



# South East Edmonton Seniors Association

## **2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan**

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## Definitions

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The following definitions are used in this document:

**Ageism** - stereotyping and/or discrimination against individuals or groups on the basis of their age.

**Brand** - a symbol, mark, logo, name, word, and/or sentence that identifies one organization's products and services as distinct from those of other organizations.

**Business Continuity** - an organization's ability to ensure operations and core business functions are not severely impacted by a disaster or unplanned events that impact critical systems.

**Business Model** - a broad range of informal and formal descriptions to represent core aspects of a business or organization, including purpose, business process, target customers, offerings, strategies, infrastructure, organizational structures, sourcing, collaboration practices, operational processes and policies including workplace culture.

**Collaboration** - a practice whereby individuals/organizations work together to a common purpose to achieve shared goals.

**Community Centred** - an organization that focuses on meeting broader community needs and achieving shared goals; proactively solicits external ideas and knowledge to serve the whole community for the collective good.

**Cultural Shift** - the process of new or unique persons, products or ideas becoming part of an existing community.

**Entrepreneurial** - a team's ability to see and/or create opportunities to generate new sources of revenue.

**Financial Management** - the function of an organization concerned with income, expense profit/loss, assets and liabilities, so that the organization may have the means to carry out its objective as satisfactorily as possible.

**Financial Viability** - an organization's ability to generate sufficient income to meet operating costs, debt commitments, and to facilitate planned growth while maintaining service levels.

**Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)** - a set of rules that encompass the details, complexities, and legalities of business and corporate accounting.

**Governance** - the structures, systems, and practices an organization has in place to do the following:

- define decision making, assign decision making authority, and set the organization's strategic direction.
- oversee services delivery, implement policy, plans, programs and projects, and monitor and mitigate its key risks.
- report on performance in achieving intended results and use of performance data to drive improvement and corrective action.
- principles of good governance:
  - **accountability** - the obligation of an individual, group, or organization to answer for a given responsibility.
  - **leadership** - the art of motivating a group or organization to act toward achieving good governance practice.
  - **integrity** - acting impartially, ethically, and in the public interest. Integrity is reflected through compliance with legislation, regulations, and policies, and through instilling high standards of professionalism at all levels of an organization.
  - **stewardship** - the careful and responsible management of resources entrusted to one's care.
  - **transparency** - the ongoing operation of an organization that creates openness between its stakeholders creating trust and leading to the organization's success.

**Governance Framework** - provides a mechanism for the Board, and those at the operational level, to have a clear understanding and oversight of each other's expectations, objectives, performance, risk appetite, and reporting requirements. These aspects are effectively communicated to relevant persons in the organization acting as a guidance system composed of standard management practices within the governance framework designed to suit the organization setting objectives, policies, values, culture, accountabilities, and performance.

**Intergenerational Programming** - opportunities that connect children, youth, adults and seniors; can take a variety of shapes and forms from a single event to weekly scheduled activities. One example is this YouTube video <https://youtu.be/oU276K74zuk> showing an older man practicing a current dance routine with his granddaughters.

**Operations Plan** - an extremely detail-oriented plan that clearly defines how staff contribute to reaching an organization's goals by outlining the daily tasks required for running an organization. When properly created, an operations plan makes sure each

staff member know their specific obligations, as well as how they should execute them within a defined timeline by mapping out the day-to-day tasks that ensure a clear path for the organization to follow in meeting goals.

**Organization Capacity** - the level of an organization's capability to deliver services and products that not only satisfy present customer expectations, but continually anticipate future marketplace opportunities. Key among the primary components of capacity are those associated with the human side of performance.

**Organization Centred** - organizations that focus internally, using internal ideas and knowledge and serve only a selected group and rejecting external ideas, knowledge and outsiders.

**Organizational Sustainability** - having the leadership, talent, global insights and change strategies necessary to meet the unique challenges facing the organization.

**Stakeholders** - individuals and groups having an interest in an organization or sector that can either affect or be affected by that organization or sector. SEESA stakeholders include members, volunteers, staff, instructors, donors, funders and potential partners.

**Strategic Plan** - a declaration of an organization's beliefs, vision and mission as well as its long-term goals and key strategies.

**Strategic Planning** - the process of defining an organization's strategy or direction, and making decisions to allocate its resources to pursue that strategy.

**Succession Planning** - a strategy for passing on leadership, governance and key management roles to new directors, officers or senior managers ensuring that an organization continues to operate after its key people move on to new opportunities, retire, or pass away.

## Introduction

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The South East Edmonton Seniors Centre (SEESA) was incorporated as a nonprofit in 1980 to provide services, programs, and activities for the southeast Edmonton senior population. Operating much like a private club, SEESA provided opportunities for social interaction, recreation, and information to help its members live independently.

In the spring of 2020 SEESA found itself facing several hard realities that resulted in the need to chart a new path forward, including:

- a significant & prolonged operating deficit.
- low organizational capacity.
- being unaware/in denial of trends about to impact Edmonton senior centres, such as the City of Edmonton's [2019 Approach to Serving Senior Centres Report](#).

The Covid 19 pandemic has killed almost a million people worldwide. Thousands of businesses and organizations closed and have remained closed to help stop the virus from spreading.

For SEESA, the Centre closure due to Covid 19 was and continues to challenge all of us, as it has isolated members from each other at a time when we need each other most. That said, if Covid had not happened we would likely have continued on the course we were on, which was, unknowingly, to attain bankruptcy by mid 2021.

Taking this as an opportunity to change that course, the Board of Directors embarked on a strategic planning effort to address current and emerging needs and to build organizational capacity to support and sustain SEESA's longevity and growth. The time frame for this plan begins in 2021 and continues through 2025. The plan provides our roadmap for the future and outlines the goals and strategies that will help achieve our mission and vision.

## History

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Since 1980, SEESA's membership continued to grow; today over 1,600 individuals are registered members and SEESA is now a federally registered charity. The centre operates out of a facility owned by the City of Edmonton.

In spring 2020 it was discovered that the organization had been operating in a financial deficit position for some time. Further, its organizational viability had been eroded by long term dependency on government funding and lack of leadership.

In response to this situation, the Board of Directors immediately reduced staff numbers and brought new leadership capacities to the table. The Board then focused its efforts on understanding and fixing the key issues related to finance, governance, operating capacity; and, conducted research to understand and build a response to emerging trends impacting Edmonton's senior centre sector.

The three key trends impacting senior centres are:

1. future government funding decisions will, in large part, be decided upon by the organization's level of accountability, organizational and financial sustainability, capacity for collaboration and readiness to move from being organization-centred to community-centred;
2. government funding is likely to decrease and in some cases may come to an end, and;
3. government is looking for ways to increase efficiencies and reduce inefficiencies throughout the senior centre sector.

The Board agreed upon a governance framework that will enable SEESA to build out its organizational capacity, and through that mechanism, strengthen financial and long-term viability. This framework, along with guidance from other non-profit organizations, businesses and governments, will help SEESA build the internal capacity needed to bring this plan to fruition.

## **Strategic Planning Process**

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In early summer of 2020 the SEESA Board of Directors made the decision to embark upon the process of strategic planning and struck a Strategic Planning Committee. Input was sought by asking members, instructors, volunteers and staff 'what's working well and what isn't. A current state assessment of organizational capacities was conducted. Additional input was sought through a series of ZOOM town hall sessions asking members, instructors, volunteers and staff to speak about their ideas for the future of SEESA. A total of 288 individuals submitted their input to the process. Two facilitated workshops were held to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (SWOC).

The Strategic Planning Committee developed belief, vision and mission statements followed by four (4) key action themes as a framework for SEESA's strategic plan. The Strategic Plan will be shared with members in the fall of 2020. The Operational Plan and 2021 Budget will be approved by the Board in December 2020.

Strategic Planning Committee Board Members:

- JudyLynn Archer, Michael Langstone, Bill Tkachuk, Brenda Winchester

August 7th Strategic Planning Workshop Participants:

- Strategic Planning Committee, Office Manager (Peggy Hansen)
- External Participants: Linda Ensley (Edmonton Seniors Centre), Susan Mann (Central Lions), Karen MacDonald (SAGE), Deb Alloway (Millwoods Seniors Centre), Wendy Weir (community member)

August 24th Strategic Planning Workshop Participants:

- SEESA Board Members Dorothy Korbut, Norma Marion, Ratna Basappa, Dave Patterson, Bill Tkachuk, Brenda Winchester, Michael Langstone, Heather Baker, JudyLynn Archer; Office Manager Peggy Hansen; Governance Committee Member Donna Spanu
- Strategic Planning Workshop Facilitator: Sharon Bell, Building Market Strategies

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## Beliefs

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The Board, as part of the strategic planning process, established a statement of beliefs to guide our work and decisions. We are:

**Accountable** - using our resources wisely and with integrity to honour the contributions of our stakeholders and report on that usage.

**Advocates** - providing a forum for understanding and addressing issues affecting seniors and our community at large.

**Affordable** - pricing membership so all can participate with sliding scale fee options and scholarships that are available for membership and classes, so that no one is excluded because they cannot afford to pay.

**Collaborative** - recognizing that our organization and community will be stronger and more effective as we build partnerships based on shared trust, mission and goals.

**Compassionate** - always behaving compassionately to others.

**Dementia friendly** - helping those living with dementia and their caregivers to feel included and supported.

**Empowering** - supporting the right to self-determination of all persons helping them live longer and better in the community they love and equipping them with information and choices to manage and enjoy their lives as fully as possible at every age.

**Friendly and fun** - with opportunities for forming new friendships and having a welcoming environment where other each know people.

**Future focused** - while respecting and honouring the past.

**Inclusive** - welcoming all, where all feel valued and included and respecting differences in age, cultural heritage, ethnicity, gender orientation, religion, physical abilities, and economic circumstances, and treating everyone with compassion, respect, and dignity.

**Leaders** - recognizing the talents among us and in the broader community, we cultivate and draw on our members and those external to our organization to make use of their vast experience and skills to benefit others, our organization and the community.

**Multigenerational** - encouraging participation of individuals and families representing a broad continuum of ages with intergenerational programming providing opportunities for bidirectional mentoring.

**Progressive** - continuously evaluating and improving our services and programs to provide our community with access to a broad spectrum of wellness, cultural and social opportunities in a safe, accessible and inviting setting.

**Redefining aging** - Ageism is discriminatory; people of all ages have wisdom, talent and resources to share; respecting the benefits that people of all ages bring to our organization and community is our new reality by encouraging individuals of all ages to work and volunteer at SEESA.

**Safety Focused** - delivering programs and services in safe places and in safe ways.

**Trustworthy** – earn trust by doing what we say we do.

## Vision

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***Vision: Southeast Edmonton is a vibrant, compassionate, inclusive place to grow up and grow older.***

Our vision for SEESA is integrated with our hopes for the future of Southeast Edmonton. It is no accident that our new vision is community-centred, not organization-centred. Moving forward, in order to be relevant, SEESA must be an asset to the broader southeast community.

SEESA's vision is consistent with its values and guiding principles, which emphasizes principles of a caring and inclusive community, compassion and integrity, accountability, and collaboration.

An overwhelming majority of baby boomers plan to remain in their homes as they age and poverty among seniors is likely to increase. In 2015/16, over 419,000 or 6.9% of Canadians age 65 years and older had dementia and two thirds were women. As the senior population continues to grow, the number of Canadians living with dementia will increase. The population of seniors in Alberta is expected to double within the next 2 decades; 18% of seniors aged 65 and over are visible minorities and 80% of care for seniors is provided by family and friends.

Increases in life expectancy, desire for independence and many aspects of diversity, meeting the needs of older adults and supporting healthy aging presents a complex challenge. To meet them, SEESA programs, services and facilities need to be inclusive and accessible with a focus on life long learning, healthy living, reducing social isolation and extending its scope of services to include more diverse seniors as well as their care givers.

SEESA facilities, programs and services need to be dementia friendly, culturally relevant and delivered in more flexible ways using a variety of formats. Sliding scale fee options may be utilized to provide equitable access to services and programs. Collaborations will expand and extend services, while enabling resource sharing, reduction of administration costs and deepening sense of community. Advocacy will

support seniors voices being heard to ensure seniors contributions and ideas are sought after, acknowledged and valued.

As we look to the future, our vision is embedded in the belief that in collaboration with its partners, SEESA will improve the lives of individuals; doing its part in helping Southeast Edmonton become a model age-friendly community for generations to come.

## Mission

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The revised mission of SEESA is:

***To empower and enhance the quality of life of people in our community as they age.***

Today, SEESA's focus is the wholeness of a person, including diet and exercise, social connectedness, life-long learning and the ability to reach needed services. Our reach is extended by working with our partners to bring even more programs and services to a more broad and diverse population.

With the emergence of new attitudes about healthy aging, inclusiveness and more active senior lifestyles, our mission is based in the concept of empowerment. We will not hold onto outdated concepts of aging. Instead, we will provide the information, tools, and support that older adults (50+) want and need in their quest for healthy and engaged living as they age. Our future is now being re-written in light of our new, broader responsibilities.

## Strategic Direction

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SEESA believes firmly in the safety, diversity and well-being of seniors. At the same time, SEESA and other centres across the country are confronting a changing population and diversifying customer base. Further, traditional funding for senior centres struggles to meet growing and changing demands. As a result, senior centres are forced to examine how they remain relevant to an ever-growing diverse group of people and provide the proven results and outcomes demanded by stakeholders.

The older adult population of today is significantly more active and has more leisure time than in the past and many more are living longer. Their needs will continue to evolve over the next 20 years. Senior centres of the future will be serving people born over a span of many decades. Some participants will be very active and transitioning to retirement, while others will be concerned with maintaining the connections and services they need to "age in place" as they grow into their 80's and 90's.

Senior centres are confronting a series of unprecedented challenges in both their diverse customer base and funding sources. This reality was brought home to SEESA in 2020.

SEESA's membership understands the need for a viable organization. In considering the future of SEESA, the Strategic Planning Committee took into account national, provincial and municipal trends and policy change, our community's strengths, and the voices of the many stakeholders who provided feedback and suggestions. From these varying perspectives, four strategic themes emerged.

### **1. Organizational Capacity & Financial Sustainability**

Forward-thinking governance, a new business model with diverse funding strategies, enhanced volunteer engagement and future-focused collaborations are essential to meeting our goals. This plan lays out necessary actions to support annual operations and achieve organizational and financial sustainability of SEESA well into the future. An emphasis on safety will ensure that SEESA delivers programs in safe ways, in safe places.

### **2. Stakeholder Engagement**

Feedback from members, volunteers, instructors and staff affirms SEESA's new vision for transparency and meaningful stakeholder engagement. Our strong history of volunteerism will be strengthened even further through training, mentorship, human resource management and skill-based leadership opportunities. Communication to, from and with stakeholders is key to SEESA achieving its mission. This plan lays out necessary actions to earn trust, understand and deliver on stakeholder needs and desires through transparent, meaningful and relevant communication and engagement.

### **3. Collaboration**

In this plan, SEESA is viewed as a community, not just 'our centre'. Continuing the tradition as a focal point for services to older adults and building on new governance capacities and operational capabilities, the emphasis will be on collaborating with other organizations to offer an expanded range of programs and services while at the same time reducing administration costs and duplication.

Moving forward, there will be an intentional effort to use consumer input and inclusion policies to align existing and new program offerings with measurable outcomes. Evaluation and ongoing improvement will become a continuous process at SEESA.

#### **4. Valued Community Asset**

Through stakeholder feedback, we learned that many participants see SEESA as their lifeline to healthy living in the community. These participants are in fact, as much a part of that lifeline as the organization itself.

Our plan is to extend this sense of belonging and well-being to a wider range of older adults through active membership with SEESA and its partners. As Edmonton's population ages, SEESA and its' growing membership will help Edmonton realize its potential of truly becoming 'age friendly'. The challenge before us is to overcome the stigma that is still attached to being older in our culture.

To be relevant, SEESA's image, programs and facilities must reflect the needs and desires of the 21st Century older adult. In implementing this plan, we will rebrand SEESA, expand programs and hours of operation, ensure access and modernize our facility to appeal to a broader audience of participants, partners and volunteers.

These four strategic themes have been further refined into 3 "SMART" (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely) goals that will guide the Plan:

1. Strengthen Organizational Capacity and Financial Sustainability
2. Evolve from Organization-Centred to Community-Centred
3. Strengthen Stakeholder Engagement.

### **Strategic Goals, Strategies, and Performance Measures**

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SEESA's three (3) Strategic Goals were created with long term outcomes in mind. The strategies and performance measures associated with each strategic goal are described below. Detailed objectives, tactics (the 'how'), timelines and accountabilities will be described in the upcoming Operational Plan.

#### **1. Enhance Organizational Capacity and Financial Sustainability**

##### **Strategies**

- Develop and implement a new governance framework to support the achievement of this plan, and to position the organization with the necessary capacity to support long term organizational success.

- Develop and implement a new business model based on fewer paid staff positions, increased volunteer engagement, tight cost controls and cost reduction, viable program pricing, strategic fund development, corporate sponsorship and revenue diversification.
- Develop and implement a strategy to converge and leverage the collective strength of SEESA (stakeholders, management, staff, Board) to build shared ownership of the SEESA brand (speak with one voice, ambassador role, face of the organization, brand driven).
- Broaden programs and services to meet the needs of our growing demographic.
- Develop and implement a strategic communications and marketing plan to strengthen engagement with existing members and attract new members.
- Document policies, processes, procedures, and standards for all functions, to strengthen business continuity.
- Develop and implement a human resource management plan for current and new positions (paid and volunteer).
- Develop and implement risk management processes.
- Implement an integrated approach to data collection and management, to inform and support operating and policy decisions.
- Embed safety principles and practices into our culture, core business process, and day-to-day operations.
- Develop and implement a change management strategy to enable the cultural shift required to support the new business model.
- Develop internal capacity for future collaborations.

## **Performance Measures**

- SEESA Board of Directors completes the Alberta Board Development Program <sup>1</sup> and achieves level three on the Social Venture Partners (SVP) Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool. <sup>2</sup>
- SEESA achieves Imagine Canada's Charity Accreditation Program. <sup>3</sup>
- Revenue sources are diversified; annual budgets are achieved.
- SEESA's bookkeeping and accounting processes follow Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). <sup>4</sup>

- SEESA's programs and services are meeting the needs of its growing, more diverse and inclusive membership.
- SEESA's revenue sources are diversified with 60% of SEESA's annual revenue being generated internally (i.e. membership fees, program revenue, fundraising).
- SEESA's information technology, communications and data management systems meet the needs of the organization.
- SEESA's staffing cost shows a reduced portion of the annual budget.
- Members, volunteers, employees and contractors are equally engaged in driving the brand.
- Key roles are supported by a succession plan.
- Annual budgets are achieved.
- Commitment to Safety is a recognized part of the SEESA brand.

## **2. Evolve from Organization-Centred to Community-Centred**

### **Strategies**

- Evolve SEESA's culture, brand, programs, facility, services and communications strategy to appeal and engage with a much broader, more diverse population of adults.
- Build strategic collaborations with the goal to extend and deepen programs and services to the broader community, whilst piloting a variety of operational and leadership efficiencies.
- Do our part in supporting and 'living' the Age Friendly Edmonton <sup>TM</sup> 5 initiative that is working to build a city that values, respects and actively supports the well-being of seniors.
- Collaborate with senior sector stakeholders to drive positive change.
- Evolve SEESA's image, programs, website, social media and facilities to reflect the needs and desires of the 21st Century older adult.
- Rebrand SEESA, expand programs and hours of operation, ensure access and modernize our facility to appeal to a broader audience of participants, partners and volunteers.

- Develop and implement a communications strategy.
- Change the stigma that is still attached to being older in our culture.

### **Performance Measures**

- Community surveys indicate that SEESA is viewed as a welcoming and accessible organization that treats everyone with compassion, respect and dignity.
- SEESA's membership reflects Southeast Edmonton's diverse population.
- SEESA engages a growing and diverse 50+ population through accessible, innovative and multigenerational programs and services.
- SEESA is attracting community members of all ages, cultural heritage, ethnicity, gender orientation, religion, physical abilities, and economic circumstances.
- A minimum of two new partnerships are in place and demonstrating mutual benefit for the organizations and their respective membership.
- Recognized by the senior centre sector as an organization driving change for good.
- Community members view older adults as relevant, valued and engaged contributors to the fabric of our community and society as a whole.

## **3. Strengthen Stakeholder Engagement**

### **Strategies**

- Deepen our understanding of SEESA's current membership, their needs and how SEESA currently helps them meet those needs.
- Deepen our understanding of ways in which SEESA is currently not meeting our membership's current and possible future needs.
- Deepen our understanding of the ways in which our membership currently engages with SEESA and ideas or desires they may have for future engagement.
- Develop and implement a holistic human resource management plan to strengthen ways in which SEESA members, volunteers, employees and contractors are recruited, trained, mentored and acknowledged.

- Determine new targeted audiences and conduct research to understand their current and possible future needs.
- Define and communicate SEESA's 'sense of belonging' to a wider range of older adults.

### Performance Measures

- Programs and services are driven by consumer need and desire.
- Members feel empowered to be engaged with SEESA in ways that meet their needs.
- Members, volunteers, employees and contractors feel supported, respected and valued.
- Succession plans are in place for all key roles, paid and volunteer.

### Long Term Desired Outcomes

2021 - 2025 Goals	Long Term Outcomes
Evolve from Organization-Centred to Community-Centred	Increased access to a broad variety of programs and services help southeast Edmonton's older adults live longer and better in the community we love. We are respected and valued for the contributions we have made and continue making.
Enhance Organizational Capacity and Financial Sustainability	SEESA and its partners are thriving by being fully engaged in collaborative action to achieve shared goals.
Strengthen Stakeholder Engagement	Older adults living in southeast Edmonton are familiar with and engaged with SEESA.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.alberta.ca/board-development-program.aspx/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://hewlett.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/A-Guide-to-Using-OCA-Tools.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.imaginecanada.ca/en/standards-program>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cpacanada.ca/en/business-and-accounting-resources>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/initiatives\\_innovation/age-friendly-edmonton.aspx](https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/initiatives_innovation/age-friendly-edmonton.aspx)