Strategic Business Plan

Addressing the Needs of Missing Persons and their Families

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Acknowledgements

The Oversight Committee, for the project designed to implement recommendations of the 2011 Western Regional Forum on Supporting Families of Missing Persons, is comprised of four members of Saskatchewan's Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons (PPCMP). The committee would like to acknowledge those who have supported this project.

We are grateful for the financial assistance received through the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Victims Fund. This assistance was critical to the implementation of the project and allowed us to build on foundational work previously completed through the 2011 Western Regional Forum on Supporting Families (WRF). Much of the success of the project can be attributed to the participants of the WRF and the recommendations put forth by those involved. The collaboration and diversity of voices offered a rich collection of recommendations. The recommendations have provided valuable insight into the service and support needs of families of missing persons. Again, through feedback gained during the community consultation phase of the project, participants of the WRF offered their ideas and informed the outcomes of this project.

Additionally, we must acknowledge the membership and work of Saskatchewan's Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons (PPCMP). The PPCMP has been a leader both in the quest to learn more about the complex issues related to missing person situations and in efforts to make gains in offering services and supports to missing persons and their families. This work has greatly contributed to the project and beyond.

Finally, the committee must acknowledge missing persons and families of missing persons from across our country. Your willingness to share heart aching experiences and your courage to seek out support from those in your communities has provided a touchstone throughout this project. You are the reason for this work.

Thank you.

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This comprehensive strategic business plan, to address the needs of missing persons and their families, is the result of a recommendation of the Western Regional Forum on Supporting Families of Missing Persons (2011). The plan sets out a number of activities intended to enhance collaboration, raise public and political awareness and improve support for families.

Executive Summary

Panic. This is one word that has been used to describe family response to a missing loved one. Most of us can only imagine the trauma of realization that a loved one has disappeared. Throughout our lives, we take measures to be prepared; we plan for life events, we anticipate where problems might arise and we seek out certainty and safety in the world around us. When a loved one is missing, all preparation is wrenched from the hands of a family, leaving in its place, panic. Each day, families throughout all regions of Canada experience the sudden crisis of a missing loved one. Few events are so distressing. Few events leave families and communities with such a sense of unresolved loss, unanswered questions and a desperate need for hope that things will turn out. Although families can never be prepared for a missing person situation, it is essential that communities are prepared. It is the responsibility of every community to offer an organized and responsive approach to missing person situations and to supporting families of missing persons.

This strategic business plan sets out a roadmap to address issues related to missing persons and supporting families of missing persons. There is a significant need for awareness and services related to prevention of, response to, and support for, missing persons and families, friends and social and kinship networks of missing persons. While successful programs and initiatives have been established and responses have been improved, there is much work yet to be done. Effort needs to be expended to ensure consistency and effectiveness in activities across regions. A planning document such as this can guide community responses and prepare communities throughout the Western regions of Canada to serve and support missing persons and their families.

Critical overall guidance to the development of the strategic activities of this plan has come from both past and recent work. For instance, foundational knowledge was gained from work done by Saskatchewan's Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons (PPCMP), a series of family meetings hosted by the PPCMP and the 2011 Western Regional Forum on Supporting Families of Missing Persons (WRF). Of particular note are 16 key recommendations coming out of the WRF. Most recently, a literature review produced substantial findings, as did a process of community consultation. The community consultation occurred beginning April 2012-June 2012 and generated invaluable feedback. 70 recipients received an invitation to participate in the community consultation by completing a survey.

The invitation to participate generated 41 responses from stakeholders throughout the Western regions of Canada. Eight individuals also participated in telephone and in-person interviews. Each of the activities was influential in determining the goals, objectives and actions outlined in the strategic business plan. Three strategic priority areas have been defined:

1. Working Together

2. Raising Awareness

3. Supporting Families

Within each of the three strategic priority areas, a number of specific goals and action steps are suggested. The feasibility of each of the strategic goals and action steps has been explored through the literature review and community consultation process. Each goal is considered a suitable and realistic target. The activities described in this plan will not only enhance past efforts but also identify selected priority actions to be accomplished over a two-year timeframe.

Because the strategic business plan contains a good deal of detailed information, a one-page Strategic Business Plan Map offers a visual representation and broad overview of the strategic business plan. The one-page overview is intended as a quick and helpful reference.

Strategic Business Plan Map

Addressing the Needs of Missing Persons and their Families

Guiding Statement

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Values

Diversity and Collaboration	Information Sharing	Responsive to the Needs of Families of Missing Persons

Dream

A diverse and collaborative group will work together to implement a comprehensive plan to address the needs of missing persons and their families. The group's efforts will result in improved community awareness and improved provision of effective services and supports for families.

Strategy and Goals

Working Together

- Project Coordination
- Communication Strategy
- Member Updates
- Host an Event

Raising Awareness

- Time of Recognition
- Online Information
- Media Involvement
- Political Support
- Individual Effort

Supporting Families

- Specialized Counseling
- Enhance Work of Agencies
- Plain Language Resources
- Resource Directory
- Research

Outcomes

- A committed group of stakeholders working together to offer a coordinated response to issues related to missing persons and their families.
- An aware, informed and engaged community that recognizes the importance of missing persons and their families.
- A range of effective services based on best practices for supporting families of missing persons.

Background Information

Because this strategic plan is based on several years of collaborative work between Government, community, families, friends and those in the social networks of missing persons, a brief history and description of previous work will provide context. In 2005, Saskatchewan's Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons (PPCMP) was formed. The vision of the PPCMP is to "work towards a future that ensures that when people go missing there is a full response that mobilizes all necessary participants and that recognizes the equal value of every life" (PPCMP, 2007). The PPCMP has goals related to raising awareness, educating the public, promoting prevention strategies, encouraging cooperation and partnerships and enhancing response capacity.

A particularly important initiative of the PPCMP was the hosting of family meetings and involvement of 21 families of missing persons in those meetings. Families were invited to the meetings in order to share information, identify key issues and make suggestions for improving the process of responding to missing person cases. A Final Report including 20 recommendations to improve the overall response to missing persons' situations was completed in October of 2007 (PPCMP, 2007). This report, along with a report on the family meetings can be accessed online at http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/MissingPersons.

The Western Regional Forum on Supporting Families of Missing Persons (WRF) was held in March 2011. Attended by approximately 60 stakeholders representing agencies from across Western Canada (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon and Northwest Territories), this event was pivotal in bringing together a group of stakeholders with varying areas of expertise and perspectives. This group included federal participation from Justice Canada and Public Safety Canada and participants from victims services workers, law enforcement officers, Crown Counsel, other criminal justice employees, community-based and non-profit organizations, First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal organizations and government representatives. The WRF advanced previous work and served to reveal areas of greater need, specifically in the area of supporting families. The report on the WRF identified 16 recommendations that serve as guiding recommendations to this plan (WRF Report, 2011). This background work is briefly outlined below.

Guiding Recommendations

Because of the many sectors and agencies represented by participants of the Western Regional Forum, the 16 recommendations put forth encompass varying perspectives. Despite the varying perspectives, participants came together with a common desire for improved understanding of missing person situations. Participants also shared concerns related to the risks faced by missing persons, concerns about preventing missing person situations, intentions to improve community response and a commitment to learn more about supporting families, close friends and those in the social and kinship networks of missing persons.

A facilitator posed guiding questions to the group:

- *What do families need in both the short and long term when they are facing a missing person's situation?*
- *How are jurisdictions currently meeting those needs? Are there areas where significant gaps remain?*
- *How can agency responses and services provided to families of missing persons be improved both within jurisdictions as well as across jurisdictions?*

The resulting discussion along with additional group activities and a series of presentations produced 16 key recommendations. These recommendations echo the voices of many and encompass the collective ideas of the group. As such, they serve as a valued guide to this strategic plan. For a complete description of the 16 recommendations, see Appendix A.

One particular recommendation suggested the initiation of a project intended to advance the other 15 recommendations. The recommendation proposed a project designed to:

1. Enrich and continue the work of the Western Regional Forum participants and agencies, including the work of the PPCMP.

2. Explore and clarify the continuum of support needs of families of missing persons.

3. Devise a **strategic business plan** encompassing a series of recommendations put forth by participants of the WRF. Broadly, the activities of the strategic business plan will:

    a) Position issues of missing persons in the forefront of provincial, regional and national conversations.

    b) Increase knowledge and understanding of missing persons through improved access to a range of informational resources.

    c) Aid members of the public to gain a full and accurate understanding of the issue of missing persons. Gain public support and make the issue of missing persons a priority within communities (WRF Report, 2011).

This project will add to the momentum and understanding of issues related to missing persons that has been increasing in recent years. Families cannot walk this complex journey alone. To navigate the uncertainty and ambiguity alone, with limited services and strategies, few coordinated supports and inadequate community services would surely be one of the most isolating of journeys. For this reason, the priority areas, goals and action steps set out in this strategic business plan are important and fitting at this time.

Strategic Planning Process-What did we Learn?

The strategic planning process, initiated and guided by the 16 recommendations of the WRF, was strengthened through additional strategic planning activities. The PPCMP agreed to take responsibility for initiating a planning project and formed an oversight committee of four members. Funding was gained through the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Victims Fund. A Project Analyst was contracted for a 13-week period. The project analyst was responsible to complete four specific tasks, namely:

- Conduct a review of literature on missing persons.
- Devise and implement a method of community consultation.
- Develop a visual illustration of the continuum of family support needs.
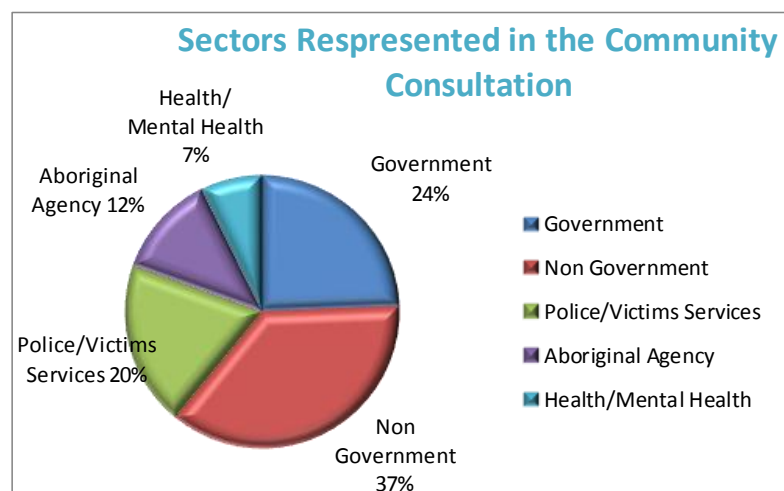- Prepare a strategic business plan.

The literature review phase created a necessary foundation of understanding while the community consultation process ensured that ideas of others were considered and incorporated into all tasks. The community consultation strongly informed the visual illustration of the continuum of family supports and the strategic business plan. The community consultation involved an online survey as well as telephone and in-person interviews. Both the survey and interview methods gathered valuable feedback. The ideas not only shaped the goals and actions steps of the strategic business plan, but also revealed a number of associated strengths and risks. For detailed information on the visual illustration of family support needs, see Appendices B and C.

An important task when devising a strategic business plan is to identify the range of strengths and risks associated with the proposed work. Fortunately, the literature review and community consultation process generated ample supporting evidence to clarify and explain identified strengths and potential approaches to address risks. What follows is an overview of several strengths and potential risks.

Strengths of the Strategic Business Plan

a) **Varied Perspectives and Collaborative Approach**

The multilayered and complex issues related to missing persons and their families are best addressed through a collaborative multi agency approach. The diversity of those involved, the varied

Sectors Respresented in the Community Consultation

- Government 24%
- Non Government 37%
- Police/Victims Services 20%
- Aboriginal Agency 12%
- Health/Mental Health 7%

perspectives and the collaborative approach used in previous work and the proposed work of this strategic plan is a definite strength. Several of the WRF recommendations speak to issues of participant commitment, development of relationships between stakeholders, seeking out champions for the cause of missing persons and strengthening partnerships (WRF Report, 2011). The priority placed on collaboration between and among groups demonstrates shared commitment to work toward change, a will to address gaps in services and efforts to avoid duplication of services. There are federal, provincial and territorial working groups to share information and support this plan. By offering perspectives and working collaboratively, a great deal of expertise is contributed and greater gains can be made.

The accompanying graphic shows the variety of groups who participated in the community consultation and who are actively involved in issues related to missing persons and supporting families of missing persons.

b) Identified Need and Community Commitment

Given the variety of stakeholders and varying perspectives, working together could pose challenges and serve as a barrier to action. However, results of the community consultation confirm respondents' strong commitment to missing persons and their families as well as the value placed on individual and collaborative efforts. Community consultation survey data indicated that 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed there is more work to be done. The fact that the community substantiates the need for work in the area of missing persons is a clear strength of this plan.

A high level of commitment is demonstrated by a response of 74% of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they wished to continue to participate in the work related to missing persons. Further, 41% of survey respondents identified actions they are prepared to take, on their own, in order to contribute. It is worth noting that for many, work

I Wish to Participate in Future Activities

Strongly Disagree 3%
Disagree 5%
Neutral 18%
Strongly Agree 27%
Agree 47%

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

related to missing persons is simply one portion of their work and this work is done over and above a range of other responsibilities.
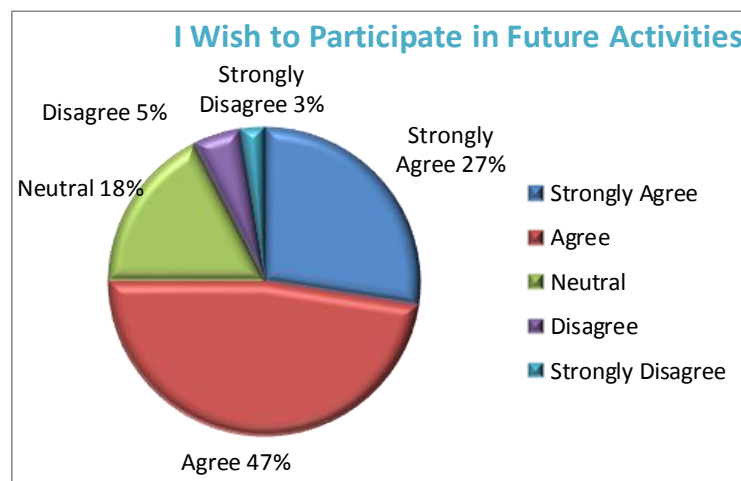
c) Family Commitment

When a person goes missing those who remain, the family members, friends, community members and all who are in the kinship network are left to cope as best they can. Families have been the leaders in efforts to improve services and supports. Based on findings of the PPCMP family meetings and the WRF Report (2011), there is a strong family commitment to establish improved community response, services and supports. The commitment of families to their missing loved ones and their appeal for advancements in the area of missing persons strengthens this strategic business plan.

d) Significant Issue and Significant Target Audience

Additional strengths of this plan are the significance of the issue and the significance of the target audience. This initiative is important to families and communities across Canada. The harms and devastation caused by missing person situations are serious. If missing person situations can be prevented, families and communities are protected from unnecessary heartache. A timely and organized response is critical as missing persons are highly vulnerable to a host of dangers while missing and many missing persons are victims of criminal activity. For too long, the support needs of families of missing persons have been ignored. It is time to acknowledge families and support them as they cope with missing person situations. Communities must help them draw on their resilience and face their journey with hope and strength.

Because of the seriousness of this issue and the number of people influenced, the target audience for this plan is significant. Australian research shows that issues related to missing persons and supporting families of missing persons is a multilayered and complex problem. It is argued that "for every missing person case, an average of at least 12 other people were affected in some way, either emotionally, through health or work effects, quality of life and other impacts. There were also substantial economic costs in locating missing people and addressing the impacts on families, friends and the community (Kiernan & Henderson, 2002).

> Results of the community consultation confirm that 79% of respondents indicated that issues of missing persons were significant or very significant in their community.

To further illustrate the seriousness and significance of the issue, consider the devastation to Aboriginal families and communities. According to the report from the WRF (2011) the number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women is disproportionately high and Aboriginal women are more at risk of serious harms when they do go missing.

The goals and activities of this strategic plan serve to address missing persons, families of missing persons, communities across the western region, a variety of government departments

and agencies, community agencies and the public. Undoubtedly, the target audience is substantial and the issues are serious. Results of the community consultation confirm that 79% of respondents indicated that issues of missing persons were significant or very significant in their community.

e) Momentum on Issues Related to Missing Persons

Several activities and initiatives related to missing persons have created momentum in recent years. One such example is the range of work on missing and murdered Aboriginal women. Examples include the Native Women's Association of Canada's focus on issues of missing and murdered Aboriginal girls and women, particularly the Sisters in Spirit Program. Amnesty International has also contributed work including the report *Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women in Canada* (2004), *No More Stolen Sisters: The Need for a Comprehensive Response to Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women in Canada* (2009). These documents can be accessed online at the following website: http://www.amnesty.ca/campaigns/sisters_overview.php.

A federal, provincial and territorial working group released a recent report, *Issues Related to the High Number of Murdered and Missing Women in Canada.* The working group examined issues associated with missing and murdered women in Canada and advanced understanding of experiences and risks of those involved in the sex trade. It was found that those who are most vulnerable include women who are: Aboriginal; poor; homeless; lacking social supports, addicted to alcohol or drugs; involved in sex work or other dangerous activities, such as hitchhiking; and/or have mental health problems (2012).

The families, friends, social and kinship networks of missing and murdered women have advanced awareness and understanding of issues. They have worked especially hard to engage communities and gain broad community awareness and support. Captivating video clips of family stories can be viewed online: http://www.amnesty.ca/campaigns/sisters_overview.php.

Another key activity has been the work of the RCMP. They received funding to develop a strategy to deal with missing persons and unidentified remains, including Aboriginal persons. They are working to establish the National Police Support Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains and a much-needed national registry for missing persons and unidentified remains. This will allow police to have more information on missing persons across jurisdictions. A national public website will also provide an avenue for the public to share information or tips on cases of murdered and missing women and other missing person cases. This work is set to be completed by 2013. More information on the registry and other activities can be found at the website http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/aboriginal-autochtone/mmaw-fada-eng.htm.

Similarly, the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police has a portion of their website dedicated to missing persons and contains a database of missing persons and unidentified

remains for Saskatchewan. This informative and easy to navigate site can be accessed by the public at http://www.sacp.ca/missing/index.php.

Other important initiatives include the ongoing work of missing children agencies like Child Find agencies across Canada. With both a National and provincial offices, Child Find is a strong presence across Canada. Child Find suggests that "a missing child is everyone's responsibility" (Child Find Canada Website, 2011). Child Find offices have been a vital information and support service to families of missing children for many years. They offer a model of collaborative work that occurs on a national scale. Through the Child Find network, many families have been helped during and after a missing child situation. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection is another agency dedicated to services for missing children and their families. Through MissingKids.ca, a resource and response centre, families of missing children are supported. A variety of educational materials is also available. This agency offers information, services and support on a national scale and again, offers a good model of work in the area of missing children.

Although there is no unified approach to missing persons **of all ages** in the Western regions of Canada or nationally for that matter, the National Missing Persons Coordination Centre in Australia offers up an exemplary model of a comprehensive national approach. National Missing Persons Coordination Centre (NMPCC) "seeks to reduce the incidence and impact of missing persons and to educate the Australian community about this significant issue" and is "guided by National Missing Persons Policy PLEASE principles of: prevention, location, education, awareness, support and evaluation…collaborative response to missing persons cases" (NMPCC, 2011, WRF Report, 2011).

Of course, other activities are underway and further evidence can be found through a review of literature. The samples cited are intended to illustrate how momentum is gained and how this momentum supports other efforts. The strategic business plan uses an integrated approach, collaborative envisioning, shared decision-making and shared action. This group represents diverse agencies, crosses multiple sectors, jurisdictional boundaries and therefore offers a broad perspective on missing persons.

Risks of the Strategic Business Plan

a) **Lack of Financial Resources**

The most obvious risk related to this strategic business plan is the lack of financial resources dedicated to issues of missing persons and their families. The issue of missing persons and supporting families is not the responsibility of one specific sector, but crosses several boundaries. When it comes to boundary-

"Almost 60% of those who participated in the community consultation agreed to share ideas related to funding opportunities."

crossing issues such as missing persons, there is often a discrepancy over who has responsibility to provide financial backing. Although funding is an issue, almost 60% of those who participated in the community consultation agreed to share ideas related to funding opportunities. This response indicates that stakeholders have ideas around funding and could certainly be enlisted to share those ideas.

b) Lack of a Coordinator for the Plan

Although it has been established that a clear advantage of this plan is the diversity of sectors and agencies represented, one risk of a collaborative working group is the inability to work in an organized manner. Without an identified coordinator to organize and ensure action steps are taken to reach the goals of the plan, there is a risk that activities will be disorganized or poorly communicated. To this end, a goal related to securing a project coordinator has been devised.

c) Jurisdictional Barriers

It is common for missing person situations to necessitate that jurisdictions work together to share information and coordinate plans. The cross-jurisdiction information sharing, communication and planning could prove to be a barrier for the issue of missing persons. However, this barrier is addressed through improved response, improved communication and information handling and has been particularly evident in recent years in the area of a coordinated police response.

d) Competition for Public Support, Political Awareness and Political Will

Each day the public faces a variety of awareness campaigns and strategies designed to gain approval or support for competing causes and serious social concerns. Groups tend to compete, not only for public support and financial resources, but also for political attention and the will of policy and decision-makers to hear their messages and respond accordingly.

Issues related to missing persons and supporting families of missing persons have had an inconsistent political profile. While there has been tremendous work done to enhance the profile on this issue, there is a need to maintain and enhance political will to address missing persons and their families broadly and consistently. The risk of competition for support, awareness and will is not reason enough to dissuade such efforts. On the contrary, the risk simply means that a plan must be deliberate, clearly defined and compelling in order to catch the attention of those for whom it is intended.

e) Disengagement of Families, Communities and Sectors

There is of course a risk that families of missing persons, communities or specific sectors may not buy-in to the strategic plan. If such groups do not feel engaged or find meaning in the particular approaches of the plan they will not contribute. The community consultation phase, careful review of the results of the family meetings hosted by the PPCMP and review of the WRF Report was an attempt to create engagement and ensure that the ideas held merit.

What are the Priorities?

The topic of missing persons is incredibly broad. Those who are missing represent every age group and ethnic background. Missing persons may be male or female; they may go missing from a busy urban centre or a remote isolated area. The reasons why people go missing are most often complex and unexplained. Although there are those who are more vulnerable or at risk to go missing, more needs to be learned about the risk factors of going missing and what can be done to help keep the most vulnerable people of our communities safer. More must be learned about approaches to prevent missing children, youth, adults and seniors. To go missing is not a crime, but in some cases, criminal activity has led to, or is part of, the missing person situation. Further broadening the issue is the family experience of a missing loved one. There is a complex process of realization, reporting, investigating, searching, locating and addressing outcomes as well as the common and unique needs of families. Many sectors are called into action and communities are compelled to respond along the way—from prevention to follow-up and support. Throughout, families require a range of services and supports to navigate systems, deal with media and cope with an array of emotions. This is indeed a broad topic.

Obviously, a strategic business plan meant to address a broad topic such as missing persons and supporting families of missing persons necessitates clear priorities with specific, measurable and achievable goals. When presented with an open-ended question requesting input on priorities for future work related to missing persons and their families, 30% of responses suggested activities related to program and service delivery and 28% of the responses were related to family support activities. Public awareness activities comprised 13% of responses while 12% of responses were related to collaboration and communication. Likewise, a review of the WRF report clarifies the emphasis placed on supporting families of missing persons, makes several recommendations related to collaboration of participants, raising awareness of issues related to missing persons and the importance of a communication strategy. The graphic to follow depicts the priority areas indicated by community consultation:

"A strategic business plan meant to address a broad topic such as missing persons and supporting families of missing persons necessitates clear priorities with specific, measurable and achievable goals."

Areas of Priority Identified through Community Consultation
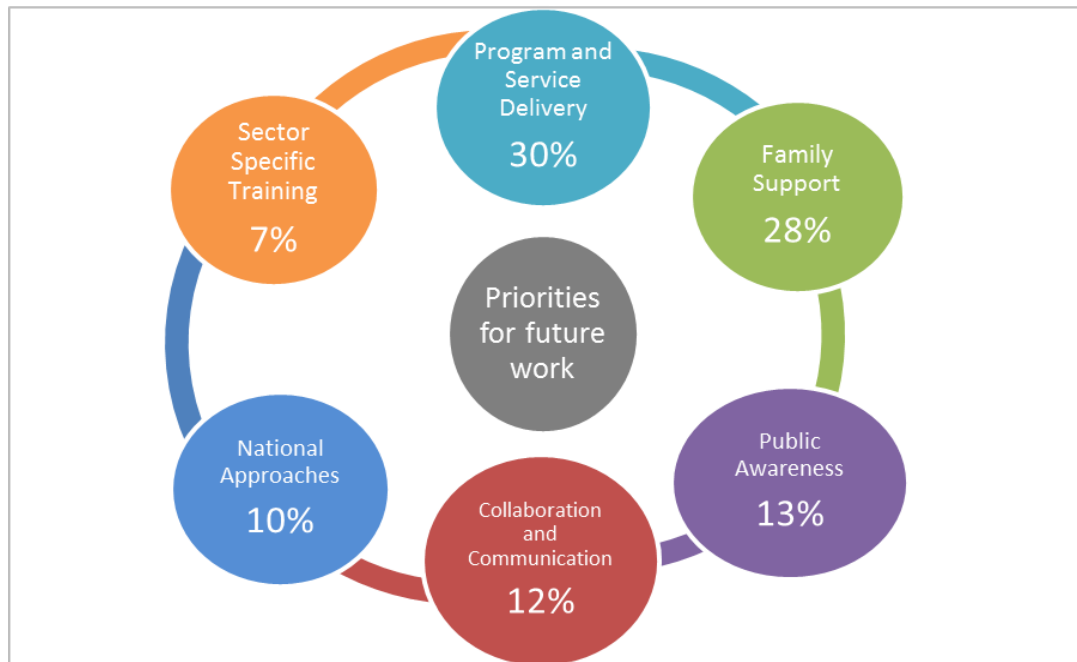
Based on an understanding of the strengths and risks associated with this plan, all information gathered from previous work, reports produced, the guiding recommendations of the WRF Report (2011), a literature review and community consultation survey and interviews, the following three areas have been identified as priority areas:

1. **Working Together**

2. **Raising Awareness**

3. **Supporting Families**

What are the Goals and Action Steps?

The next section of the strategic business plan is organized around each of the three areas of priority. Each area of priority is explained briefly, several goals are described and accompanied by supporting information and action steps. The supporting information and action steps are set out as a proposed approach to reach each goal.

1. Working Together

It has been argued throughout this strategic business plan that working together is a sound approach to the complex issue of missing persons and supporting families of missing persons. Collaboration effectively brings together a wealth of knowledge. It stimulates an exchange of ideas and promotes action toward a collective goal. Working together and sharing of responsibilities does not mean that everyone does everything. On the contrary, this approach avoids replication and ensures that each party does the work of her or his sector. The importance of this clarity of roles was conveyed through the community consultation. Though there are benefits to working together, there are risks. A risk described earlier, of a strategic business plan based on many groups working together, is the lack of cohesive leadership and a coordinated effort. This risk is substantial enough to merit a goal related to seeking a project coordinator to ensure that all who are involved can work together in a healthy and collaborative manner. Should a project coordinator be employed, this role would enhance many of the other goals and actions steps in each priority area. A coordinator for the strategic business plan would increase the likelihood of success. Unfortunately, there is a risk that this goal will not materialize. In that case, the goals and action steps are still achievable but they will require additional effort. Further collaboration by those involved may encourage participants to take on the work.

Along with a goal related to coordination of efforts, four additional goals intended to promote collaboration are outlined below.

Goal 1.1 Secure Project Coordination

Employ a Project Coordinator to oversee a two-year implementation of the Strategic Business Plan, corresponding goals and action steps.

Supporting Information and Action Steps:

1. Participants of the WRF can be called upon to offer ideas related to potential sources of funding for coordination of the strategic business plan.

2. Funding options can be explored and proposals submitted. The Strategic Business Plan and all documents associated with the development of the plan can be considered as supporting evidence (Visual Model of Family Support Needs and Presentation on Family Support Needs).

Goal 1.2 Establish a Communication Strategy

Develop a four times yearly e-mail communication strategy to improve information sharing between and among participants of the WRF and other stakeholders as identified.

Supporting Information and Action Steps:

An email communication strategy between and among participants would be an effective means of sharing information, improving collaboration and thus improved services to families and communities. One recommendation of the WRF report identified a need to "develop and implement a communication strategy…so that members of the Forum can communicate with one another to provide feedback." It was encouraging to see that participants in the community consultation placed high value on the role of communication. Support for an email communication strategy was high. 78% of respondents indicated they would be interested or very interested in receiving an email update about issues related to missing persons and 57% indicated they would be willing to gather content and send an email to others one time each year.

1. Prepare a complete and up to date list of email addresses of participants of the WRF.

2. Identify four or more individuals who would be willing to gather content for an email one time through the year. The kind of content identified by respondents of the community consultation as most interesting to receive by email was varied. This is likely due to the differing perspectives and backgrounds of respondents. Results indicated that resources related to family support, increasing public awareness, approaches to prevention and program information were ranked as more interesting while requests for feedback, research updates, news items and notices of events and were ranked as less interesting perhaps because this information is readily available through other sources. It is likely that each sender of the email would have a particular area of knowledge and could draw on her or his expertise as well as current events or timely information.

3. Send the email update one time each year to the contact list and invite others to comment or share additional information. This email contact would result in quarterly contact but would also open the door to additional communication.

Goal 1.3 Share Updates

To strengthen relationships and develop partnerships between and among participants, each individual on the email contact list will send an informational email one time each year to others on the contact list.

Supporting Information and Action Steps:

1. Participants will send an email to inform those on the contact list of program news or updates, meetings, events or to share new information about the work of the sector she or he represents. This would also be a good opportunity to ask questions, gain feedback on initiatives or enlist the expertise of others.

2. Review the suggestions of the WRF Report "Make a commitment-In order for any progress to be made it is important to have all agencies committed as well as to clearly identify who can do what, who is willing to provide the best services…" (2011):

3. Use the communication strategy to "build relationships-All forum participants are responsible to build and maintain cross-jurisdictional relationships in order to work toward our goals and provide the best services possible to missing persons and their families" (WRF Report, 2011).

4. And finally, "pursue partnerships and support-forum members will continue to contact other organizations and groups in order to build positive partnerships that will help raise awareness" (WRF Report, 2011).

Goal 1.4 Host an Event

Build on the success of the Western Regional Forum on Supporting Families by hosting a networking and knowledge building event.

Supporting Information and Action Steps:

Through community consultation, participants identified a willingness to continue to work together, share information and coordinate activities related to missing persons and their families. The proposed communication strategy will go a long way toward meeting this need. Additionally, a networking and knowledge building event would increase the success of the communication strategy and greatly enhance other goals. An event would provide a concrete and meaningful opportunity for participants to contribute and offer the chance to maintain a sense of responsibility to work for better outcomes. The event would help to accomplish "coordination and networking across Canada…" and would build and sustain partnerships (WRF Report, 2011).

1. Assemble an advisory committee of participants of the WRF to consider a range of possible types of events and knowledge building options.

2. The advisory committee is encouraged to consider broad approaches to hosting an event such as online training, web-based presentations or a range of formats for in-person events.

3. Through a collaborative process, identify a focus for discussion or examination. Consider gaps in understanding, community needs and purpose.

4. Seek out funding opportunities, partnerships and sponsorship.

5. Determine options for hosting and location.

6. Brainstorm ideas for presentations, key experts, varied contributors and meaningful ways for family involvement.

2. Raising Awareness

When the public is aware of and understands an issue, they are more likely to support the cause. For example, an informed public is more likely to offer financial backing, volunteer their time, attend an event, contribute ideas or participate in dialogue when they are educated about, and committed to, a cause. Raising the level of public awareness not only creates support and empathy to the plight of missing persons and their families, but also compels the public to respond to a missing person situation or support families in a helpful and empathetic manner. The accompanying chart depicts the perceived level of community understanding of family support needs. It shows that only 17% of community members have a good understanding of supporting families. An additional result from community consultation shows that 98% of those who participated agree or strongly agree that improved public awareness will lead to improved family supports. This shows the important causal relationship between awareness and support. This result indicates that

Community Awareness of Supporting Families

- Good 17%
- Neutral 17%
- Fair 35%
- Poor 31%
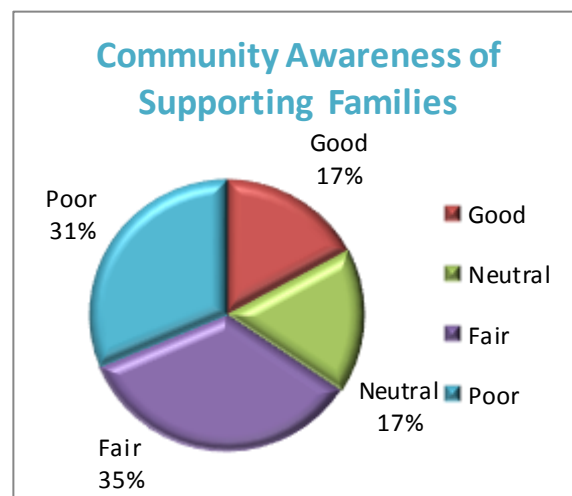
communities and families alike would benefit from increased awareness of issues related to missing persons and their families.

Full understanding of issues of missing persons also serves as a preventative measure. If the public is aware of specific risks and dangers, they will be more aware of appropriate actions they can take to protect themselves and their families and help to create safer communities. Data gathered through the community consultation offers a view of respondents' perceived level of community awareness of prevention strategies. The corresponding chart shows that 75% of the community members are perceived to have a poor, fair or neutral understanding of prevention strategies.

A further reason to raise awareness of issues related to missing persons is that strong public support is beneficial when attempting to influence policy change and to urge decision makers to take issues of missing persons and their families into consideration. Guiding recommendations from WRF include suggestions related to raising awareness of issues, gaining political attention and public support.

The goals and action steps outlined in this section are directed to education and increasing awareness in the public and political arenas.

Community Awareness of Prevention Strategies

Poor 24% Good 25%

- Good
- Neutral
- Fair
- Poor

Fair 24% Neutral 27%

Goal 2.1 Launch a Time of Recognition

Declare a Missing Person's Day, Week or Month in each Jurisdiction of Canada and Nationally.

Supporting Information and Action Steps:

Through the community consultation, respondents indicated their opinions on priorities for future work. The importance of raising public awareness of issues related to missing persons and their families emerged as a priority area with 13% of the comments related to this topic. Clearly, one of the things respondents are thinking about is how to bring greater awareness of this issue to their communities.

1. A time of recognition, whether one day, one week or a month would help to meet the plan of the WRF to create an "involved and inspired community including: citizens, families, police, government, non governmental organizations, coroners, medical examiners, education providers and Aboriginal communities." It may also increase "public commitment and support to work on missing persons issues" (WRF Report, 2011).

2. One individual in each jurisdiction could take on the process of having a day, week or month proclaimed as Missing Person's Day, Missing Person's Week or Missing Person's Month.

3. The individual from each jurisdiction could connect with others to coordinate the process of planning and declaration in each jurisdiction.

4. Consider the approach taken in Australia where a week in August has been designated as Missing Person's week. This serves as a good example of work done in this regard.

5. In Saskatchewan, the PPCMP has begun the process to have a day designated as Missing Person's day. This day would commemorate the missing, would include the families of missing persons and would increase awareness and understanding in communities.

6. Missing Children's day is recognized provincially, nationally and internationally on May 25.

Goal 2.2 Provide Online Information

Develop a website with a comprehensive selection of resources and information on missing person situations and supporting families of missing persons.

Supporting Information and Action Steps:

Up-to-date and engaging content on issues related to missing persons would increase understanding and awareness. It is typical for many of us to turn to the internet when seeking information. For this reason, a website is an excellent approach to share knowledge with a large and diverse audience. A recommendation of the WRF suggests that a "clearinghouse of information…about missing persons consisting of items such as inventory kits, tool, checklists, pamphlets and other useful sources will be created…" (WRF Report, 2011).

A website dedicated to missing persons and supporting families of missing persons has several advantages. It would be a low cost, accessible and responsive means of sharing information. Online information is readily updated and able to handle a variety of content including video or audio clips, text documents, images and interactive content. The variety of content could serve to educate families, community agencies and the broader public. Currently there is an array of websites available with a vast amount of information. A serious disadvantage is the dispersal of content over multiple sites. It is challenging for knowledge-seekers to discern which site to trust and to know which pieces of information are most accurate.

1. Explore options for website development, website hosting and maintenance. For instance, a current website owner may agree to provide space or a WordPress site would offer an entirely new website as a low-cost or no-cost option.

2. Gather reliable and useful regional, national and international information and perspectives. Organize the content and house it in a central location. Consider the target audiences and range of informational needs. For example, there is a need for general knowledge, practical strategies and supportive messages. A website is capable of providing information in these categories and more.
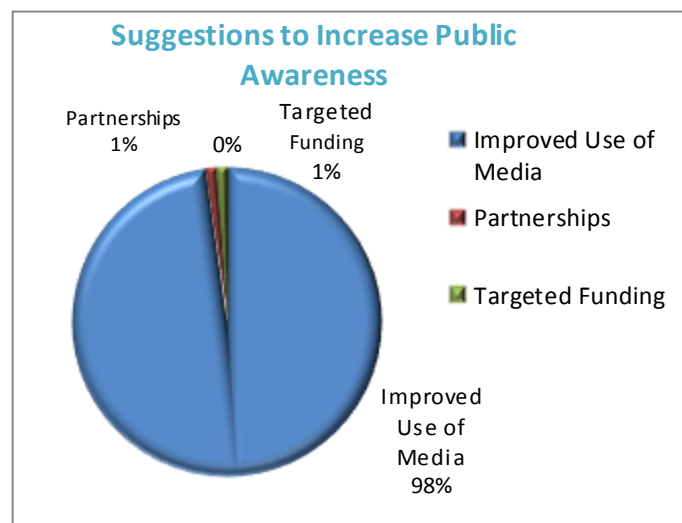
3. Identify ways to engage the public such as through compelling stories or video clips of family experiences of missing persons.

4. A website needs to be: easy to navigate, visually appealing and house accessible, up to date content for public, professional and family use. All links to all partner agencies should be included, as should downloadable documents from partner agencies, relevant materials, reports and checklists from other regions.

Goal 2.3 Increase Media Involvement

Raise public awareness through improved use of several forms of media.

Supporting Information and Action Steps:

Through the community consultation process, respondents were prompted with an open-ended question asking for suggestions for ideas to raise public awareness. 98% of the comments specified use of media. Media strategies identified included use of local television, radio and newspaper as well as use of social media approaches. However, a previous question asked respondents how they might contribute to issues of missing persons. The activity they were *least* willing to take part in was speaking with the media. Although reluctant to speak with the media, respondents seem to recognize the potential for improved awareness and understanding gained through effective use of the media.

Suggestions to Increase Public Awareness

Partnerships 1% 0% Targeted Funding 1%

- ■ Improved Use of Media
- ■ Partnerships
- ■ Targeted Funding

Improved Use of Media 98%

1. Participants of the WRF can review the media toolkit for families as a way to become familiar with the content and prepare themselves to interact with and use media to raise the profile of issues.

2. Each participant or agency can explore the development and use of a media strategy including creating prepared speaking notes, identifying key messages, preparing public service announcements, media releases and compelling stories or examples. Consider techniques that will gain the attention of the media such as family stories, missing person experiences or memorial events.

3. Seek out champions of missing persons in the media (television, radio, newspaper, online news). Develop a list of contacts and connect with your contacts when you have news stories.

4. Engage media not only when there is a missing person situation but also at other times.

Goal 2.4 Enhance Political Support

Gain Provincial and Federal political support for issues related to missing persons and supporting families of missing persons.

Supporting Information and Action Steps:

One recommendation of the WRF relates to seeking political attention for missing person issues and gaining both Provincial and Federal support. The recommendation suggests that to ensure improved services and supports for families they must "seek national attention…get the report on the schedule of Federal, Provincial and Territorial Deputy Ministers Responsible for Justice…" (WRF Report, 2011).

1. Those who take on the task of gaining political attention or assuming the role to champion the cause of missing persons and their families can work to maintain political contacts.

2. Use available resources as tools to inform and raise awareness of those in a position to influence policy or direct change. Seek out ways to impress upon decision makers the importance of issues related to missing persons and the need for services and supports for their families.

3. As new materials like the Strategic Business Plan are developed, the materials can be provided to political contacts.

Goal 2.5 Improve Individual Effort

Each participant or agency will raise issues related to missing persons and supporting families of missing persons within her or his sector, agency, community or region.

Supporting Information and Action Steps:

1. Each participant will make a commitment to be prepared to bring forward issues related to missing persons and supporting families of missing persons.

2. Participants will identify opportunities such as community meetings, networking events, public presentations or conferences to speak about this important issue.

3. Participants will track speaking opportunities and compile data to share with others as a way of keeping others informed.

3. Supporting Families

The need for services and supports for families of missing persons has been under-examined by researchers and often overlooked by policy and decision makers. Families, when faced with a missing person situation, have had limited access to services and have often coped by relying on informal personal networks. This gap in services and supports has been recognized and is beginning to be addressed. The focus of the WRF was on supporting families. Participants of the WRF discussed the need for a "complete support system for families that is responsive to changing needs. This will include family to family support as well as assistance with the media" (WRF Report, 2011). As a participant of the WRF, Child Find Saskatchewan is able to offer a model of family support and a model of family connection through the Connecting Families program. Also recognized were the multiple factors leading to financial hardships with one conclusion of the WRF being that families have a need for "fully funded accessible services..." (WRF Report, 2011). These thoughts were echoed through the community consultation. Community consultation also resulted in identifying activities thought to be helpful directions in supporting families. The activities identified as most helpful are depicted in the accompanying graphic.

Long Term Family Support

Activity	Value
Sharing of Family Experiences	~95
Develop Informational Website	~95
Develop Plain Language Materials	~95
Help Existing Agencies Enhance their Support	~95
Establish a Roster of Trained Counsellors	~100
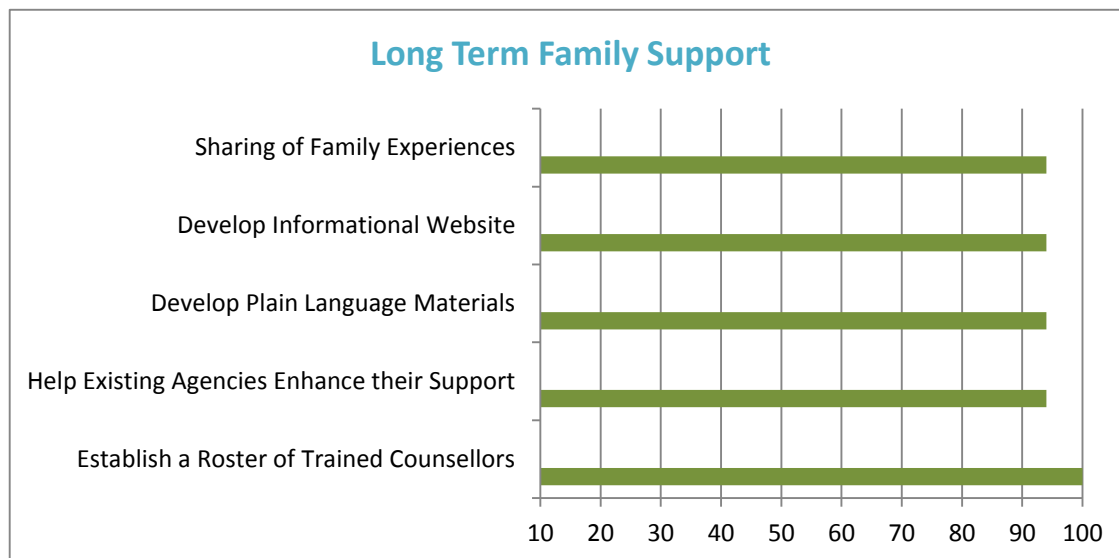
This strategic business plan proposes a collaborative approach to improve services in prevention, awareness, reporting, investigation, location and follow up activities. This plan will go a long way to address the needs of families. The strategic business plan will promote the "coordination and networking across Canada including developing a support protocol for families, information sharing, best practices, service sharing and training" (WRF Report, 2011).

The specific goals and action steps related to supporting families of missing persons are as follows:

Goal 3.1 Specialized Counselling

Establish a roster of specifically trained counsellors.

Supporting Information and Action Steps:

Those who provide counselling to families of missing persons must not only be highly qualified and skilled counsellors, but they also require a solid understanding of the missing person situation. Additionally, research suggests that an understanding of ambiguous loss (Boss, 2002) and unresolved grief are also promising approaches (Wayland, 2007). Therefore, counsellors should also be well versed in these concepts. Counselling must be ongoing in cases where a loved one has not been located. In some cases grief counselling is not appropriate as the family is more focused on keeping hope alive. Unfortunately, in some cases grief counselling may be needed when a loved one is located but deceased. The WRF Report suggests "services that promote healing including counseling, grief counseling, spiritual guidance, and support from other families experiencing similar situations" as well as supports that are "accessible, accommodating, flexible and timely" (WRF Report, 2011).

1. Participants of the WRF, various agencies and sectors can develop connections with counsellors and the Psychological Association to gain more information about appropriate models of counselling.

2. Seek out counsellors who have an interest in missing person situations, have a solid background and are willing to gain additional knowledge. Develop a list of registered counsellors and identify those who are the best fit for each situation.

3. Initiatives are currently underway to establish a roster of trained counsellors. Agencies are exploring ways to support counsellors to learn about missing persons and concepts such as ambiguous loss and unresolved grief. One such example is through the work of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. This agency is exploring possibilities and opportunities to negotiate specific training for counsellors. There is potential that counsellors from various regions could participate in such a training if or when it comes available.

Goal 3.2 Enhance Work of Existing Agencies

Increase community understanding of the support needs of families of missing persons and enhance the ability of existing community agencies to offer support to missing persons.

Community Awareness of Supporting Families
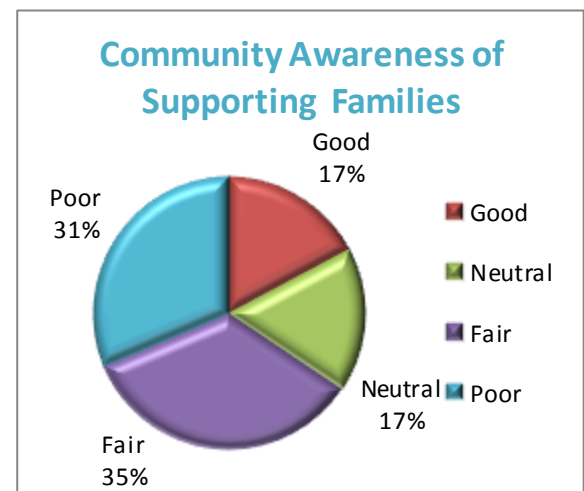
Supporting Information and Action Steps:

Through the strategic planning process a visual model depicting the range of support needs of families of missing persons was developed. This content is available as a one-page handout and is paired with a brief 13-slide PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint presentation can be modified. Individual contact and agency information, sector specific content and meaningful examples or anecdotes based on personal understanding can be added.

1. Each participant of the WRF will receive an electronic copy of the one-page visual illustration of family support needs and the 13-slide PowerPoint presentation with speaking notes.

2. Participants will present the content to approximately three or four agencies in her or his community as a way to increase understanding of the support needs of families of missing persons.

3. Re-launch or promote materials already developed. The re-launch could coincide with the launch of the informational website (see goal 3.5).

4. Share family support materials that have already been developed with community agencies and other service providers. This would include items such as Missing Persons Checklist, Navigating the Missing Person Process, Media Relations: A Tool Kit for Families.

Goal 3.3 Plain Language Resources

Develop plain language support focussed resources for families of missing persons.

Supporting Information and Action Steps:

It is critical that family support materials are relevant and helpful. Input and feedback from families with experiential knowledge can help to ensure this is the case. Additionally, content should be presented in plain and easy to read language with clear and straightforward messages. Families who are under stress, have a limited amount of time and are experiencing a rollercoaster of emotions would more easily use such content. To add to this, families of missing persons have varied backgrounds; they may have English as an additional language or have lower reading levels and thus would benefit from the more accessible information.

Families might best access support materials if they are available through several avenues. For example, materials could be available online, provided by an advocate, non-profit agency like Child Find, police officer or housed in a variety of community-based agencies. If online, the site should be easy to locate, easy to navigate and documents should be quickly downloadable and printable. A recommendation of the WRF (2011) suggests a clearinghouse of information about missing persons. The most obvious location for the family support materials would be on the online clearinghouse thus creating "one point of contact for families" with a single repository of information (WRF Report, 2011).

1. Individuals, agencies and sectors are encouraged to continue to develop plain language resources for families.

2. Explore a variety of topics and consider which format would best suit the content.

3. Distribute resources as hard copy documents or as downloadable printable documents.

4. All documents could be uploaded onto the web site and the participants of the email contact list could share this information with each of their own contacts.

5. Possible topics to consider include runaway youth, self-care, seeking counselling, ambiguous loss, talking about your missing loved one.

6. Victims Services Liaison workers in Saskatoon, Regina and Prince Albert are developing a package of resources to provide to families of missing persons. This is a promising approach and an excellent way to distribute resources to families.

Goal 3.4 Develop a Resource Directory

Identify and document current avenues for family support, counselling, available services and family-to-family connection. Develop and distribute an easy to use plain language resource directory.

Supporting Information and Action Steps:

The Western Regional Forum on Supporting Families was a pivotal event that gathered critical information about the needs of families of missing persons. The activities of this event provided a foundation of understanding about what families need. This event began an important conversation about existing gaps in services and supports and the steps to address those gaps. The process of community consultation provided an additional opportunity to gain feedback and confirmed that 82% of respondents recognize family-to-family connection as an effective means of support. Additionally, families require other types of support and services but may not know from where or how to access available supports and services. WRF recommendations endorse the importance of family involvement in important processes and the development of the family support initiatives (WRF Report, 2011).

1. Consider creating committee of individuals of 3-4 participants. The committee members would take on the tasks of identifying and documenting existing services and supports as outlined in the goal. There is currently an inventory of participating agencies developed through the PPCMP. These agencies are a good starting point because they likely offer services that may not be widely known about. For instance, Child Find Saskatchewan offers a Connecting Families program. This initiative would be important to include in a resource directory.

2. The content is best presented as an easy to navigate resource directory that could be easily updated as services are established or changed. The resource directory could be developed to

meet the needs of a specific community or region. Once developed it can be shared widely to serve as a model for other areas.

3. The resource directory should be on a website, downloadable and printable.

Goal 3.5 Promote Research

There is a need for further investigation into the subject of supporting families of missing persons. In order to encourage the opportunity for research, 5-10 academic departments can be contacted and engaged in discussions to promote research and active exploration of this important issue.

Supporting Information and Action Steps:

Many aspects of missing persons and the experiences of families of missing persons are under-examined by researchers and thus not fully understood. Knowledge of best practices related to family support has been gained over the years by sectors such as policing, justice, social service and missing children agencies. Promising practices include culturally informed support, empowerment of families and connecting families with others families who have experiential knowledge. Additional research on supporting families of missing persons is needed. A counterpart to the necessity of research is a coordinated means of sharing this knowledge with a variety of sectors and the public.

How Effective is Family to Family Support?

- Very Effective 35%
- Effective 47%
- Neutral 18%
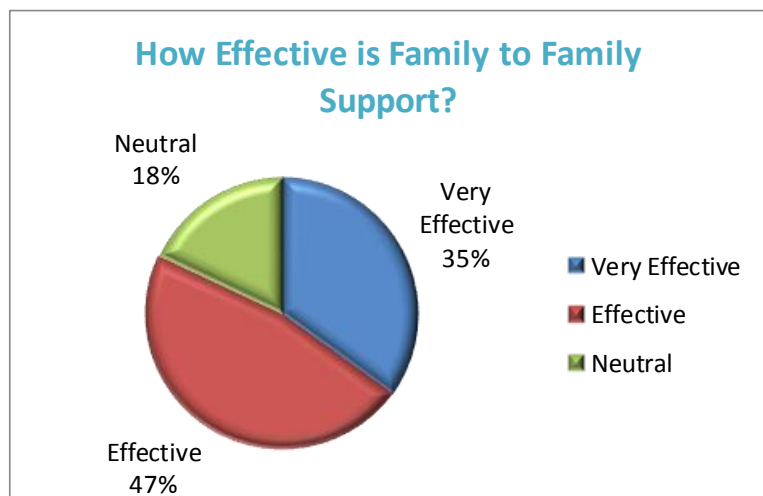
1. One or two individuals could champion this cause. The individuals could arrange to meet with department heads of programs such as Sociology, Psychology, Criminology or Social Work. The need for research related to missing persons and supporting families of missing persons should be promoted as a worthwhile topic for investigation.

2. An additional approach to consider would be to share the brief presentation on the continuum of family support needs along with the visual illustration of family support needs. This presentation and handout provided within the academic environments may prompt upper year students to pursue advanced study and research in the area of missing persons and their families.

3. Family to family connection or the sharing of experiential knowledge seems to be a promising approach. For example, this approach is used in an online support forum with a missing persons organization in the UK (www.missingpeople.org.uk). Perhaps a researcher could be encouraged to conduct participatory or phenomenological research in order to capture personal narratives about the experience of having a missing loved one. Personal accounts and stories are supportive activities and desired by families and communities alike.

Milestones

The timeline of the strategic business plan to address issues related to missing persons and their families is set for two years. However, this is an approximate timeline and is considered as such for a number of reasons. Several of the goals are ongoing. For instance, a goal related to bringing issues related to missing persons and their families to the forefront of discussions is an activity that will continue well after the formalized plan has been completed. Furthermore, outcomes of specific goals such as securing a project coordinator or securing funding to hold an event have the potential to influence timelines in a significant manner. As well, due to the nature of collaborative work, and the submission of this business plan as a model for use by various agencies, those who are involved may determine timelines that are more suited to their specific sector or agency. Finally, every plan is subject to broader social, political or economic changes. Such changes may influence the implementation or completion of the goals and action steps identified. Nevertheless, a number of milestones are set to occur from September 2012 through August 2014. The milestones serve to maintain momentum and produce realistic outcomes.

September 2012

Members of the Project Oversight Committee distribute Strategic Business Plan, Visual Illustration of Supporting Families and PowerPoint Presentation on Supporting Families to participants of the WRF and other stakeholders they identify.

September 2012

Participants of the WRF receive materials and share with others in their agency or sector.

September-December 2012

Participants begin to implement strategic business plan goals and action steps. A suggested place to begin is the goal related to a communication strategy. Participating agencies can also begin to upload documents on their websites.

March 2013

Participants are encouraged to engage individually and collectively in a Year 1 Interim Review. The email communication strategy may be a good way to plan for the review and identify next steps.

August 2013

Participants should have completed presentations, worked on a media strategies and engaged in individual efforts to raise the profile of issues related to missing persons and their families. Participants are encouraged to engage individually and collectively in a Year 1 Year End Review.

March 2014

Participants are encouraged to engage individually and collectively in a Year 2 Interim Review. Again, the email communication strategy is the most obvious way to begin this process.

August 2014

Participants are encouraged to engage individually and collectively in a Year 2 Year End Review. At this point, the group can evaluate what has been accomplished, what yet needs to be done and perhaps identify a new set of strategic activities.

Conclusion

This comprehensive strategic business plan sets out a roadmap to begin to address the needs of missing persons and their families. It has been informed by several guiding recommendations coming out of the 2011 Western Regional Forum on Supporting Families of Missing Persons, a literature review and a process of community consultation. The strategic plan emphasizes the need for activities to promote a variety of sectors and agencies to work together to develop a collaborative and responsive community approach to missing persons and their families. The plan includes goals and actions designed to raise public awareness and to support families who are faced with a missing person situation.

Certainly, the realm of missing persons and support for families of missing persons is a broad one and long-term efforts will be required. However, this plan offers a model of working together, raising awareness and supporting families that can serve as foundational work in this area. A plan such as this is best viewed as a dynamic plan subject to change. We live in an ever-changing world and social, economic or political changes could very well influence the activities set out in this plan. This plan is intended to be implemented over a two-year period.

The following summary offers the outcomes that will have resulted at the conclusion of two years:

Working Together

- A communication strategy will have been established.

- Participants will utilize the communication strategy to share pertinent information and strengthen relations between and among members.

- Participants will have improved their own knowledge and skills in the area of missing persons.

- Participants will have had opportunity to participate in a networking and learning event.

Raising Awareness

- Each region will have declared a day, week or month to recognize missing persons.

- Improved use of online information will continuously evolve as information is developed.

- Improved use of various forms of traditional and social media will have been used to increase awareness of missing persons.

- Individuals will raise awareness of issues related to missing persons and their families through meetings, presentations and community events.

- Political support will have been gained through individual efforts, sharing information and keeping key contacts from each region informed of activities and progress.

Supporting Families

- Work will have progressed to develop a roster of specifically trained counsellors with representation from each region.

- Presentations on family support needs along with a handout depicting family support needs will have been delivered to agencies throughout the Western region of Canada.

- Existing agencies will gain an improved understanding of issues related to missing persons and supporting families through receipt of, and review of, all documents developed.

- Agencies will have continued to develop plain language resources to support families. Resources developed will be made available online.

- Families will have access to coordinated collections of information such as a resource list or resource directory. Existing resources such as Victims Services and the Child Find Connecting Families programs will have been promoted and will have gained improved recognition.

- The need for research will have been promoted to several academic institutions. Expanded understanding gained through research and documented evidence may influence policy and improve decision-making.

Appendix

Appendix A Western Regional Forum on Supporting Families of Missing Persons 16 Recommendations

Appendix B Visual Model of Support Needs of Families

Appendix C PowerPoint Slides to Accompany Visual Model of Support Needs of Families

Appendix A- 2011 Western Regional Forum on Supporting Families of Missing Persons
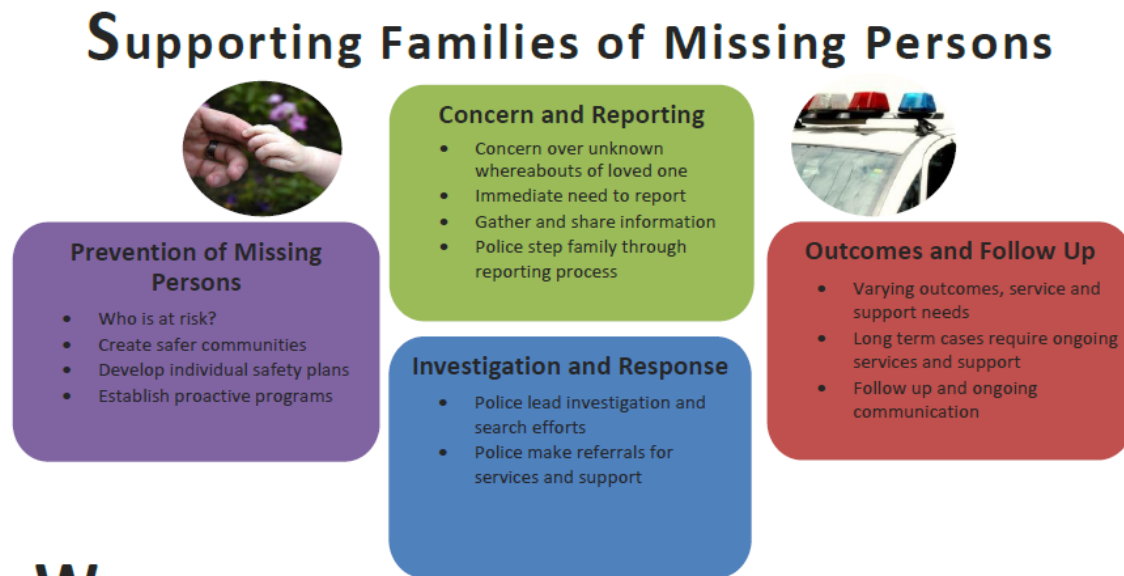
16 Recommendations

1. **Produce a report** – In order to create awareness and notify families, communities, public and other agencies about what has occurred at this Western Regional Forum, PPCMP is tasked with the responsibility of producing a report about this Forum. This report will be circulated to all participants in draft form for review, and finalized and released to the public.

2. **Report to families** – Forum participants discussed the importance of having input and feedback from families and ensuring that they are involved in important processes. PPCMP may provide a report and seek feedback and information from families of missing persons on the WRF.

3. **Make a commitment** – In order for any progress to be made it is important to have all agencies committed as well as to clearly identify who can do what, who is willing to do what and name various subgroups that are willing to provide assistance and help create strategies.

4. **Build relationships** – All Forum participants are responsible to build and maintain cross-jurisdictional relationships in order to work toward our goals and provide the best services possible to missing persons and their families.

5. **Identify champions** – Every province and territory is tasked with identifying a person who will champion the issue of missing persons.

6. **Identify a key point or person** – Participating jurisdictions will identify one person who is linked to many services and professionals that knows how to help families of missing persons.

7. **Pursue partnerships and support** – Forum members will continue to contact other organizations and groups in order to build positive partnerships that will help raise awareness.

8. **Seek national attention** – It will be important to get the report on the schedule of Federal, Provincial and Territorial Deputy Ministers Responsible for Justice. There is an International
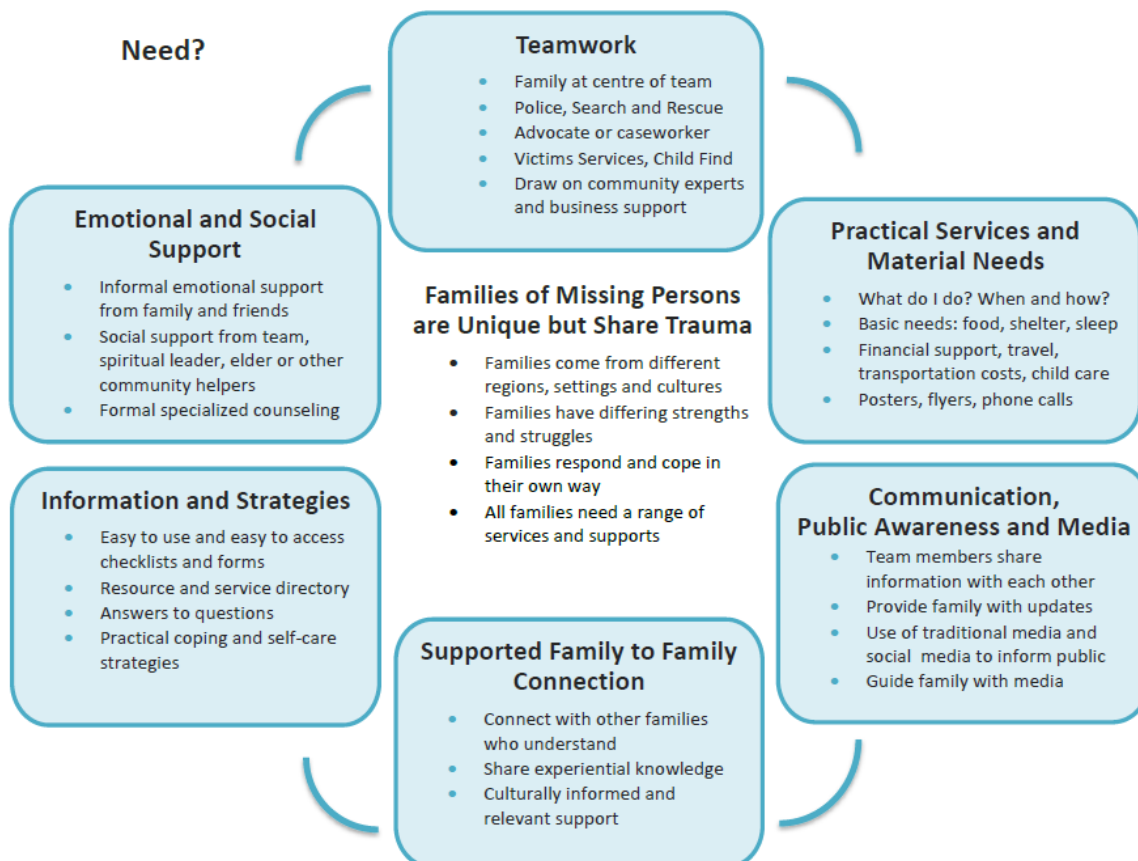
Symposium on Victim Issues being organized by Public Safety Canada for November 2011, where we may be able to present our results in a national setting. A panel presentation may occur at this conference, in order to link more partners and gain more support.

9. Raise awareness – All participants are responsible for presenting the key findings of this Forum back to their organizations and jurisdictions. There needs to be an ongoing effort in creating and maintaining awareness of this issue.

10. Provide feedback for NPSCMP's public website – Sergeant Prosper has indicated that she would be appreciative of feedback from various sources for her project. Participants are encouraged to provide feedback within one year so that a national website can be developed.

11. Develop a business proposal – A formal proposal needs to be brought forth in order to find an official coordinator to develop a business plan and support continued collaboration amongst WRF participants. PPCMP will take responsibility for this step.

12. Develop a business plan – The creation of a formal plan needs to be brought forth. Ideally, this would be a joint partnership both on regional and national levels.

13. Build a clearinghouse of information – A depository of information about missing persons consisting of items such as inventory kits, tools, checklists, pamphlets and other useful sources will be created. Some participants indicated that they may be able to employ a group of students to complete this task.

14. Develop and implement a communication strategy – A strategy will be developed so that members of the Forum can communicate with one another to provide feedback.

15. Increase public support – Commitment and support is necessary in making sure that this issue remains a priority.

16. Establish a national database – NPSCMP is already working toward this goal, so it is important for participants to provide any support and help they can to Sergeant Prosper as her and her group work toward achieving this.

Supporting Families of Missing Persons

Concern and Reporting
- Concern over unknown whereabouts of loved one
- Immediate need to report
- Gather and share information
- Police step family through reporting process

Prevention of Missing Persons
- Who is at risk?
- Create safer communities
- Develop individual safety plans
- Establish proactive programs

Outcomes and Follow Up
- Varying outcomes, service and support needs
- Long term cases require ongoing services and support
- Follow up and ongoing communication

Investigation and Response
- Police lead investigation and search efforts
- Police make referrals for services and support

What do Families Need?

Teamwork
- Family at centre of team
- Police, Search and Rescue
- Advocate or caseworker
- Victims Services, Child Find
- Draw on community experts and business support

Emotional and Social Support
- Informal emotional support from family and friends
- Social support from team, spiritual leader, elder or other community helpers
- Formal specialized counseling

Families of Missing Persons are Unique but Share Trauma
- Families come from different regions, settings and cultures
- Families have differing strengths and struggles
- Families respond and cope in their own way
- All families need a range of services and supports

Practical Services and Material Needs
- What do I do? When and how?
- Basic needs: food, shelter, sleep
- Financial support, travel, transportation costs, child care
- Posters, flyers, phone calls

Information and Strategies
- Easy to use and easy to access checklists and forms
- Resource and service directory
- Answers to questions
- Practical coping and self-care strategies

Supported Family to Family Connection
- Connect with other families who understand
- Share experiential knowledge
- Culturally informed and relevant support

Communication, Public Awareness and Media
- Team members share information with each other
- Provide family with updates
- Use of traditional media and social media to inform public
- Guide family with media

Supporting Families of Missing Persons

Presented by:

Presentation created by:
A Project to implement Recommendations of the Western Regional Forum on Supporting Families of Missing Persons and Saskatchewan's Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons.

Prevention of Missing Persons

- Who is at risk?
- Create safer communities
- Develop individual safety plans
- Establish proactive programs

Concern and Reporting

Supporting Families of Missing Persons

- Concern over unknown whereabouts of loved one
- Immediate need to report
- Gather and share information
- Police step family through reporting process

Investigation and Response

Supporting Families of Missing Persons

- Police lead investigation and search efforts
- Police make referrals to community services and supports

Outcomes and Follow Up

- Varying outcomes, service and support needs
- Long term cases require ongoing services and support
- Follow up and ongoing communication

What do Families Need?

- A range of services and supports tailored to each family's unique needs
- Services provided through a collaborative multi-agency approach

Families of Missing Persons Are:

- Unique but share a common experience of trauma
- From various regions, settings, cultures and communities
- Resilient and able to respond/cope in their own way but, all families need services and supports

Teamwork

- Teamwork is the most effective approach. Who is on the team?
- Family of missing person
- Police, Search and Rescue
- Advocate or caseworker
- Victims Services, Child Find
- Draw on local community experts and business support

Emotional and Social Support

Supporting Families of Missing Persons

- Informal emotional support from family and friends
- Social support from team, spiritual leader, elder or other community helpers
- Formal specialized counseling

Practical Services and Material Needs

Supporting Families of Missing Persons

- What do I do? When and how?
- Basic needs: food, shelter, sleep etc.
- Financial support, travel and transportation costs, child care
- Posters, flyers, phone calls

Information and Strategies

Supporting Families of Missing Persons

- Easy to use and easy to access checklists and forms
- Resource and service directory
- Answers to questions
- Practical coping and self-care strategies

Communication, Public Awareness and Media

Supporting Families of Missing Persons

- Team members share information with each other
- Provide Family with updates
- Use of traditional media and social media to inform public
- Support and guide family with media relations

Supporting Families of Missing Persons

Supported Family to Family Connection

- Connect with other families who understand
- Share experiential knowledge
- Culturally informed and relevant support

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