



Strategic Plan

The Nourish and Develop Foundation

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1. Strategic Context

1.1. Executive Summary

In 2011, the Nourish and Develop Foundation (TNDF) opened its doors in Cannington, Ontario to fill service gaps across Brock Township, with an emphasis on food access, food literacy, and community building.

Over the last decade, TNDF has grown in many ways. As of 2023, they employ nearly 20 staff members, operate out of 3 facilities, have over 100 registered volunteers, and run dozens of foods and social support programs and partnerships each year.

Between 2020 and 2022, TNDF experienced rapid and unpredictable change. As a result, their team, and the community lost clarity on who TNDF is, what TNDF does, and where TNDF is heading.

In the summer of 2022, TNDF engaged Laridae, a leading consulting and training firm, to guide the team through a strategic planning process, resulting in the development of this three-year strategic plan.

For TNDF, the goal of this planning process was to re-gain clarity so they could move from a state of being reactionary into a place of being highly intentional about all that they do, in alignment with their team and the community's needs and aspirations for the organization.

In line with industry best-practices, their strategic planning process included a document review, focus groups and key person interviews, an online survey, and an environmental scan that situated the organization within the larger context. Additional meetings were held with the team to work towards developing the final strategy.

A Three-Year Plan

The Nourish and Develop Foundation is committing to a three-year (2023-2026) strategic plan with three (3) strategic directions:

- Proactive & Sustainable Organization
- Thriving & Resilient Team
- Interconnected with Community

These directions, which are detailed later in this document, will help position the organization to ensure they can sustainably continue to provide responsive and excellent services and programs.

2. Mission, Vision, and Values

As a part of this strategic planning process, TNDF refreshed their mission, vision, and values. They decided upon the following foundational statements.

Mission:

We connect people to nourishing food and supportive resources, empowering the community to come together to develop lasting change.

Vision:

For Brock Township and surrounding areas to be thriving communities in which everyone is food secure, safely housed, and well supported.

Values:

Curiosity: our team is geared towards learning and non-judgement; we ask questions and listen to the answers, recognizing that everyone has something valuable to contribute to the work we do

Connection: building reciprocal relationships with and between community members and partners to facilitate inclusion and belonging

Advocacy: we influence change at a local level by amplifying the lived and living experience of community members and pushing for systemic solutions to poverty, injustice, and social isolation

Responsiveness: in conversation with our community, we identify and address service gaps in innovative and collaborative ways

Equity: we meet people where they are at, emphasizing the right for community members to determine and meet their own needs in a dignified way

3. Strategic Focus

Through the strategic planning process, we explored the scope of our work.

We agreed that being clear and inclusive of how we express what we offer while setting healthy boundaries is important in bringing our team and community together.

3.1. Service Branches

When we opened our doors in 2011, TNDF's activities were aimed at enhancing food security, food literacy, and connection in our community. Over time, this has evolved in response to the changing community pressures and needs.

With our increased expansion beyond food access and security to offering social supports over the last four years, we have now made the strategic decision to amalgamate our former Women's Services branch with our former Social Support department to form a new branch called Social Services. At the same time, we will bring all of our food departments, programs, and initiatives under a second branch called Food Services.



Across both service branches, we will continue the following core approaches to service:

- Building community by fostering reciprocal relationships with and between community members
- Offering learning opportunities and hold space for folks to exchange knowledge
- Advocating with our community for solutions to poverty and injustice, focusing on the local level while amplifying campaigns that advocate for systems change at the provincial and national levels
- Helping community members navigate social service systems by making warm referrals and advocating for their needs with them to other service providers in order to ensure they receive the best service possible

3.2. Service Boundaries

When a need is identified within the community, we do our best to be responsive. However, it is important that we stay within our capacity.

This naturally brings along some challenges. If we say yes to everything, we strain our capacity, financial resources, and ability to deliver effective service.

Through this planning process, we want to start setting internal boundaries and criteria for the things we say yes to and reinforce that it's ok to say no to things too.

Moving forward, we will continue to do work that directly meets our two branches of service and remains aligned with our core service approaches.

Although we can find connections, sometimes even loose connections to our pillars, we will be more intentional with choosing to move ahead with opportunities that:

- have connections to one, or both of our branches
- leverage our resources (people, time, and money) responsibly
- have the biggest impact on our community

Our team will explore opportunities that fit within our mandate. We will support initiatives out of scope by referring to better-aligned partners, offering space instead of time and other resources, and making appropriate connections.

3.3. Geographic Boundaries

TNDF offers service across Brock Township and surrounding areas and will continue to do so. Through our planning process, we discussed what geographic reach would mean for our team moving forward.

We decided to continue service where we currently are and engage other communities through collaboration so long as the partnership aligns with service boundaries as described above. Although we will do our best to support those in need, we are not focusing our resources on any intentional expansion of our geographic bounds.

4. Strategic Directions

An effective strategic plan sets the foundation for a clear and focused future, uniting the organization under a common purpose and strategy.

Our strategic directions shape our strategic plan. Each strategic direction is intended to proactively achieve our mission and put the updated strategic focus areas above into action, guiding us while allowing us to respond and adapt as circumstances evolve over the coming years.

Each of our strategic directions includes some context, an impact statement, and a corresponding set of tangible commitments.

Our strategic directions and commitments will provide a strong framework for developing annual operational plans with measurable goals, and achievable objectives.

4.1. Proactive & Sustainable Organization

Over time, we have prioritized being adaptable and responsive to our community's evolving needs.

We must continue to do so, while also dedicating efforts to being more proactive in our change management, with emphasis on building our capacity to sustain the organization for years to come.

Impact Statement

By 2026, we will have a renewed structure that considers effective governance, strong management, and financial health for TNDF's long-term sustainability.

Commitments

*Over the next 3 years, we are committing to **being a proactive and sustainable organization** by:*

- **Enhancing practices for long-term governance:** increasing board membership diversity, exploring how to best engage community in governance, and embedding effective governance approaches to reduce overall risk.
- **Ratifying leadership while balancing the value of a non-traditional structure:** implementing and investing in a management structure that separates governance and operations, ensures effective accountability, allows for effective decision-making, and builds capacity to support a growing team.
- **Exploring ways to diversify our funding sources:** building on a strong start, we will continue to be financially responsible with our decisions while finding new and alternative funding sources, prioritizing our financial sustainability and health.

4.2. Thriving & Resilient Team

We have built an exceptional team. Each staff member is dedicated, responsive, and aligned to create a welcoming and safe place for those we serve.

We will continue to prioritize the well-being of our team and the health of our unique workplace culture by creating defined opportunities for staff to grow and ensuring we have the knowledge, resources, and capacity to courageously work through challenges and change as a team.

Impact Statement

By 2026, we will have a healthy workplace where everyone can collaborate, learn, and grow while continuing to have a meaningful impact on our community.

Commitments

*Over the next 3-years, we are committing to **building a thriving and resilient team** by:*

- **Establishing clear growth pathways for staff:** creating succession plans for core roles and investing in professional development and learning.
- **Being intentional with change management:** considering implications of change on team dynamics, thinking critically about clear communications through change, and building the team's capacity to be proactive and courageous through change.
- **Re-energizing our engagement with volunteers:** to effectively increase our capacity where needed and re-engage community members in a meaningful way while balancing the administrative element of volunteer management.

4.3. Interconnected With Community

At our core, we are community builders. We exist to support our community; and to do so, we need to continue rooting our work in collaboration.

Over time, the nature of our community engagement has adapted as necessary, as has our organization's branding. Although we maintained a strong connection and overall reputation, we have come to be recognized by different names and logos, depending on how community members have engaged with our work.

Moving forward, we will unite our identities and align them with how our community recognizes us. We will also work to clarify our approach to partnerships by exploring our assets and limitations and by defining and maintaining our boundaries.

Impact Statement

By 2026, we will be known by a single name and organizational identity, increasing awareness through effective communications, collaboration, and partnerships.

Commitments

*Over the next 3-years, we are committing to **connecting with our community** by:*

- **Uniting our identity and building a compelling brand:** building on our strong reputation, we will reflect on our visual identity, name, and brand language to build understanding and connection between our organization and community.

- **Making sure we are known:** increasing awareness about our programs and services with other service providers, people seeking support, and our community.
- **Being strong partners:** we will continue collaborating with other service providers, businesses, and government by evaluating their strengths, limitations, and boundaries as well as our own. We will leverage our assets, and the assets of our partners, while also acknowledging and honouring our limitations and boundaries by establishing clear partnership policies and agreements.

5. Conclusion

The Nourish and Develop Foundation remains responsive to the needs of our community. From food services to social services, our team is dedicated to facilitating access to better support for individuals and families.

We understand that we cannot be everything to everyone, so we strive to be intentional in our approach to supporting the community. By setting clear boundaries, we will improve capacity while increasing our impact.

The three key strategic directions guiding our future are:

- Proactive & Sustainable Organization
- Thriving & Resilient Team
- Interconnected with Community

By strengthening our internal resources, providing meaningful work for our team, and communicating effectively with our stakeholders, we will make certain TNDF remains a key player in our community's well-being.

These strategic directions will help guide us over the course of the next three years and ensure we continue to provide quality support to the people accessing our services and programs.

6. Appendix: Stakeholder Engagement Summary

6.1. Why Engage?

Leadership Through Genuine Engagement

Strategic plans that provide meaningful direction throughout their stated duration rely on an authentic engagement process that genuinely seeks input and allows those invested in an organization's success to provide ideas, input, and feedback.

Properly conducted, stakeholder engagement is in no way an abdication or devolution of leadership.

It's the opposite.

Leaders who reach out to and seek the input of the people delivering or receiving services are far more likely to craft future strategic directions that resonate with those they affect and those who must implement them.

The Multiple Purposes of Engagement



Listen

To listen to stakeholders by gathering input, ideas, and suggestions.



Include

To include stakeholders in the planning process, helping to generate buy-in.



Educate

To educate stakeholders about the great work you do.

6.2. Engagement Process

Engagement served as the foundation for the process, informing subsequent discussion, deliberation, and decision-making.

The engagement process—developed and facilitated by Laridae in August and September 2022—was designed to engage with and listen to the individuals who interact with The Nourish and Develop Foundation regularly.

As a result of this engagement, our strategic plan is informed by experience, evidence, and the most broadly held perceptions of all those we serve.

Audiences

We engaged The Nourish and Develop Foundation's primary stakeholders during the engagement process.

People accessing services/ workshops & events	Parents/ Caregivers of people accessing services	Board Members	Community Partners
Staff (volunteers, frontline & management)	Funders and Donors	Elected Officials	Community Members

Stakeholder Participation



6.3. Common Themes

Advocacy

- Multiple participants recognized the need for **greater advocacy** in addressing community pressures.
 - It was said that by leading by example and advocating for the community, TNDF could help hold the township and other organizations accountable for collectively improving Brock Township.
 - Some respondents suggested that TNDF is well positioned to advocate collaboratively influencing meaningful policy changes at the government level.
 - Specific areas of improvement identified include:
 - Transportation
 - Mental health awareness
 - Income supports
 - Children and youth services
 - Food security
 - Affordable housing

Social Pressures

- Respondents mentioned that many people were struggling and finding it difficult to ask for help.
- Participants spoke to the pandemic's impact on the population and its contribution to mental health issues.
- The affordable housing crisis and the cost of rent are putting pressure on people.
- Inflation was noted as impacting lower socio-economic areas in the region in particular.
- As social pressures increase all over Ontario, it was noted that services and supports tend to prioritize urban areas and larger populations.
 - A lack of resources in North Durham was mentioned regarding the homeless.

Accessibility

- Many stakeholders reported ineffective transportation as a challenge in the area, noting that public and on-demand services have good intentions but are not very responsive and unreliable when scheduling appointments and other activities.
 - Some people trying to access transit services experienced difficulties in accessing Presto cards.
 - Everything is reportedly done online, which can be a barrier for some people.
 - The On Demand services require customers to load their mobile devices themselves.
- A need for accessible mental health services was identified as the impact of the pandemic has contributed to increased social isolation.
 - One respondent spoke about a lack of recreational activities for older adults.
- Several people reported needing reliable health care that is close to Cannington.
 - One participant mentioned having trouble accessing medications, with another adding that the delivery services may add fees, increasing expenses.
 - Waitlists contribute to the inaccessibility of primary care.
 - Some individuals commented on the lack of available support for those with disabilities.

- Multiple participants spoke about the difficulties of living in a historic town, noting the struggle to improve accessibility while maintaining historical values.

Perception and Awareness

- Some participants recognized TNDF as one of the only accessible places in the community, providing a safe space for people to visit and talk.
 - The organization was identified as friendly, inclusive, reliable, responsible, hard-working, compassionate, and physically and emotionally accessible.
- There was an appreciation for TNDF's communication skills and outreach regarding their services to partners.
 - It was acknowledged that a lot of information was going out to the public, but participants were unsure whether it was going to the right places.
- Consistent communication was a key element in maintaining client relationships and contact.

Service Delivery

- A strong theme throughout the engagement was TNDF's approach to service delivery.
- Multiple stakeholders spoke about prioritizing dignity, empowering individuals, and helping people make informed and healthy choices.
- Multiple participants identified a need to build food literacy skills and increase engagement with children and youth. The importance of "normalizing that everyone needs help sometimes."
- Additional supports for mental health, youth, and men in the community were mentioned by some respondents.

Partnerships and Collaboration

- There was an appreciation for TNDF's responsiveness and openness to working with partners.
 - Partners reported that their staff are engaged by the organization and are incorporated into TNDF's services.
 - There was an appreciation for the ability to use TNDF space for programming.
 - Multiple participants mentioned referrals between partners.

- Respondents noted that all partners need to leverage each other's strengths and better engage each other in specific program initiatives.
 - Systemic changes can be made by identifying the gaps and working collaboratively.
- It was suggested that adaptability with partnerships would be needed as new locations open in close proximity.

People and Capacity

- Many participants spoke of feeling supported and encouraged by fellow staff and volunteers.
 - It was noted that management focuses on outcomes, entrusting staff to meet expectations, and providing a sense of autonomy.
 - Staff focus on collaboration to meet the needs of the people receiving services and attending events.
- Stakeholders commented on staff being creative, motivated, and personable, which contributes to building great relationships with stakeholders.
 - Ensure new staff engage with the community and build familiarity with stakeholders to continue building personal relationships.