



# ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN 2026

## Advancing Strategic Priorities. Driving Impact.

The Annual Operating Plan shows how our 2024–2028 Strategic Plan comes to life through annual actions and priorities. At the centre sit our three “YES” priorities:

**Young People:** Our Legacy and Future

**Employees:** Our Source of Sustainable Energy

**Seniors:** Our Commitment to Lifelong Health

## Driving Impact Through Learning

Since the launch of our strategic plan in 2024, we have strengthened how we measure impact by using clear theories of action to link our work to the outcomes we aim to achieve. We began by expanding reach, improving access, and delivering services where they are needed most. This foundation allowed us to move beyond participation and focus on outcomes.

## Measuring Impact

In 2026, we are measuring what matters most: **resilience in young people, recognition and overall health for employees, and a sense of belonging and physical function among seniors.** As this work continues, we are shifting strategies and have expanded our measurement outcomes where appropriate to reflect the full impact of our programs and services.

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**At the YMCA, we deliver services, learn from our impact, and stay accountable to our communities.**

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# OUR COMMUNITY

The YMCA serves a diverse population, including individuals from priority communities\* who face barriers to accessing our programs. Our commitment to providing enabled access highlights our dedication to inclusion and ensuring support reaches those who need it most.

## Our Baseline Data - January-December 2025



**95,026** Community Members Served



**33,535** Enabled Access (35% of total)



**18,881** Members from Priority Communities (20% total)



Formal volunteer tracking begins this year to support planning and reporting

Enabled access is a method of removing financial barriers to promote inclusivity and affordability through subsidy, financial assistance, or free programming. Anyone who wants to be a participant in the community may have access to a program due to a YMCA subsidy, a grant or government funding. Enabled access does not include promotion or marketing strategies like discounts or incentives.

YMCA subsidy is a method of reducing financial barriers to promote inclusivity and affordability through direct subsidy or membership assistance. YMCA subsidy is directly supported by donors and funders.

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*\*Participants living in communities as defined by postal codes with a median household income of less than \$67,500/year are considered to live in priority communities. The goal is to reduce and eventually eliminate the inequalities faced by these individuals.*

# PRIORITY

# 1

## YOUNG PEOPLE

### OUR LEGACY AND FUTURE

**Goal:** Child and Youth Development, Focused on Those in Priority Communities.

### Theory of Action #1:

**IF** we combine youth feedback and program data to inform our programs,



**THEN** we will better serve a greater number of young people, including those in priority communities.

#### STRATEGIES

- **Collect Participant Feedback:** Gather feedback from youth participating in programs.
- **Track and Analyze Program Data:** Continuously collect and analyze data to identify areas for improvement.
- **Implement a Continuous Improvement Process:** Regularly review and refine programs based on the feedback and data collected.

#### OUTPUT TARGET BY END OF 2026

10,395

Young people served from priority communities

58,225

Young people served

10,195

2025 RESULTS: 56,048

Young people served from priority communities

# Theory of Action #2:

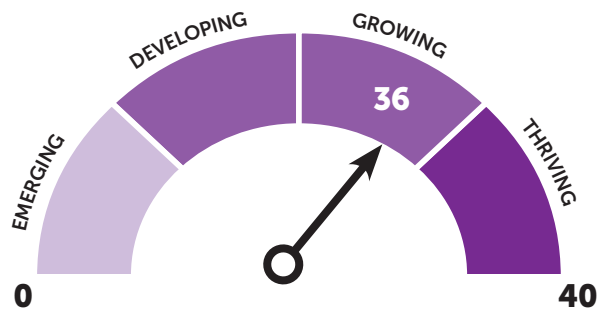
**IF** we leverage the YMCA HBB ecosystem where young people can develop supportive relationships, **THEN** they will build resilience through healthy minds and habits.

## STRATEGIES

- **Deliver After-School Academic and Social Support:** Deliver the Beyond the Bell program and Before and After School Care.
- **Build Life-Skill Development:** Deliver Youth Achievers program.
- **Strengthen Aquatic Skills and Safety Training:** Offer swimming lessons and advanced aquatics.
- **Cultivate Leadership Development:** Deliver Camp Wanakita Student Counsellor (SC) Leadership Program.

## OUTCOME BENCHMARK TARGET FOR 2026

Resilience Scale for Children™:  
2025 Average Resilience Score: 35



Benchmark score on the Resilience Scale for Children™ (Wagnild, 2014) is 34.  
Resilience is the capacity of youth to not only bounce back from challenges but to also learn, grow stronger and thrive because of those challenges.

The maturity descriptors below show how programs progress over time, from early development to sustained strength and resilience: **Emerging** (becoming increasingly visible, taking root, and building strength); **Developing** (growing in scale and becoming more advanced and noticeable); **Growing** (increasing in strength, maturing, and becoming more firmly established); and **Thriving** (strong, resilient, and consistently flourishing).





# PRIORITY

# 2

## EMPLOYEES

### OUR SOURCE OF SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

**Goal:** Positive Leadership and Culture.

#### Theory of Action:

**IF** we actively foster a culture of recognition where employees feel valued and appreciated for their contributions,



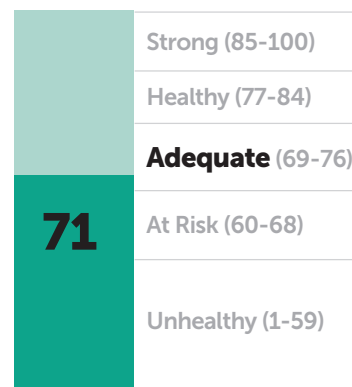
**THEN** this will lead to improvements in employee recognition score and the overall organizational health score.

#### STRATEGIES

- **Enhance Employee Recognition Program:** Review and improve the service award program and employee milestone event.
- **Expand Learning & Leadership Development:** Introduce professional development sessions for all staff and leaders and provide LEADS leadership training for the Association Leadership Team.
- **Embed Recognition Across the Employee Lifecycle:** Integrate recognition practices at key stages, from recruitment to offboarding, to foster belonging and create connections to YMCA values.

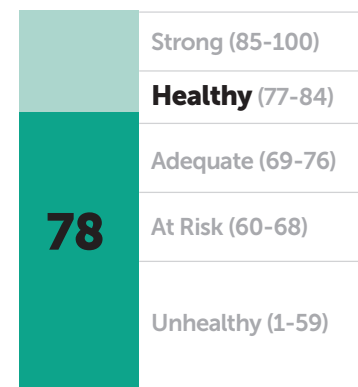
#### OUTCOME TARGETS BY END OF 2026

##### Recognition Score\*



2025 Recognition Score: 70

##### Overall Health Score\*



2025 Overall Health Score: 77

\*The Recognition and Overall Health scores are based on the results from the YMCA WorkWell Employee Experience Insights Survey. All employees are invited to complete this survey.

# PRIORITY

# 3

## SENIORS

### OUR COMMITMENT TO LIFELONG HEALTH

**Goal:** Active Aging.

#### Theory of Action #1:

**IF** we use data on the needs and interests of seniors and program data to improve our programs,



**THEN** we will better serve a greater number of seniors, including those in priority communities.

#### STRATEGIES

- **Collect Participant Feedback Collection:** Gather feedback from seniors participating in programs.
- **Track and Analyze Program Data:** Continuously collect and analyze data to identify areas for improvement.
- **Implement a Continuous Improvement Process:** Regularly review and refine programs based on the feedback and data collected.

#### OUTPUT TARGET BY END OF 2026

1,075

Seniors served from  
priority communities

6,477

Seniors served

1,047

Seniors served from  
priority communities

2025 RESULTS: 6,465

# Theory of Action #2:

IF we offer programs that promote the well-being of seniors and create opportunities for them to contribute to the YMCA HBB ecosystem,

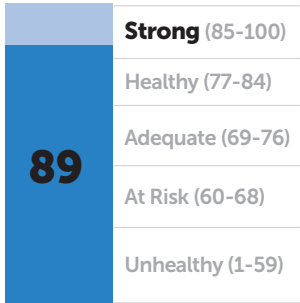
▶ THEN they will experience an increased sense of belonging and enhanced physical function, supporting active aging and independence.

## STRATEGIES

- **Provide Health and Fitness Programs:** To promote physical well-being and social interaction.
- **Advance Balance +:** A community exercise initiative focusing on strength, balance, flexibility, and endurance.
- **Deliver Aquafit Classes:** To provide low-impact, water-based exercise options.
- **Offer Cognitive Groove:** A dance-style program designed for individuals with limited mobility or memory.

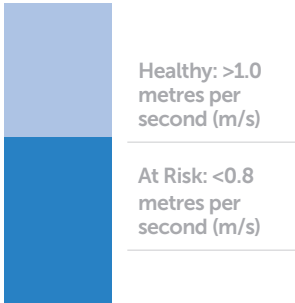
## OUTCOME TARGETS BY END OF 2026

### SENSE OF BELONGING Connection Score\*



2025 Connection Score: 89

### PHYSICAL FUNCTION Gait Speed\*\*Benchmark



SENSE OF BELONGING is the experience of feeling connected to and valued within the YMCA community.

\*The Connection score is based on results from the YMCA WorkWell Members Experience Insights Survey and represent members who identify as 60 years and older. All members are invited to complete this survey.

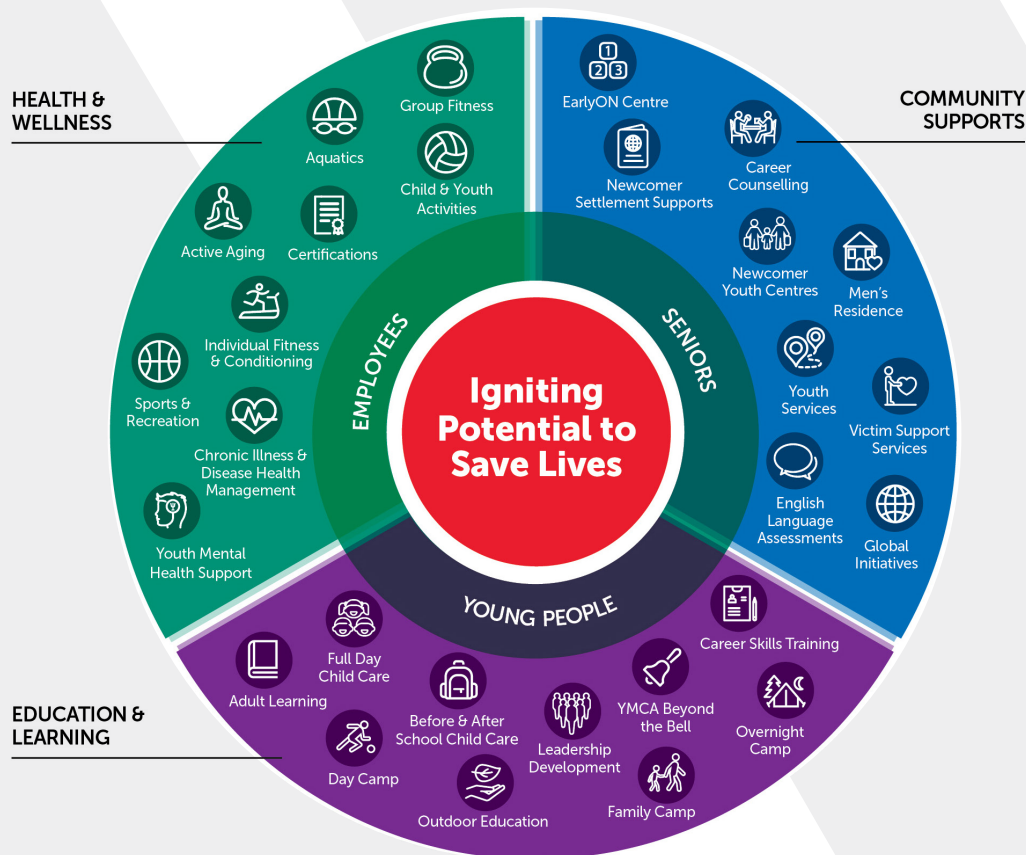
PHYSICAL FUNCTION reflects a person's capacity to move effectively and maintain independence in daily life, and is a key indicator of healthy aging and resilience.

\*\*Gait speed is a proven indicator of health and independence in older adults. It predicts fall risk, cognitive decline, and overall resilience. By incorporating gait speed measurement, we aim to track functional improvements resulting from participation in YMCA programs and support seniors in aging well.



## Our Ecosystem of Offerings

The YMCA provides a wide range of services, from health and wellness programs to youth development initiatives and senior engagement activities. While we support all our offerings, this year's Annual Operating Plan spotlights key initiatives that align with our strategic priorities for maximum community impact.



**OUR VISION** - Creating a vibrant and healthy community where everyone thrives, igniting their fullest potential.

**OUR MISSION** - YMCA Hamilton|Burlington|Brantford is a charitable organization that creates spaces to belong and promotes healthy living for people at all stages of life.

**OUR VALUES** - Caring. Honesty. Inclusion. Respect. Responsibility.

**YMCAHBB.CA**

Charitable Registration #10808 3825 RR0001



## GET INVOLVED

The YMCA relies on the financial support of donors and funders who share our vision.

**The Y Saves Lives®**

**YMCAHBB.CA/Donate**