



BUSINESS PLAN 2015-18

ALBERTA SPORT CONNECTION

2015-18 Business Plan

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The [Alberta Sport Connection](#) (ASC) is committed to achieving results and strategic direction guided by the Government of Alberta's [Active Alberta Policy](#), [Canadian Sport Policy](#) and the [Alberta Sport Plan](#). ASC works with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, other Alberta government Ministries, Albertans, clients and stakeholders. ASC's Business Plan is clearly linked to the goals and priorities in the Alberta Culture and Tourism Business Plan.

Alberta Sport Connection's business plan is guided by the following vision, mission and values.

VISION

Alberta, the premier sport delivery system in Canada.

MISSION

To enhance, advocate and inspire participation and partnership as Albertans strive for excellence in sport.

Values

Efficiency – we efficiently deliver services to our client

Respect – we show consideration and appreciation for diversity

Integrity – we conduct ourselves ethically and are open, honest and fair

Accountability – we are accountable for our actions

Excellence – we are committed to continually improving the services we deliver

Leadership – we will initiate collaborative partnerships to achieve our goals

Creativity – we will use innovative approaches to achieve business goals

Guiding Principles

1. Values-based

All sport programs are values-based, designed to increase ethical conduct and reduce unethical behavior.

2. Collaborative

High-quality sport is based on partnerships with the sporting community, vested government ministries and other sectors, importantly with Education and Recreation. Clarity and timely communication is key to truly successful collaborative partnerships. Sport delivery is enhanced through linkages with organizations, service providers and the private sector.

3. **Accountable (intentional, relevant, systematically aligned, effective, efficient).**
Programs have clear objectives to achieve desired outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation of programs support improvement and innovation.
4. **Effective**
Advocate for an aligned provincial sport development system that results in quality sport outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation of program outcomes support improvement, innovation and accountability. Utilization of sport-related research will support the identification of conditions under which programs have the strongest basis for success.
5. **Technically Sound**
Principles of long-term participant development form programming in all contexts of sport participation, recognizing that different participant pathways exist across jurisdictions.
6. **Inclusive**
Sport program delivery is accessible and equitable and reflects the full breadth of interests, motivations, objectives, abilities, and the increasing diversity of our society.
7. **Sustainable**
Partnerships, innovative funding, economizing and sharing of resources exist to increase organizational capacity and to achieve sport system objectives.
8. **Educational and Developmental**
Education and transfer of knowledge is apparent to ensure the sport system remains up-to-date.
9. **Communication**
Open and transparent internally and externally.
10. **Research and Development**
As a best practice, sport related research will be encouraged and will ensure programs have a strong base for success.

How ASC Supports the Ministry Business Plan and Government of Alberta Priorities

The ASC core businesses, goals, desired outcomes and strategies align with, and support, the Government of Alberta strategic outcomes of economic diversification and the socio-economic well-being of Albertans. Through sport, ASC works to enhance Albertans quality of life and supports local economies through sport tourism and the economic benefits of hosting Multi-sport games and major sporting events.

In addition, low levels of physical activity are associated with increased risk of heart disease, diabetes, certain cancers, obesity, hypertension, anxiety, depression and premature mortality. The economic impact of physical inactivity in Canada, in terms of chronic disease, obesity and health care costs is estimated at \$6.8 billion annually.

Our core businesses are also directly connected to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's mandate. We also support Alberta's Culture Plan, which is based on Alberta's Cultural Policy, the "Spirit of Alberta" which states that "Albertans view culture in a broad sense, to include not only the arts but also heritage, *sport* and recreation and the natural environment".

In addition the core business of ASC also supports Government of Alberta initiatives such as the Active Alberta Policy. It contains specific outcomes including: "More Albertans, more active, more often", "All partners involved in providing recreation, active living and sport opportunities in a coordinated system" and "Albertans having opportunities to achieve athletic excellence".

Successful implementation of the ASC Business Plan will occur through partnerships with the public and private sectors. Currently a number of programs are delivered in collaboration with communities, regional and provincial sport associations and agencies. The ASC will explore future partnerships with Own the Podium, Canadian Sport Institute Calgary and national and provincial sport associations to enhance athlete, coach, officiating and administrator development in Alberta.

The ASC will continue to review all sport program partnerships. In Year One of the Business Plan, there will be an in-depth review of the Alberta Sport Development Center Network, the High Performance Coach Programs, and the ASC will engage the Alberta Senior Citizens Sport and Recreation Association in the implementation of recommendations from an evaluation of the Alberta 55 Plus Summer and Winter Games.

In addition, in Year One, ASC will also work with stakeholders to build an implementation plan for "Going the Distance": The Alberta Sport Plan 2014-2024.

In future years, other ASC programs will be completing in-depth reviews.

Link to the Active Alberta Policy and the New Alberta Sport Plan

ASC supports the Culture and Tourism 2015-2018 Business Plan through Desired Outcome Five: “Albertans enjoy improved health and wellness and strong communities through recreation, active living and sport”.

ASC supports the Government of Alberta as it works towards achieving the outcomes of the Active Alberta policy. The Government policy will achieve the recreation, active living outcomes through a coordinated system involving stakeholders, non-profit organizations, other levels of government, the private sector and individuals. ASC, with its stakeholders, will work collaboratively to achieve the outcomes of the policy through its sports programs and services. The Core Businesses in ASC Business Plan support outcomes identified in the Active Alberta policy. The renewal process for a new Alberta Sport Plan was initiated in 2013 and “Going the distance: the Alberta Sport Plan 2014 – 2024 was released on July 24, 2014. ASC is committed to implementing the Alberta Sport plan priorities.

Governance

Alberta Public Agencies Governance Framework (adopted in 2008) notes the expectations of government agencies regarding all elements of governance, including accountability and transparency. The Alberta Sport Connection is subject to the provisions of the Governance Framework. ASC’s Mandate and Roles document, an agreement between the Minister of Culture and Tourism and the Alberta Sport Connection, outlines specific roles and responsibilities.

ASC Core Businesses

Through ASC's review of the environmental context (see page 16), core businesses and strategies have been identified for 2015-18. To achieve core business goals, ASC will continue to collaborate with governments, public, private and not-for-profit sectors and seek active community engagement in achieving its desired outcomes. ASC will also be guided by [Alberta's Social Policy Framework](#).

During the period of this business plan, and in support of Active Alberta Policy and the Alberta Sport Plan, ASC will continue to adjust program delivery priorities, policies, practices, and evaluation criteria as required based on the principles of need, affordability, elimination of duplication, program credibility, and efficiency.

CORE BUSINESSES

Core Business 1: MARKETING

ASC will play a vital role in advocating and expressing the value of sport. Marketing includes: Advocacy; Sponsorship; Communications; and Fund Development. Partners in the sport delivery system, including key decision makers, media and the general public comprise our target markets.

Marketing and Communications currently pursues various initiatives designed to create awareness of the value of sport, ASC programs and services and our partnership programs. Implementation of strategies will be guided by an Advocacy, Communications & Marketing Plan.

Goal 1: Promote the value of sport and ASC through advocacy, communications and sponsorship

Desired Outcomes:

- Corporate Community enhances its support of ASC programs
- Increase Albertans' awareness of the value of sport

Strategies

- 1.1 Complete the development of an Advocacy, Communications & Marketing Plan 2015-18
- 1.2 Establish linkages within the sport sector to advance advocacy
- 1.3 Engage in discussions with other provinces/territories to discuss trends, opportunities, sport benefits and solutions to align provincial and national delivery systems
- 1.4 Establish relations with key corporate partners
- 1.5 Develop an external communication strategy targeting the public, key decision makers, corporations, individuals
- 1.6 Develop an internal communications strategy targeting provincial sport associations and other sport delivery agencies (e-news, annual meetings, presidents meetings, provincial forums)
- 1.7 Ensure an accurate, inclusive and user-friendly website that makes ASC information available on a number of social media platforms
- 1.8 Utilize social media regularly to communicate with partners, including the development of an App for Games and conferences
- 1.9 Ensure all ASC materials and programs incorporate the ASC brand/logo
- 1.10 Incorporate the ASC brand across the sector
- 1.11 Market the value of ASC programs to perspective sponsors
- 1.12 Develop a strategic advertising campaign targeting the public
- 1.13 Organize Salutes to recognize Olympic & Paralympic athletes and coaches following 2016 and 2018 Games
- 1.14 Maintain and recognize our existing sponsors
- 1.15 Develop and implement a Planned Giving program
- 1.16 Communicate with current and potential sponsors on a regular basis
- 1.17 Investigate an Endowment Fund that provides long-term benefit to sport

Performance Indicators

- The amount of self-generated dollars raised
- Number of Albertans participating in sport

Core Business 2: MULTI-SPORT GAMES

[Multi-sport Games](#) are a significant sporting experience in the lives of participants. They provide Albertans with opportunities to reach their athletic potential, pursue personal excellence and develop socially through ethical competition. These Games develop a sense of community and create an environment in which pride, enthusiasm, inspiration and fair play thrive.

Alberta Sport Connection provides an opportunity for developing athletes and for seniors to compete in multi-sport events by coordinating the Alberta Summer & Winter Games and the Alberta 55 Plus Games. ASC also supports [Team Alberta](#) in Interprovincial Games, including Canada Summer & Winter Games, Western Canada Summer Games (WCSG), and Arctic Winter Games to allow Alberta's athletes to develop and display their talents and skills.

Goal 1: Support host communities, provincial sport organizations (PSO) partners and participants in Alberta, Provincial, Territorial and Arctic Games

Desired Outcomes:

- Increase in participation in the Alberta and Alberta 55 Plus Games and zone playoffs
- Team Alberta is a podium performer at Canada Games and WCSG
- Team Alberta / Team Alberta North participants have a positive multi-sport Games experience

Strategies:

- 1.1 Establish minimum standards for hosting and coordinate the bid process and selection of host communities for Alberta Games
- 1.2 Provide financial support to communities that host Alberta Games
- 1.3 Provide financial support to provincial sport associations to assist in the selection of zone teams for Alberta Games
- 1.4 Enhance the quality of life for seniors by providing financial assistance to Alberta 55 plus association to support their provincial initiatives and involvement in Alberta 55 Plus Games
- 1.5 Provide consultative services to Alberta Games host communities

- 1.6 Support athlete, coach and technical officials participation in Alberta Games
- 1.7 Coordinate the sport technical package in cooperation with provincial sport associations
- 1.8 Recognize the efforts of the host community volunteers to host the Games
- 1.9 Promote and encourage sport organizations and host communities to use the ASC's donation program to assist with fund raising
- 1.10 Support athlete participation throughout the Canadian Sport for Life continuum, stage 3 Learning to Train (Alberta Games) and stage 7 Active for Life (Alberta 55 Plus Games)
- 1.11 Investigate multi-sport event opportunities and partnerships that impact and enhance the health of Albertans through participation in sport
- 1.12 Support Alberta's high-performance athletes and coaches participation in multi-sport Games through coordinating comprehensive technical packages and provide support and team training & selection funding to provincial associations to prepare athletes and coaches
- 1.13 Provide leadership, coordination, consultation, and administration services to Team Alberta and Team Alberta North
- 1.14 Support Alberta's emerging high-performance athletes by coordinating and funding the provision of sport science services
- 1.15 Work effectively with Host Societies to ensure technical requirements and quality athlete and coach services are provided
- 1.16 Actively engage and collaborate with Host Societies, governing bodies, and other Games partners

Performance Indicators

- Number of participants who compete in regional and zone playoffs for Alberta and Alberta 55 Plus Games
- Team Alberta finishes in the top three at Canada Games and WCSG
- Percentage of satisfaction with Team Alberta / Team Alberta North Games experience

Core Business 3: SPORT DEVELOPMENT

The Alberta Sport Connection and the Alberta sport development system vision is to lead the country in terms of “excellence” in organizational, athletic, coach, official and volunteer development. Specifically, Sport Development (SD) will provide provincial organizations with development funding, long-term athlete development support, educational and leadership enhancement activities, coordinate bilateral federal sport funding, liaise with Aboriginal communities for sport development, foster cross-sector collaboration, support sport for persons with disability and under-representative populations, promote research, advocacy and provide support through the Alberta Sport Connection’s donation fund.

Goal 1: Enhance sport system capacity

Desired Outcomes:

- Provide support to Provincial Sport Organizations (PSO) and other stakeholders to assist in the delivery of programs and services
- Provide coaches and coach developers with access to development and education opportunities
- Marginalized and underrepresented groups have access to sport opportunities

Strategies

- 1.1 Provincial Sport Association funding is provided on an annual basis
- 1.2 Provincial Sport Organization funding is reviewed and a transition plan for the funding review is implemented
- 1.3 Consultative support is provided, when required, to provincial sport associations with respect to strategic planning, governance and other organizational issues
- 1.4 Participate on Federal-Provincial/Territorial Sport Committee workgroups to forward Alberta’s position and expertise on a national level

- 1.5 Provide opportunity for corporations and individuals to contribute to sport development through provincial associations through the Donation Fund Program
- 1.5 Provincial Sport Organizations are aware of and have aligned their Strategic Plans to the Canadian Sport Policy and the Alberta Sport Plan
- 1.6 Work with provincial sport organizations to ensure their programs are aligned with Canadian Sport for Life
- 1.7 Work with provincial sport organizations to promote the delivery of programs and services in all communities
- 1.9 Build on existing relationships (PLAY groups, BFFL Centres, EverActive, ARPA, etc.), connections and linkages with the provincial sport sector to advance the awareness, education and implementation of physical literacy programs in the first three stages of the CS4L model with funding provided through the Sport Support Bilateral and annual operational grants
- 1.10 Provide financial support to organizations wishing to further their alignment with LTAD principles
- 1.11 Integrate LTAD's principles into the design and delivery of all ASC programs
- 1.12 Support and share current research on sport, as well as best practices for program design and delivery (share Research and Scan report)
- 1.13 Review current program related to Sport Science Funding (Sport Medicine Council)
- 1.14 Coordinate the Alberta's Future Leaders Program (AFL) in approximately 10 communities. AFL mentors work with the community to develop and deliver youth-focused sport, arts and cultural activities. Provide training for mentors and a leadership camp for aboriginal youth
- 1.15 Advance the awareness, education and implementation of programs that increase physical activity levels and provide sport opportunities for under-represented groups including persons with a disability, girls and women, economically disadvantaged, new Canadians and Aboriginal populations
- 1.16 Coordination and fulfillment of obligations under the Sport Support Bilateral related to under-represented populations is maintained in order to ensure a positive relationship with Sport Canada

- 1.17 Consultative and financial support is provided to organizations that provide opportunities for underrepresented and or marginalized populations groups (InMotion Network, Indigenous Sport Council-Alberta (ISC-A) and the Steadward Centre)
- 1.18 Provide sport opportunities for new Canadians and persons with disabilities
- 1.19 Support and guidance is provided to coaches in Alberta who are pursuing further coach education or evaluation
- 1.20 Consultative and financial support is provided to organizations wishing to provide a learning environment for coaches
- 1.21 Support is provided to provincial sport associations with respect to national coaching certification coordination
- 1.22 Financial support is provided to organizations and coaches wishing to further develop their coaching expertise through the coach initiatives program
- 1.23 Support is provided to coach developers to maintain their levels of qualification and to further support coaching education in the province
- 1.24 Consultative support is provided to Coach Alberta in order to ensure they have up-to-date information for their membership regarding provincial coaching activities and national initiatives
- 1.25 Continue to work with the educational system and the Alberta Schools Athletic Association to ensure expanded learning opportunities for school-based coaches
- 1.26 Liaise with the Coaching Association of Canada with respect to the delivery of the National Coaching Certification Program
- 1.27 Support and guidance is provided to officials in Alberta who are pursuing official education
- 1.28 Consultative and financial support is provided to organizations wishing to provide a learning environment for officials
- 1.29 Financial support is provided to organizations and officials wishing to further develop their expertise (official initiatives)
- 1.30 Recognize and celebrate the significant achievements, performances and contributions of Alberta's amateur athletes and teams
- 1.31 Acknowledge the tremendous impact NCCP Coach Developers have on Alberta's sport delivery system
- 1.32 Recognize and honor coaches for their successful and outstanding achievements in developing Alberta's amateur athletes

- 1.33 Recognize and honor officials for their successful and outstanding achievements in officiating sports that involve Alberta's amateur athletes
- 1.34 Recognize and honor the significant contributions of individuals who devote their volunteer time and effort to the development of sport
- 1.35 Provide educational and networking sessions to the provincial sport associations, sector partners and delivery agents dealing with issues identified through the association review process as well as through research and emerging issues
- 1.36 Coordinate the next biennial Sport Leadership Conference in April 2017 and 2019 which provides a formalized educational opportunity for the provincial sport community

Performance Indicators

- Percentage of growth in Provincial Sport Organization (PSO) membership
- Number of Albertans that have achieved national Coaching Certification Program Trained / Certified status
- Number of marginalized and underrepresented groups that the PSOs and other ASC programs reach through targeted programming

Core Business 4: SPORT EXCELLENCE

Alberta Sport Connection strives to give Albertans opportunity to excel in sport to the level of their abilities and interests. Sport develops a sense of community and creates an environment in which pride, enthusiasm, inspiration and fair play thrive. Multi-Sport Games and major sport events allow participants to explore the potential of their physical and mental abilities.

Goal 1: In collaboration with partners, deliver programs and facilitate sport excellence for Albertans

Desired Outcomes:

- Assist athletes to continue their pursuit of athletic excellence at the highest levels of national and international competition
- Alberta's athletes have access to provincial, national and international caliber athlete development opportunities
- Alberta communities and organizations have the opportunity to host major sport events

Strategies:

- 1.1 Provide funding and support for coach and officials' education and training, including grants to support the employment of high performance coaches through the High-Performance Coaching Development Program
- 1.2 Support Alberta's high-performance athletes' participation in interprovincial, national, and international Games (Canada Summer, Canada Winter, Western Canada Summer and Arctic Winter)
- 1.3 Support Alberta's emerging high-performance athletes by funding the provision of sport science services, on a regional basis through the [Alberta Sport Development Centres](#), and provincially to the Canadian Sport Institute-Calgary
- 1.4 Support the development of high-performance disabled sport in Alberta by providing support to Provincial Sport Organizations for the disabled and support for the Steadward Centre for physical and personal achievement
- 1.5 Support the International Sport Exchange Program to enhance athletic excellence and foster relationships with Alberta's sister provinces in Gangwon, South Korea; Hokkaido, Japan; and Heilongjiang, China
- 1.6 Recognize the accomplishments of Alberta's high-performance athletes through the Olympic and Paralympic Salute, the [Athlete and Team of the Year Program](#), and support for the [Alberta Sport Hall of Fame and Museum](#)
- 1.7 Promote the value of hosting events in province to key stakeholders
- 1.8 Ensure that sport organizations and communities are aware of the opportunity to acquire financial support to host events
- 1.9 Assist organizations in securing and hosting sport events in the province

Performance Indicators:

- Number of high-performance athletes receiving assistance through the Podium Alberta program
- Number of Alberta athletes receiving sport science services from Alberta Sport Development Centres and the Canadian Sport Institute, Calgary

Environmental Context

This environmental scan identifies key trends and developments that have a role in shaping social, cultural, economic, government and the sport landscape.

Collaboration and Partnerships

Across the sport sector and within the Government of Alberta, there is an increased emphasis on enhancing relationships and partnerships with collaboration and creative approaches to achieving desired outcomes. Strong relationships and partnerships with stakeholder groups are key to successfully achieving ASC goals and objectives with a focus on connectivity and advocacy.

Aging Population

Alberta's population increased by 10.8% (to 3,645,257) between the 2006 and 2011 editions of the Census. If trends continue, Alberta's population is projected to increase 17% between 2010 and 2020. According to the 2011 Census of Canada, Alberta's population is aging. As of May 2011, the number of seniors (people aged 65 and over) rose to almost 406,000 which represents 11% of the population (3,645,257). The 35 and under population has shrunk over the past three decades, a decrease was also evident among children aged 0 – 14; population decreased by 5.5% between 2006 and 2011. This is likely to impact school sport programs and place greater demand on club, community and provincial programs.

The aging process is expected to accelerate as more baby boomers turn 65. Alberta has the highest proportion of working age population (15 – 64) among provinces at 70%. Different regions in Alberta have varying demographics, Central and Southern Alberta has a higher proportion of senior population aged 65 and over, while Northern Alberta has a higher proportion of children.

Population growth and the changing composition of Alberta's population has created more diverse needs and new demands for a broader range of sport experiences, services, and programs. The changing composition of Alberta's population will impact the types of services that are developed and how they are marketed.

An increasingly immigrant, urban-based and aging population will also increase demand for different sport activities and events.

Changing Family

Family types have shifted over the last decade. Between 2006 – 2011 (2011 Census) the number of married couples grew by 3.1%, to 67%, lone-parent families increased by 8% to 16.3% and common-law increased 13.9 % to 16.7%. One in five children lives in a lone-parent family—a proportion that has doubled over the last two generations. Female-led lone-parent families still outnumber male-led lone-parent and 42.3% of our youth aged 20 – 29 still live at home. Sport services and programs must recognize the changing structure of families to allow for delivery differences and accommodating programs.

Increasing Diversity

Sport programs and services need to recognize the needs and interests of various cultures. Communities have become increasingly ethnically diverse. New Canadians accounted for approximately 70% of Canada's growth. In the 2006 Census, the proportion of visible minorities in Alberta grew from 11.6% in 2001 to 14% in 2006. Visible minorities tend to reside in large urban centres – the population of minorities is about 24 % in Calgary and 22% in Edmonton. The growing diversity of the population – growing segments of Aboriginal and new immigrants who have shown to have lower economic and social integration and who may have non-traditional sport preferences that will directly impact sport delivery.

Gender

Women and girls, who account for more than 50 percent of the population of Canada, continue to be underrepresented in the sport and physical activity system. More men (45% than women (24%) participate in sport. The number of women trained as coaches, and actively coaching, still

remains low. The rate of girls' participation in sport continues to be lower than that of boys.

Awareness of biomechanical and physiological considerations unique to women and girls has increased, providing an increased need to improve training methods and competitive programs for athletes. However, large gaps persist in knowledge and practice relating to the psycho-social factors that influence women and girls as participants, athletes, coaches, officials, leaders or administrators.

Canadian data suggest that men account for more of the total hours of volunteer involvement in not-for-profit sport and recreation organizations than women. Men also account for more hours spent on boards and committees of not-for-profit sport and recreation organizations. Increasing the number of women on boards can bring new voices, varying opinions, and different approaches and solutions to the decision-making process.

Opportunities for People with Disability

On a broad scale, persons with disability are not participating in sport at rates comparable to their able-bodied counterparts and are not enjoying the physical and social benefits that result from participation. Unique challenges and barriers face each of the movements for people with disability – physical and intellectual. ASC and sport sector partners will have to be aware of program delivery in barrier-free environments and socio-cultural environments that foster participation of persons with a disability.

Personal Economics

More than half the wealth in North America is owned by people over 50. Young families with children are now twice as likely to live in poverty. In 2009, the average gap between disposable income and the low-income threshold was 38% in Alberta (versus 34% nationally). There is a need for sport partners to examine ways to support individuals with low income, but especially young and lone-parent families.

The cost of living in Alberta increased by 11.4% between 2006 and 2011. It remains 4.8% higher than the national average. In 2008, for each dollar earned, Canadians spent \$1.40. The changing habits of consumption will impact consumer decisions; those most likely to participate in sport have higher educational attainment and higher income levels.

According to Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP) 2007, 14% of Albertans donated an average of \$109 each to Sport and Recreation organizations. The majority of donors are Albertans aged 35-54 years and married or in a common-law relationship.

Volunteering

According to the Environmental Scan 2010 (Department of Canadian Heritage), sport and recreation make up the largest component of the volunteering sector. In Canada, the number of sport volunteers totalled 2.2 million in 33,649 organizations, more than in any other sector (arts, culture, health and social service). In Alberta, in 2007, 43.5 million hours were volunteered for sports and recreation organizations. Each volunteer contributed an average of 118 hours (2007 Alberta CSGVP Subsector).

Not-for-profit organizations (including many sport and recreation organizations) are having greater expectations placed upon them, requiring greater administrative and voluntary assistance. The 2008 Alberta Recreation Survey noted a decline in volunteerism. However, as Baby Boomers begin to retire they provide an excellent source of skilled volunteers. They will have to be actively recruited but may not be willing to commit to short-term projects and tasks. The changing state of volunteers needs to be taken in to account for recruitment and retention.

Aboriginal Communities

The Aboriginal population is younger and growing at a faster pace than the non-Aboriginal population. Over half (50.8%) of Alberta's Aboriginal population was under 25 in 2006. The change away from active, traditional lifestyles has led to decreased activity and increased lifestyle diseases. The rate of Type 2 diabetes is five times higher among Aboriginal people, and is increasingly common among Aboriginal youth. The benefits of increased participation in sport include safer communities and increased health and longevity for Aboriginal people.

These challenges and opportunities reinforce the need to facilitate relationships, develop strategic partnerships and strengthen the capacity of Aboriginal communities through enhanced recreation and sport initiatives. ASC programs directed at Aboriginal communities, coaches and athletes, including leadership development programs can help to address the elevated needs of this rapidly growing population.

Valuing Sport in Canada

In 2013, Sport Canada reported that 72% of Canadians believe that sport is a key contributor to quality of life in their communities. The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, (Bulletin #13, 2013), indicated that individuals residing in Quebec ranked the value of sport to overall health and well-being at more than 80%. Albertans ranked it around 60%. More men than women perceive sport as very important and those aged 45 years and older ranked sport lower than 15 – 24 year olds.

In addition, importance of sport was ranked higher by individuals if:

- University educated
- Higher income (over \$30,000)
- Resident of a large community (1 million or more)
- Single or never married
- Active
- Sport participant

Sport Participation

According to the General Social Survey (2010), registered sport participation levels fell from 45% in 1992 to 26% in 2010. Part of this decline can be attributed to an aging population, as active participation in sport declines with age. The Canadian Community Health Survey indicated a shift from formal and organized activities to more individualized and informal pursuits. Favorite youth activities included swimming, bicycling, running and basketball. Declining participation in sport is seen as a contributing factor to increased obesity and chronic health problems.

Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) is a movement to increase sport's contribution in Canadian society, recognizing sport as an important part of everyone's life, by promoting each child's healthy and logical development in sport or physical activity. Physical literacy skills are important for sporting success as well as healthy lifelong enjoyment. CS4L's Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model, from playground to podium, contributes to both sport excellence and the well-being of all Canadians. ASC works in collaboration with partner organizations to support implementation of CS4L and the LTAD frameworks. The Active Alberta policy, CS4L, Canadian Sport Policy renewal and the Alberta Sport Plan identify and provide parameters that will guide sport development strategies and encourage partnerships to ensure sport for life.

Services and support could increase participation in sport. Almost 4 in 10 (39%) Canadians say help in planning daily schedules to include sport would make it easier to participate. Similarly, 7 of 10 Canadians see affordable facilities, services and programs, access to safe streets and paths, trails and green spaces as important in making it easier to participate in sport.

Motivation for Sport Participation

The 2011-12 Sport Monitor (2013 Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI) – Bulletin 11) explored different motives for participating in sport. An individual’s engagement in sport and adherence to continue is greatly influenced by what motivates them. The top motivators are:

Feeling better mentally and physically	Having fun
Exercising	Getting outdoors
Finding sport personally satisfying	Looking better
Socializing with others	Relaxing and forgetting about worries
Taking risks/seeking adventures	Competing or winning

In general some of the same motivators help explain why children participate in sport, have fun, improve skills, belong to a group, be successful, gain recognition, get fit, and find excitement. Conversely, they drop out of sport because of other interests, boredom, lack of success, too much pressure, loss of interest, friends leaving, or because it ceases to be fun. A 1992 study of 26,000 children found that ‘fun’ is the pivotal reason for being in sport — and lack of fun is a leading reason for dropping out.

Trends in Physical Activity

In 2011-12, Canadian Physical Activity Levels Among Youth (CANPLAY) examined children’s preferences for the intensity of various types of physical activities and sports. According to parents, boys are more likely than girls to prefer solely vigorous intensity activities, whereas more girls than boys prefer moderate-intensity activities exclusively. These relationships hold across all age groups (5 – 19 years). Difference in preference of intensity exists with parental and household characteristics: university educated parents and higher income households have children and youth that prefer vigorous intensity activities.

Low levels of physical activity are associated with increased heart disease, diabetes, certain cancers, obesity, hypertension, anxiety, depression and

premature mortality. The economic impact of physical inactivity in Canada, in terms of chronic disease, obesity and health care costs is estimated at \$6.8 billion annually.

Despite health benefits associated with physical activity, participation has not increased significantly in Alberta over the last decade. A recent study indicates 94% of Albertans believe physical activity reduces potential health problems, but only 59% get enough physical activity to achieve health benefits. In addition to physical health benefit, young Albertans engaged in physical activity have better social, emotional and academic development.

Several challenges exist in engaging Albertans of all ages in physical activity.

The amount of time available for recreation is an issue: on average, Albertans work the most hours in Canada. Time spent watching television, playing video games and on the internet also significantly contributes to physical inactivity and a sedentary lifestyle. Opportunities exist to work with the physical activity and sport sector to identify common outcomes and related initiatives.

Youth Inactivity and the Need for Connectedness

Canadian children now spend close to 8 hours a day in front of screens and less time playing outside. The Canadian Health Measures Survey identified that obesity rates tripled for children between 1981 – 1996 and children's overweight levels grew from 15% for both genders to more than 29% for girls and 35% for boys.

Alarming findings were highlighted in the 2013 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card based on 2008-11 Canadian Health Measures Survey, 7% of 5- to 11-year-olds in Canada, and 4% of 12- to 17-year-olds, meet the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Children and Youth, which recommend at least 60 minutes of daily moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA). Only 40% of 5- to 17-year-olds in Canada accumulate at least 60 minutes of MVPA at least 3 days per week.

The Report Card also indicated that 75% of 5- to 19-year-olds in Canada participated in organized physical activities and sport in the past year. 51% of students in Grades 6 to 10 in Canada reported participation in at least one organized sport (sport club or team).

Alberta's internet access has steadily increased from almost 64% in 2005 to about 82% in 2009. Youth have a very strong need to stay connected on-line; any activity that takes them off line, especially for long periods of time will not be popular. From April 2009 to April 2010, social networking mobile applications increased usership by 240%. Smartphones are the most

common way to access the internet. This has implications for our sector in configuring websites. The 24/7 connectedness is also placing demands on our sport sector to provide real time updates and to use other new technologies related to results management systems.

Economic and Social Impact of Sports Events

Spectators, volunteers and participants in sport and recreation events generate economic activity both locally and throughout the province. According to the Department of Canadian Heritage (2013), spending associated with the Canadian sport tourism industry reached \$3.6 billion, an increase of almost 9% from 2008. The multi-sport games and major events hosted in Alberta communities create significant economic and social benefits and the participants in these events serve as role models and inspiration for local youth and seniors to be more active.

Enhanced facilities developed for major events increase the availability of quality recreation opportunities for local residents. Hosting major events nurtures a strong sense of united community and enhanced well-being. The events bring volunteers together, forging new friendships; and individuals and local businesses develop long-term relationships through involvement with sport events.