



# 2026-31 STRATEGIC PLAN





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# Land Acknowledgment

St. Leonard's Community Services, London & Region (SLCS) acknowledges that our six sites are located on land that has been inhabited by Indigenous Peoples for thousands of years.

There are longstanding relationships between the three local First Nations and these lands and waterways, and we are intentionally working to deepen respectful relationships with Indigenous communities.

We recognize the three First Nations communities with longstanding ties to this area: Chippewa of the Thames First Nation (the Anishinaabe); Oneida Nation of the Thames (the Haudenosaunee); and Munsee-Delaware Nation (the Lunaape) and we continue to show respect to these communities today. We also acknowledge the many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples who live, work, and seek services in London today.

We recognize and honour the commitments made through the Dish With One Spoon Wampum, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, which calls for the two nations to share and care for the land together, and the Two Row Wampum, an agreement between the Indigenous nations and settlers, which commits us to travel side by side in peace, friendship, and respect, neither trying to steer the other.

SLCS takes seriously our responsibilities under the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, particularly in educating our staff and leadership, and working alongside Indigenous partners to co-create services.

We are grateful for all generations of Indigenous People across Turtle Island for their contributions and care of the land and its resources. This is sacred land upon which we are privileged to live and work.

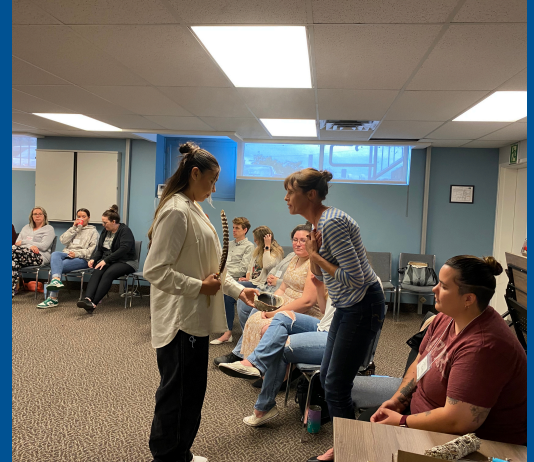


# Acknowledgements

SLCS' new strategic plan was shaped by the wisdom, experience, and generosity of many. We are grateful to everyone who participated in our planning process: program participants, staff, leadership, the Board of Directors, funders, and community partners. Your honesty, insight, and willingness to share, especially those who offered their lived experience, made this plan stronger, more grounded, and true to the community we serve.

A special thank you to the Strategic Planning Committee whose thoughtful guidance, compassion, and commitment carried this process from beginning to end.

This plan is not just for SLCS, but truly belongs to all of us. Your voices informed our reflections and shaped our priorities and goals for the next five years. As we move forward, we do so with gratitude, humility, and a deep sense of responsibility to honour the trust you have placed in us. We look forward to working together to build a community where all people are safe, supported, and valued. Always.



# Letter from SLCS' Executive Director and Board Chair

It is with great pleasure and humility that we present St. Leonard's Community Services, London & Region's (SLCS) new Strategic Plan 2026-2031, a roadmap that builds on our legacy of excellence and positions us to meet the future with confidence.

This is our plan. It is written with the experiences and insights of the people we support, our staff, board members, leaders, and community partners. Hundreds of people took the time and care to share their truth about SLCS and help us plan our future. What we heard in our consultation has reinforced the importance of the vital work we do. Together, we identified four priorities:



**Person-Centered Service**



**Community Connections**



**People and Culture**



**Financial Sustainability**

At the heart of SLCS is an unparalleled culture built by passionate and committed team members from across our community. We know that our organization is one where there is great alignment of our people with our vision, mission, and values. This Strategic Plan affirms our commitment to them.

With these priorities guiding us, we will continue to strengthen SLCS' operations and build on the solid foundation we have developed over decades and where our people thrive and our community benefits.

We were inspired by the feedback and input we received that shaped our 2026-2031 Strategic Plan. We extend not just our gratitude but a sense of excitement for all that we can achieve! This reaffirms SLCS' commitment to uphold our values with integrity, to foster an inclusive environment, and to ensure that everyone that we advocate with feels safe, valued, and respected.

***Gordon Thane***

Board Chair

***Michael Oates***

Executive Director



# About St. Leonard's Community Services, London & Region

For over 55 years, St. Leonard's Community Services, London & Region (SLCS) has been dedicated to a community where everyone feels safe, valued, and supported. SLCS provides a range of services including youth and adult community programs, school-based youth programs, and adult residential programs.

SLCS is committed to providing welcoming, inclusive, and respectful services that honour the dignity, strengths, and unique needs of each person we support. Although our organization was founded in 1969 with help from local religious institutions and figures, we are not a faith-based organization today. We commit to providing a non-judgmental space where people of all backgrounds feel seen, heard, and respected.

We recognize our historical ties to religious institutions and understand the significant impacts this history has had, especially on Indigenous communities. The painful legacy of Residential Schools and other forms of systemic oppression is a reality we must address. We strive to create a safe, welcoming, and culturally sensitive environment, especially for those affected by this history.

Our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation must be more than just words. SLCS' Justice Equity Diversity and Inclusion Council cultivates opportunities for learning, unlearning, reflection, and action. There is ongoing effort to embed restorative principles in our practices and policies, guided by our values of inclusion, collaboration, compassion, and accountability toward a more inclusive and culturally-responsive organization.

SLCS' goal is to support and advocate with those we serve. We welcome meaningful conversations about how we can continue to strengthen our services and our community.





# Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision, mission, and values are essential elements of an organization, naming who the organization is, what it seeks to achieve, and what it stands for. At SLCS, these are important touchstones grounding all that we do.

Think of vision, mission, and values like a journey. Our vision is the horizon, the future we are working toward, the destination we want to reach that keeps us moving forward. Our mission is the pathway, the concrete work we do every day to move toward that horizon. Our values are the compass, the principles that guide decisions and shape our relationships and actions. When the road is challenging or the way is unclear, values keep us oriented, unified, and true.

Together, our vision, mission, and values tell the story of who SLCS is, what we do, and why our work matters. We took time during strategic planning to update these foundational elements of our organization, affirming:

**Vision:** A community where everyone feels safe, valued, and supported

**Mission:** To support and advocate with individuals who are, or who are at risk of being, justice-involved

**Values:**

**Inclusion:**  
We recognize the diversity of human experiences, honour the dignity of each person, and respect each person's right to self-determination.

**Collaboration:**  
Relationships are central to who we are. Cultivating respectful and meaningful connections is what we do.

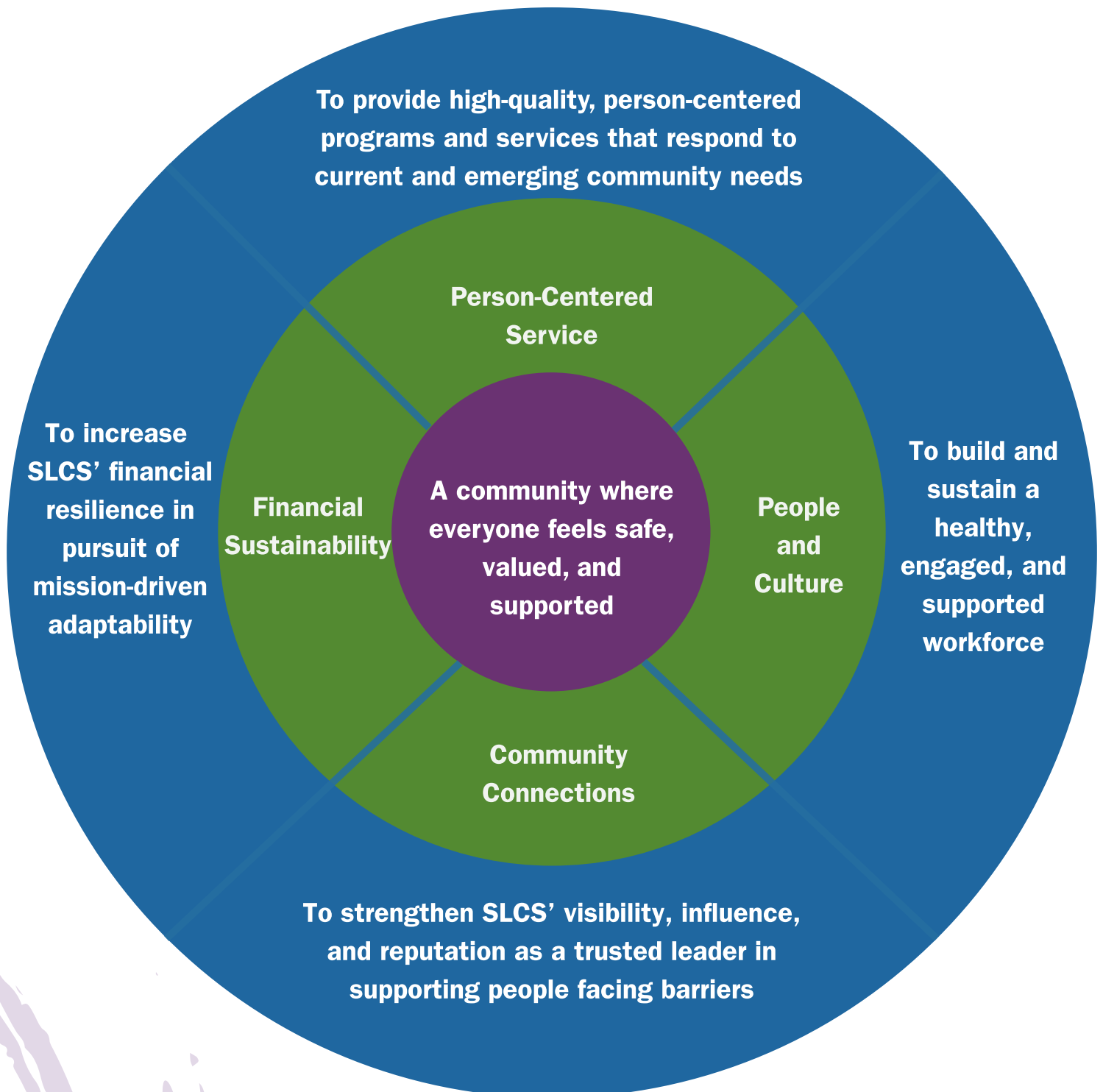
**Compassion:**  
We are honoured to be part of the journeys of others and walk alongside with empathy, commitment, and respect.

**Accountability:**  
We own our actions and make intentional choices with transparency and integrity.



# Overview of Strategic Priorities

In the next five years, SLCS will focus its efforts and initiatives in these key areas:





# Priority: Person-Centred Service

**Goal:** To provide high-quality, person-centred programs and services that respond to current and emerging community needs

## **How we will do this:**

1. Advance housing solutions that respond to evolving community needs
2. Expand and optimize partnership agreements to increase available resources
3. Engage participants and community members in the design and improvement of programs and services

## **Why this is important for SLCS right now:**

The needs of the people and communities we support continue to evolve. Homelessness, justice involvement, mental health challenges, and addictions are layered, interconnected elements, shaped by experiences of trauma, systemic barriers, and inequity.

Consistency and continuity of support can mean the difference between stability and crisis. Investing in this priority strengthens our ability to meet people where they are, from the moment they come through our door until they move on from our work together.

Evolving our programs and services is vital. It re-centres our work in the voices of participants and community members. It recognizes that gaps in housing, accessibility, and resources represent real barriers to health, wellness, and growth. It respects those we support through values-based commitments to grow, adapt, and show up. This is SLCS' moment to be bold, think long-term, and carry our mission forward with conviction.

SLCS is eager to take on this challenge.





# Priority: People & Culture

**Goal:** To build and sustain a healthy, engaged, and supported workforce

## **How we will do this:**

1. Foster a culture of trust, transparency, and engagement
2. Invest in employee wellbeing, resilience, and professional growth
3. Strengthen collaboration, connection, and belonging across SLCS
4. Engage in transparent and sustained conversations regarding total compensation and recognition

## **Why this is important for SLCS right now:**

People are at the centre of all we do. The quality of our services, the strength of our relationships, and our ability to make a meaningful impact in the community depend on having a skilled, compassionate, and engaged workforce.

As the needs of the people we support continue to evolve, so too do the demands placed on our employees working alongside them. This work can be challenging at times, requiring SLCS to invest in employees with the same care and intentionality that it brings to the people who access services.

As we build for the future, SLCS must continue to attract and retain qualified, mission-aligned employees. By fostering a culture of inclusion and belonging, we create an environment where employees feel fulfilled, know the difference they make, and experience the same sense of care and support that they extend to others.



# Priority: Community Connections

**Goal:** To strengthen SLCS' visibility, influence, and reputation as a trusted leader in supporting people facing barriers

## How we will do this:

1. Identify and create meaningful opportunities for engagement and collaboration with community members and partners
2. Increase public awareness of SLCS' mission and services
3. Share the impact of SLCS' work through outcomes and lived experiences that centre the voices of participants and community members

## Why this is important for SLCS right now:

SLCS has spent more than 55 years quietly and consistently working across London and the wider region. Our reach is extensive, though awareness of our work varies across communities and sectors. We are well known and deeply respected by many partners and community members. The opportunity now is to broaden awareness of SLCS, the people and communities we support, and the impact of our work.

Visibility and trusted relationships matter. They help ensure SLCS contributes to important conversations, builds strong partnerships, secures resources, and advocates effectively for the people and communities it supports.

There is also a harder truth: the work SLCS does is not universally embraced. Supporting people experiencing homelessness and justice involvement can be divisive, met with skepticism, misunderstanding, or opposition. Ignoring that reality does not make it go away. Meeting it head-on requires a confident, clear, and values-rooted public presence that amplifies the voices of lived experience.

These voices and experiences of the people and communities SLCS supports deserve a place in public conversation. Yet, too often, these perspectives are overlooked, misunderstood, or reduced to stereotypes and headlines. Strengthening our community connections helps change that. It broadens understanding of the challenges people face, highlights stories of resilience and growth, and fosters the trust and relationships that allow SLCS to extend its reach and deepen its impact.



A photograph showing the back of a person's head and shoulders as they sit at a round table. In front of them is a laptop displaying a website. To the right, the side of another person's head is visible. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an office or meeting environment.

# Priority: Financial Sustainability

**Goal:** To increase SLCS' financial resilience in pursuit of mission-driven adaptability

**How we will do this:**

1. Diversify SLCS' funding streams
2. Develop innovative values-aligned partnerships
3. Enhance organizational financial understanding to support informed decision-making across all levels of SLCS

**Why this is important for SLCS right now:**

The nonprofit sector is navigating one of its most challenging funding environments in recent memory. Shifting government priorities, rising compassion fatigue, and deepening economic pressures continue to strain the all-too-limited resources available to organizations doing critical community work. For agencies and participants at the intersection of justice involvement, social supports, and homelessness, the stakes are especially high.

Focusing on financial sustainability is not a retreat from mission; it is a commitment to protecting and promoting it. Financially resilient organizations can better weather uncertainty, respond to emerging needs, and continue showing up for its participants, communities, and partners. Financial resilience supports a thriving and mission-adaptive organization. This allows us to offer new and needed programs and supports, take measured risks, innovate, and grow. Financial resilience gives us the strength and independence to lead with our values first, not just our budget.



**Our administrative offices and many of our community-based programs are located at:**

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