

# Leduc County Social Framework Final Report

November 2019



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The general public, as well as a number of community stakeholders and regional partners, were involved throughout the development of the Leduc County Social Framework.

We would like to thank residents of Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta for responding to the general, senior and youth surveys and engaging during the community events.

We would like to thank the following local and regional organizations for participating in the stakeholder survey, key informant interviews and workshop sessions:

- Alberta Child & Family Services
- Alberta Health Services
- Alberta Supports
- Beaumont FCSS
- Black Gold School Division
- Calmar Public Library
- CASA
- Chimo Youth Retreat Centre
- City of Leduc FCSS
- Devon FCSS
- Karunia Counselling

- Leduc & District Food Bank
- Leduc & District Victim Services
- Leduc Community Corrections
- Leduc County FCSS Advisory Board
- Leduc County Library Board
- Leduc Hub Association
- Leduc Regional Housing Foundation
- New Sarepta Public Library
- RCMP Leduc Detachment
- Riseup Society
- Warburg Public Library

We would also like to thank the Leduc County, Town of Calmar, Town of Thorsby and Village of Warburg councils, administrations, FCSS programs and staff for their insights and guidance throughout the process.

# **Executive Summary**

The Leduc County Social Framework is is intended to be a living document that will lead the services of Leduc County Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) and related social support services over the next ten years. This document is designed to provide a path towards improved and efficient service provision in the multi-municipal service area that includes the municipalities of Leduc County, Town of Calmar, Town of Thorsby and Village of Warburg.

The background review provides a current understanding of the public policy, social service and demographic trends in the overall region, as well as the differences within each unique community.

Total residents

15,805
Total residents

14.0% Seniors Ages 65 and over

30.6% Youth Under 25 years of age Low income Low income measure, after tax

17.5% Spending 30% or more on housing Measure of housing affordability

The two-phase public engagement process reached a wide cross-section of residents and stakeholders across the communities of Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta.

Engagement participants
 Resident surveys
 Resident surveys
 Key informant interviews
 Workshop sessions

The engagement findings provide valuable context about the current social needs locally and regionally.

Qual	ity of Life	<b>Top Program/Service Priorities</b>	Most Important Social Issues
63%	Satisfied/ Very satisfied	Residents said: 1. Recreation & leisure opportunities 2. Mental health & addiction supports 3. Childcare	Residents said: 1. Public transportation 2. Criminal activity 3. Substance use/addiction 4. Lack of social activities/programs 5. Accessibility to physical health services

The results from the background review and public engagement process directly informed the development of the Regional Social Action Plan. Moving ahead, it is intended that this document will provide the region and its communities with a feasible, impactful path toward addressing some of the key priorities and issues identified during the engagement process. Organizations and individuals can take the Leduc County Social Framework and move it forward locally and regionally. Cross-sectional planning, collaboration between FCSS programs and service providers, collaboration among community organizations and the business community, and advocacy from local groups will aid in developing strategies to strengthen the well-being of residents of Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta.

# Leduc County Social Framework

#### Vision

"Enriching the quality of life for residents through a commitment to enhance social supports that foster individual and collective well-being."

# **Guiding Principles**

Advocacy Collaboration Engagement Equity Inclusion

# **System Strategies**

# Value: Building the Social Service Sector

Capacity building is vital to success in our communities and can be advanced through partnerships and volunteerism.

- Advocacy
- Local Capacity
- Regional Collaboration
- Service Delivery

# Service Strategies

### Value: Reducing Barriers to Supports

Every resident should have access to and awareness of social programs and services and we will work to reduce barriers to support.

- Accessibility
- Resident Awareness

### Value: Developing the Child

Families should be provided with every opportunity to raise a healthy, active child in a quality community environment.

- Early Childhood Development
- Youth

### Value: Fostering Healthy Individuals & Families

Fostering healthy individuals and families will lead to enhanced well-being.

- Families
- Mental Health
- Safe Communities
- Seniors
- Social Connections
- Substance Use/Addictions

### **Value: Addressing Poverty**

Those living in poverty will have equal access to a healthy lifestyle through resources and supports in our communities.

- Food Access
- Housing

# 1. Introduction

Leduc County, Town of Calmar, Town of Thorsby and Village of Warburg experience unique challenges in their ability to support the social needs of residents. The geographic size of the region creates challenges and barriers to accessing services. As the population continues to age, the range and level of social services required continues to evolve. As with many municipalities in the province, Leduc County has also been impacted by the downturn in the oil and gas sector.

The communities of Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta are made up of diverse populations with different family composition, age profiles, income levels and housing needs. This demographic diversity leads to differing local social needs and issues.

The Leduc County Social Framework is intended to be a guiding document that will lead the services of Leduc County FCSS and related social support services over the next ten years. This framework is a review of the general social well-being of residents as an indicator of related social needs, gaps, issues and opportunities. The framework sets a path towards improved and efficient service provision in the future.

# 1.1. Project Approach

In 2019, Applications Management Consulting was contracted by Leduc County to undertake the development of a social framework. The goal of this framework is to enhance the well-being of residents, and to maintain and enhance the level of community and social services available. The framework applies to the municipalities of Leduc County, Town of Calmar, Town of Thorsby and Village of Warburg, with respect to the Multi-Municipal FCSS Agreement. This includes the communities of Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta, which are comprised of residents of the town, village or hamlet and the surrounding Leduc County service areas.

The Leduc County Social Framework undertook a four-phase approach: Background Review, Needs Identification Engagement, Recommendations Engagement and Framework Development.

# **Background Review**

The Background Review phase undertook a thorough environmental scan to provide a picture of the current landscape in Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta. A review of existing municipal and provincial plans, reports and other relevant documents on social issues and sustainability formed an understanding of the approach to social services in Leduc County and its communities, as well as identified valuable best practices from regional and provincial contexts. The creation of an assets profile confirmed existing community assets in Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta. This baseline assessment of social services provides information about the scope of existing social issues and service gaps, and some potential solutions or ideas that might contribute to addressing those. The existing social service capacity in Leduc County and its communities was explored through this inventory, which includes the organizations and programs and services in the region. The demographic profile examined the historical demographic and societal trends as they apply to Leduc County, Town of Calmar, Town of Thorsby, Village of Warburg and Hamlet of New Sarepta. Areas examined include historic population, population by age, family

type, housing mix, housing tenure, household total income, low income and housing affordability, which was used as context for determining community similarities and differences in local needs.

# **Needs Identification Engagement**

The Needs Identification Engagement phase engaged residents and stakeholders in Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta about social needs and priorities. From May to August, 2019, we heard from around 650 participants through five main engagement methods. The diverse voices we heard from included representatives from social service agencies and non-profit organizations, government staff and senior, adult and youth residents. A snapshot of satisfaction gives indication regarding the current perceptions of residents. A snapshot of programs and services provides context on the social service priorities of resident and stakeholder participants in the region. A snapshot of social issues presents details about the most important social issues of those resident and stakeholder participants. Looking at the engagement results by age demographic and by unique community offers background about similarities and differences across the region. These findings served as evidence that directly informed formulation of the strategies and actions for the framework.

# Recommendations Engagement

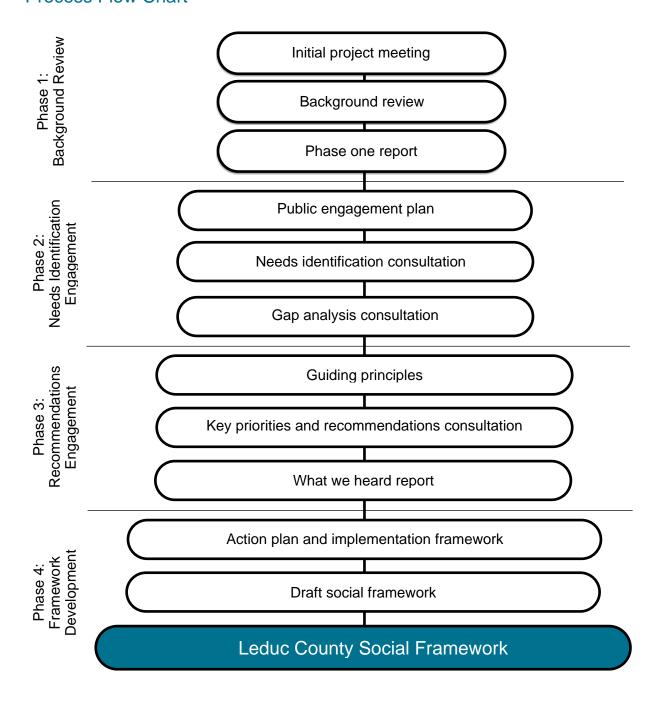
The Recommendations Engagement phase engaged residents and stakeholders in Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta regarding social opportunities and strategies. In August and September, 2019, we heard from about 70 participants through two main engagement methods. We used what we learned through the environmental scan and what we heard during the needs identification engagement process as the basis for the system and service strategies, which are directly informed by the demonstrated social needs and issues. We presented these strategies to participants for their ideas around future actions and a way forward.

# Framework Development

The Framework Development phase involved formulating the actions for each system and service strategy, utilizing the findings from the background review and public engagement process. Moving ahead, addressing the social needs, priorities and issues will be an ongoing, evolving process.



# **Process Flow Chart**



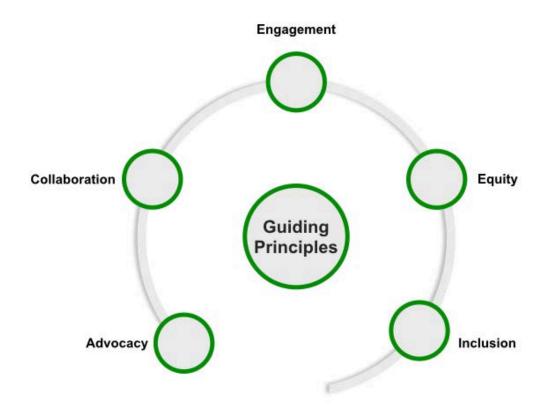
# 1.2. Vision

The vision states the goal for social services in the communities of Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta now and in the future.

"Enriching the quality of life for residents through a commitment to enhance social supports that foster individual and collective well-being."

# 1.3. Guiding Principles

The guiding principles provide direction around how the communities of Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta will work together to achieve the vision.



**Advocacy:** support opportunities to work with key organizations and other levels of government in a collective effort to strengthen quality of life.

**Collaboration:** collaborate with regional partners and stakeholders to build on strengths, encourage constructive dialogue and foster capacity development.

**Engagement:** ensure opportunities for residents and stakeholders to be informed and engaged in their communities.

Equity: champion fair treatment and access to opportunity for all residents and stakeholders.

**Inclusion:** cultivate communities that are safe and welcoming to a diverse population.

# 1.4. Defining the Social Needs

For a community to function and be sustainable, the basic needs of its residents must be met. A socially sustainable community must have the ability to maintain and build capacity, and have the resilience to prevent and address problems in the future.

# Background

Traditionally in Canada, provincial governments have the primary mandate to address social issues. However, in Alberta, the province has delegated part of this role to local municipalities through the funding of Family and Community Support Services (FCSS). Despite the fact that municipalities are well-placed to develop and deliver preventative programs, their resources are limited, and the needs almost always exceed local capacity to respond. Many rural communities face community sustainability issues, and while they often may face similar issues to other communities, they require

unique solutions to build capacity within the community.



Leduc County makes the social needs of its residents a priority through efforts building relationships with neighbouring municipalities. Through its strategic documents, Leduc County has paved the way for setting targets to achieve a higher quality of life and addressing the social needs of its residents. For example, the Multi-Municipal FCSS Agreement provides the parameters for seamless FCSS services to all residents of Leduc County, Town of Calmar, Town of Thorsby and Village of Warburg, wherever they live within those municipal boundaries. The Leduc County Strategic Plan outlines a vision for continually enhancing the quality of life for its citizens by increasing the capacity and accessibility of affordable county-sponsored programs and activities to all citizens. The Leduc County Municipal Development Plan supports the development of complete communities as part of its plan for sustainable development. This work reaffirms Leduc County's priority to support residents and to build healthy communities across the region.

In 2019, Applications Management Consulting was contracted by Leduc County to undertake the development of the Leduc County Social Framework. The goal of this framework is to enhance the well-being of current and future residents of Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta, and to maintain and enhance the level of community and social services available.

The recent downturn in the economy and drop in oil prices has negatively impacted Alberta, and Leduc County specifically. The oil and gas industry is a key sector for Leduc County and the economic and employment impacts have resulted in an increase in residents requiring social support services. Many rural communities in Alberta face community sustainability issues, as the populations

continue to age and the range and level of social services required by the residents continues to evolve.

The communities in the region comprise a mix of single individuals, couple families and lone-parent families that require supports to reflect diversity of income, housing and age. Continued efforts to promote early childhood development, the importance of fostering health and the need for supports for seniors to age in their homes communities will continue to foster a thriving, growing region.

Leduc County is well positioned to overcome these challenges by continuing to be proactive in identifying community needs and priorities, fostering the development of local capacity, providing valuable regional social programs and services, playing an advocacy role to address complex social issues, and building relationships to coordinate effective responses among key stakeholders and partners.



# Key Stakeholders and Partners



It is intended that stakeholders including residents, social service providers, the business community, and government should identify their role in moving forward recommendations outlined in this report.

Each level of government or service agency has a different scope of legislative, financial and operational mandates. A specific stakeholder or partner can have primary, secondary or limited responsibility, depending on the social service area. For example, provincial governments have the primary responsibility for mental health, developing policy and planning for services. Municipal governments have secondary responsibility, possessing a role in addressing the issue without being primarily responsible, due to the overlapping and varying nature of government responsibilities. The federal government has a limited responsibility, taking on a small or contributing role such as through funded projects, without being directly responsible for the provision or planning of services. Service agencies are often delegated day-to-day operation and implementation of mental health services.

### Social Framework

As part of the social framework, Leduc County FCSS consulted the communities of Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta over two phases of public engagement to explore the current state of resident needs and the service provision they receive locally and regionally. The diverse voices we heard from included representatives from social service agencies and non-profit organizations, government staff and senior, adult and youth residents.

Over 700 participants contributed through five main engagement methods. Around 590 members of the general public were engaged through resident surveys and community events and 115 stakeholders were consulted through a stakeholder survey, key informant interviews and workshop sessions.

# Phase One Engagement

The needs identification occurred during the first phase of engagement. Residents and stakeholders identified priority programs and services. For resident survey respondents, recreation and leisure opportunities is the biggest priority. Mental health and addiction supports and childcare are also top priorities. Mental health and addiction supports is the biggest priority based on the workshop sessions, key informant interviews, and stakeholder survey. Transportation and housing supports are also top priorities for stakeholder participants.

Residents and stakeholders also identified the most important social issues. Resident participants said that public transportation is the most important social issue, followed by criminal activity and substance use/addiction. Depression or other mental health concerns is the most important social issue according to stakeholder participants, followed by public transportation and substance use/addiction.

# Phase Two Engagement

During the second phase of engagement, recommendations around the key priorities were explored. The social values, strategies and actions that have been developed in the framework support the priorities that have been established through the engagement process.



# 1.5. Social Value Statements

Throughout the resident and stakeholder engagement, key themes emerged regarding the social needs, issues and priorities in Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta. This led to the creation of the following five social value statements for the framework:

#### We believe that...

- Capacity building is vital to success in our communities and can be advanced through partnerships and volunteerism.
- Every resident will have access to and awareness of social programs and services and we will work to reduce barriers to support.
- ► Families will be provided with every opportunity to raise a healthy, active child in a quality community environment.
- ▶ Fostering healthy individuals and families will lead to enhanced well-being.
- ▶ Those living in poverty will have equal access to a healthy lifestyle through resources and supports in our communities.

These statements align to the strategies and actions identified in the Regional Social Action Plan.



# 2. Regional Social Action Plan

The Regional Social Action Plan includes the strategies and actions as they relate to the social value statements. This Regional Social Action Plan is driven by the vision and guiding principles.

The 4 system strategies reflect those that can continue to build the regional social service sector and the organizations within Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta. The 12 service strategies focus on program and service areas that will continue to focus on enhancing the quality of life of residents across the communities.

Community assets, demographic profiles and best practices have been considered in the formulation of the Regional Social Action Plan. The suggested strategies and actions are a result of the analysis and findings from the background review, needs identification engagement and recommendations engagement phases of this project.

Implementation of the Regional Social Action Plan is the shared responsibility of the communities of Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta. Stakeholder responsibilities should be examined when making social planning decisions going forward. It will also be important to monitor the success of implementation on a regular basis.



# Leduc County Social Framework

#### Vision

"Enriching the quality of life for residents through a commitment to enhance social supports that foster individual and collective well-being."

# **Guiding Principles**

Advocacy Collaboration Engagement Equity Inclusion

# **System Strategies**

## Value: Building the Social Service Sector

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- Advocacy
- Local Capacity
- Regional Collaboration
- Service Delivery

# Service Strategies

### Value: Reducing Barriers to Supports

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- Accessibility
- Resident Awareness

### Value: Developing the Child

Families should be provided with every opportunity to raise a healthy, active child in a quality community environment.

- Early Childhood Development
- Youth

### Value: Fostering Healthy Individuals & Families

Fostering healthy individuals and families will lead to enhanced well-being.

- Families
- Mental Health
- Safe Communities
- Seniors
- Social Connections
- Substance Use/Addictions

### **Value: Addressing Poverty**

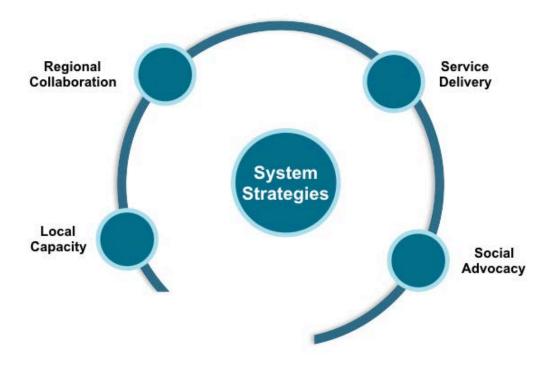
Those living in poverty will have equal access to a healthy lifestyle through resources and supports in our communities.

- Food Access
- Housing

# 2.1. System Strategies & Actions

Four system strategies have been identified. System strategies reflect those that can continue to build the regional social service sector and the key stakeholders and partners within it across Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta.

# **System Strategies**



Below is a social value statement and the system strategies that fall under it.

# **System Strategies**

### Value: Building the Social Service Sector

Capacity building is vital to success in our communities and can be advanced through partnerships and volunteerism.

- Local Capacity
  - Encourage opportunities to build capacity among existing assets and networks
- Regional Collaboration
  - Foster regional collaboration among stakeholders and partners
- Service Delivery
  - Identify opportunities for enhanced service delivery
- Social Advocacy
  - Create opportunities for advocacy with other levels of government

System Strategy



Encourage opportunities to build local capacity among existing assets and networks







A key component of a vibrant municipality is the capacity of its communities to respond to local social needs and issues.

As the background review and public engagement process for this project clearly demonstrate, Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta each have their own unique communities. There are notable variations in demographic trends, social issues, resident needs and stakeholder priorities. To respond to specific local program and service requirements in these communities, each community should endeavour to build local capacity to provide supports to their residents. With respect to local capacity, stakeholders were particularly concerned that municipal budgets are constrained, community involvement is changing, and volunteers are aging.

### **Potential Actions**

### Promote a vision for social services in the community

- Council and administration commit to working to advance the Leduc County Social Framework
- ▶ FCSS promotes the local strategies and actions to the community

# Relationship building among local stakeholders and groups

- FCSS meets with local stakeholders on a regular basis to discuss social needs and issues
- Enhance networking opportunities for community leaders and service providers
- ▶ Engage the local business community to support local causes and organizations

### Promote volunteerism in the community

- ▶ Each FCSS fosters awareness of volunteer opportunities in their communities
- ▶ Local organizations raise awareness around how to get involved through volunteerism and donations

### Advance volunteer development in the community

- Municipalities encourage and coordinate volunteerism in their communities
- ▶ Plan local volunteer information sessions, appreciation events and training workshops

### Encourage community leaders and groups to lead local initiatives

Continue to engage with the local community services advisory committees

- Create volunteer community boards that coordinate local volunteerism and encourage community leadership
- ▶ Provide local grants to community groups

- ▶ FCSS: Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg
- ▶ Local business community
- Local libraries
- Local schools
- Local seniors centres
- Local youth groups
- Volunteer community groups/members
- ► Leduc County
- ▶ Town of Calmar
- ▶ Town of Thorsby
- Village of Warburg



Foster regional collaboration among stakeholders and partners







An important component of a successful region is the ability of its communities to work together to utilize resources to provide more effective and efficient service delivery.

Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby and Warburg FCSS already collaborate for provision of programs and services to their residents. The Multi-Municipal FCSS Agreement provides the parameters for seamless FCSS services to all residents of Leduc County, Town of Calmar, Town of Thorsby and Village of Warburg, wherever they live within those municipal boundaries. It allows for the autonomy of each municipality, while ensuring that each community will offer services to residents in a borderless manner. The towns and village generally provide assistance and, if required, refer clients to Leduc County FCSS to provide support for more complex needs. Continued collaboration between councils, administrations and staff of Leduc County, Town of Calmar, Town of Thorsby and Village of Warburg with respect to provision of their FCSS program and the implementation of this framework is vital.

To respond to regional social needs and priorities across the communities, regional partners, agencies, service providers and others also have roles to play in providing services to residents. During the engagement process for this project, stakeholders identified a desire to work collaboratively towards addressing key social issues in the region. By advancing collective actions rather than working in silos, there are opportunities for improved service delivery.

### **Potential Actions**

Commit to a shared vision for social services between Leduc County, Town of Calmar, Town of Thorsby and Village of Warburg

- Councils and administrations commit to working together to advance the Leduc County Social Framework
- Look for opportunities to share resources to address certain social needs and issues

Capitalize on opportunities for Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby and Warburg FCSS to share resources

▶ Establish formal meetings with the FCSS community coordinators to strategize about key service areas and program delivery

- Look for partnership opportunities between FCSS programs, where they take turns offering programs and services in local communities and across the region
- ▶ FCSS board provides recommendations around the actions to focus on first

### Regional relationship building among stakeholders and partners

- Continue formal meetings with FCSS neighbours (Beaumont, Devon, Leduc, Edmonton) to share information and best practices
- ► Create regular opportunities for regional agencies and service providers to meet to discuss issues and opportunities

### Encourage stakeholders and partners to lead regional initiatives

- Formalize partnership opportunities between regional social service agencies and FCSS programs
- Actively support regional boards, committees and groups

- Edmonton Evergreen FCSS
- ► FCSS: Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg
- Government of Alberta agencies<sup>1</sup>
- Key regional stakeholders<sup>2</sup>
- City of Beaumont
- ▶ City of Leduc
- Leduc County
- ▶ Town of Calmar
- ▶ Town of Devon
- Town of Thorsby
- Village of Warburg

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Government of Alberta agencies could include Alberta Child & Family Services, Alberta Health Services, Alberta Justice & Solicitor General, Alberta Supports and others.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Stakeholders could include relevant organizations that operate regionally, such as Black Gold School Division, Leduc & District Food Bank, Leduc & District Victim Services and Leduc Regional Housing Foundation.



Identify opportunities for enhanced service delivery







Common themes emerged throughout the engagement process with respect to service delivery.

Awareness of what social services are available locally and regionally is lacking. Lack of information about the programs and services available was one of the biggest barriers to accessing programs and services reported by residents. This makes it difficult for residents to seek out the supports they need on their own. Some stakeholders mentioned that there is not enough communication or understanding of what programs and services each municipal FCSS program is offering, or what programs and services each social service agency is providing. This creates challenges in the referral process.

We heard there is a need to reduce the stigma around using social services, especially service areas such as substance use/addictions, mental health and early childhood development.

We also heard that there is a need for more collaboration among organizations to provide wraparound services to clients.

### **Potential Actions**

### Reduce awareness/decrease stigma of utilizing FCSS programs and services

- Promotion of who FCSS is and what FCSS offers to the following audiences:
  - ▶ Residents of Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta
  - ▶ Internal municipal staff of Leduc County, Town of Calmar, Town of Thorsby and Village of Warburg
  - Key regional stakeholders and service providers

# Standardize program attendance, evaluation and outcomes reporting for Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby and Warburg FCSS

- ▶ Track which municipality clients live in for registered programs
- FCSS programs sharing information about program attendance, evaluation and outcomes
- ▶ FCSS programs sharing information about new and existing programs and services, as well as best practices

### Work with regional FCSS programs and service providers in key service areas

▶ Identify opportunities to take turns providing regional programs, services and events with FCSS neighbours (Beaumont, Devon, Leduc)

Identify opportunities for regional agencies to jointly work on specific programs, services and events

Establish a regular review process for FCSS programs and services to increase collaboration, minimize duplication and build capacity

- ▶ FCSS programs commit to defining and participating in a regular review process
- ▶ FCSS board provides recommendations around regional service delivery

# Encourage collaboration between social service agencies with regards to wrap-around services

- ► FCSS board invites service providers and agencies to present at meetings and engage in future service planning
- ▶ Establish opportunities for coordination of essential services

- ▶ 211
- Edmonton Evergreen FCSS
- ► FCSS: Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg
- Government of Alberta agencies
- Key regional stakeholders
- City of Beaumont
- ► City of Leduc
- ▶ Leduc County
- ▶ Town of Calmar
- ▶ Town of Devon
- Town of Thorsby
- Village of Warburg

System Strategy Social Advocacy

# Create opportunities for advocacy with other levels of government







Many social services fall outside of a municipality's direct responsibility and under the jurisdiction of other levels of government. A vital part of meeting social needs and addressing social issues is the ability of the municipality to advocate effectively to provincial and federal governments to enhance availability and accessibility in key service areas.

In order to address the most important social issues and meet resident social needs in priority program and service areas, as identified during the needs identification engagement, involvement of provincial and federal agencies is needed. Resident participants said that public transportation is the most important social issue, followed by criminal activity and substance use/addiction. Depression or other mental health concerns is the most important social issue according to stakeholder participants, followed by public transportation and substance use/addiction. Recreation and leisure opportunities is the biggest priority for resident participants, followed by mental health and addiction supports and childcare. Mental health and addiction supports is the biggest priority for stakeholder participants, followed by transportation and housing supports.

### **Potential Actions**

# Coordinate advocacy efforts between Leduc County, Town of Calmar, Town of Thorsby and Village of Warburg

- ▶ FCSS board provides recommendations around advocacy efforts
- ▶ Advocate with councils and administrations to explore opportunities for more mobile services in their communities and improved services across the region

### Identify opportunities to work with local and regional MLAs and MPs

- Set up meetings between each MLA/MP and representatives of the municipalities
- Use the findings and recommendations in this framework to guide discussions

#### Jointly advocate with regional FCSS programs and other stakeholders in key service areas

- Advocate to regional school boards
- Advocate to Government of Alberta agencies in areas such as mental health, addictions, and childcare
- Advocate to the federal government in areas such as transportation, housing, and funding

### Encourage community leaders to become involved in advocacy efforts

Invite service providers and agencies to present to the FCSS board

- ▶ FCSS: Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg
- ► Edmonton Evergreen FCSS
- ▶ Government of Alberta agencies
- ▶ Government of Canada departments³
- Key regional stakeholders
- City of Beaumont
- ▶ City of Leduc
- Leduc County
- ▶ Town of Calmar
- ▶ Town of Devon
- ▶ Town of Thorsby
- Village of Warburg

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Government of Canada departments could include Citizenship & Immigration Canada, Department of Justice Canada, Employment & Social Development Canada, Health Canada and Public Safety Canada.

# 2.2. Service Strategies & Actions

Twelve service strategies have been identified. Service strategies address priority program and service areas and important social issues that will continue to work towards the enhanced well-being of residents across the communities of Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta.

# **Service Strategies**



On the following page are social value statements and the service strategies that fall under those.

# **Service Strategies**

### Value: Reducing Barriers to Supports

Every resident should have access to and awareness of social programs and services and we will work to reduce barriers to support.

#### Accessibility

Minimize barriers to accessing social programs and services in the region

#### Resident Awareness

Raise resident awareness about existing social supports available in the community

## Value: Developing the Child

Families should be provided with every opportunity to raise a healthy, active child in a quality community environment.

### • Early Childhood Development

Provide early childhood development programs to support children and families in developing strong foundations

#### Youth

Support opportunities for youth to be engaged in ways that support their well-being and help build capacity within their local communities

#### Value: Fostering Healthy Individuals & Families

Fostering healthy individuals and families will lead to enhanced well-being.

#### Families

Encourage families to live healthy lifestyles that support their individual and collective well-beings

#### Mental Health

Support access to mental health services

#### Safe Communities

Ensure communities are safe and inclusive for all residents

#### Seniors

Expand seniors supports that allow people to age in place within their local communities

### Social Connections

Foster social and recreational opportunities that support physical and mental well-being and allow residents of all ages to establish connections within their communities

#### Substance Use/Addictions

Support access to comprehensive substance use programs that include addressing root causes

### Value: Addressing Poverty

Those living in poverty will have equal access to a healthy lifestyle through resources and supports in our communities.

#### Food Access

Improve dignified access to healthy food for people experiencing hunger and food insecurity

### Housing

Enhance access to adequate and affordable housing that meets the individualized needs of residents



Minimize barriers to accessing social programs and services in the region







Accessibility is being available when needed. Having timely access to social programs and services, when there is a need, is essential for the quality of life of residents within the community.

In the engagement process, distance to programs and services and lack of public transportation was a recurring theme limiting residents' accessibility to programs and services. Not having sufficient access to social programs and services as a result of transportation barriers is an issue that impacts all demographics, regardless of age or ability.

Cost of programs and services was one of the biggest barriers residents reported in the survey. Residents indicated that more local, affordable recreation and leisure opportunities are needed for all ages. In particular, residents reported that low cost children's, youth and seniors activities and programs would better support their communities.

Other considerations for improving accessibility included greater internet access across the communities and more information about existing programs and services online.

### **Potential Actions**

### Continue to provide resources that support access to programs and services

► Continue to promote municipal FCSS offices as local supports for residents to gain information about and referrals to programs and services

## Continue to identify opportunities to improve access to programs and services

- ▶ Promote opportunities for increased collaboration and information sharing among service providers about existing programs and services in the community
- ► Engage with residents who are utilizing programs and services, and are experiencing challenges with access (ie. eligibility, filling out forms, transportation, child care, hours, cost)
- Promote accessibility by exploring more opportunities for low cost events and activities for all ages.

### **Expand access to transportation services**

- Work with municipalities to increase use, eligibility and service levels for existing community buses
- Explore on-demand transit options in the communities

▶ Assess the social needs and benefits of transit options

### Advocate for internet access for residents to live, work and play

- ▶ Advocate for high speed Internet access to all parts of the County and all communities
- Increase wifi availability among community hubs

### Advocate with regional stakeholders and partners for greater access to core social supports

▶ Program and service areas to focus advocacy efforts on include physical and mental health services, counselling, addiction supports, food, housing and senior government supports

### Promote local, accessible community hubs for all ages

Work with local municipalities to ensure all communities have spaces that are safe and inclusive of all ages and demographics

- ► FCSS: Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg
- Government of Alberta agencies
- Government of Canada departments
- Local business community
- Volunteer community groups/members
- Leduc County
- ▶ Town of Calmar
- Town of Thorsby
- Village of Warburg

Service Strategy

Resident Awareness

Raise resident awareness about existing social supports available in the community







Creating awareness of existing programs and services across the region is important so that residents are able to access them if needed. Resident survey respondents reported lack of information about programs and services available as one of the top barriers to access in the region. It is important to note that residents of the community reported utilizing both electronic and physical means to access information. Word of mouth is one of the most common methods for people to get information about programs, services and events in the community. Youth are largely using electronic sources such as social media and websites, while seniors are more frequently using newspapers, newsletters and community signage.

Fostering awareness of social issues in the communities is also key to ensuring needs of residents are met. Resident participants said that public transportation is the most important social issue, followed by criminal activity and substance use/addiction. Depression or other mental health concerns is the most important social issue according to stakeholder participants, followed by public transportation and substance use/addiction. Other social issues that were identified during the engagement process included bullying, isolation and loneliness, poverty, domestic and family violence, elder abuse, homelessness, and discrimination.

### **Potential Actions**

Continue to share information with residents and stakeholders in the community through electronic and physical spaces

- ▶ Use both electronic and physical spaces to share information
- ▶ Use community events as a way to promote FCSS programs and services
- ► For specific programs and services, use the preferred promotional methods for the target demographic

### Distribute information through existing programs and community hubs

- ▶ Distribute information through programs residents are already accessing
- ▶ Distribute information at high traffic locations in each community (i.e. schools, seniors centres, libraries, recreation centres, transfer stations, restaurants, stores)

### Encourage municipalities to share information, planning and promotion

Encourage local municipalities to share information with each other about programs, services and events ▶ Create opportunities for coordinated planning and cross promotion

### Encourage cross-promotion of programs, services and events through service providers

▶ Work with service providers to share information about each other's programming with clients

# Maintain existing website for social supports

- Regularly update 211 database
- Continue to promote 211 as a key source of information about programs and services

## Encourage local municipalities to share information with newcomers in the community

▶ Explore local options to welcome newcomers to the community

- ▶ 211
- Black Gold School Division
- ► FCSS: Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg
- Key regional stakeholders
- Libraries
- Recreation centres
- Seniors centres
- Leduc County
- ▶ Town of Calmar
- ► Town of Thorsby
- Village of Warburg

Service Strategy

Early Childhood Development

Provide early childhood development programs to support children and families in developing strong foundations







Early childhood development is important because the emotional, social and physical development of young children has a direct impact on their overall development as an adult. Understanding the need to invest in young children is vital, so as to maximize their future well-being.

Research suggests that engaging young children leads to positive outcomes related to behaviour, social skills, physical development, emotional development, cognitive development and creativity.

In the 2016 Federal Census, there are over 1,000 children between the ages of 0 and 4 living in Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta. Leduc County FCSS offers a range of programming to support early childhood development. Greater awareness and accessibility of programming can help reach out to those families who are not yet utilizing these supports.

#### **Potential Actions**

### Enhance awareness of early childhood programs

- ▶ Continue to promote early childhood programs at events in all the communities
- ▶ Promote early childhood programs at community hubs that families frequent (i.e. schools, recreation centres, childcare facilities, stores)

### Raise awareness/decrease stigma about seeking early childhood development supports

- ▶ Promote the positive outcomes related to early childhood development
- ▶ Promote Ages and Stages questionnaires as an easily accessible assessment tool

### Increase awareness of existing licensed childcare providers

- Promote licensed childcare options in the communities
- Promote local preschool programs

### Early childhood development information website

► Create an online space with information on early child development programs, childcare options, available subsidies and parenting programs

### Improve access to quality childcare options

Encourage new licensed daycare, family day home and preschool programs

► Encourage opportunities for additional childcare spaces (i.e. drop in, part time, emergency, respite, childminding)

#### Reduce social isolation for families

- Increase awareness of existing social supports for families
- ▶ Work with local schools to engage children in preschool and kindergarten
- Work with local service providers and agencies to engage families

## Provide awareness of local training opportunities for childcare providers

Qualified childcare staff are required to support the demand for local childcare. Promotion of training opportunities will enhance the qualifications of childcare providers

- Alberta Human Services
- ▶ Black Gold School Division
- Churches
- Early Childhood Programs
- ▶ FCSS: Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg
- Key regional stakeholders
- ▶ Leduc Strathcona Day Home Agency
- Libraries



Support opportunities for youth to be engaged in ways that support their well-being and help build capacity within their local communities







In rural municipalities, youth are important in building and sustaining communities. Providing youth with opportunities to be engaged within their communities and make positive impacts is important for developing the leaders of tomorrow. Supporting youth through education, mentorship and youth-led initiatives gives youth a voice, empowers them to get involved and reinforces their value in the community.

The top needs that resident survey respondents identified to better support youth in the community included: more things to do, youth activities and programs, and youth gathering places. Survey respondents expressed a need for affordable, local, safe and youth led programs. Youth activities and programs included recreation, sport and leisure as well youth groups and clubs. Stakeholder participants also identified needs to better support youth. Greater awareness of mental health and addiction was identified, as was the need for more opportunities for mentorship, peer support and counselling.

## **Potential Actions**

### Enhance awareness of youth programs and services across the communities

➤ Continue to promote youth programs through social media, websites, schools, community signage, events and word of mouth

### Enhance awareness of tobacco and substance use

- Work with Alberta Health Services and local schools to enhance awareness of the negative impacts of tobacco and substance use
- ▶ Establish a Drug Action Committee with youth representation

### Minimize barriers to access for youth programs and services

- Explore options for affordable/free youth activities in communities
- Explore transportation options to youth events
- ► Encourage local programming options in community hubs (i.e. schools, community halls, recreation centres)

### Provide more opportunities for youth to engage

Establish a Youth Advisory Committee

- ▶ Establish a youth council to report on youth challenges and opportunities in the communities
- ▶ Encourage a youth job/volunteer board (online) for local opportunities
- Encourage peer/mentorship opportunities

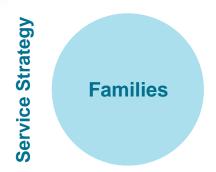
# **Expand youth programs and services**

- ► More drop-in youth programming
- ▶ More life skills programs (i.e. cooking, financial literacy, healthy relationships)
- ▶ More programming for children and youth ages 6-17

### Explore options for a youth outreach worker to advocate for youth

Have a youth outreach worker to connect schools, local programming and youth in the community

- Alberta Health Services
- Boys & Girls Club of Leduc
- ▶ Black Gold School Division
- Churches
- ▶ FCSS: Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg
- Libraries
- Local business community
- Local youth program providers
- Volunteer community groups/members



Encourage families to live healthy lifestyles that support their individual and collective well-beings







Building strong and vibrant communities stems from healthy residents and families. Ensuring that families have adequate social supports is essential to sustaining communities and building capacity.

In the 2016 Federal Census, families with children comprised approximately 38% of all families in the region. Town of Calmar, Hamlet of New Sarepta, Town of Thorsby and Village of Warburg have a greater proportion of lone-parent families than the overall Leduc County and Alberta proportions. Greater social resources in these communities are important to support lone-parent families in particular. During the engagement process, resident survey respondents identified needs for better supporting families with children. This included providing more children's activities and programs, childcare options, family gathering places and parenting programs and services. Stakeholder participants identified similar needs but also identified mental health support and transportation as needs for supporting families.

### **Potential Actions**

# Improve awareness of existing programs and supports available for individuals and families

▶ Distribute information about local programs and services for families at community hubs that families frequent (i.e. schools, recreation centres, childcare facilities, stores)

### Encourage healthy relationships, families and communities

- ▶ Enhance community awareness around family violence prevention
- ▶ Work with regional stakeholders to provide information and education to communities about positive relationships, effective communication, and reduced isolation

### **Encourage financial stability across the communities**

- Explore ways to enhance access to employment, income, and subsidy supports
- Explore opportunities for greater access to Alberta Supports across all communities through mobile or outreach services

### Focus on building capacity within communities to support families

▶ Increase partnerships with community organizations (i.e. churches, community groups, businesses, schools) to raise awareness and support around social issues

# Focus on utilizing existing community hubs as places to gather and increase local programming and supports

- Community schools (evenings/weekends)
- Community halls
- Family Resource Networks

#### More local programming for individuals and families

- Life skills (i.e. cooking, financial literacy, healthy relationships, parenting)
- Counselling for all ages
- Programming for residents with special needs
- Local activities and programs for children

- Alberta Child & Family Services
- Alberta Health Services
- Alberta Supports
- Black Gold School Division
- ► Canadian Mental Health Association
- Churches
- Family Counselling Centres
- ▶ Family Violence Prevention Team
- ▶ FCSS: Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg FCSS
- Karunia Counselling
- Leduc & District Victim Services
- Leduc Hub Association
- ▶ Leduc Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Local business community
- Libraries
- ▶ Leduc Regional Housing Foundation
- ▶ RCMP
- Volunteer community groups/members



### Support access to mental health services







The mental health of an individual includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It is important in all stages of life, and impacts children, youth, adults and seniors who require appropriate supports. Access to mental health supports and preventative programs is a key contributor to overall quality of life. During the engagement process stakeholder participants identified depression and other mental health concerns as the most important social issue. Many resident survey respondents agreed that depression and other mental health concerns is a social issue that existed within their communities.

In Leduc County, as with other rural communities, the widespread geography can sometimes lead to increased feelings of isolation and loneliness for residents. An aging population also tends to be less mobile, increasing their vulnerability to feelings of isolation and loneliness and other mental health concerns. In addition, stakeholder participants identified a need for mental health supports for families in the form of accessible, affordable and available family, children's and parent counselling.

#### **Potential Actions**

#### Raise awareness/decrease stigma around mental health and wellness in the community

- ▶ Increase awareness of what mental health and wellness is
- ▶ Information sessions to reduce the stigma of seeking help for mental health related concerns for individuals and their families
- Increase awareness of what mental health concerns can look like

#### Improve awareness in the community about mental health programs and services

Information sessions to promote existing programs and supports at existing community hubs (i.e. libraries, schools, senior centres, community halls)

#### Greater dialogue around youth mental health issues

- Connect with youth counsellors and youth around mental health issues
- ▶ Use youth gathering places as opportunities for greater awareness of supports

# Identify and promote opportunities to strengthen community engagement to reduce the onset of mental health related issues

▶ Encourage and promote programs and services that focus on rural mental health across all communities

▶ Build and enhance social connections within local communities

#### **Establish a Regional Mental Health Committee**

- ▶ The committee can be used by regional and neighbouring municipalities to jointly advocate for mental health supports and services
- Conversations could focus on building a common language around mental health and widespread awareness about the resources available

#### Improve access to local opportunities for mental health supports

- ▶ Explore opportunities for mobile mental health services for the communities
- ▶ Telephone/web counselling sessions after the intake/initial visit
- ▶ Reduce barriers to accessing services (i.e. transportation, childcare, cost)
- ▶ Continue to encourage/attract healthcare professionals to work in rural communities

# Build a common language around mental health and widespread awareness about available resources

- Increase awareness of mental health within municipal councils, administrations and staff departments
- Encourage conversations around mental health with service providers and community members
- ▶ Promote enrolment in programs that provide education around mental health (e.g. Mental Health First Aid programs)

- Alberta Health Services
- Black Gold School Division
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- CASA
- ▶ Chimo
- ▶ Doctor Retention Committee (Warburg, Thorsby, Breton)
- Family Counselling Centres
- ▶ FCSS: Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg
- George Spady Society
- Karunia Counselling
- ▶ Leduc Regional Housing Foundation
- Riseup Society

Safe Communities

# Ensure communities are safe and inclusive for all residents







A sense of safety and inclusion is vital in shaping and enabling municipalities to flourish. Feelings of security and belonging are key to ensuring residents are engaged, productive and positive contributors to their communities.

In the resident survey, some respondents identified social issues that indicate they may not feel safe in their communities. Adult respondents identified criminal activity as the most important social issue. Overall, criminal activity is the social issue most reported by surveyed residents. Residents expressed their feelings in relation to areas including criminal activity (property crimes), substance use/addiction, bullying, and domestic/family violence.

During the engagement process, residents also identified social issues that suggest they may not feel included in their communities. Resident survey respondents indicated that bullying and isolation and loneliness are important social issues. Other social issues some residents reported they believe exists in their community included domestic and family violence, discrimination, unsafe communities and elder abuse.

#### **Potential Actions**

#### Continue to promote crime reduction strategies

▶ Promote crime reduction statistics and crime reduction strategies through the use of municipal websites, social media and community signage

# RCMP and Enforcement Services continue to work to build positive relationships in the communities

Continue to build positive relationships with residents (ie. youth, families, individuals)

#### Enhance communication of safe and inclusive communities

- ▶ Encourage and promote safe communities through the use of social media, email, websites, signage, information sessions, and schools
- ▶ Encourage and promote inclusivity in areas such as cultural awareness and gender sensitivity

#### Support local communities to enhance community safety strategies

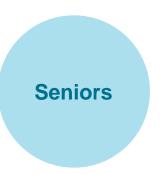
- ▶ Promotion of local crime watch (i.e. Rural Crime Watch Associations, Citizens on Patrol)
- ► Encourage community based ways of getting to know neighbours (i.e. Block Parties, Neighbourhood Connectors)

► Encourage use of opportunities to get to know newcomers in the community (i.e. Welcome Wagon)

#### **Promote local emergency preparedness**

▶ Encourage local communities to have plans and awareness around emergency preparedness and response

- Community leaders/residents
- ▶ Family Violence Prevention Team
- ▶ FCSS: Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg
- ▶ Leduc & District Victim Services
- ▶ Leduc County Enforcement Services
- ► Leduc Nighthawks (Citizens On Patrol)
- Libraries
- ▶ RCMP
- Riseup Society
- Rural Crime Watch Associations
- Leduc County
- ▶ Town of Calmar
- Town of Thorsby
- Village of Warburg



Expand seniors supports that allow people to age in place within their local communities







As the population of a community continues to age, there is a demand for a wider range of social services to allow residents to age in place and support their desire to continue to live within their home community. The overall Leduc County has a greater proportion of seniors (65+) than across Alberta.

Almost all (95%) of the seniors who responded to the survey have plans to remain in their home community as they age. However, just over half (53%) of resident survey respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with Leduc County as a place to age.

While seniors have identified a strong preference to continue to age in their homes, they do require greater supports to satisfy their needs. Based on the resident survey, respondents identified that transportation was one of the top needs required to better support seniors in the community. Lack of transportation options created a barrier to accessibility of physical and mental health services that are essential to aging residents.

Seniors identified their preference to continue to age in the community because of their home, family and friends, and the rural/acreage lifestyle.

#### **Potential Actions**

#### Further promotion of existing supports for seniors

- Continue to use FCSS as a key resource to share information and connect with seniors in the community
- Reach out to seniors using their preferred methods of communication

#### Enhance awareness of government supports and benefits to assist seniors

Continue to use FCSS to promote and facilitate access to supports and benefits for seniors

#### Continue to create opportunities for seniors to be connected and engaged in their communities

Work with local communities to continue to offer local events that encourage seniors to be active and engaged

#### Identify opportunities to connect with isolated seniors in the community

- Utilize existing seniors support services as a mode to reach out to isolated seniors
- Continue to encourage word of mouth invitations among seniors to local events

#### **Expand seniors transportation services**

- ▶ Help establish a system for scheduling local seniors transportation
- ▶ Work with local communities to explore opportunities for volunteer driver programs

#### Expand supports to enable seniors to age in place

- ▶ Further engagement with seniors on the supports needed to encourage aging in place
- Create a volunteer handyman program
- Continue to advocate for mobile physical and mental health services
- Establish a seniors companion program
- ▶ Continue to provide housekeeping services

#### Respite supports for caregivers

▶ Explore opportunities for local respite supports for caregivers of seniors

- Alberta Health Services
- Alberta Supports
- Churches
- ▶ FCSS: Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg
- ▶ Leduc Transit/Leduc Assisted Transportation Service
- ▶ Leduc Hub Association
- Local seniors buses
- Local seniors centres
- Serving Hands Senior Care Ltd.

Social Connections

Foster social and recreational opportunities that support physical and mental well-being and allow residents of all ages to establish connections within their communities







Improved access to social and recreational opportunities that support physical and mental well-being is a priority for residents and stakeholders. Recreation and leisure are unique in their ability to build capacity and are vital to establishing healthy communities and individual well-being.

Establishing healthy social connections is important in all stages of life - for children, youth, adults and seniors. These connections with community can help to minimize feelings of isolation and loneliness and can protect against depression and other mental health concerns.

Many of the municipalities within Leduc County have higher proportions of children and seniors and need to ensure they are providing opportunities for their residents to be engaged and connected to their community.

#### **Potential Actions**

#### Improve awareness of existing programs and services

▶ Continue to promote existing programs and services through the use of word of mouth, social media, websites, community signage, events and community hubs (i.e. schools, seniors centres)

#### Establish local social committees to promote/organize events in the community

- ▶ Connect local stakeholders in the planning and promotion of community programs, services and events
- Reduce barriers for residents to access events in neighbouring local communities

#### Enhance local programs for children and youth

- ▶ Explore programming needs for children and youth ages 6-17
- ▶ Establish partnerships with local program providers and community hubs (i.e. schools, libraries, recreation centres, community halls)
- Explore opportunities for low/no cost events and activities for families

#### **Enhance local programs for seniors**

- ▶ Establish partnerships with local community organizations, program providers and seniors centresMinimize barriers to accessing recreation and leisure programs
- ▶ Transportation to events and activities at recreation centres and community hubs
- ▶ Explore opportunities for low/no cost events and activities for seniors

#### Encourage volunteerism across all the communities

▶ Build volunteer connections locally and regionally

- ▶ Black Gold School Division
- Community halls
- ▶ FCSS: Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg
- Libraries
- Local business community
- Local service providers
- Local recreation centres
- Local seniors centres
- ▶ Sports, recreation and leisure organizations/coaches

Substance Use/ Addictions Support access to comprehensive substance use programs that include addressing root causes







Substance use and addiction was one of the most reported social issues that surveyed residents strongly agree or agree exists in their community.

The engagement process highlighted the need for greater awareness of addiction and increased accessibility to supports for those residents and families that are experiencing negative impacts from substance use related issues.

In addition, increased awareness, education and addiction support for youth was identified to be a priority.

#### **Potential Actions**

#### Foster awareness of addiction and reduce stigma in seeking help

- ▶ Information sessions in community hubs (i.e. libraries, schools, seniors centres, community halls)
- More awareness around the negative impacts of substance use

#### Enhance awareness of addiction supports available in the community

- ▶ Increase awareness of: 211, local support groups (i.e. AA, NA, Al-Anon) and local service providers
- ▶ Use community hubs as a mechanism to improve awareness (i.e. schools, events, businesses, post offices, transfer stations)

#### **Establish a Drug Action Committee for rural areas**

▶ The committee will be used to advocate for prevention and supports to address substance use related issues in rural areas

# Advocate with neighbouring municipalities for greater access to addiction supports across the region

- Intake/mobile intake services
- Detox services
- Residential treatment
- Counselling services

#### **Enhance supports for youth addictions**

- ▶ Establish a High Risk Youth Committee, where regional stakeholders meet to discuss issues and opportunities
- ▶ More dialogue between youth counsellors, schools, and Alberta Health Services

- Alberta Health Services
- Black Gold School Division
- CASA
- ► Chimo
- ▶ FCSS: Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg
- Leduc Community Corrections
- ▶ Leduc Community Drug Action Committee
- Local support groups
- City of Beaumont
- ▶ City of Leduc
- ▶ Leduc County
- ▶ Town of Calmar
- ► Town of Devon
- Town of Thorsby
- Village of Warburg



Improve dignified access to healthy food for people experiencing hunger and food insecurity



Access to basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter are essential to fostering healthy individuals and strong communities. Local food security is a core component of ensuring residents have their basic necessities.

It is important that the community respond as a whole to work together to support families and individuals in accessing foods to support healthy lifestyles. Access to nutritious food results in more successful students, more active families, more productive individuals, more healthy seniors and higher quality of life among residents.

#### **Potential Actions**

#### Improve coordination of food hamper delivery to all communities

- ▶ Encourage discussion among service providers (ie. Leduc & District Food Bank, volunteers) to establish a process to bring food hampers to local communities.
- ▶ Advocate for a consistent pickup location in local communities for food hampers

#### Provide life skills development opportunities in all communities

- Regional stakeholders expand cooking programs such as the Community Kitchen to all communities
- ▶ Regional stakeholders establish life skills programs in existing spaces in all communities

#### Enhance access to food for isolated residents in all communities

▶ Local community organizations and volunteers establish food delivery options (e.g. Meals On Wheels) for seniors and persons with disabilities in local communities

#### Increase accessibility to affordable food options in all communities

▶ Local community organizations and volunteers establish food co-op programs (e.g. WECAN Food Baskets) in all communities

# Expand breakfast, lunch and snack programs to all schools within Black Gold School Division

▶ Leduc & District Food Bank and volunteers expand breakfast, lunch and snack programs to all schools in all communities

#### Enhance access to quality nutritious food in all communities

► Connect with local food suppliers (i.e. grocery stores, farm producers) to provide nutritious options in their communities

- Alberta Health Services
- ▶ Black Gold School Division
- ▶ FCSS: Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg
- ▶ Leduc & District Food Bank
- Local food suppliers
- ▶ Meals On Wheels
- Volunteer community groups/members
- WECAN Food Basket Society



Enhance access to adequate and affordable housing that meets the individualized needs of residents







Access to adequate and affordable housing is an important foundation for overall quality of life. Residents struggle with housing affordability, especially low income households, persons with disabilities and seniors. Across Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta there is a variation among the income levels of residents, and some municipalities experience a greater prevalence of low income than others. Warburg, Thorsby, and New Sarepta have a higher prevalence of low income as compared to the overall Leduc County proportion. As such, these municipalities may require greater supports to ensure residents have adequate and affordable housing options. Rural municipalities also typically have a larger proportion of single-detached homes as compared to urban centres. The lack of diversity in housing options can sometimes create barriers for individuals and families that require a greater range of housing options.

In the engagement, availability of low income/subsidized housing and housing options for all life stages were identified as social issues. Seniors housing was one of the top needs identified by residents to better support seniors in their communities. This included a range of housing options: assisted/supportive living, long term care, affordable, low income and retirement housing. Some residents and stakeholders also identified need for supports for tenants living in rental housing in local municipalities. This included more information about adequacy of housing conditions, available subsidies and tenant/landlord dispute supports.

In addition, homelessness was identified by some residents and stakeholders as a social issue in their communities.

#### **Potential Actions**

#### Advocate for grants/subsidies for social housing units across the communities

▶ Work with neighbouring municipalities to jointly advocate for more affordable/subsidized housing units in the region.

#### Improve awareness around tenant and landlord policies and rights

▶ Promote Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) and Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution Service (RTDRS) to tenants/renters and landlords.

#### Improve awareness of home improvement/repair grants available for landlords

- ▶ Seniors Home Adaptation and Repair Program (SHARP)
- Alberta Secondary Suite Program

▶ Home Energy Plan

#### Increase accessibility to housing supports

Expand partnerships across the region with housing stakeholders.

#### Work with local builders to encourage development of multi-family units

▶ Encourage builders to build a range of local housing options for all life stages.

#### **Encourage building of secondary suites**

- ▶ Increase awareness of secondary suites as a secondary income option
- ▶ Promote Alberta Secondary Suite Program to offset costs for building a suite.

#### Garner a better understanding of homelessness and housing needs in all communities

- ▶ Further research into housing needs and homelessness (e.g. Homeless Count).
- ▶ Engage with stakeholders about how to address rural homelessness.

# Partner with communities to use existing spaces for emergency/transitional/supportive housing

Work with local communities to identify existing spaces that could be used for temporary housing.

- Alberta Supports
- ▶ FCSS: Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg
- Leduc Hub Association
- Leduc Regional Housing Foundation
- City of Beaumont
- City of Leduc
- Leduc County
- Town of Calmar
- ▶ Town of Devon
- ▶ Town of Thorsby
- Village of Warburg

# 3. Moving Ahead

The Leduc County Social Framework is intended to be a living document to support social planning across the region over the coming years. The social issues and priorities identified during this process reflect the voices and concerns at this time and should continue to be further explored to identify root causes, interconnection among issues, and prioritization based on urgency of need and available resources.

Stakeholders across the region identified a common vision to enrich the quality of life of residents by finding opportunities to collaborate and build local capacity to support the regional social service sector. Leduc County, Town of Calmar, Town of Thorsby and Village of Warburg have many assets that they will be able to leverage in addressing needs as expressed by residents and stakeholders. This includes the shared vision across municipalities, the strong FCSS programs, the relationships with a range of social service providers, and the engaged residents.

### **Planning Our Priorities**

It is proposed that the communities of Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta come together to engage in operational planning for stakeholders, where they come together to agree to work on a limited number of priorities and build up plans based on this collective decision making. The Leduc County Social Framework can be used as a guiding document to engage in a planning process that establishes priorities for each community and collectively as a region.

In establishing priorities and strategies, there should be a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders. Most social service organizations have clear mandates that state the boundaries of their work. To gain a greater understanding of the potential roles and responsibilities of local and regional organizations in addressing a given issue the following can be explored:



- ▶ Which organizations have a mandate that supports the priority?
- ▶ Who has capacity to take on a leadership role in addressing the priority?
- ▶ Are there opportunities for partnerships?
- Are there other organizations that should be involved to support the issues?

It is not possible to address every priority at one time. It is recommended that an order for addressing priorities be set. Explore each issue and ask the following:

- ▶ Are there any expressed needs that must be addressed prior to another, or that need to addressed simultaneously?
- ▶ Are there any priorities that can be addressed in the short-term with limited resources?
- ▶ Which issues will require the greatest amount of time and resources?

Moving ahead, it is intended that this document has been developed to provide the community with a feasible, impactful path toward addressing some of the key priorities and issues identified during the engagement process. Organizations and individuals can take the Leduc County Social Framework and move it forward locally and regionally. Cross-sectional planning, collaboration between FCSS programs and service providers, collaboration among community organizations and the business community, and advocacy from local groups will aid in developing strategies to strengthen the well-being of residents of Leduc County, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg and New Sarepta.

