff, funding and member recruitment/retention/satisfaction

- ∞ Website review, cleaning and enhancements completed January 2021
- ∞ Applied for a Civil Society Grant to do a large-scale health and safety campaign over 2 years
- ∞ Member events including: Leadership Series, Advocacy Training, Cultural Solutions
- ∞ OHS Leadership Training and Handbook launched
- ∞ Community Services Staff Safety Initiative video launched
- ∞ Moved to producing two newsletters – Connections, Sector News moved to bi-weekly distribution

Promote Excellence in Professional Development and Research in Alberta

Make Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations part of professional development and training

- ∞ *The Journey Home* tool for training caregivers – sessions offered monthly for 4 months
- ∞ New offerings to continue to ally with Indigenous Peoples – omanitew
- ∞ Mental health series sessions held at 4 events

Provide leadership development within the sector

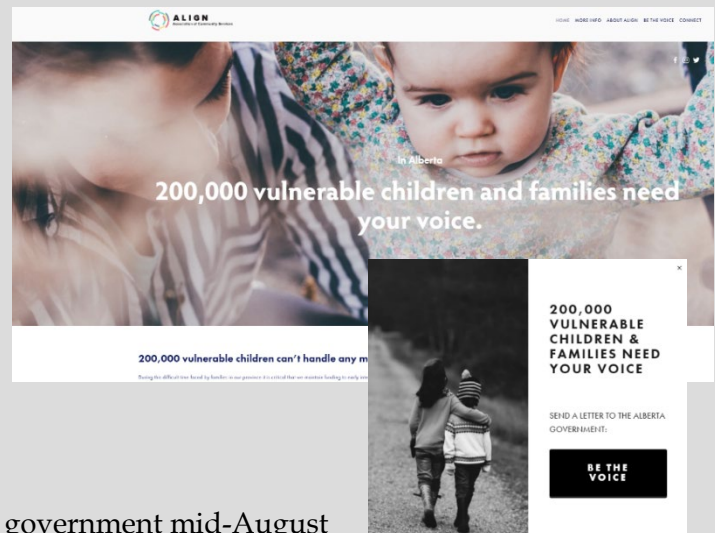
- ∞ Senior leadership series completed May, 2021 to large attendance

Encourage research and evidence is used in practice

- ∞ Developed and launched supplemental manual for human service sector in OHS strategies

Alternative learning opportunities

- ∞ Hosted contracting session on EOI grant writing



Develop an ALIGN Indigenous Strategy/ Cultural understanding

Request to develop an Indigenous cultural understanding Framework

- ∞ We continue to work on the Indigenous Culture understanding framework and are engaging elders and knowledge keepers in our journey.
- ∞ We have have seen omanitew and allying cultural solutions as foundational training for all front line practitioners. We are encouraging all agencies to support their staff int his training.

Develop a Workforce Strategy for Healthy, Sustainable, Competent Service Providers

Further develop our wellness strategy

- ∞ Workplace wellness strategy workshops held over 5 sessions throughout the province

Leadership with Government

Influence and collaborate with government in the development of legislation, policy, and procedures in areas such as the Child Intervention Review, Child Advocate, Human Rights, Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Disabilities

- ∞ Provided training to inspectors on trauma and child welfare services
- ∞ Letter campaign and social media campaign completed

COVID Response

- ∞ Coordinated Q & A between Agencies, Children's Services and AHS directives via communications memos
- ∞ Community of Purpose (CoP) x 4
- ∞ Communication Gatherings group care, foster care, FRN
- ∞ Collaborated in Practice Guidance Development
- ∞ Collaborated with the Child Welfare League of Canada on National COVID response
- ∞ Applied for and received COVID emergency funding
- ∞ Completed OHS review in response to COVID
- ∞ Increased frequency of Board meetings, communications with staff and contractors
- ∞ Collaboration with Children's Services Workforce development to New Hire 101 virtual training
- ∞ Mental Health Support online training



FINANCIAL STATEMENT

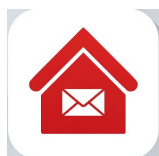
Income

Gov't of Alberta - leadership bursary	\$ 269,329
Memberships	247,362
Conference, Workshops and other initiatives	122,672
Government assistance	71,480
CIAFV fiscal agent fees, Training room rental, Interest	34,424
Total	745,267

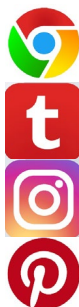
Expenses

Leadership bursary	229,504
Salaries, Benefits, and Contracted Services	221,176
Occupancy and office costs	88,212
Conference, AGM, Workshops and other initiatives	40,564
Occupational health and safety	27,194
Indigenous cultural understanding framework	26,681
Government relations committee	18,173
Total	651,504

The full audited statement will be available to review on the ALIGN website.



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