

A Culture of Care and Connection



REACH
Niagara

Strategic Plan: 2026–2029



A Culture of Care and Connection

REACH Niagara is rooted in a simple commitment: care should reach individuals where they are.

Over the last strategic period, REACH has grown in its relationships, role and presence across Niagara. More individuals are accessing care through REACH, more partners are relying on the model and the need for compassionate, low-barrier healthcare continues to grow.

The 2026-2029 Strategic Plan sets a path for sustaining that work while strengthening the foundation beneath it. It is grounded in what has made REACH trusted: low-barriers, non-judgment and practical, compassionate support for individuals facing significant barriers to healthcare.





Mission, Vision and Values

As part of this planning process, REACH renewed its mission, vision and values to reflect both continuity in its model and the organization's next stage of growth.



Mission

REACH provides **compassionate, low-barrier healthcare** by meeting individuals where they are.



Vision

A Niagara where barriers no longer prevent individuals from accessing healthcare

Values



Respect

In every interaction with those we serve, we meet them where they are, without judgment, and treat them with dignity.



Compassion

We seek to understand individuals' experiences, and respond with kindness, humanity, and care to support the health and well-being of those we serve.



Collaboration

We work with partners across the system to improve access, strengthen care, and better support the individuals we serve.



Equity

We work to reduce barriers and improve access to healthcare for individuals facing challenges.



Overarching Objective

Sustain and grow the model by carrying the culture forward.

REACH Niagara's culture of trust, low-barriers and non-judgment is the foundation of its model. It is what makes the work possible. Individuals access care because of it. Staff are drawn to REACH because of it. Partners rely on it.

As REACH grows, that culture must be understood, embedded and deliberately carried forward so that growth strengthens the model rather than dilutes it.

During this next strategic period, REACH will address the capacity, funding and role pressures on the organization while protecting what makes the model worth sustaining. The organization cannot continue absorbing growing demand without clearer roles, stronger internal systems, better community pathways and more sustainable resources.

The five strategic directions that follow provide the framework for achieving this objective. Together, they will help REACH grow the model, carry its culture forward, strengthen the staff practices that make it effective and support better outcomes for individuals who continue to face significant barriers to healthcare in Niagara.





Strategic Directions

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1

Sustainable Low-Barrier Care

Sustain REACH's low-barrier model so care remains accessible, trusted, and durable as demand grows.

REACH will focus on:

- Securing stable funding for core low-barrier healthcare
- Embedding the practices that make low-barrier care trusted and accessible
- Aligning service growth with funding, staffing and delivery capacity
- Tracking and communicating the impact of low-barrier care

Low-barrier care is the centre of REACH's work. This direction strengthens the financial and operational foundation needed to keep that care available, consistent and responsive over time

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

Role Clarity and Strategic Boundaries

Define REACH's role so it can remove barriers without becoming responsible for every system gap.

REACH will focus on:

- Defining program scope and clarifying who each program is designed to serve
- Creating consistent decision rules for new requests and opportunities
- Supporting staff to set limits consistently and compassionately
- Building shared accountability with partners before, during and after referrals

Clearer roles and boundaries will help REACH protect its capacity for the individuals who need its model most. They will also give staff and partners a shared understanding of where REACH leads, where it collaborates and where other parts of the system must carry responsibility.

Operational Backbone and Organizational Capacity

Strengthen the internal systems, leadership, and staff supports needed to sustain the work.

REACH will focus on:

- Strengthening operational leadership
- Improving finance, administration and reporting capacity
- Clarifying internal systems, workflows and roles
- Investing in staff support, retention and development

REACH has grown into a larger and more complex organization. Stronger internal capacity will help staff do their work, support timely decisions, reduce pressure on executive leadership and ensure the organization has the structure needed to carry its culture forward.

Connected Community Pathways

Build better pathways so individuals experience greater continuity across healthcare, housing, justice, shelter and community services.

REACH will focus on:

- Creating practical transition pathways with key partners, with clarity on what happens before, during and after referrals
- Strengthening integration across health, housing and social supports
- Advancing gender-responsive care and pathways for cis women, transgender women and nonbinary women-aligned individuals
- Reducing fragmented care, stigma and repeated storytelling

Many individuals served by REACH move through systems that are difficult to navigate. Stronger pathways will help reduce dead ends, improve handoffs and support continuity across care, shelter, housing, justice and community supports, including for cis women, transgender women and nonbinary women-aligned individuals experiencing homelessness who face distinct risks related to violence, sexual assault, trauma, justice involvement and gaps in healthcare response.

Partnership and System Leadership

Use REACH's trust, credibility, and experience to help the broader system become more responsive.

REACH will focus on

- Deepening relationships with partners who share its commitment to low-barrier care
- Helping partners build their own low-barrier capacity
- Using evidence and stories to influence system change
- Advancing shared standards and accountability across the service system

REACH's credibility gives it a role beyond direct care. By sharing evidence, strengthening partnerships and advancing shared standards, REACH can help shape better system responses for individuals who continue to face barriers in traditional pathways.



With Gratitude

REACH Niagara extends its sincere thanks to the Board, staff and medical team for their leadership, commitment and insight throughout the strategic planning process. Their experience and dedication shaped this plan and will be essential to moving it forward.

REACH also thanks the individuals and community partners who shared their perspectives and helped ground this plan in the realities of care, access and collaboration across Niagara. Their input was invaluable in shaping the direction of the next three years.

The success of this plan will depend on the same spirit that informed its development: trust, compassion, equity and collaboration. Together, REACH and its partners will continue working to reduce barriers, strengthen access to healthcare and support individuals across Niagara with dignity and care.





REACH Niagara

Making Healthcare Accessible



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