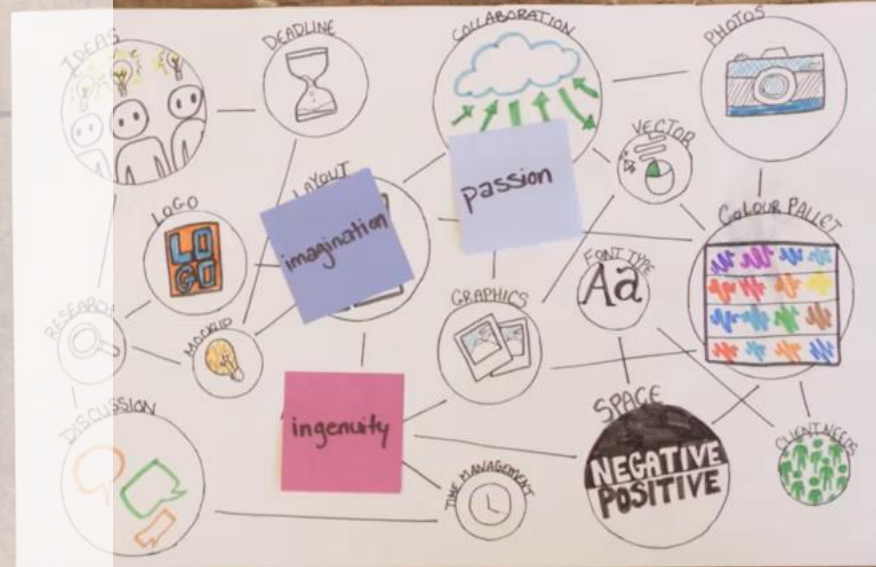


Voices United Board to Board Learning and Engagement Update

OASIS

July 3, 2025





OASIS – A New Strategic Plan

- ***Vision:*** *A thriving, resilient, and unified developmental services sector where all individuals with IDD have access to equitable, high-quality supports.*
- ***Mission:*** *OASIS strengthens and connects developmental service agencies through strategic advocacy, capacity-building, and system-wide leadership.*

This plan frames the “why” of our association’s advocacy



Core Values

Collaboration – OASIS exists to unite and strengthen the sector. Working with other agencies, funders, and organizations is at our core.

Member-Driven – We represent our members and prioritize their needs, ensuring they shape our actions and decisions.

Impact-Driven – Everything we do should lead to measurable improvements for the sector and individuals with IDD.

Knowledge Building – As a hub for expertise, we equip members with data, insights, and shared learning.

Innovation – We identify and disseminate new solutions that help the sector evolve.



Strategic Priorities

Our priorities are interconnected and should be viewed as a whole—each reinforcing the others to strengthen the sector, amplify collaboration, and drive systemic impact.

I. Strengthening the Sector’s Capacity

II. Policy & Systemic Advocacy

III. Unifying the Sector & Enhancing Collaboration

IV. Enhancing Public Awareness & Influence



Voices United – Rationale

- **Building Forward, Together:** an ethos of “by the field, for the field”
- **Startup Mindset:** Treating OASIS as a dynamic startup, innovating and adapting to deliver maximum value to members in alignment with our mission.
- **Evidence based model of change:** ensuring we’re pulling on the best thinking in community organizing, coalition building and sector capacity building to strengthen organisations.

evidence-based change must still tie directly to formal government policy direction (e.g., throne speech, budget) to be effective



Boards' Unique Role

- As volunteer governors, you operate at the **helicopter level** — you're not here to direct day-to-day activities but to set direction, speak to what must change, and hold governments accountable for enabling supportive communities.
- Advocacy by Boards can:
 - **Amplify the “why”** — reminding government that people with IDD and their families deserve equitable opportunities to live and belong in their communities.
 - **Frame the “what”** — the need for government investment in community capacity, not just individualized funding streams.
 - Leave the “how” to management — your EDs and staff are the experts on implementation.
 - Boards are uniquely positioned to speak to the high-level needs articulated in the Speech from the Throne and the Budget

Empowering Governance, Amplifying Impact

OASIS has gained clarity on what counts as policy vs. administrative guidance, empowering Boards to focus advocacy on where it matters most.

- OASIS has always had a strong connection with the Boards of our member agencies.
- Board members have been telling us they want our support to learn with other organisations, improve their governance and act at a provincial level (while not getting in the CEO's hair).
- They've asked that we maintain and strengthen the connection with other boards and intentionally support sector learning and action at the inter-organisational, sector level.

Voices United – Since November



When we launched Board-to-Board last November, many of you told us you wanted to be more involved in advocacy — but you were cautious about crossing into operations or undermining your EDs.



Since then, our collective advocacy has evolved: we've navigated a provincial budget cycle, a federal election and budget, and engaged in conversations around the Throne Speech and key policy announcements.



Through these efforts, we've heard loud and clear: Boards want a role in **articulating the need and urgency for change**, not the operational details.



Recent developments like the April 2025 throne speech confirm the importance of Boards advocating for DS as a core part of Ontario's economic and social plans.

Voices United – Tactical Context



Innovating Solutions, Delivering Value



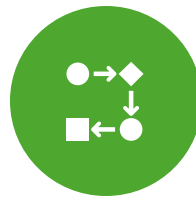
Engaging Stakeholders Across Channels: Conduct consultations via meetings, planning tables, webinars, listservs, conferences, media, and social platforms.



Data-Driven Insights: Leverage targeted surveys to identify sector priorities while respecting survey fatigue.



Solution-Oriented Outputs: Deliver targeted solutions including webinars, reports, conference sessions, and working groups informed by member input.



Iterative Improvement: Refine initiatives based on feedback loops to ensure continuous improvement and relevance.



Stakeholder insights must be connected directly to formal government policy instruments (throne speech, budget) for maximum impact.



Key Developments Since November 2024

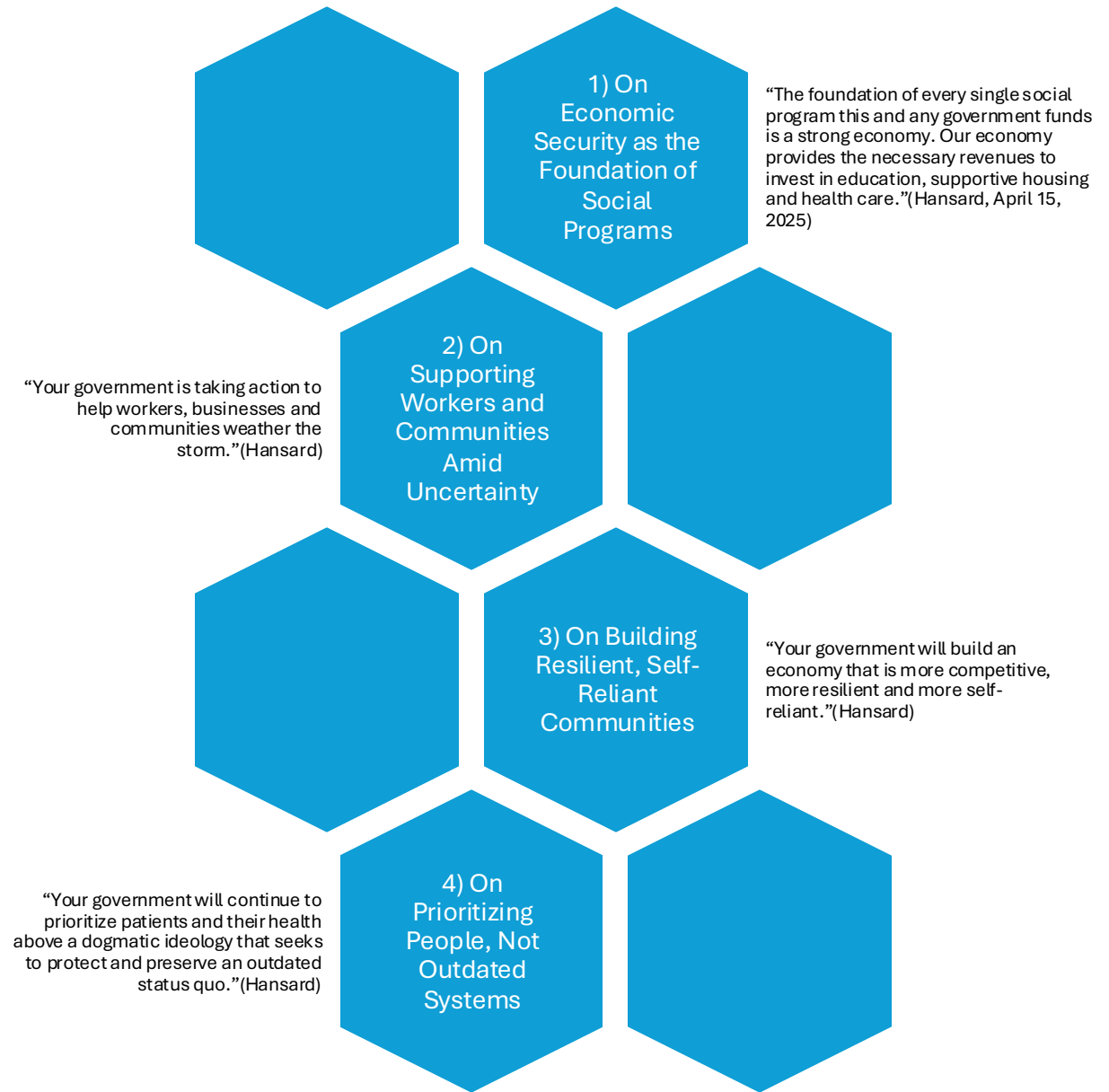
- Budget Process – 2025
- Inauguration of US President
- Ontario Provincial Election (Conservative majority)
- Federal Liberal Leadership Change (Trudeau → Carney)
- Ontario Throne Speech
- MCCSS RPP
- Federal Election (Liberal minority)
- Ontario Budget 2025
- BBQ Season (Federal government resumes Sept 15; provincial government resumes Oct 20)

Provincial Budget & Throne Speech

- The Throne Speech framed economic resilience as the foundation of social programs .
- The Ontario budget (24 – Plan to Protect Ontario Act) received Royal assent on June 5th.
- Despite continued fiscal restraint, there were no substantive increases targeted at building community capacity in developmental services.
- The Throne Speech reiterated commitments to affordability and service improvements but fell short on clear strategies for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families.
- This gap highlights the need for Boards to **advocate for a vision of supportive communities**, not just for funding to agencies.



Stated in the April 2025 Speech from the Throne





Federal Election

- The Federal election brought new dynamics to Ottawa, but early signals suggest little prioritization of developmental services or community inclusion.
- No “Disabilities” Minister or Minister of State provides no focal point for advocacy (but allows more points of access for how DS is impacted by multiple portfolios).
- The Prime Minister has emphasized that government must act as a *catalyst* for inclusive communities — words we can echo in our advocacy.
- This is a time to press for **federal-provincial collaboration** to address the decades-long erosion of rights and supports for people with IDD.

OASIS Conference & #Waiting2Belong

COMMUNITY LIVING
Ontario

oasis



#WaitingToBelong

“My son is nonverbal, and communication has been a big challenge for us. We've been waiting 4 years for services.”

Maria, Toronto

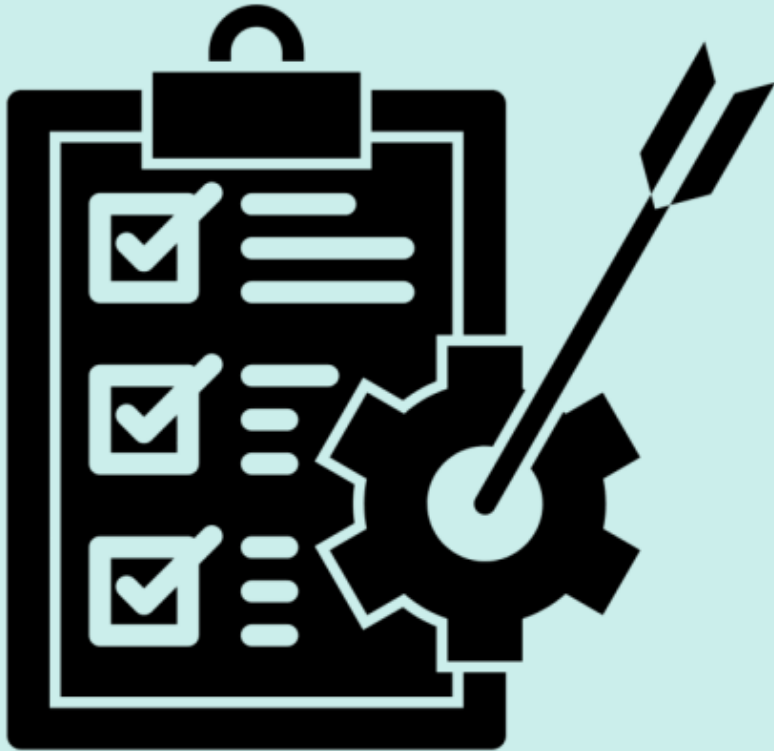
- Our annual conference confirmed that **#Waiting2Belong** has resonated across agencies and families: however, a clear, urgent call to build inclusive communities and eliminate waitlists was too vague for a specific ask of government
- While **#5toSurvive** remains critical — advocating for immediate increases to agency funding — Boards are uniquely positioned to elevate **#Waiting2Belong** by speaking to the bigger picture:
 - Why belonging matters
 - Why Ontario can't afford to leave people behind
 - And why building inclusive, resilient communities benefits everyone.
 - Why Agencies play a critical role in ensuring individuals, families and communities create equal opportunity for all Ontarians.



Connecting with Political Messages

- We can and should leverage the language our leaders use to hold them to their own words:
- The Prime Minister called government a *catalyst for inclusion* — we must ask: *Where is that catalyst for developmental services?*
- Premier Ford has spoken of *building Ontario* — our Boards can challenge: *How are we building Ontario if thousands of people with disabilities and their families remain on waitlists, excluded from community life?*

Alignment with Ontario Aims



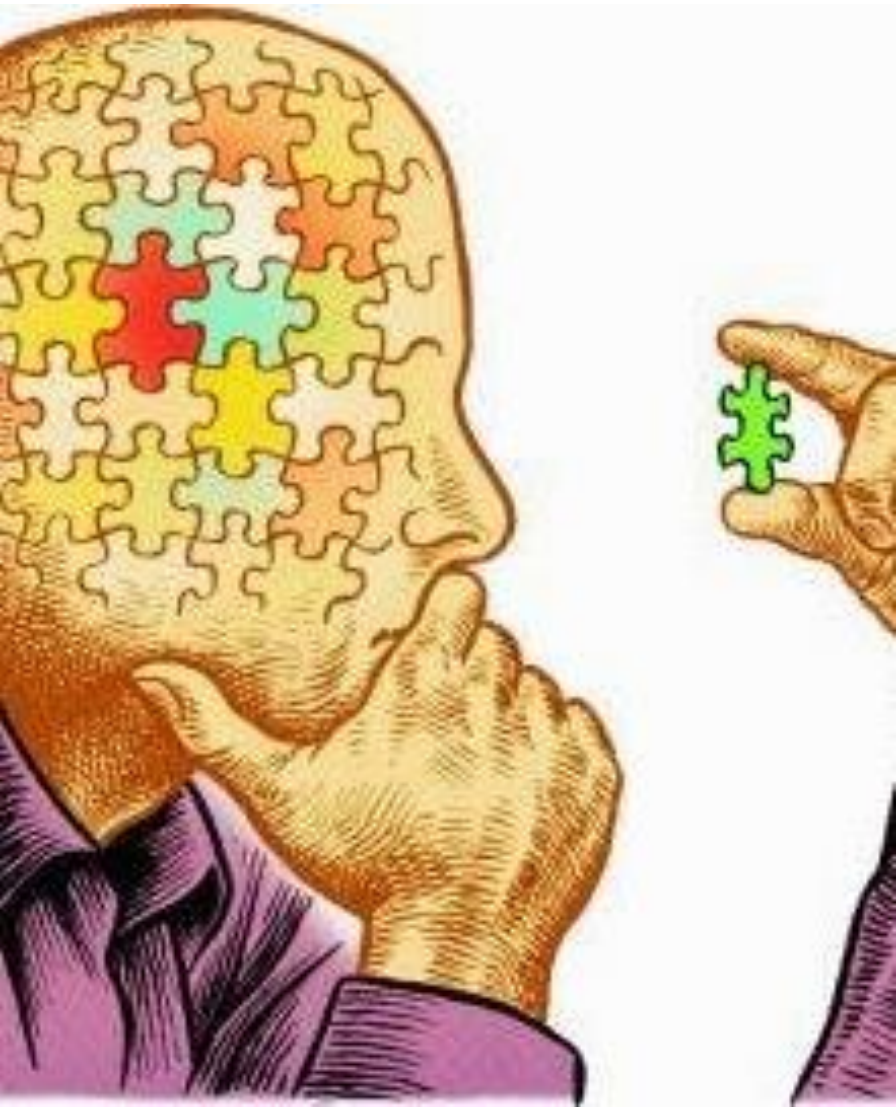
- Needs-based individualized budgets (J2) that move with the person provides support for community participation (supporting families and individuals to participate in and strengthen economy)
- *Integrated cross sector supports: Coordinating DS with health, housing, education, employment and justice (cross government focus)*
- *Workforce capacity building (strengthen recruitment and retention – economic impact)*
- *Reducing wait lists and supporting life transitions early*
- *Data/evidence driven improvements and fiscal sustainability*



Key Messages

- To resonate with Government of Ontario priorities:
 - ✓ Emphasize choice, flexibility, and efficiency (themes throughout the government budget and throne speech).
 - ✓ Show how modernized DS services reduce pressure on costly systems (hospitals, justice, housing).
 - ✓ Align DS investment with commitments to *better outcomes* and *responsible spending*.
 - ✓ Frame DS workforce needs as essential to realizing government promises in health and community care integration.

Closing Thought



- Advocacy is not a solo act. By working together as Boards — through OASIS and initiatives like **Board-to-Board** — we can present a united, coordinated voice that speaks for stronger, more inclusive communities across Ontario.
- Let's use tonight's discussions to find shared priorities and identify opportunities to align our Boards' voices so that no organization feels alone when speaking truth to power.

Our united voice must target the true levers of government direction—throne speeches, budgets, and legislation—if we're to secure lasting change



Your Priorities

- Questions and Discussion