



The strategic plan presented in this document is the cumulative effort of the entire Laidlaw organization, including the Board of Directors, staff, grantees, volunteers, government, and community partners. The knowledge, experience, and aspirations of those impacted and involved with Laidlaw are reflected in this plan. This plan is the extension of the strategic learnings and evaluation work that both the Board and staff have undergone over the last couple of years. These foundational reviews assessed how we measured our success since 2013, how challenges were addressed, and what opportunities have surfaced; they continue to enhance internal evaluation processes to better design and inform our approaches and granting programs.

The 2019-2024 Strategic Plan is reflective of Laidlaw's strengths and weaknesses and is a response to the opportunities youth, youth-granting partners, and the philanthropic community have identified. Best practice guides our plan but will not limit it. Our main objective is to increase our direct impact, share our impact to make better decisions to advocate for system change, and continue to learn from our network to better operationalize our goals.

Through the successful execution of this plan, the Laidlaw Foundation will continue to be a leading, youth-focused foundation in Ontario.



Helping youth impacted by the criminal justice, education, and child welfare systems who are underserved and overrepresented in these systems.

Building on the previous Strategic Plan, the 2013- 2018 Strategic Plan deepened Laidlaw's focus on youth-led systems change, especially in the education and non-profit sectors, and broadened its geographic focus from the Greater Toronto Area to Ontario. Through the updated Strategic Plan, Laidlaw committed to youth inclusion by investing steady funding levels and increasing efforts to support systems change.

Our Mission

Laidlaw Foundation supports young people impacted by the justice, education, and child-welfare systems to become healthy and engaged by investing in innovative ideas, convening interested parties, advocating for systems change, and sharing learning across the sector.

Our Vision

A society in which all young people have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Our Values

As the Laidlaw Foundation builds on the last 10 years of youth-centred work with a new focus on areas in the youth sector with the greatest need, it will be important for the Laidlaw Foundation's approach and activities to be guided by the values that define our institution. Every board and staff member at Laidlaw lives the values of the foundation as we work together to deliver on our mission and work towards our vision.

Equity: We embed equity in all of our policies, practices, processes, and interactions.

Engagement & Empowerment: We commit to engaging and empowering young people in decision-making and governance.

Reconciliation: Our commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in Canada is reflected in our operations, granting, and investment portfolios.

Responsive: We consult, engage, and work with youth on issues that matter to them, from idea to implementation.

Accountability: We are accountable to our grantees, our Foundation, and the larger communities of which we are a member.

Laidlaw belongs to a network of stakeholders striving for positive youth development. This relationship model, based on our commitment to engaging and including youth, is embedded in the way we build capacity, engage, and advocate for change.

Capacity

We build capacity through our granting programs and support for grantees; our collective action and impact; our willingness to identify, support, scale, and jump on new ideas; and our commitment to generating new knowledge.

Engagement

We convene, contribute, and drive conversations based on our knowledge, grantee experience and impact, and partnerships in the grant-making community.

Advocacy

We champion issues facing young people. We listen to the youth we serve and build advocacy strategies intended to design, drive, and push for systems change.

How we will measure success

Laidlaw's Mission, Vision, and Values will be operationalized and brought to life through the clear definition of and adherence to achieving specific objectives we've laid out. These objectives serve as milestones to help us achieve our goals and will be tracked through our core set of evaluation principles, approaches, and methods designed for Laidlaw based on leading practice. We see evaluation as a tool for learning and development to build responses and solutions to complex social problems as well as a means to building momentum for change. We can only do this by continuing to create a culture of learning and evaluation at all organizational levels through deliberate and enhanced funder-grantee collaboration.

Strategic Goals

1 Elevate the Priorities and Voices of Youth with Lived Experiences in Justice, Education, and Child Welfare Systems

If Laidlaw is to work towards a society in which all youth have the opportunity to achieve their full potential, it will need to elevate the priorities and voices of youth who have the greatest need. Though Laidlaw will remain youth-centred and focus its granting, convening, and advocacy activities on Ontario's youth, it will put particular focus on youth who have been impacted by the criminal justice, education, and child welfare systems, as these systems often present systemic hurdles for youth.

The Laidlaw Foundation will elevate the priorities of youth with lived experiences in the criminal justice, education, and child welfare systems to achieve their full potential by putting their lived experience, aspirations, and voices to the forefront of our grant-making and leadership activities.

2 Promote Equitable and Accountable Institutions and Systems

The Laidlaw Foundation understands that institutions and systems can either encourage or inhibit youths' ability to achieve their full potential. As a convener and advocate, Laidlaw will ensure that it is an institution that can serve as a model by directly including youth voices and perspectives into its work and will advocate that other institutions and systems in the sector do the same.

Using our positive and equitable approach to building partnerships, the Laidlaw Foundation will continue to convene and advocate for youth-centred practice, service design, and system-wide awareness of the need to provide unique services and supports to youth, especially those with lived experiences in the criminal justice, education, and child welfare systems.

3 Advocate for Evidence-Based Policy

The Laidlaw Foundation firmly believes in the importance of harnessing data to influence policy change. As a leader in the youth philanthropic sector, we have a wealth of data to pull from our grant processes, including both evaluation data and youth-reported data. We plan to organize and aggregate this data and collaborate with other sector partners to fill knowledge gaps and influence systems change.

The Laidlaw Foundation will be a known leader in both the philanthropic and the youth-serving sectors by continuing to evaluate impact, generate evidence, apply learning, and advocate for system change by partnering with practitioners, academics, and those with lived experience to collect robust data on its own activities and trends in the system and to use that data to maximize impact through granting and advocacy efforts.

Conclusion

Laidlaw is a leader in the youth sector in Ontario because of our approach to relationships and the way we build youth capacity; our focus on engaging youth and elevating their ideas; and our dedication to giving youth a seat at the table, voicing their perspectives in decision-making circles. We see our role as one that turns young people's ideas into implementation by providing them the resources to directly improve the systems they are touched by.

This 2019-2024 Strategic Plan sets the course for us to vigorously live out our mission, vision, and values and improve the lives of youth impacted by the criminal justice, education, and child welfare systems on both an individual level and at a larger scale in Ontario. Through this plan, we will strengthen and hone our granting activities, promote the need for equitable and accountable systems, and use robust data and research with the help of our partners to advocate for evidencebased policy change.

At the end of the day, we do what we do so that all youth thrive, are engaged, are connected, and are included in society. We remain committed to this vision.