

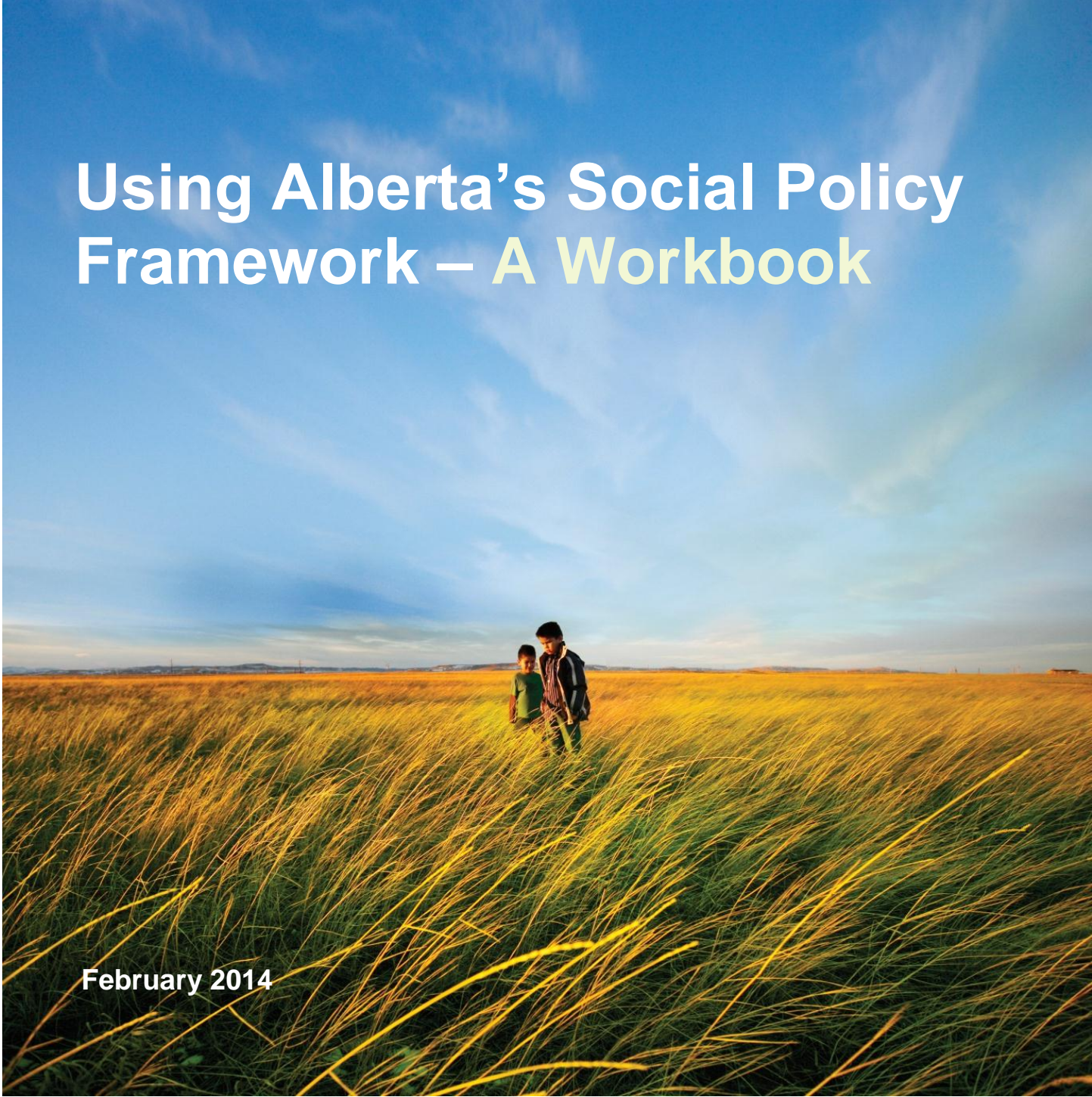


Alberta  
Government

# Alberta's Social Policy Framework

## Using Alberta's Social Policy Framework – A Workbook

February 2014





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## Introduction

Launched in February 2013, *Alberta's Social Policy Framework* is a vision for social policy that defines who we are as people and communities. It reflects our shared aspirations for a province that offers all Albertans the opportunity to benefit from their highest possible quality of life.

The Social Policy Framework has a guiding and influencing role among organizations, sectors, and governments. Its purpose is to encourage alignment and coordinated action on priorities – priorities we have collectively decided are important to us as Albertans. Whether you work in service delivery, program and strategic policy development, strategic planning, or make daily decisions in your frontline work with Albertans, the Social Policy Framework can influence and guide your work.

But how? So, we have a framework – so what? How does that affect me? How does having a Social Policy Framework change anything? These are familiar questions, some of which you may have asked yourself.

The Social Policy Framework is only as transformative as we make it. *Alberta's Social Policy Framework* challenges all of us to live by the principles we drafted together and work together to co-create meaningful change.

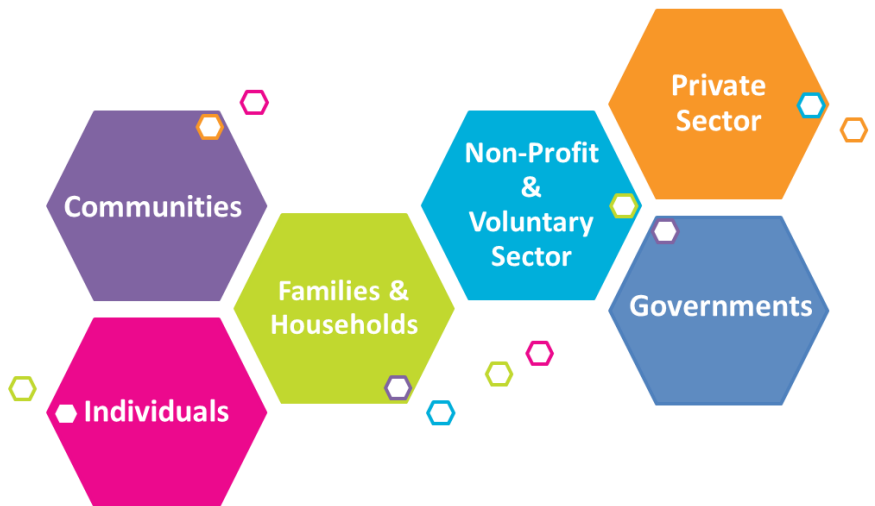
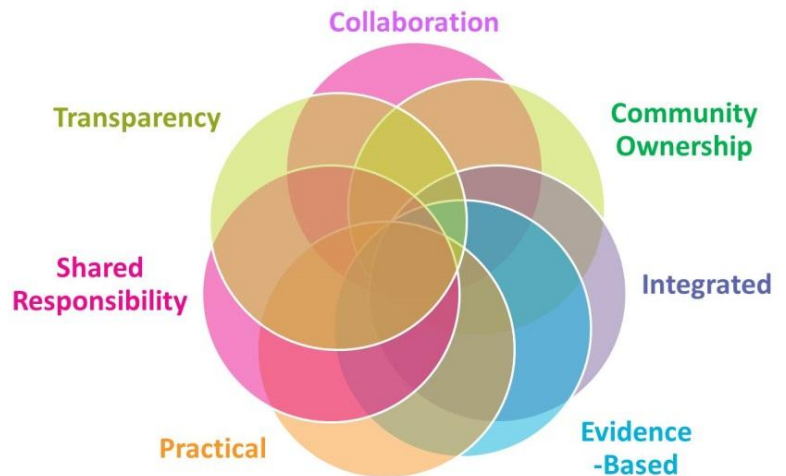
## Working Together

*Alberta's Social Policy Framework* defined a new Government of Alberta standard for public participation in policy making.

A set of principles used during the engagement acknowledged the need for a new kind of relationship between government and communities – one that reflects the importance of communities in identifying and developing solutions to social challenges, and that acknowledges the importance of community to Albertans' quality of life.

The principles helped convey the need for tangible results, with practical actions that build on what works.

Implementing the Social Policy Framework is an ongoing process of influencing and shaping your work that requires collaboration and commitment by everyone. As the Framework states, it is no one person, sector, organization, or ministry's task alone. Addressing complex social problems requires coordinated action by everyone.



## Purpose of this Workbook

This workbook is designed to encourage and support people to contribute to these ongoing efforts to achieve better outcomes for Albertans. It is designed to support you and your team to think through how the Social Policy Framework connects to your work. It can also be used to engage people in discussions about the social policy issues facing their communities.

## It's About You

This workbook is to challenge you to think about how the Social Policy Framework could – or should – change your work. This change could be transformative, or it could be more incremental. This process may challenge you to think about your work a bit differently – how you interact with clients, work with colleagues in different organizations or teams, or see the connections between big policy issues like poverty or homelessness and your work, or the work of others.

This workbook contains several resource sheets and exercises that you or your team can use to implement the Social Policy Framework. You are welcome and encouraged to change them to meet your needs, and to choose the ones that will most benefit you in your work.

- **Resource Sheets:** handy references that may be useful for participants during discussions
- **Exercise Sheets:** a series of discussion questions and other tools to support your discussions

The exercises in this workbook are provided in no particular order, and you may find it useful to use all or only some of the exercises, depending on your needs. We suggest taking a look through the entire workbook, and then choosing the exercises and resources that will best support your efforts.

There are many ways you can use this workbook. Some ideas to get you started are outlined below.

- **Small Group Discussions:** get some colleagues together and work through one of the worksheets. This could be a good activity for a branch planning session or work retreat.
- **Collaborative Workshops:** partner with another organization. Have each organization/group work through an exercise, then mix up the groups to share learnings and insights, and identify a way forward together.
- **Facilitated Group Sessions:** bring in a facilitator to assist your group to work through one or more of the exercises.
  - If you need assistance finding a facilitator with knowledge of the Social Policy Framework, email [HS.socialpolicy@gov.ab.ca](mailto:HS.socialpolicy@gov.ab.ca) with details of your event, what assistance you are looking for, and what you hope to accomplish.
- **Operational or Strategic Planning:** use the exercises as part of your operational or strategic planning processes to help integrate and align your goals and activities with *Alberta's Social Policy Framework*.

## Additional Resources

If you have any questions about using this workbook or about other tools to support your efforts, please contact us at [HS.SocialPolicy@gov.ab.ca](mailto:HS.SocialPolicy@gov.ab.ca). Some additional resources are outlined below.

### Recommended Reading

- [Alberta's Social Policy Framework](#)
- [Summing Up: Albertans' Perspectives on the Social Policy Framework](#)

### Other Resources

- [Alberta's Social Policy Framework – Pamphlet](#)
- [Social Policy Framework Engagement Statistics](#)
- [Summing Up: Aboriginal Albertans' Perspectives on the Social Policy Framework](#)

### Websites

- [Alberta Human Services](#)
- [Alberta's Social Policy Framework](#)
- [Together We Raise Tomorrow: A Poverty Reduction Strategy for Alberta](#)
- [Together We Raise Tomorrow: Children's Charter](#)
- [Together We Raise Tomorrow: Early Childhood Development](#)
- [Government of Alberta: Results-based Budgeting](#)
- [Your Alberta: Government of Alberta YouTube Channel](#)

Information about how you can get engaged in discussions about social policy in Alberta is available online at [socialpolicy.alberta.ca](http://socialpolicy.alberta.ca).

## Contact Us

- Do you have questions or comments about this workbook or the Social Policy Framework?
- Do you have creative ideas about ways to use the Framework?
- Is there a different tool or resource you wish was available to help you?
- Do you have examples of Social Policy Framework activities or processes that you have used in your work? What has worked well for you?

Please share them by emailing [HS.socialpolicy@gov.ab.ca](mailto:HS.socialpolicy@gov.ab.ca) or posting your thoughts on [socialpolicyframework.alberta.ca](http://socialpolicyframework.alberta.ca). Write a blog posting, start an online conversation, or share your completed work sheets or results from your discussions.

# Resource and Exercise Sheets



# Resource Sheet: Alberta's Social Policy Framework – Outline (1 page)



SPF VISION Overall direction for social policy in Alberta	OUTCOMES Frame and orient activities towards common goals		PRINCIPLES Guide decision making, programs and service delivery	ACTIONS Priority transformational initiatives to realize change*	POLICY SHIFTS Influence and inform policy
	Social Policy Outcomes	System Outcomes			
In Alberta, everyone contributes to making our communities inclusive and welcoming. Everyone has opportunities to fulfill their potential and benefit from our thriving social, economic, and cultural life.	<b>Albertans are...</b> <b>Safe</b> > Live free from fear of abuse and violence  <b>Healthy</b> > Achieve the highest attainable standards of health and well-being  <b>Secure &amp; Resilient</b> > Support themselves and their households through safe work and career opportunities, with access to effective income supports when in financial need  <b>Lifelong Learners</b> > Develop the knowledge, skills, and commitment to learning needed to participate in society and reach potential  <b>Included</b> > Feel welcomed in the communities where they live, learn, and work  <b>Active &amp; Engaged</b> > Explore opportunities to participate in recreational activities and cultural experiences, and to engage in Albertan society	<b>Systems are...</b> <b>Aligned</b> > Policy is aligned across program areas; tools and supports work together  <b>Balanced</b> > Programs and services are balanced between prevention and intervention, support the whole person, and recognize strengths and needs  <b>Accessible</b> > Albertans have access to and benefit from cohesive, flexible, timely, and informed services and supports  <b>Accountable and Sustainable</b> > Social programs and services are results-oriented, transparent, and sustainable  <b>Complementary</b> > Roles are balanced, complementary, and work together to achieve outcomes	Dignity  People First  Healthy and Strong Relationships  Mutual Responsibility  Inclusion  Proactive  Collaborative  Accountable	Early Childhood Development  Poverty Reduction Strategy  Common Service Access  Primary Health Care Initiatives  Results-based Budgeting  Partner with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Communities  Safe Communities  10-Year Plan to End Homelessness	1. Policy balances prevention and intervention  2. Policy supports citizens to have the resources and competencies for success  3. Government is an influencer, convener, and partner  4. Social policy emphasizes the integration and coordination of resources  5. Policy is a tool to empower, facilitate, and create opportunity  6. Focus on outcomes, quality, values, and dignity

\* This is a list of leading Government of Alberta initiatives and not an exhaustive list of actions by government or other sectors

## Resource Sheet: Alberta's Social Policy Framework – Desired Policy Shifts (1 page)



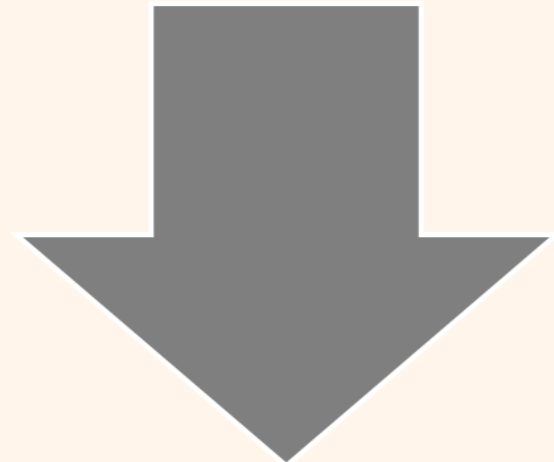
### MORE

- Policy balances prevention and intervention
- Policy supports citizens (resources and competencies)
- Government is an influencer, convener, partner
- Social policy emphasizes integration and coordination
- Policy is a tool to empower, facilitate, create opportunity
- Focus on outcomes, quality, values, and dignity



### LESS

- Policy and delivery are often crisis-oriented
- Policy addresses symptoms and deficiencies
- Government is a service provider, funder, legislator
- Social policy is viewed as silos of need and service
- Policy is a tool to control and regulate behaviour
- Focus on inputs and rules



## Exercise: What is Social Policy? (1 page)

*Policy is a set of guidelines that help us make decisions. Policy takes many forms - as actions, guidelines, rules, principles, laws, or regulations that influence what we do and the way we do them. For policy to be person-centred and holistic there is a need to look beyond the immediate issues and to see the wider picture of connections and influences.*

**Purpose:** To think about your work in its broader context and complexity in order to better identify potential opportunities and challenges as we develop solutions to social challenges.

**Instructions:**

- Discuss the questions below
- Keep a record of your discussion using scrap or flipchart paper

### Questions:

1. The diagram on the right identifies three interconnected policy areas. Brainstorm some examples of environmental, social, and economic policy.

2. What area of policy does your work fit? How does your work connect to other policy or issue areas?



3. What outcomes are you trying to achieve? How could you increase your connections (i.e. policy alignment) in order to produce better outcomes?

4. How can the Social Policy Framework support your efforts?

## Exercise: Strategic Directions (2 pages)

*Alberta's Social Policy Framework will guide the directions of our social policy. The Framework has three defined roles: to clarify outcomes and roles, to coordinate activities and policy alignment, and to influence by providing overall direction to planning and decision-making. It does this, in part, by identifying three core strategic directions for social policy in Alberta.*

**Purpose:** To identify existing and potential areas of alignment with the strategic directions outlined in Alberta's Social Policy Framework.

**Instructions:**

- Using Resource Sheet #2, discuss and answer the questions outlined below
- Use the table on the following page or flipchart paper to brainstorm your answers

### Questions:

1. Read the descriptions of the three strategic directions outlined in *Alberta's Social Policy Framework*.
2. Using the table on the following page, answer the following questions:
  - a. Looking at Resource Sheet #2, brainstorm what you need "less of" and "more of".
  - b. What are you already doing to transform, innovate, and collaborate in your work?
  - c. What are some of the ways you could further transform, innovate, and collaborate? Imagine the possibilities!
  - d. How can *Alberta's Social Policy Framework* support you to realize these potentials?

### Transform

- We transform systems and relationships to produce better outcomes for all Albertans
- We orient practices, delivery systems, and culture to the framework principles and outcomes
- We implement transformational initiatives

### Innovate

- We use the framework as a tool to generate alignment across policy domains and tools
- We use policy as an outcomes-based tool to create new opportunities, in improved ways
- We incent and encourage innovation to achieve agreed-upon outcomes

### Collaborate

- We work together to achieve positive social outcomes
- We use broad coalitions to resolve challenges
- We share a common language and a common vision for the future

	EXISTING	POSSIBILITIES	HOW CAN THE SOCIAL POLICY FRAMEWORK SUPPORT YOU?
TRANSFORM			
INNOVATE			
COLLABORATE			

## Exercise: Guiding Principles (1 page)

*Thinking about how we can live the principles outlined in Alberta's Social Policy Framework can influence how we deliver services, work with our clients and colleagues, and design our systems.*

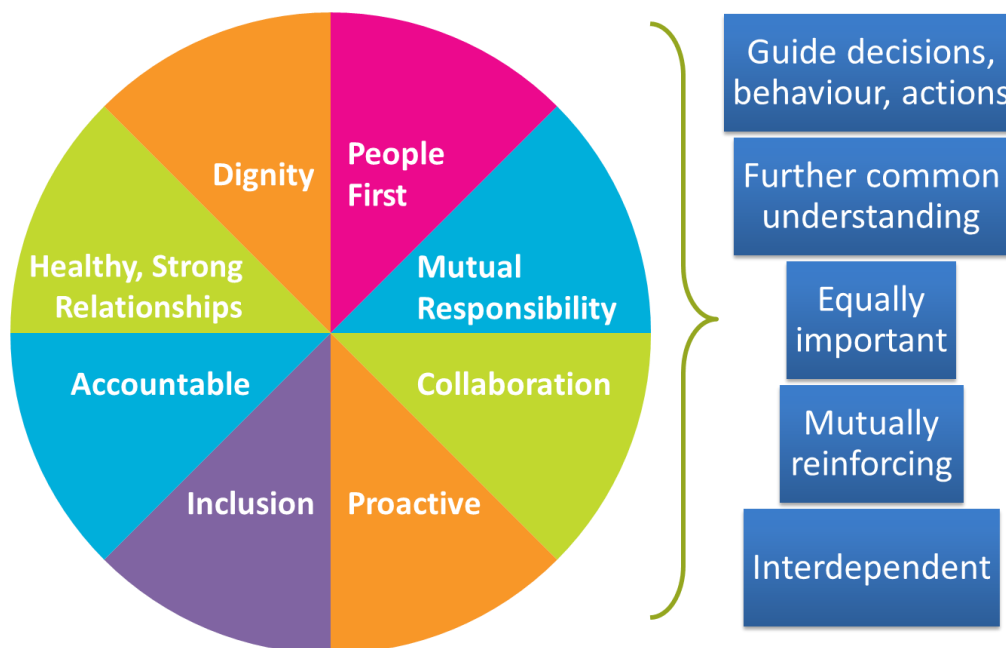
**Purpose:** To think about how to connect the principles outlined in Alberta's Social Policy Framework to your everyday work. To identify the potential impact of using these principles in your work.

**Instructions:**

- Using the diagram below as a reference, discuss the questions below.

### Questions:

1. How does your current work align with these principles?
2. How do you know whether you are living these principles in your work?
3. What opportunities exist for you to build on or introduce new ways to use these principles in your work?



## Exercise: Guiding Principles – Mutual Responsibility (1 page)

*Thinking about how we can live the principles outlined in Alberta's Social Policy Framework can influence how we deliver services, work with our clients and colleagues, and design our helping systems.*

**Purpose:** To think about how to connect the principles outlined in Alberta's Social Policy Framework to your everyday work.

**Instructions:**

- Watch a video of Minister Dave Hancock talking about the social policy framework (1:05 minutes)
- Link: <http://youtu.be/aBXLIsTDxjk>
- Discuss the questions below

### Questions:

1. How is social policy important to you – personally, and in your work?
2. Is self-interest a good motivator?
3. Albertans stated that social policy is everyone's responsibility. Is this reflected in how you work together? In your practices and policies?
4. What could you do in your work to have a greater positive impact and to better engage in social policy issues?
5. How could you encourage others to become more involved in addressing social challenges?
6. How can you model the way?





## Exercise: Guiding Principles (2 pages)

*Thinking about how we can live the principles outlined in Alberta's Social Policy Framework can influence how we deliver services, work with our clients and colleagues, and design our systems.*

<b>Purpose:</b>	To think about how to connect the principles outlined in Alberta's Social Policy Framework to your work.
<b>Instructions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Think about your current work, or a new project you are designing.</li><li>• Using the table on the following page, go through each Social Policy Framework principle.</li><li>• Some questions are provided for each principle.</li><li>• In the 'Answers' column, outline how you actively reflect each principle in your work. Be specific.</li></ul>

### Note:

- More detailed descriptions of the principles are outlined on pages 12 – 13 of [Alberta's Social Policy Framework](#).

Principle	Questions	Answers
<b>Dignity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you ensure that your clients, colleagues, and you are treated with empathy and respect?</li> </ul>	
<b>People First</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you value the experiences of your clients? Your co-workers?</li> <li>How do you ensure that the views of your clients are included in decisions that affect them?</li> <li>How do you build trust between you and your clients? You and your colleagues?</li> </ul>	
<b>Healthy &amp; Strong Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you promote healthy and strong relationships between yourself and your clients? You and your co-workers?</li> <li>How do you consider your client's relationships in your work with them? In decisions that affect them?</li> </ul>	
<b>Mutual Responsibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you consider the roles and responsibilities you have to future generations in your decision-making?</li> </ul>	
<b>Inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you acknowledge varying perspectives in your work?</li> <li>How do you ensure that all voices are heard in your decision-making processes?</li> </ul>	
<b>Proactive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you address root causes – the underlying causes of problems?</li> <li>How do you demonstrate flexibility into your processes so that you can more readily respond to changing needs?</li> </ul>	
<b>Collaborative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you collaborate to get a clear picture of the different perspectives on the issue you are facing?</li> <li>What makes you collaborative?</li> </ul>	
<b>Accountable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you use evidence to inform your decision-making processes?</li> <li>How do you share information back with your clients or colleagues?</li> </ul>	

## Exercise: Outcomes for Albertans (2 pages)

Alberta's Social Policy Framework identifies outcomes for Albertans – what social policy should achieve for all Albertans. The ultimate purpose of the framework is to have social policies, programs, and systems that produce better results. Thinking about how we contribute to achieving these outcomes is important to our success.

**Purpose:** To think about how your work contributes, and could further contribute, to achieving the outcomes for Albertans identified in the Social Policy Framework.

**Instructions:**

- Read the outcomes for Albertans identified in Alberta's Social Policy Framework
- Discuss the questions below
- Use the table on the following page or flipchart paper to record your ideas

### Questions:

1. Discuss and identify how your work currently supports achievement of the Social Policy Framework's outcomes for Albertans.
  - a. What are you focusing on?
  - b. Is where you currently spend most of your time and effort the best place(s) if you want to create better outcomes?



2. Discuss and identify what you could do to support achieving these outcomes.
3. Discuss and identify how you could work with your partner programs or organizations to support the achievement of these outcomes.
  - a. What changes would be required?
  - b. How can you form new relationships? With who and for what purpose?
4. How will you know you are successful?

<b>SAFE</b>	
<b>HEALTHY</b>	
<b>SECURE &amp; RESILIENT</b>	
<b>LIFELONG LEARNERS</b>	
<b>INCLUDED</b>	
<b>ACTIVE &amp; ENGAGED</b>	

## Exercise: System Outcomes (2 pages)

*Alberta's Social Policy Framework identifies system outcomes – the desired state of the system of social services and supports. System outcomes are about how all the various pieces work together as one. The ultimate purpose of the framework is to have social policies, programs, and systems that produce better results. Thinking about how we work together and the systems we create is important to our success.*

**Purpose:** To think about how your work does and could further contribute to achieving the system outcomes identified in the Social Policy Framework.

**Instructions:**

- Read the system outcomes identified in Alberta's Social Policy Framework
- Discuss the questions below
- Use the table on the following page or flipchart paper to record your ideas

### Questions:

1. Discuss and identify how your work currently helps achieve the Social Policy Framework's system outcomes.
  - a. Where do you currently focus your efforts? Where do you spend most of your time and energy?
  - b. Is where you currently spend most of your time and effort the best place(s) if you want to create better outcomes for individuals and families?

2. Discuss and identify what you could do to better support achieving these system outcomes.

**Aligned:** Policy is aligned across program areas so that tools & supports work together

**Balanced:** Programs and services balance prevention and intervention, support the whole person, and recognize strengths and needs

3. Discuss and identify how you could work with your partner programs or organizations to better support the achievement of these outcomes.

**Accessible:** Albertans can access and benefit from cohesive, flexible, timely, and informed services

**Accountable & Sustainable:** Social programs and services are results-oriented and transparent

**Complementary:** Roles are complementary, balanced, and work together to achieve outcomes

- a. What changes would be required?
  - b. Are there any new relationships to be forged? With who and for what purpose?
  - c. Who in your sector or field should you be working with? In government? In the private sector?
4. How will you know you are successful?

<b>ALIGNED</b>	
<b>BALANCED</b>	
<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	
<b>ACCOUNTABLE &amp; SUSTAINABLE</b>	
<b>COMPLEMENTARY</b>	

## Exercise: Social Policy Shifts (2 pages)

*Alberta's Social Policy Framework outlines a number of desired policy shifts that we should move towards in our policies, programs, and service delivery.*

**Purpose:** To generate ideas about how to better align the current or planned practices or policies in your work area with the policy shifts outlined in the social policy framework.

**Instructions:**

- Referring to policy shifts outlined in the Alberta's Social Policy Framework, discuss the questions below.
- After discussion, think about a current or planned project, policy, initiative, or practice in your work area and brainstorm ideas using the table on the next page.

### Questions:

- How can you include more of the desired policy shifts in your work?
- What challenges will you face when attempting to move towards the desired policy shifts?
- How can you overcome these challenges?

DESIRED SOCIAL POLICY SHIFTS		
	Current Emphasis	Moving Towards More of...
<b>FOCUS</b>	Policy and delivery are often crisis-oriented	Policy balances prevention and intervention
<b>PURPOSE</b>	Policy addresses symptoms and deficiencies	Policy supports citizens by providing the resources and competencies for success
<b>GOVERNMENT ROLE*</b>	Government is a service provider, funder, and legislator	Government complements its statutory and funding roles with that of an influencer, convener, and partner
<b>CONNECTIVITY</b>	Social policy is viewed as silos of need and service	Social policy emphasizes the integration and coordination of resources
<b>USE</b>	Policy is a tool to control and regulate behaviour	Policy is a tool to empower, facilitate, and create opportunity
<b>MEASURES OF SUCCESS</b>	Focus on inputs and rules	Focus on outcomes, quality, values, and dignity
*This policy shift is intended neither to indicate an abdication of statutory or law-making responsibilities on the part of the Government of Alberta nor its role in funding social programs; rather, it is intended to signal a complementary shift towards a more collaborative and facilitative role.		

DESCRIBE				
	Current State & Policy Practices	Desired Future State & Policy Practices	Potential Actions to get from Current to Desired State	How will you know you are successful?
FOCUS				
PURPOSE				
GOVERNMENT ROLE				
CONNECTIVITY				
USE				
MEASURES OF SUCCESS				

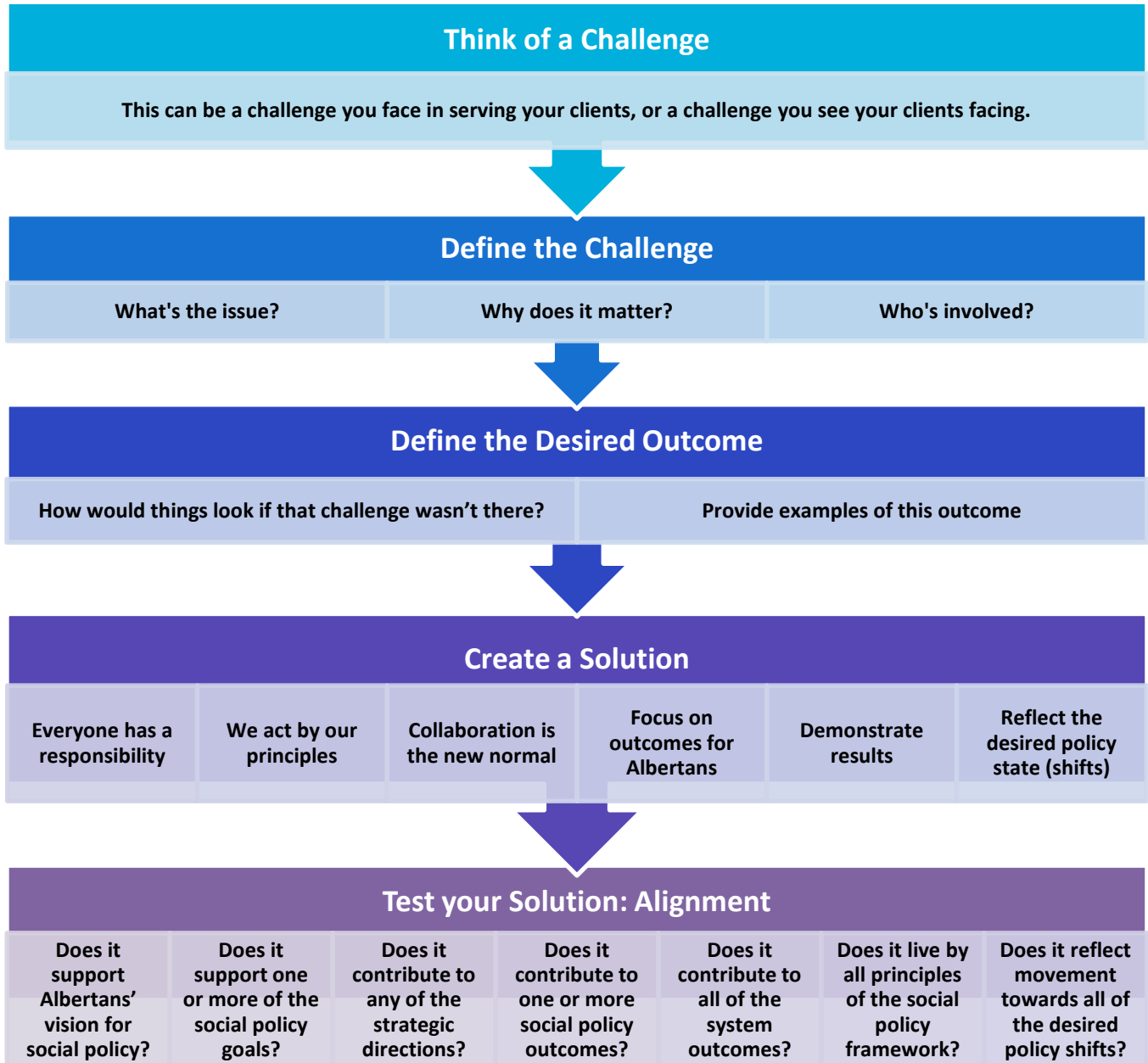


## Exercise: Alignment Flow (3 pages)

This is a useful exercise to think through how the Social Policy Framework connects and relates to your work or to a particular project.

**Purpose:** To examine whether a particular policy, initiative, or practice designed to address a social challenge is consistent with Alberta’s Social Policy Framework.

**Instructions:** Using the chart below as a guide, brainstorm ideas and complete the table on the following page.



**Think of a challenge**

**Define the challenge**

<b>What's the Issue?</b>	
<b>Why does it matter?</b>	
<b>Who is involved?</b>	

**Define the Desired Outcome(s)**

<b>How would things look if that challenge didn't exist?</b>	
<b>Does this outcome exist anywhere?</b>	

**What are some potential solutions?**

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**Test Your Solution(s): How does it Align with Alberta’s Social Policy Framework?**

<b>Vision:</b>			
<b>Goals:</b>			
<b>Strategic Directions:</b>			
<b>Outcomes for Albertans:</b>			
<b>System Outcomes:</b>			
<b>Principles:</b>			
<b>Policy Shifts:</b>			

## Exercise: Roles (1 page)

*The transformative potential of Alberta's Social Policy Framework is in the potential for collective action to address social challenges.*

**Purpose:** To identify potential roles and responsibilities of the various partners involved in social policy and how we could best work together to create meaningful change.

**Instructions:** • Discuss the questions below

### Questions:

1. What role(s) do you currently play in addressing social challenges?
  - a. Are these roles appropriate?
  - b. What changes could you make to strengthen your capacity to co-create change?
2. How do you see the roles and responsibilities of the partners identified in the Social Policy Framework working together?
3. With whom do you currently have the strongest working relationships?
4. Where could you strengthen your work relationships?

Individuals	Families	Neighbourhoods & Communities	Non-Profit & Voluntary Sector
Private Sector	Local Governments	Provincial Government	Federal Government

## Exercise: Strategic Flow (2 pages)

*This is a useful exercise to think through how your work aligns with Alberta's Social Policy Framework. The greater the alignment of our collective efforts to address social challenges, the greater our potential ability to create positive change.*

- Purpose:** To examine the degree of alignment and connection between your organization's goals and priorities and those outlined in *Alberta's Social Policy Framework*.
- Instructions:**
- Identify your organization/work unit's goals, strategic priorities, and priority actions/projects.
  - Individually, place them where you think they best align with the four overarching goals of the Social Policy Framework. Use the chart on the following page.
  - As a group, compare your choices, and answer the questions below.

### Questions:

1. With what Social Policy Framework goal does your work most strongly align (which goal has the most white boxes filled)?
  - a. Is this surprising? Yes or no, and why?
  - b. Is this appropriate? Yes or no, and why?
2. Is there a Social Policy Framework goal that has a lot of blank boxes?
  - a. If so, are there ways you can strengthen this alignment?
  - b. What are the challenges or risks associated with strengthening this alignment?
  - c. If not, are there ways you can build upon current actions?

**Protect the Vulnerable**


**Reduce Inequality**


**Create a Person-Centred System of High Quality Supports**


**Enable Collaboration & Partnerships**
