



Alberta Sports and Recreation
Association for the Blind

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024-2028



ASRAB: PROUD PAST ... PROUD FUTURE

The strategic plan provides the foundation for future development and sustainability. This document will help the Board of Directors and Staff implement strategies and initiatives that will move ASRAB towards the desired future.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Alberta Sports and Recreation Association for the Blind (ASRAB) supports Albertans who are blind or visually impaired to live physically active lives and participate in competitive sports programs. We do this by:

- providing development and competitive sport programs, and
- supporting and encouraging the blind or visually impaired to actively participate in a broad spectrum of sport and recreation programs.

ASRAB VALUES

1. **Visionary:** Proactive, innovative, creative, and progressive; willing to take prudent risks for a shared cause.
2. **Inclusive:** Broadly reflective and representative of the blind and partially sighted community across Alberta.
3. **Sensitive:** Respectful of unique qualities; open and responsive to members' needs.
4. **Working Together:** Guided by principles of respect, ethics, and integrity in collaboration, outreach, and presentation.

ASRAB BELIEFS

ASRAB's programs and services are grounded in four core beliefs:

- Sport and recreation enhance the quality of life for all.
- Sport and recreation have the power to help individuals achieve personal goals and aspirations.
- Joint decision-making involving athletes and volunteers is essential to success.
- Broad input from members and stakeholders facilitates informed decision-making.

ASRAB GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Open Decision-Making: ASRAB believes in transparent, honest, and democratic decision-making, committed to consultation and collaboration.

Partnerships: ASRAB fosters partnerships aligned with its values and principles, acknowledging the broader community's needs.

Capacity Building: The organization empowers volunteers, members, and community-level workers, leveraging its provincial role for effective facilitation and leadership.

ASRAB VISION: THE STORY OF SUCCESS

This vision describes ASRAB's focus and accomplishments between 2024 and 2028.

ASRAB is led by a core group of skilled and committed volunteers and staff who provide leadership and vision and continue to increase its capacity to meet growing demand. ASRAB engages with a wide network of enthusiastic and engaged stakeholders; sponsors, donors, schools, vision service providers, members, volunteers and participants who actively participate in ASRAB's promotion, community engagement, and funding efforts.

ASRAB actively plans for the acquisition of a physical location as its operational base, where programs can be run in an accessible and engaging space for individuals with low vision to be in community. The space enables funding opportunities through rentals and other community partnerships. The Association's vision and priorities aim to stabilize, strengthen, and grow the Association to reach this goal.

ASRAB successfully engages thirty percent (30%) of all Albertans who are blind and partially sighted in some form of sport and physical activity. It is affiliated with a provincial network of partners, sponsors and stakeholders who share a common vision and conviction that all recreation and sport pursuits are attainable for persons who are blind and partially sighted given the right support and encouragement. The Association is active in the major municipal centers and has ongoing programming in all SPAR defined zones of the province.

ASRAB's programming and events such as Sight Night, the Try-It Program, and Physical Literacy programs continue to demonstrate that having partial sight or blindness is not a barrier to participation in an active lifestyle.

As the provincial sport governing body for Goalball, ASRAB has developed a comprehensive sport development program that supports and encourages both recreational and competitive participation. ASRAB's youth, junior, and elite athletes are continuously being recognized for their athleticism, podium finishes, and representation as members of the Canadian Goalball pools and Parapan Am or Paralympic teams.

2024 – 2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

PREAMBLE

ASRAB was established in 1975 as a provincial association to support athletes of all ages who have partial sight or blindness, enhancing their quality of life through an active lifestyle. The Association endeavors to expose its members to a wide range of sport and recreational activities that encourages individuals of all ages to continue to participate at their local community level with friends and family.

Over the past decade specifically, ASRAB has undergone remarkable growth and transformation, marked by a substantial expansion in its programs and a broadening footprint within the community it serves. The evolution of ASRAB's organizational structure has been evident through the maintenance of a robust Board that serves as a steadfast foundation, and the expansion of staffing to include specialized and regional positions. This growth in roles has contributed to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Association's operations.

Significant strides have been made in the following strategic priority areas:

1. **Operations:** Recent policies, education initiatives in Safe Sport and Risk Management, and an amplified presence on social media, facilitated by engaged expertise.
2. **Finance:** Significant strides have been made in grants, donor engagement, and sponsorship, guided by the expertise brought in through fund development initiatives.
3. **Education & Awareness:** Improved communication with Teachers of Vision Impaired Students (TVIs) and active engagement with schools and districts to support physical educators have strengthened our role and outreach efforts.
4. **Active Living:** The enhancement of regional programming and the introduction of new programs, in collaboration with technical expertise, underscore our dedication to promoting active and healthy lifestyles.
5. **Competitive Sport (Goalball):** A focus on engaging youth and providing them with training and support, coupled with strategies for a smooth transition to senior play, reflects our commitment to fostering talent within the Goalball community.

STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE

This strategic plan will serve as a foundation for both board and staff to make informed decisions. While ASRAB continues to develop the programs and services and provide opportunities for sport and recreational participation for all ages, there are challenges and opportunities that need to be addressed as the specific action plans are developed as a result of the strategic planning process.

Strengths	Opportunities
Dedicated Team and Leadership	Diversified Funding Sources
Established Programs and Expertise	Adoption of Digital Channels and Technology
Growing Provincial Presence	Increased Communication and Marketing

STRATEGIC PLANNING

ASRAB's strategic plan for 2024-2028 focuses on elevating awareness, strengthening operational foundations, advancing competitive sports, promoting active living, and securing sustainable funding. By focusing on and developing these priorities, ASRAB aims to enhance the lives Albertans with visual impairments or blindness, fostering a more robust inclusive and active community. The strategic plan focuses on five strategic priorities:

1. **Operations**
2. **Financial Stability**
3. **Education and Awareness**
4. **Active Living**
5. **Competitive Sport**

1. OPERATIONS

GOAL STATEMENT: Strengthen ASRAB's organizational infrastructure to create increased capacity and strategies to meet our vision.

INITIATIVES:

1. **Program Evaluation:** Evaluate current initiatives in each priority area to identify areas for improvement or expansion. Prioritize most valuable initiatives annually through a feasibility study based on current and expected funding.
2. **Diversity and Age Inclusion:** Develop strategies for early intervention and support for individuals with vision impairments across different age groups and circumstances. Review stakeholders and the plan for key touchpoints for the diverse sub-groups in our population. Create an accessible digital welcome and orientation package.
3. **Technology Integration:** Leverage, research, and embrace technology to improve efficiency in service delivery, communications, marketing, and streamlining of internal processes. Continue to use our CRM to automate processes and organizational information.
4. **Communication Strategy:** Create a robust annual communication plan that targets all key stakeholders and directs efforts across multiple mediums. Focus on digital communication.
5. **Policies, Procedures, and Documentation:** Document all ASRAB processes and procedures digitally for clear communications, onboarding, and knowledge transfer.
6. **Internship / Practicum Program:** Continue to leverage higher education institutions as partners, and create a robust and engaging internship program with new types of students in business, marketing, and technology to enhance ASRAB's capacity and support ASRAB's initiatives.
7. **Volunteer Training and Recognition:** Create a cohesive program for volunteer recruitment, engagement, education, and recognition. Focus on Sport Lead development and long term/returning volunteers with enhanced leadership roles.
8. **Membership Maintenance and Growth:** Evaluate current membership data to update offering and remove perceived or present barriers to membership if they exist. Increase ASRAB membership through membership promotion activities.

9. **Digital Marketing and social media:** Create tailored and accessible digital materials and communications to disseminate information effectively to existing and new stakeholders.
10. **Partnership Maintenance and Exploration:** Assess current partnerships and explore new potential partnerships with optometrists and ophthalmologists as well as educational institutions to reach a broader audience.
11. **Safe Sport and Risk Management:** Activate and Implement ASRAB's Safe Sport policies and Risk Management within all operations and priorities. Monitor and assess our performance to enable continuous improvement.

2. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

GOAL STATEMENT: Develop a comprehensive sponsorship plan and secure diversified funding sources to sustain ASRAB's strategic vision. This will involve maintaining current financial support, increasing, and stabilizing funding from various sources, and decreasing expenses through collaboration and the leveraging of cost-saving technology. By 2028, ASRAB will have implemented a diversified funding strategy, achieving an annual budget of \$800,000 to \$1 million.

INITIATIVES:

1. **Fundraising Committee:** Create a new standing committee to review and update ASRAB's long term fundraising strategy.
2. **Update our Fundraising Strategy:** The Fundraising Committee will produce a 2024-2028 fundraising strategy that will include a review of past and present fundraising efforts and outcomes while exploring new sources of financial support. The strategy will be incorporated across all communication channels and through as many key activities as possible.
 - Explore ties to medical professionals and medical establishments, focusing on ophthalmology and optometry.
 - Explore planned giving programs and partnerships with funders.
 - Leverage Sight Night.
 - Actively seek and apply for grants.
 - Leverage technology to bring in new donations.
 - Monetize Education and Awareness programs (Full time Goalball Clinician).
 - Present stories, testimonials, and overall mission and value proposition.
3. **Year-Round Fundraising:** Develop a year-round fundraising strategy to maintain a consistent income flow. Leverage online platforms and engage donors regularly through newsletters, updates, and targeted campaigns.

3. EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

GOAL STATEMENT: Enhance ASRAB's provincial profile as the primary sport and recreation association focusing on delivering high-quality opportunities for persons who have visual impairment or blindness. Share messages that break down barriers and challenge perceptions of what is possible for persons who are blind or partially sighted.

INITIATIVES:

1. **Educate the Public on ASRAB's Mission:** Digital presence to reach a wider audience; leveraging technology, social media, and other media platforms to highlight active and healthy lifestyles.
2. **Community Partnerships:** Work with sector-leading organizations to enhance ASRAB's visibility. Collaborate with teachers, CNIB, and AHC Vision Clinic to promote ASRAB to visually impaired individuals and their support networks. Collaborate with municipal recreation coordinators and other sport bodies.
3. **Educational Partnerships:** Engage educational professionals to promote opportunities. Collaborate with school systems to ensure participation opportunities.
4. **Sight Night:** Conduct Sight Night events in Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer and Lethbridge and initiate other centers for community promotion, member engagement, and fundraising.
5. **Goalball Demonstrations:** Develop and deliver goalball demonstrations to schools and community groups, with the goal that all students with low vision are aware of the sport and opportunities for participation.
6. **Active Wellness for Individuals with Vision Impairment:** Implement the "Active Wellness for Individuals with Vision Impairment" project, offering trail hikes, mindfulness sessions, and mental health support.

4. ACTIVE LIVING

GOAL STATEMENT: Establish a continuum of programs and services supporting broad participation in recreational and physical activity programs in communities across Alberta, including Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary, Grande Prairie, and Lethbridge, together with other communities as feasible.

INITIATIVES:

1. **Programming:** Offer diverse active living programs year round, including winter, indoor, summer, running, and children's sports and recreation activities.
 - Goalball: Support Goalball programs across Alberta communities
 - Socialization and networking opportunities
 - Establishments of partnerships
 - Children and youth programs emphasizing physical literacy
2. **Procedural Development:** Establish an evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of each activity and program. Support programs with strong procedures and processes relating to logistics and risk management.
3. **Volunteers:** Establish a robust volunteers and students orientation package and training strategy to support and increase active living programming in the long term across Alberta.
4. **Fundraising efforts:** Explore possible ties to fundraising through fee for service or donations.

5. COMPETITIVE SPORT

GOAL STATEMENT: Implement a robust provincial sport development strategy, increasing participation levels and supporting athletes in goalball at local, provincial, and national levels.

INITIATIVES:

1. **Prioritize goalball as ASRAB's signature sport:** Focus on fundamental skills for all players and high-performance training for senior athletes. Establish and support recreational Goalball programs in Edmonton, Red Deer, and Calgary, expanding to other communities including Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat.
2. **Competitive Athlete Development:** Expand support for athlete development towards the National Pool and Sport Canada AAP. Develop a comprehensive provincial sport development strategy for Goalball, achieving podium finishes nationally.
3. **Focus on Recruitment and Long-term Retention:** Increasing the number of participants, coaches, officials and volunteers that join the sport and stay engaged in goalball. Provide leadership opportunities and professional development.
4. **Youth player development:** Continue to focus on youth players recruitment and support. Provide coaching and training in line with Long-Term Player Development, providing a robust player development pathway. Ensure the youth are prepared to transition to senior participation.
5. **Showcasing the Athlete Journey:** Showcase our athlete's stories and accomplishments in various formats and through various mediums to provide community engagement and awareness.
6. **Strength and Conditioning:** Support athletes in strength and conditioning through partnerships with service providers.

SUMMARY

ASRAB has a strong foundation in its existing programs and committed leadership. The organization has opportunities for growth by expanding education and awareness programs, leveraging technology, and building collaborative partnerships. However, challenges such as limited funding, communication gaps, and the need to educate the public and potential members on ASRAB's value proposition should be strategically managed to ensure long-term success.

Ongoing adaptation to the evolving landscape, both in terms of external challenges and internal improvements, will be crucial for ASRAB's sustainable development. The Strategic Plan 2024-2028 provides the direction and key steps to best support ASRAB's success in meeting our key organizational goals.