



Business Plan
2025-2026



Leadership Message

Transformation takes more than strategy. It takes courage. It takes trust. It takes hope.

As we step into the 2025-26 fiscal year, we do so with a deep sense of purpose, optimism, and a determined commitment to the values that guide us: respect, integrity, equity, accountability and, above all, human-centred collaboration.

This year's plan is grounded in renewed partnership with our community, our teams, and our allies. This Business Plan reflects not just where we are headed but how we will get there, with intention, and relentless focus on our mission to move people out of poverty and homelessness.

The challenges faced by our community are evolving, and so are we. This year, we are embracing change to better meet the needs of those experiencing poverty. It is about aligning every part of our work with our purpose, which is to eliminate poverty in our community.

Through innovative programs, deep partnerships, and a focus on systemic solutions, we are focusing growth efforts on domains with a proven impact on poverty alleviation.

We are evolving our service models to improve holistic impacts for people throughout their journey out of poverty. We are leaning into our strengths and building on years of experience stabilizing individuals and families through proven programs like housing, family support, and wraparound services.

This mission is too big for any one organization to achieve alone. That's why collaboration, a true value-driven partnership, is at the heart of this plan. Whether it's co-developing solutions with community members, aligning efforts with sector partners, or working alongside those who share our mission, we are committed to walking together.

We are thinking ahead and focusing on diversifying our revenues by launching a new catering social enterprise that not only creates sustainable income but also provides opportunities for meaningful employment and community engagement.

Transformation takes more than strategy. It takes courage. It takes trust. It takes hope. Together, we can build a future where every person in our community has a home, a purpose, and a place to belong.

To all our staff, partners, supporters, and community members, thank you. You are part of this journey, and we are so grateful to move forward—together.



Johanna Knettig
CO-CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Louise Traynor
CO-CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Board Message

The 2025–26 fiscal year marks the beginning of a new leadership chapter with the appointment of Johanna Knettig and Louise Traynor as Bissell’s Co-Chief Executive Officers. On behalf of the Board of Governors, we have complete confidence in their shared leadership and our enthusiasm for the path ahead.

Adopting a Co-CEO model is both a value-driven strategic decision and a natural evolution for our organization. It is rooted in Bissell’s values of collaboration, equity, integrity, and human-centred leadership. In this time of change and increasing complexity, we believe that shared leadership will extend our ability to respond with agility, creativity, and meaningful action for the people we serve.

We are inspired by the bold vision set out in this year’s Business Plan. Bissell is channelling its energy where it will make the most difference: advancing housing services across Edmonton, initiating new social enterprises to generate sustainable revenues, forging deeper relationships with Indigenous peoples and different levels of government, and increasing advocacy to bring about systemic change. These strategic priorities reflect the community’s evolving needs and build on Bissell’s heritage strengths in mobilizing people and families out of poverty.

This work is complex, and the road ahead will require continued courage, collaboration, and creativity. With Johanna and Louise leading the charge alongside deeply committed Bissell staff, volunteers, donors, and community partners, we are better equipped than ever to continue to build a community where everyone has a home, a purpose, and a belonging. On behalf of the Board of Governors, welcome and thank you for joining us on this mission.



Lee-Ann Leitch
BOARD CHAIR

Bissell Centre’s Board Governors are appointed based on their expertise, commitment, integrity and vision.

Bissell Centre is managed by its Board of Governors consisting of 9 to 16 individuals who volunteer their time as Board Governors. Bissell Centre’s Board Governors are leaders in social services, business and the community. Board Governors are elected annually at Bissell Centre’s Annual General Meeting by the members of Bissell Centre.

Bissell Centre’s Board of Governors is responsible for the strategic direction for Bissell Centre and focuses on the following key accountabilities:

- Adequate practices are in place to reduce the risk of harm to its employees, volunteers, visitors and clients.
- Bissell Centre meets all legal, financial and regulatory requirements.
- Satisfactory progress is being made in achieving the objectives of the strategic framework and adequate resources are being provided to achieve the objectives.

There are currently three standing committees established by the Board of Governors:

The Human Resources, Nominating & Governance Committee is responsible for providing direction on Bissell’s approach to governance issues; making recommendations regarding the Board’s effectiveness; recommending individuals for nomination as Board members; and reviewing key compensation and human resources policies for Bissell.

The primary responsibilities of the Finance, Audit & Risk Management Committee include assessing the processes related to risk identification and control effectiveness; overseeing financial reporting; evaluating Bissell’s internal control systems for financial reporting and material transactions; and evaluating audit processes.

The Board’s Community Engagement Committee is primarily focused on looking for ways in which our Board and other community stakeholders can participate to expand the influence of and grow the organization’s impact. This committee is currently inactive.



OUR VISION

To eliminate poverty in our community.



OUR MISSION

Working in community, we remove barriers and support people as they move out of poverty.



OUR CORE VALUES

Our values of Respect, Human-Centred, Equity, Collaboration, Integrity, and Accountability are reflected in all aspects of our work and within the culture of Bissell. They are our commitment to ensuring our participants, employees and stakeholders are involved with an organization that puts people first.



Child Care Fieldtrip to Ukrainian Village
AUGUST 2024



2024-25 Year in Review

Community Bridge Expansion to Leduc

Community Bridge, Bissell Centre’s eviction prevention program, expanded to support residents in the City of Leduc. Through this expansion, Bissell received \$50,000 in funding dedicated to providing financial assistance to Leduc residents at risk of housing loss. These funds can be used to help cover default rent, damage deposits, or first month’s rent, with the goal of promoting housing stability and preventing eviction in the community.

The Community Bridge is a rapid response intervention providing support to stop an eviction, disconnection or foreclosure. It is a one-time assistance program to be used as a last resort once all other options have been explored.

Community Bridge case management includes financial coaching to create a budget and a financial action plan, assistance to find and apply for any eligible benefits, referrals for additional programs, support to negotiate with a landlord/ utility company, and support to create a sustainable plan for the future.

Eligible households may also be able to access a no-interest loan for rental, mortgage, or utility arrears. Some households, if they are not sustainable in their current housing, can be supported to move into housing that fits their budget.



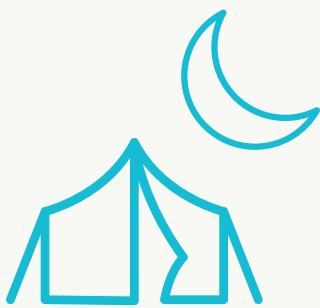
Bissell Food Services Growth

In the past year, Bissell Centre’s Food Services team made significant strides in expanding both community meal access and the operational capacity of our social enterprise, Bissell Harvest Catering. Building on our longstanding legacy of providing hot, nutritious meals to individuals experiencing poverty, homelessness, and food insecurity, we enhanced internal systems and strengthened external partnerships to ensure more consistent and equitable food access. Our work was guided by a dual commitment: to reduce food insecurity across Edmonton’s vulnerable populations and to create meaningful pathways out of poverty through employment and social enterprise initiatives.

A cornerstone achievement last year was the formal launch of Bissell Harvest Catering, our mission and purpose-driven social enterprise. Developed as a means to generate sustainable revenue while showcasing culinary excellence, Bissell Harvest Catering officially began operations, providing premium catering services for private, corporate, and social events. While we await the public launch of our dedicated website and marketing materials, we have already supported dozens of events and secured ongoing client interest. Importantly, all catering food is 100% purchased—no food rescue or donated goods are used in this stream of our operations, maintaining clear ethical and brand distinctions from our community meal programs.

Meanwhile, our community food services continued to grow. We maintained partnerships with Edmonton’s Food Bank and Second Harvest, contributing to the preparation of tens of thousands of meals, reinforcing Bissell’s role as a hub for meal distribution and nourishment. Food rescues were strategically reallocated to community-facing initiatives, including MOU partners such as George Spady, Aboriginal Counseling, Homeward Trust, and EnCompass (formerly Edmonton John Howard), allowing us to maximize impact without compromising food safety or program integrity. Our kitchen also expanded its role in supporting affiliated services like Moonlight Bay Camp, Early Childhood Development, and Indigenous-led programs.

Throughout these efforts, we remained grounded in a values-based approach centered on dignity, sustainability, and social impact. With new internal goals set for inclusive hiring, including a target to employ 25% of our catering workforce from individuals with lived experience by 2027, we continue to intertwine food, empowerment, and enterprise. This last year marked a meaningful leap forward in how we nourish both body and community—while building the foundation for future growth.



Moonlight Bay Centre Cultural Camps / Elders Retreats

We had the honor of partnering with Treaty 8 Polytechnique to provide a Cultural camp at Moonlight Bay to which participants from Hope Terrace, FASS, Community Space and Housing attended. It was a huge success, and the participants were able to do a series of land-based teachings, cooking, medicine picking and received teachings from Elders and knowledge keepers.

In 2024-25, our Cultural Support team established weekly programming for Childcare, FASS, Hope Terrace and within our Community Space. Some examples of activities last year were, Tobacco ties and teachings, learning simple songs and stories in Cree and a weekly participant-driven women's sharing circle. We were also able to support staff members who requested medicines, knowledge, access to ceremony as well as one-on-one support.

Bissell's Indigenous Engagement team was honored to hold an Elders retreat to recognize, care for, and learn from the many Elders that work tirelessly for our community members, nations, and Bissell Centre. We had 15 Elders attend an overnight stay at Moonlight Bay Centre. Traditional food was prepared, and activities included traditional Indigenous games, fishing, boating, storytelling, and manicures/pedicures. We were treated to storytelling, lessons and singing from the Elders. The Elders relaxed and able to enjoy each other's company, rest and rejuvenate. We were incredibly grateful that we were able to honor our Elders on behalf of Bissell Centre.

Our Strategic Plan

We are working towards the day when Bissell Centre no longer exists in its current form because there is no more poverty.

Eliminating poverty is a complex task that requires systemic change. Families and individuals are often trapped in the cycle of poverty because of social structures and systems that keep them at a disadvantage.

The experience of living in poverty is interwoven with different and distinct realities for each person depending on their race, culture, gender, sexuality, age, and ability.

Ending poverty requires combined efforts at all levels to transform our individual, communal, and social experience to include everyone, especially those who are most marginalized.

To that end, we centralize our organizational strategy using a cascading method, like a waterfall, that includes our core values, organizational approach, riverbanks, and practice philosophy to set a clear path towards a poverty-free community.

This way of conceptualizing our strategic plan allows for innovative changes as the river flows, changes speed, fills up, and sometimes dries out. The river guides the possibilities and limits of our work, so we remain focused and determined to reach our goals.



**ORGANIZATIONAL
STRATEGY**

**CORE
VALUES**

**ORGANIZATIONAL
APPROACH**

**PRACTICE
PHILOSOPHY**

RIVERBANKS

Our Practice Philosophy

Our community-work practice is guided by these key philosophies that represent the leading practices of the human- services sector and our commitment to ensuring our participants are served with accessible, high-quality, informed, evidence-based, and culturally appropriate programs and services.

Cultural Responsiveness

Bissell Centre will seek to provide programs and services that are culturally safe at their core. Our culturally responsive practice includes empathy and caring, reflectivity about our own beliefs about people from other cultures, our own cultural frame, and that we seek knowledge about other cultures.

Restorative Justice

Bissell Centre will support individuals and families in a manner consistent with the values of restorative justice. Restorative justice strives to repair harm and restore relationships by focusing on the impact on, and wellbeing of, the victim, offenders, and the larger community.

Trauma-Informed

Bissell Centre will provide services that are consistent with the principles of trauma-informed practice including safety, trust, choice and control, and compassion.

Childhood, personal, and historic, intergenerational trauma is pervasive among our participants, particularly those who self-identify as Indigenous. Trauma overwhelms an individual's and a community's ability to cope. It forces fight, flight, or freeze responses that help protect individual and community survival.

Strengths-Based

Bissell Centre will seek to find, affirm, and encourage people to build and apply their strengths, assets, and supports to move out of poverty and prosper. All communities, families, and individuals have strengths, assets, and supports they can develop to make change.

Anti-Oppressive

Bissell Centre will ensure staff work in an anti-oppressive way to ensure participants and colleagues experience equity in our interactions and service delivery. Each staff member has a responsibility to anti-oppressive engagement.

Harm Reduction

Bissell Centre will practice harm reduction by involving a range of support services and strategies to enhance the knowledge, skills, resources, and supports for individuals, families, and communities to be safer and healthier.

Harm reduction aims to keep people safe and minimize death, disease, and injury from high-risk behaviour, especially psychoactive substance use. This approach recognizes that this behaviour may continue, despite individual knowledge about risks.

Evidence-Based

Bissell Centre will make decisions based on evidence-based practice and produces evidence-based program evaluation to guide decision-making and program supports.

Evidence-based practice acknowledges the importance of robust research, analysis, participant feedback, and demonstrated outcomes to effective.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Informed

Bissell Centre will be informed about the nature of FASD and the needs of those with FASD to help them be part of the community.

FASD is prevalent among Bissells participants and affects each person differently. It happens when a fetus is exposed to alcohol in utero.

Our Organizational Strategy

“*What we do and how we do it.*”



1. High Quality Programs and Services

Bissell Centre develops and provides high quality programs and services and impactful community and economic development initiatives that benefit individuals, families, and neighbourhoods in poverty by:

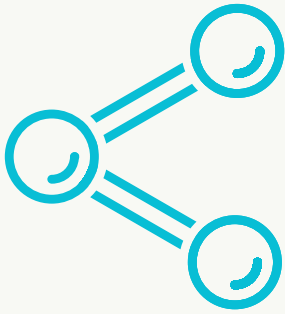
- Increasing involvement in, and advocacy for, appropriate and accessible housing options and supports.
- Continuing our commitment to providing supports that address systemic gaps and barriers.
- Enhancing alignment and collaboration with partners to increase effectiveness of supports.
- Engaging collaboratively with local neighbourhoods and stakeholders.
- Developing community-based social enterprise that will be sustainable and impactful for the community.



2. Truth and Reconciliation

Bissell Centre commits to participating in the large systems work required to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the National Report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice by:

- Building honest, meaningful, and good relationships with Indigenous communities (Nations/Peoples), leadership, and organizations that support and act *with* them.
- Centering the lived experience of Indigenous participants and staff.
- Providing proper protocol to listen and learn with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Indigenous people to gain understandings of traditional knowledges of all Indigenous Nations in Treaty 6.
- Developing opportunities for staff to build understanding and capacity to work with Indigenous participants, colleagues, Nations, and organizations.



3. Systems Change

Bissell Centre aims to influence systems and societal change by:

- Engaging with all levels of government and other institutions to contribute to policy change and best practices that support families and individuals to move out of poverty.
- Ensuring the voices of people with lived experiences are heard in a meaningful way to them.
- Building an organizational culture based on learning, reflection, and a commitment to evidence-based practice.
- Educating and raising awareness about the issues and complexities of poverty and inviting the community to actively engage in the elimination of poverty.



4. Organizational Sustainability

Bissell Centre develops resources, capacity, and long-term organizational sustainability by:

- Organizational planning with a continued commitment to excellence that includes governance, risk management, infrastructure, and administrative capacity development to achieve our vision and mission.
- Ensuring our work is consistent with, and pays close attention to, environmental sustainability across the organization's operations.
- Raising funds to directly impact the people we serve and ensuring a high-quality donor experience.
- Increasing public awareness about Bissell Centre and the impact of our work in the community.
- Developing a healthy culture of employee engagement, accountability, celebration, and professional development that supports employees to understand their role in our vision and mission.
- Providing equal opportunity, competitive staff compensation and benefits, and pay equity for all employees.

Our 2025-26 Strategies

1.

High Quality Programs and Services

Strategy: *Bissell Centre develops and provides high quality programs and services and impactful community and economic development initiatives that benefit individuals, families, and neighbourhoods in poverty by increasing involvement in, and advocacy for, appropriate and accessible housing options and supports.*

Housing Development Strategy

In 2025-26, Bissell Centre will finalize its Housing Development Strategy and execute a strategic communication plan related to the strategy to identify key collaborators, stakeholders and decisionmakers who can inform and influence the implementation of the strategy.

We will seek and respond to opportunities in four priority areas:

- Supportive Housing,
- Short-term Stabilization Housing,
- Supportive Recovery Housing, and
- Mixed Market housing.

In our effort to widen the continuum of care of available housing services for the people we serve, we will actively pursue funding from all levels of government for these four models as well as opportunities to expand our housing services into such areas as Eviction Prevention and Scattered Site Intensive Case Management.

Bissell Centre's Community Bridge program will continue to support households, if they are not sustainable in their current housing, to move into housing that better fits their budget.

High Quality Programs and Services *Continued*

Strategy: *Bissell Centre develops and provides high quality programs and services and impactful community and economic development initiatives that benefit individuals, families, and neighbourhoods in poverty by continuing our commitment to providing supports that address systemic gaps and barriers.*

Supportive Recovery Housing

The primary objective of the Supportive Recovery Housing site is to widen the continuum of housing options available for the people we serve. The site will provide secure and sustainable housing to individuals with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder who are living in recovery, while also ensuring they are not being overserved. The program will strive to build recovery capital while allowing residents to reach their full potential by empowering them to live at a higher level of independence.

We take possession of the property for the site in May, 2025. Operation funding for the year has been secured, and the site will begin operation in September 2025 with full occupancy by November. Once all five residents have moved in, we will host a naming ceremony for the site.

Bissell Centre Service Hub

In 2025-26, Bissell Centre's Community Space is transitioning into a Service Hub with a revised staffing model featuring a Case Management Coordinator, to enhance service coordination and participant support, and a Community Engagement Liaison to support with partnership development and inreach programming.

This shift from drop-in, basic-need support to coordinated case management will improve participant engagement, outcomes, and resource allocation. Bissell Centre's Service Hub will specialize in prevention, diversion, and stabilization, making it distinct from emergency shelters.

Services available in the Service Hub will include:

- **Prevention:** Tenant Empowerment, Financial Literacy, Family Supports.
- **Diversion:** Community Bridge, Housing Workshops, and Supported Referrals.
- **Stabilization:** Case Management, Skill-Building, and Community Initiatives.

High Quality Programs and Services *Continued*

Strategy: *Bissell Centre develops and provides high quality programs and services and impactful community and economic development initiatives that benefit individuals, families, and neighbourhoods in poverty by enhancing alignment and collaboration with partners to increase effectiveness of supports.*

Enhance and Expand Financial Empowerment Services

Our goal for Financial Empowerment this year is to further expand into municipalities surrounding Edmonton. Building on the relationship that we built with the Government of Alberta's Family and Community Support Services program in Leduc in 2024-25, our initial focus is to build and strengthen Bissell Centre's relationship with the Family and Community Support Services program in St. Albert. Expanding Community Bridge to additional municipalities reduces barriers for community members seeking support and enables households to receive support while staying in their preferred community.

Seek New Opportunities for Employment Services

To end poverty in our community, addressing gaps in benefits, income, and employment is crucial. Bissell Centre continues to seek funding to offer tested and effective pre-employment, supported employment, and employment services within the community.

High Quality Programs and Services *Continued*

Strategy: *Bissell Centre develops and provides high quality programs and services and impactful community and economic development initiatives that benefit individuals, families, and neighbourhoods in poverty by developing community-based social enterprise that will be sustainable and impactful for the community.*



Bissell Harvest Catering Launch

Bissell Harvest Catering is a mission-driven social enterprise developed to extend the impact of Bissell Centre’s food services into the broader Edmonton community. Rooted in the organization’s long-standing tradition of providing meals for individuals experiencing poverty and homelessness, Bissell Harvest Catering transforms that legacy into a community-focused business that offers elevated culinary experiences. The catering program not only generates revenue to support core programming at Bissell Centre, but also provides meaningful employment and skill-building opportunities for individuals with lived experience of poverty, aligning with our broader goal of empowering people to move out of poverty.

This social enterprise combines a commitment to culinary excellence with a values-based approach to service. Every event we cater for is an opportunity to showcase fresh, locally sourced ingredients, environmentally sustainable practices, and exceptional customer service. Through customizable menus, in-depth consultations, and a flexible service model, Bissell Harvest Catering supports a wide variety of events—from weddings and corporate functions to community gatherings and socially conscious celebrations. Our team consistently goes above and beyond to ensure that every client interaction is a positive and memorable one, helping to build lasting relationships and brand trust.

The potential impacts of this initiative are multi-faceted. In addition to being a reliable revenue stream for Bissell Centre, the catering business enhances community engagement and awareness of social enterprise models. It also creates tangible employment outcomes through our inclusive hiring practices, with a target of having 25% of our team composed of individuals with lived experience by 2027. As we continue to scale our operations, Bissell Harvest Catering will play a key role in advancing both economic and social goals—demonstrating how community-centered entrepreneurship can create lasting change in the lives of individuals and the fabric of the city.

2.

Truth and Reconciliation

Strategy: *Bissell Centre commits to participating in the large systems work required to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the National Report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice by building honest, meaningful, and good relationships with Indigenous communities (Nations/Peoples), leadership, and organizations that support and act with them.*

Relationship Building with Nations - Process to Partnership

A significant portion of the individuals we support identify as First Nations, Inuit or Metis. A critical element of supporting their healing journey is to provide supports and engagement in a culturally sensitive and informed way. Deepening our relationships with Nations will continue our journey as an organization to better understand and integrate Indigenous ways of knowing and being in our practice and supports.

Through 2025-26, we will develop a roadmap that will guide our actions and intentions in connecting with First Nation and Metis leaders and representatives at an organizational level. The purpose is to deepen our relationships in order to build towards formal collaboration on services we provide, with an ultimate goal of best serving community members on their pathway out of poverty.

Truth and Reconciliation *Continued*

Strategy: *Bissell Centre commits to participating in the large systems work required to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the National Report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice by centering the lived experience of Indigenous participants and staff.*

Refresh People & Culture Strategy and Practices to Incorporate and Integrate Indigenous Elements

In 2025–26, the Indigenous Practices and People and Culture Integration Plan will focus on embedding cultural understanding and Indigenous perspectives throughout organizational practices. A key strategic priority is ensuring that all current and incoming staff complete mandatory Indigenous Engagement training within their first month of employment.

The Plan also involves a thorough review of performance management and onboarding processes to incorporate an Indigenous and culturally responsive lens. To support this, dedicated working groups composed of individuals with lived experience and Indigenous representation will be established to co-develop culturally informed policies and procedures. Additionally, the organization will enhance its commitment to staff member well-being by increasing the use of staff circles—spaces for collective support around grief and loss, celebration, change management, and debriefing—rooted in Indigenous practices of community and healing.

Indigenous Protocol for Organizational Use

In 2025–26, Bissell Centre’s Indigenous Engagement team will create a written repository and accompanying reference materials describing protocols for use by our staff members when interacting with our Indigenous community members, outside partners and staff members. The methods Bissell will use to gather, store and share these materials will be created by Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous people.

Although Bissell will be able to write down a portion of these teachings, Indigenous traditions are that of an oral lineage and descent, meaning that Indigenous staff members will be present as often as required to provide those teachings and spiritual nuances firsthand. By providing both written and in-person Indigenous knowledge, we aim to ensure, per the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action, that low barrier access to these teachings is available to those supporting our Indigenous community members.

3.

Systems Change

Strategy: Bissell Centre aims to influence systems and societal change by engaging with all levels of government and other institutions to contribute to policy change and best practices that support families and individuals to move out of poverty.

Organizational Advocacy Strategy

In 2025-26, Bissell Centre will finalize and implement Bissell Centre's Advocacy Strategy.

Advocacy is an intentional practice of interacting with people to illuminate clear pathways and affect change. Advocacy must be tangibly connected to why Bissell exists and thoughtfully planned and practiced for greatest impact. Bissell has been doing advocacy since its inception, in different ways and with varying individuals and groups. Shifting to an approach of practicing advocacy rather than doing it requires concentrated effort, comfort with risk and clearly defined priorities backed by evidence.

Practicing advocacy requires attuning and attending to all the components that constitute advocacy. From awareness campaigns that educate to mobilizing allies to being involved in a decision for change. From honing the confidence of leaders to practice advocacy to creating impactful coalitions. From writing evidence-based policy recommendation papers to building trusting relationships within the advocacy network. Practicing advocacy demands dedicated thought, time, energy, and resources used with purpose, direction, and intentionality.

Bissell's three advocacy priorities are at the intersection of poverty reduction and poverty prevention:

- **Safe and adequate affordable housing.**
- **Sustainable income with a living wage.**
- **Positive health outcomes.**

This is where the organization can affect sustainable policy change and be most impactful in the lives of people experiencing or at risk of experiencing poverty. Truth and reconciliation encircle the advocacy priorities; it is an impactful lens through which decisions are made.

Bissell's Advocacy Strategy, which includes a framework for both proactive and reactive decision-making, clearly identified priorities and key messages. We will incorporate these priorities and messaging within all of our internal and external communications to ensure that a strong, clearly articulated pathway to change is illuminated.

Systems Change *Continued*

Strategy: *Bissell Centre aims to influence systems and societal change by ensuring the voices of people with lived experiences are heard in a meaningful way to them.*

Courageous Voices

Over the past year, Bissell Centre and our partners at Boyle Street Community Services have embarked on a hopeful listening journey to co-create solutions with the community. The Courageous Voices project aims to drive meaningful, lasting change to address poverty and homelessness in Edmonton.

Engagement primarily took place through sharing circles—with over 500 people participating—as well as one-on-one conversations and surveys. Sharing circles are a central part of the Courageous Voices project, and we believe this depth of listening will not end with Courageous Voices—it will become an embedded practice that shapes how we make decisions long into the future.

In fiscal year 2025-2026, the Courageous Voices team will complete engagement with the four impacted communities at the heart of this journey – staff, community members, diverse Indigenous voices and the broader community (including funders, donors, partners and supporters).

In summer 2025, the team will report back on insights gathered, stories shared, and lessons learned. The leadership teams of both organizations will reflect on this work—independently and together—to develop ideas for implementation. These recommendations will then be presented to the Boards of both agencies.

Strategy: *Bissell Centre aims to influence systems and societal change by building an organizational culture based on learning, reflection, and a commitment to evidence-based practice.*

Program Participant and Staff Member Safety and Wellness

One of the greatest challenges faced by our staff team is maintaining their mental and emotional health in the face of trauma. That toll can come in the form of an acute emergency or repeated exposure to traumatic histories. To support and maintain the health of our team, Bissell Centre offers robust individual psychological benefits, access to team supports, and immediate support after a critical incident. However, the method we have been using is being retired. In 2025-26, Bissell Centre will be exploring options to replace that integral resource to ensure long-term health for our team.

4.

Organizational Sustainability

Strategy: *Bissell Centre develops resources, capacity, and long-term organizational sustainability by organizational planning with a continued commitment to excellence that includes governance, risk management, infrastructure, and administrative capacity development to achieve our vision and mission.*

Client Database Expansion

In 2025-26, Bissell will expand the development of its new client database named Orbit, which was developed in 2024-25. Goals for the year include adding expertise with Power BI to our team, completing the migration of historical data from its current client database, customizing data reports for each of our programs and updating departmental key performance indicators. Hiring internal expertise allows Bissell the ability to continually improve the database application's performance, incorporate planned maintenance, and customize it as needed to best meet our ongoing data needs. Migrating historical data and building customized program reports will prepare us to focus on program evaluations in 2026-27.

Strategy: *Bissell Centre develops resources, capacity, and long-term organizational sustainability by ensuring our work is consistent with, and pays close attention to, environmental sustainability across the organization's operations.*

Refreshing Environmental Sustainability Goals

Environmental Sustainability is an important conversation topic and action item in today's society and in our sector. Bissell Centre formally began its environmental sustainability journey in 2024-25 through its partnership with Green Economy Canada. In 2025-26, Bissell plans to develop a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory and create a long-term action plan to measure and manage Bissell Centre's GHG emissions.

Across our operations—including Bissell Harvest Catering—we are integrating eco-conscious practices like composting food waste, using recyclable packaging, and prioritizing local procurement to reduce our carbon footprint and support a healthier planet.

Organizational Sustainability *Continued*

Strategy: Bissell Centre develops resources, capacity, and long-term organizational sustainability by developing a healthy culture of employee engagement, accountability, celebration, and professional development that supports employees to understand their role in our vision and mission.

Creation and Delivery of Management Financial Literacy Training

In 2025-26, Bissell will create a training program and templates with general knowledge for new Manager orientation as well as creating templates specific to each department.

The goal is to deepen the financial literacy of all individuals in leadership roles to in order to support resource stewardship. This knowledge will better allow leaders to maximize the outcomes of our resources.

Strategy: Bissell Centre develops resources, capacity, and long-term organizational sustainability by increasing public awareness about Bissell Centre and the impact of our work in the community.

External Relations Strategy and Implementation

External relations refers to the way that an organization strategically organize, engage and communicate with other organizations and external stakeholders in order to increase collaboration, advocacy and achieve our strategic priorities.

At Bissell Centre, these relationships primarily include government at all three levels, donors, funders, community influencers, other service providers in the health and social sectors, and to a broader extent the general public.

In 2025-26, Bissell Centre's External Relations Plan will focus on deepening our relationship with government and other key external stakeholders deepen the understanding of who we are as a unique organization and advance our strategic priorities.

Organizational Sustainability *Continued*

Strategy: Bissell Centre aims to influence systems and societal change by raising funds to directly impact the people we serve and ensuring a high-quality donor experience.

Transformational Giving in Action

By increasing awareness, knowledge, and support among individuals who have the capacity and interest to give, we are creating meaningful opportunities for transformational gifts that can sustain Bissell's programs and services long into the future. These gifts do more than fund operations and projects—they help deepen engagement and generate lasting impact within the community. Our focus on larger contributions is a strategic move to build capacity for addressing complex social issues, expanding critical services, and ensuring the long-term financial health of the organization. At the same time, we aim to foster more personal, values-aligned relationships with donors who are inspired by Bissell's mission.

To bring this vision to life, we are taking a series of coordinated steps. We are finalizing compelling Cases for Support, refining our engagement lists in collaboration with the Leadership Team and the Board, and initiating regular relationship review meetings to maintain momentum. A Leadership Giving Committee is being developed and onboarded, and Board members are being engaged through one-on-one conversations to strengthen alignment and support. Key staff will receive specialized training in major gift cultivation and solicitation, with additional sessions planned for volunteers and Board members.

We are also designing targeted engagement strategies for Edmonton's development sector and downtown business community and hosting a series of key supporter cultivation events. A donor stewardship strategy is being refined to ensure each supporter experiences a thoughtful, personalized journey, and a system for tracking key performance indicators has been implemented to guide our growth and set goals for the years ahead. Through these efforts, we are laying the foundation for a resilient and relationship-driven approach to leadership giving.



Our Operational Principles

Ethical and Statutory Compliance

Guiding Bissell Centre are the ethical and statutory requirements for the responsible operation of a charity under the Alberta Societies Act, the Canada Revenue Agency's rules for charitable organizations registered under the Income Tax Act and the standards and practices prescribed by the Imagine Canada Standards.

The Imagine Canada Standards require Bissell Centre to demonstrate excellence and leadership in five key areas of operation:

- Board governance
- Financial accountability and transparency
- Fundraising
- Staff management
- Volunteer involvement

As a member of the Standards program, Bissell Centre complies with 73 Standards, including:

- A mission statement that is approved and revisited by the board at least every five years to assess its continuing relevance.
- Compliance with all legal requirements as a charitable organization and all relevant laws and statutes.
- Responsible conduct in all affairs of the organization and carrying out all legal and financial responsibilities in an ethical manner.
- Updated policies and procedures.
- Philanthropy and fundraising activities conducted in an ethical and responsible manner and a system of managing finances and assets in a responsible and accountable way.

Bissell Centre is committed to credibility and donor confidence.



Staff Retreat at Moonlight Bay Camp
SEPTEMBER 2024



Courageous Voices Discernment Fest

SEPTEMBER 2024

Capital Planning Framework

Bissell's Capital Plan is a two-part forecast of annual facilities capital and information technology needs.

Integral to Bissell's long-term service and financial planning, the Capital Plan's key objective is to strike a strategic balance among the following needs:

- Maintaining our infrastructure and facilities in an appropriate state of repair.
- Optimizing our network of amenities to best serve our participants, volunteers, employees, and visitors.
- Advancing Bissell Centre's mission priorities within its long term financial capacity.

Bissell Centre's Capital Plan is a current and future projection of capital needs. The plan helps place forward-thinking projects in context and gives an overall perspective on facilities needs.

The Bissell Board of Governors approves each year's capital funding costs. The Capital Plan is presented to Bissell Centre's Board of Governors and its Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee for review and discussion. After the Plan has been approved by the Board, Bissell then begins work to plan, design and implement facilities and information technology improvements.

For the 2025-26 Capital Plan, Bissell Centre will implement a robust fire prevention plan that addresses hazards, supports compliance, and prioritizes the safety of our employees, clients, visitors and community neighbours.

Bissell Centre's 2025-26 Capital Plan has been approved by the Bissell Centre Board of Governors and proposes \$696K of facilities capital investment priorities in the next year, including fire prevention measures, foundation strengthening, and retrofitting our food services van

to better support our food services social enterprise initiatives.

Information Technology Capital Planning includes the equipment and technology that allows our employees to perform their daily functions to deliver services to our participants and the community.

Total strategic capital investments in equipment and IT for the 2025-26 fiscal year is estimated at \$430K, including \$39K for new equipment, \$50K for completion of software development, \$150K in specialized applications, and \$190K in IT technical assistance services.

Equipment and information technology have short lifespans and require frequent replacement when compared to other types of capital assets. Additionally, the world of information technology changes rapidly and is often accompanied by a change in the way work is done or a service is offered.

Enterprise Risk Management

Risk Mitigation

Bissell has committed to focus on prioritization, integration and communication of significant risks to management and the Board. In support of this, Bissell has implemented an enterprise risk register framework to provide guidance in managing risk across the agency.

Bissell Centre continues to mitigate enterprise risk through the maintenance of:

- Bissell Centre's risk register an annual strategic review process.
- Ongoing risk management assessments.
- Annual budgeting and business planning process.
- A tracking process for current contractual and funder reporting commitments.

Bissell's key risk categories are Reputational, Operational, Governance, Financial, and Compliance.

Risks are analyzed, considering impact rating, likelihood and inherent risk, to determine how they should be managed.

Role of the Board of Governors in Risk Management

Our Board of Governors provides oversight of senior leadership's management of the various risks the agency faces. The Board meets regularly with key risk management functional leaders. It also receives annual reports from senior representatives of the agency's independent auditor.

The Finance, Audit & Risk Management Committee members have regular risk management discussions with senior leadership of the agency.

Ultimately, oversight of our risk management activities is one of the most important roles of the Board of Governors. The Board is dedicated and fully committed to its role in ensuring quality, compliance and effective risk management.





Drawing by Community Member Ceno



Working in community, we remove barriers and support people as they move out of poverty.

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