



NEW HORIZONS

ONTARIO CAMPS ASSOCIATION (OCA)
STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2027

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ontario Camps Association (OCA) is at a pivotal moment, embracing both challenges and opportunities that demand strategic thinking, a commitment to our community, and a focus on sustainable growth. This plan framework outlines our path forward, focusing on maximizing our strengths, addressing our weaknesses, seizing opportunities, and mitigating threats to ensure that OCA continues to be a leader in promoting quality camp experiences in Ontario and beyond.



Vision

Enriching, safe and high quality camp experiences for generations to come.

Mission

To support, strengthen, and advocate for the enrichment of the camp experience in Ontario through accreditation, education, promotion and inclusive community building.

Core Values

INTEGRITY - Demonstrating honesty and fairness at all times.

RESPECT - Recognizing and protecting the inherent worth of every person, including oneself.

RESPONSIBILITY - Being dependable and accountable for choices, actions and commitments.

INCLUSIVENESS - Fostering a sense of belonging for all.

CARING - Building relationships and demonstrating concern for the needs of others.

OPENNESS - Ability and willingness to embrace new and different ideas and to be open to change.

OUR COMMITMENT TO ANTI- OPPRESSION & ANTI- RACISM

Statement on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

The Ontario Camps Association strives to provide member camps with education, support and resources with the goal of creating safe spaces for all campers, staff and families that recognize and integrate people's race, religion, cultural identity, indigenous identity, place of origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, income and family structure.

Land Acknowledgement

The Ontario Camps Association and its members operate on the traditional territories of Indigenous nations who have lived on these lands for millennia. Ontario is covered by 46 treaties and unceded territories, and remains home to Indigenous people alongside settlers, newcomers, and descendants of enslaved people.

We are grateful to live and work on this land.

We are committed to truth-sharing and active steps towards reconciliation. This includes recognizing our responsibilities to the land and its inhabitants. Our camp professionals are engaged in unlearning colonial legacies and re-evaluating traditions. As an Association, we support these efforts through professional development, educational resources, and reconciliation initiatives.



WHY THIS PLAN, WHY NOW?



Our Purpose

At the Ontario Camps Association, we champion the transformative impact of camp on the development and wellness of children and youth across Ontario.

Why? Because we know that *camp changes lives*.

This is true both for campers and for the world around them. Camps provide a nurturing environment where children and youth have fun and learn vital life skills. These experiences are crucial for building resilience, fostering emotional and physical well-being, enhancing self-esteem, and honing leadership capabilities. For both campers, and parents and caregivers alike, camps instill confidence and contribute to long-term growth and development well beyond the camp season.

Camps are instrumental in cultivating the diverse, capable leaders our businesses, organizations, and communities will rely on in the future. As an essential part of the fabric of our province, it is critical that the camp industry remains strong and thriving, helping to build a robust and vibrant Ontario for generations to come.

In a changing world and with more complex challenges faced by camps, campers and families alike – from resources to resilience and relationships – The OCA is committed to sustaining and strengthening these vital destinations.

In short, *Ontario needs more camp* and OCA is ready to help camps *change, transform and thrive* to meet this new moment.

And so OCA must also *evolve*.

That's what the OCA's NEW HORIZONS 2025-2027 Strategic Plan is all about.

Through accreditation, education, advocacy, inclusive community building and other comprehensive supports, our membership driven association will help ensure that camps continue to offer life-changing experiences to many more generations of engaged campers and camper families.

Our Strategic Priorities & How We Activate Them

Recognizing that OCA relies on volunteer resources to support our small but expert staff team, and that many OCA Board members are also busy camp owners, operators and directors, this plan is intentionally realistic and focused.

It recognizes that to move toward OCA's vision – enriching, safe and high quality camp experiences for generations to come – there needs to be a strong foundation on which to build outcomes.

For that reason, it begins with a focus on internal capacity building, then extends out into the work of strengthening the sector, and finally building external awareness, understanding and engagement.

Perhaps most importantly, it is designed so that current and prospective members can clearly understand the OCA's value proposition and how they fit within the priorities of this strategic plan.

For that reason, our strategic priorities are phased over three years, each with two focused goals and a realistic number of impactful objectives.

Our priorities are:

Modernize & Strengthen OCA (Year 1)

Build Industry Capacity & Resilience (Year 2)

Create & Amplify the Case for Camp (Year 3)

Finally, this plan recognizes that OCA will celebrate its 100th year in 2033 and that this plan and all strategic plans leading up to that milestone are in service of ensuring the longevity and viability of the association for the next century to come.

Strategic Priority A

Modernize & Strengthen OCA

Modernize and strengthen the OCA programs, services and infrastructure that support camps, in order to sustain and increase membership value, member numbers, and related revenue.

Goal 1: Enhance Member Engagement and Satisfaction

Objective 1.1: Develop and implement a comprehensive communication strategy to better articulate OCA's role and the benefits of membership to current members.

Objective 1.2: Launch data-driven membership drives focused on the value and support OCA provides, to increase year-over-year revenue based on existing baselines and annual growth goals.

Objective 1.3: Develop and implement new programs to increase member satisfaction, including formal peer-to-peer, networking and mentorship programs to facilitate knowledge-sharing while also fostering and building community among members.

Goal 2: Strengthen Operational Resilience and Innovation

Objective 2.1: Address resource constraints by exploring new funding models within existing revenue streams, including tiered membership fees.

Objective 2.2: Pursue new revenue streams, sponsorship opportunities and alternative funding sources to enhance OCA's ability to support members.

Objective 2.3: Enhance the current volunteer model and clarify staff and volunteer roles and responsibilities, to best leverage current member expertise, attract new discipline-specific subject matter experts (e.g. legal, financial, marketing) and make best use of resources.

Strategic Priority B

Build Industry Capacity & Resilience

Support the capacity building and resilience of current and future camp leaders and camp operations, by fostering of communities of practice, mentorship, standards and professional development.

Goal 3: Enhance the Standards Process, Learning Opportunities & Other Supports

Objective 3.1: Enhance the accreditation process and programs and offer additional educational resources to ensure high standards of safety and quality across all camps.

Objective 3.2: Develop new and enhance existing professional development programs and supports to strengthen member skills and issue management capabilities.

Objective 3.3: Develop a new strategy for the preferred vendor program to strengthen offerings and enhance the value proposition for vendors and member camps.

Goal 4: Support Strong Inclusive Camp Environments

Objective 4.1: Increase the diversity of volunteers, including Board members, through new and inclusive approaches to recruitment.

Objective 4.2: Offer diversity and inclusion training for all OCA staff, volunteers and member camps to help foster environments of respect and equity.

Objective 4.3: Explore and support programs and partnerships that address the needs of underserved and equity deserving populations, e.g. Indigenous groups, newcomers.

Strategic Priority C

Create & Amplify the Case for Camp

Build sustainable awareness and understanding of the case for camp and its impact among decision makers and influencers through powerful marketing, advocacy and storytelling.

Goal 5: Advocate for the Camp Industry

Objective 5.1: Collaborate with industry leaders and policy makers to strengthen lobbying efforts with governmental and non-governmental organizations to champion the benefits of camps, and align with broader educational and community goals.

Objective 5.2: Establish strategic partnerships with educational institutions and other associations to offer specific professional development that enhances the skills and credibility of camp as a profession.

Goal 6: Focus on Marketing and Storytelling

Objective 6.1: Develop and deploy a strategic marketing and communications plan and associated awareness campaign(s) to elevate the visibility and perceived value of the camp experience with a focus on decision-makers and influencers (funders, parents, prospective employees).

Objective 6.2: Regularly showcase and promote the sharing of impact stories from camps, camp participants and alumni that illustrate the profound personal and community impact of camp experiences.



HOW WE'LL IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN



Operationalizing This Plan

Each year in January, the Board will approve an annual operating plan and budget developed by staff to ensure progress on strategic priorities. Annual objectives will be affirmed or revised, and metrics will be established for each objective, to ensure OCA can meet, measure and report on progress toward each goal. These annual plans may include:

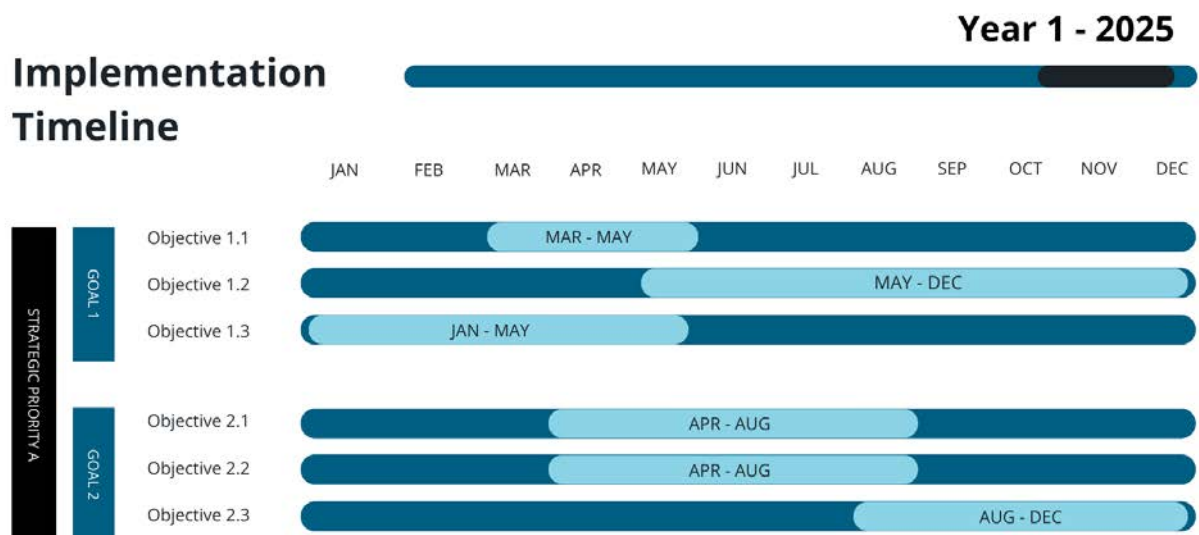
TARGETS & TIMELINES: Anticipated targets and timelines for each objective, including major milestones.

RESPONSIBILITIES: Assignment of staff, members and committee specific roles to achieve each objective.

RESOURCES NEEDED: An outline of the financial, human and material resources required for each goal.

Implementation Overview

Following is a high level template for timeline planning for each annual plan:



Measuring Plan Progress

A structure will be created to monitor progress on the strategic plan at a governance level. Regular evaluation and adaptation is recommended, including:

MONITORING: Progress reviews against objectives and key performance indicators.

FEEDBACK MECHANISMS: Surveys and forums for member feedback to refine strategies.

ADJUSTMENT: Steps to adjust strategies based on feedback and changing conditions internally and externally.

Ensuring Success, Together

The success of this plan will be contingent on shared accountability between staff and Board for tracking and assessing progress, the willingness and ability of decision-makers to make strategic investments to support this plan, and the overall availability of resources – both staff and volunteer subject matter experts – to support the actioning of this plan.



CONCLUSION

This strategic plan framework represents our roadmap for the next three years. It is crafted to adapt to the evolving needs of our community and to ensure that the OCA remains at the forefront of promoting excellence in the camp industry in Ontario. We are committed to implementing these strategies with rigor and enthusiasm, according to our values, and confident that our collective efforts will yield lasting impacts for the OCA, our members and the camping industry.



**ONTARIO CAMPS
ASSOCIATION**

Community. Leadership. Life.