



Our Way **Forward**

Introduction

We know that the organizations we work with across Nova Scotia are continually being challenged to keep pace with developing and maintaining their own Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) programs, however, we also know that these same long term care, home care and disability support organizations remain steadfastly committed to safety. Addressing these challenges and fostering this commitment requires support from AWARE-NS, and the resources and training we are equipped to provide.

As always, we are ready, willing and able to help, but meeting this necessary and growing demand has become difficult with our limited resources.

AWARE-NS' Strategic Plan makes clear that the highest level of risk for our organization is the absence of a long-term sustainable funding model and plan – highlighting AWARE-NS' long history of year-to-year grant funding, which has challenged our ability to develop and implement a long-term strategy to improve health and safety outcomes in the sectors we support.

AWARE-NS' role in facilitating safer working environments and healthy and safe workers keeps us motivated. The past few years remind us that change is constant, but our organization's vision remains strong. We know and understand the business case for occupational health and safety – and how organizations can be overwhelmed in its absence – when the threat of illness or insecurity can affect workers' performance, livelihoods and personal lives.

More than ever, the significance of workplace health and safety is clear. Organizational leaders and their staff have the desire to keep safety top-of-mind, but we also know that many are struggling to maintain their OHS programs while addressing today's health system pressures and workforce struggles.

Our Way Forward, anchored by our vision, mission and values, reinforces this notion and aims to inspire partners, staff and stakeholders to further elevate the profile of workplace health and safety, and most importantly, make sure it's here to stay.

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Strategic Plan Development Process

AWARE-NS embarked on a renewal of our last strategic plan (2015 to 2018) in the fall of 2022. A review of that strategic plan's directions, goals and objectives revealed that much work has been accomplished and the renewed strategic plan should build on the outcomes from the 2015 to 2018 plan and explore new opportunities and innovation.

A working group consisting of representatives from the Board, and the Executive Director and Administrative Support from AWARE-NS was formed in the fall of 2022 to lead the renewal of the strategic plan. The strategic plan development process consisted of the following:

- A review of the previous strategic plan to identify strategies completed and opportunities for continued development.
- A review of strategic plans from health and safety associations from other jurisdictions in Canada to help identify potential innovation.
- An environmental scan including key informant interviews with representatives from long term care, home care and community services; a survey with individuals who work in long term care, home care and community services (including front line staff, managers and senior leaders) as well as partners (Worker's Compensation Board of Nova Scotia, Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration and sector associations); and a planning session with the Board.
- Development of draft strategic directions and associated objectives for the strategic plan (2023 to 2028) based on the findings from the review of materials and environmental scan.
- A second session with the Board to obtain feedback and final approval on the draft strategic directions and associated objectives.
- Review of the strategic plan by staff.

The Framework



Mission, Vision and Values

Vision

Safe and healthy people; safe and healthy workplaces.

Mission

Advance workplace health and safety in health and community services sectors throughout Nova Scotia via collaboration, leadership, knowledge exchange and innovation.

Values

- **Commitment to Excellence:** Through evidence based approaches, we set high expectations and standards to achieve results while living our vision and mission.
- **Accountability:** We are accountable for achieving the goals within our strategic plan and together with partners we are accountable for advancing workplace health and safety.
- **Responsive and Flexible:** We are responsive to the needs of individuals and organizations, as well as opportunities and innovation that emerge in advancing workplace health and safety.
- **Respect:** We approach our work with honesty respecting the rights of all workers for a safe and healthy workplace.
- **Inclusion:** We are committed to inclusive engagement of our communities and strive to ensure equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility in all of our work.
- **Collaborative:** We build and support collaborative relationships and partnerships in advancing workplace health and safety



Strategic Directions

Strategic Direction: Leadership and Culture

Goal: A culture that supports workplace health and safety through leadership, accountability and innovation.

Objectives:

- Support organizations to build leadership and a culture of health and safety.
- Develop an accountability framework for AWARE-NS to monitor outcomes to ensure quality improvement and best practices.
- Explore innovation in workplace health and safety that promotes organizational responsiveness.
- Advocate for worker health and safety.

Strategic Direction: Brand Awareness, Organizational Growth and Sustainability

Goal: AWARE-NS is valued and resourced to advance workplace health and safety ensuring its growth and sustainability.

Objectives:

- Develop and implement a communication strategy to build awareness, generate excitement and demonstrate value proposition and excellence about AWARE-NS.
- Develop and implement a government relations strategy to build and demonstrate commitment to workplace health and safety, aligned with sector organizations and government priorities.
- Validate and demonstrate the need for worker health and safety and AWARE-NS' role and value.
- Build AWARE-NS resiliency and support growth (both externally and internally).

Strategic Direction: Programs, Services and Resources

Goal: Increased awareness, knowledge, skills, confidence and practices to support workplace health and safety.

Objectives:

- Identify priority areas for programs, services and resources that align with the safety training competency framework and based on evolving sector needs.
 - Develop programs, services, and resources to support workers' psychological health and safety.
 - Ensure that programs are reflective and responsive to workforce needs using an IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equity, accessibility) approach and lens.
- Support and provide a comprehensive approach to health and safety training and education.
 - Identify, develop, deliver and evaluate effectiveness of training and education.
- Support the development and continuous improvement of organizational safety management systems.
 - Conduct targeted outreach and coaching with sector organizations to support workplace health and safety.



Strategic Direction: Partnerships and Relationships

Goal: New and strengthened partnerships to advance workplace health and safety.

Objectives:

- Create, facilitate and participate in networking and share best practices in health and safety.
- Strengthen relationships with key influencers to support workplace health and safety.
- Expand partnerships including:
 - Exploring partnerships with community colleges and universities to support workplace health and safety education for learners.
 - Partner with research centres/organizations to support and/or inform research.
 - Create strategic partnerships with health authorities and other health system partners to leverage opportunities for workplace health and safety.
- Enhance AWARE-NS programs and services in the area of IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility) by collaborating with organizations that support/lead IDEA.
- Expand existing and develop new relationships nationally with organizations that have similar mandates.
- Explore opportunities to partner with Atlantic provinces to support workplace health and safety.



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