

# 2024-2028 Strategic Plan

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**To:** Chair and Members of the Board of Health

**Meeting Date:** November 1, 2023

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## Recommendations

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It is recommended that the Board of Health receive and approve the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan.

## Key Points

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- Early in 2023, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) began the process of creating a multi-year strategic plan.
- WDGPH worked with consultants to guide the strategic planning process and collect staff and community partner input.
- In September 2023, Board of Health Members, the Senior Leadership Team, and managers from each division worked together to develop the 2024-2028 strategic plan. The plan will guide the work of WDGPH in the coming years.

## Background

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As part of the Accountability Framework and Organizational Requirements set forth by the Ministry of Health, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) is required to have a strategic plan that establishes organizational priorities over a period of 3 to 5 years. This plan should include input from staff, clients and community partners and must be reviewed at least every other year. Prior to 2019, WDGPH consistently met this requirement.

WDGPH's previous strategic plan was in place from 2016-2020, with the development of a new strategic plan slated to begin in 2020. However, following the province's 2019 announcement regarding the imminent amalgamation of local public health units, the Agency altered its approach. In lieu of a multi-year strategic plan, the Senior Leadership Team developed a one-year strategic framework, meant to guide the Agency through a period of uncertainty. This framework was presented at the March 2020 Board of Health meeting.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, WDGPH's full-scale response demanded all organizational resources. As a result, development of a longer-term strategic plan was deferred. The most recent strategic framework was presented to the Board of Health at the February 2023 meeting. The 2023 framework highlighted the Agency's transition from emergency response to normal program service delivery.

Following approval of the 2023 framework, WDGPH began the process of creating a new multi-year strategic plan. The Senior Leadership Team opted to hire an external consultant to guide the Agency through strategic planning activities. A competitive bidding process was used, and Augustyn Enterprises Inc. (AEI) was the successful bidder. Work on WDGPH's 2024-2028 strategic plan began in June 2023.

## Discussion

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### Strategic Planning Process

The process for creating the new strategic plan took place in three phases.

#### **Phase 1: Project Initiation**

*June 2023*

The first phase of the project involved a review of the Agency's relevant plans and documents. This review included the 2023 Strategic Framework, the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, the 2022 Community Report and program information from the 2023 Annual Service Plan. During this phase, AEI worked closely with WDGPH staff to develop an engagement plan for soliciting input from staff and community partners.

## **Phase 2: Strategic Plan Development**

*July to September 2023*

The second phase of the planning process involved two major tasks: gathering input from WDGPH staff and community partners and using the input to develop the strategic plan.

### **Staff Engagement**

Staff were given the opportunity to provide input during the strategic planning process in two ways. During the month of August, all staff had the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey that included seven open-ended questions regarding what WDGPH's priorities should be over the next five years. 74 survey responses were collected, representing a participation rate of approximately 31%. Staff were also invited to participate in in-person engagement sessions. These sessions were facilitated by AEI and held at each public health office. Each session took approximately two hours and focused on generating lists of potential priorities for WDGPH. In total, 31 staff members from 12 teams participated in the engagement sessions.

### **Community Partner Engagement**

In July 2023, WDGPH invited representatives from 38 community partner agencies to participate in engagement sessions for the new strategic plan. Similar to the staff engagement sessions, three community partner engagement sessions were held (one at each WDGPH office). In total, 14 attendees, representing 11 local organizations, participated in the engagement sessions. Two community partners wished to participate but were unable to attend any of the sessions. Fortunately, these partners were later able to share their perspectives in one-on-one conversations with AEI.

### **Developing the Strategic Plan**

Early in September, several Board of Health members, the Senior Leadership Team and at least one manager from each division met for a two-day workshop to develop the new strategic plan. To prepare for the meeting, all attendees were asked to review a “Strategic Plan Pre-Work Package” that summarized the results of the engagement sessions, staff survey and one-on-one discussions with partners. During the workshops, AEI facilitated several activities that helped the group draft the vision, mission, values, goals and strategic priorities that will guide the work of WDGPH over the next five years.

### **Phase 3: Strategic Plan Finalization**

*October to November 2023*

In phase 3, AEI compiled the information generated in the workshops and created a draft strategic plan. The plan was shared with the Senior Leadership Team for feedback, which was incorporated into an updated plan. Pending approval from the Board of Health, AEI will then finalize the 2024-2028 strategic plan. In addition to providing the plan, AEI will also create promotional resources for the strategic plan for WDGPH to use on the public website and the agency’s social media accounts.

WDGPH’s 2024-2028 strategic plan can be found in Appendix A.

### **Dissemination**

Upon approval from the Board of Health, the strategic plan will be shared with staff, community partners and the public.

*WDGPH Staff:* The plan will be shared at an upcoming agency-wide town hall meeting. It will also be reviewed in-depth during a management meeting. Managers will be encouraged to discuss the strategic plan with their staff at team meetings and to explore ways to align their program plans with the goals and strategic priorities. Elements of the new strategic plan will be incorporated into internal agency templates and documents to ensure that the strategic plan is always top of mind during program planning and reporting.

*Community Partners:* The Senior Leadership Team, management and WDGPH staff will all share the strategic plan with partners and collaborative groups where appropriate. Community partners who participated in engagement sessions will receive a copy of the strategic plan in an email expressing WDGPH’s gratitude for their input.

*Public:* The strategic plan will be hosted on our public website. WDGPH social media accounts will also share information about the new strategic plan, including where individuals can go for further information.

## **Strategic Plan Measurement**

WDGPH is currently developing its approach for measuring agency progress towards strategic goals and priorities. Information will be collected from all programs and services to evaluate which ones contribute to each strategic goal. Data and indicators used to measure WDGPH's impact will be aligned with the strategic plan using WDGPH's Quality and Impact Framework. Tools such as surveys will be used to collect feedback from WDGPH staff and community partners to validate the agency's approach and to assess the degree to which they believe WDGPH is acting in accordance with its mission, vision, and values.

## **Health Equity Implications**

WDGPH's commitment to promoting health equity and reducing health disparities is a common thread throughout the 2024-2028 strategic plan. Being equitable was identified as a core value of the Agency. The strategic priorities and initiatives reference reducing health inequities, identifying and serving equity deserving groups, and incorporating equity into everything we do.

## **Conclusion**

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After several years of uncertainty and emergency response, WDGPH has transitioned back to normal program and service delivery. As part of this transition, the Agency began the process of creating a new multi-year strategic plan. With the help of AEI, WDGPH was able to collect valuable input from staff, community partners and WDGPH leadership. This input informed the goals and priorities of the new strategic plan. The 2024-2028 strategic plan will guide the work of WDGPH over the next five years and help position the Agency as a leader in public health.

# Ontario Public Health Standards

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## Foundational Standards

- Population Health Assessment
- Health Equity
- Effective Public Health Practice
- Emergency Management

## Program Standards

- Chronic Disease Prevention and Well-Being
- Food Safety
- Healthy Environments
- Healthy Growth and Development
- Immunization
- Infectious and Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control
- Safe Water
- School Health
- Substance Use and Injury Prevention

## 2023 WDGPH Strategic Directions

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- People & Culture:** We will maximize relationships through meaningful in-person interaction. Further integrate equity, diversity, and Inclusion objectives throughout the organization and equip ourselves for change.
- Partner Relations:** We will strategically collaborate with partners to address priority health issues in the community, re-engage with community partners and work with a range of partners to achieve positive health outcomes.
- Health System Change:** We will ensure we are positioned to be an agent of change within the broader health sector, advance the work of Ontario Health Teams and lead change in public health.

## References

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N/A

# Appendices

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## Appendix A