



canadianavalancheassociation

**2022 to 2025
Strategic Plan**

Approved by the CAA Board of Directors March 21, 2023

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Introduction

This four-year strategic plan was developed by the CAA Board of Directors and senior staff in a process that began in fall of 2021. The previous plan had timed out in 2020. Given the demands of the pandemic and the continued need to achieve many of the goals in that plan, the board opted to delay working on a new plan until the summer of 2021.

This plan was developed with board, staff and the assistance of an external expert in non-profits and strategic planning. The plan was placed in front of the membership for comment in June of 2022. Following member feedback the plan was finalized and authorized by a motion of the board on March 21, 2023.

As with previous strategic plans for the CAA, this is a living document: The plan's goals will be reviewed and prioritized annually. Member feedback on this process is encouraged. Comments can be sent to the CAA President at president@avalancheassociation.ca. Key themes that informed the development of this plan are summarized below.

Professional Practices/Self-Regulation (Formerly CAA's professional path)

The CAA has made significant advances in Professional Practices/Self-Regulation with respect to new membership criteria and aligned training. While aspects of these goals have been achieved, work remains to iron out processes and to provide resources to members and stakeholders, such as the *Guidelines for Instruction in Avalanche Terrain*.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Mental Health

Members have been clear that they wish for the CAA to recognize its role in society with respect to diversity, equity, inclusion. Members have been equally clear that government and employer mental health support systems are either absent or fall short of the needs of CAA members. Goals 7 and 8 seek to meet these needs for members by setting objectives to provide new resources in these areas.

Integration of effort

The objectives of this plan were designed to ensure that, wherever appropriate, committees, staff, and the board understand and actively engage each other and the membership, to achieve our shared goals.

Organizational Efficiency

Whether the CAA's revenues come from members, industry operators, students or other sources, the board and staff assigned to applying these resources will make every practical effort to plan and execute programs efficiently and responsibly. By doing so, we will keep fees down to ensure fairness to members, and keep expenses within our means. This approach will safeguard our long-term organizational sustainability. The updated plan makes some changes to reflect valuing intellectual property more clearly.

Vision, Mission, and Values

The Canadian Avalanche Association - Who Are We?

Our Vision

The Canadian Avalanche Association earns the confidence of Canadian public in the programs and services delivered by CAA members.

Our Mission

We ensure that our diverse membership of avalanche practitioners meets the highest standards, and adheres to best practices to secure the confidence of governments, industry, and Canadians.

We do this by:

- Protecting the [public interest](#) by ensuring members adhere to the CAA's Code of Ethics.
- Representing CAA members who are professionally engaged in avalanche work in Canada.
- Maintaining, monitoring, and enforcing standards of education and qualifications for continued membership in the association.
- Providing continuing professional development opportunities for our members
- Facilitating the exchange of technical information between persons engaged in avalanche safety programs.
- Supporting public avalanche awareness by acting as a resource base.
- Encouraging and promoting avalanche safety research and development.
- Providing professional avalanche education.

Our Core Organizational Values

Leadership: We lead by advancing professional avalanche education, knowledge, and professionalism, while fostering the trust of the general public, and shaping our own future.

Collaboration: We collaborate and draw upon the collective wisdom and knowledge of our members, committees, staff, stakeholders, experts within Canada and look outwards to global avalanche community, and the public to help reach our goals and strengthen our organization.

Transparency: We build trust by embracing and demonstrating transparency to the public, regulators and members whenever possible.

Accountability: We take ownership and responsibility for the organization's actions and decisions.

Integrity: We demonstrate integrity by looking to these values at all times, and acting appropriately. This fosters good faith in the public, the organization, and members.

Stewardship - We responsibly plan and manage our human, fiscal and intellectual property resources appropriately for the short-term and for the future of our organization.

Social Responsibility - We treat members, staff and students respectfully and seek to offer support systems where possible. We act in good faith to minimize the impact of our activities on the environment and other stakeholders

For more detail, please see the Appendix.

2022-2025 Goals and Objectives

Introduction

Each of the seven goals below address an overall outcome the CAA wants to achieve. Each goal is supported by specific objectives. This plan assumes that while it is valuable to identify high-level goals, it is not very helpful or realistic to identify detailed objectives or strategies more than one to two years out. Board and staff have a more detailed workplan that helps prioritize effort towards achieving the objectives and goals described in this plan.

Focus and Priorities

This plan includes eight goals with their supporting objectives. Not all goals or objectives are of the same priority, nor do they all require the same amount of resources to achieve. As such, the board and staff focus on the most important objectives to achieve in the current year of the plan, which are supported by strategies and work plans.

The board will re-visit the plan and its objectives annually to assess the organization's progress and reprioritize goals to best achieve our vision and mission.

Goal 1: Professional Practices/Self-Regulation

The CAA establishes a professional self-regulatory model that protects the public interest, while meeting the needs of CAA members, regulators and industry.

Objectives:

- 1.1. Promote understanding of the [Scope of Practice Statement](#), approved by the Board of Directors in 2014, to CAA members and external stakeholders, and monitor its effectiveness to protecting the public interest, and ensure CAA members practice within this scope.
- 1.2. Promote understanding of the [Code of Ethics](#), approved by the CAA membership in 2014, to CAA members and external stakeholders, and monitor its effectiveness in protecting the public interest, and ensure CAA members conduct their practices within the Code of Ethics.
- 1.3. Complete a robust Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program that ensures excellence in practice and a culture of accountability for members. The public and stakeholders trust this process.
- 1.4. Provide opportunities for continuing professional development to our members that are relevant and applicable.
- 1.5. Promote, support monitor the effective use of the CAA Competency Profiles.
- 1.6. Practice Standard and Guidelines:
 - 1.6.1. Ensure appropriate review so all existing Practice standards and guidelines are current and accurate
 - 1.6.2. Periodically evaluate which additional Standards and Guidelines are required for CAA members
- 1.7. Complete and Implement the Guidelines for Instruction in Avalanche Terrain with appropriate support tools for members

Goal 2: Membership

The value of CAA membership is recognized by its members, industry, and regulators. Regulators and the public support the enforcement of CAA membership.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Members in all categories understand and value membership obligations and benefits.
- 2.2 Industry, regulators and the public support the standards and obligations of CAA membership as a requirement for avalanche risk management services.
- 2.3 CAA membership categories and their requirements are revised to meet CAA goals, Entry to Practice Requirements, and the CAA Scope of Practice.
- 2.4 The CAA actively looks to improve services to underserved geographic regions (Yukon, Quebec, NFLD), practice types and minorities.
- 2.5 Finalize plan and complete CAA History project

Goal 3: Education and Research

The [CAA's education programs](#) and research initiatives earn the confidence of members, students, regulators, industry and the public. Courses offered are of the highest standard to build essential foundations of avalanche practice. Research efforts are academically sound and oriented towards future applicability for practitioners.

Objectives:

- 3.1 The CAA's educational process is aligned to prepare students to meet the educational requirements of the CAA membership application process.
- 3.2 Practitioners, industry and regulators understand, participate, and support continuous improvement for creating or modifying curriculum to address the required competencies for avalanche practice in Canada.
- 3.3 The CAA offers efficient and relevant educational resources to meet student/member needs through workshops, web-based learning, and other educational tools.
- 3.4 Support for research is directed toward programs and initiatives whose outcomes are likely to be applicable in the field by avalanche practitioners.

Goal 4: Governance

Governance of the CAA's board, committees and staff is principled, effective, and transparent to the satisfaction of members, industry, regulators and the public.

Objectives:

- 4.1 The CAA board is consistently engaged, transparent and accountable as it meets its obligations.
- 4.2 A clear succession plan is in place for the board and committees to foster board and committee members' engagement, and to ensure CAA roles are filled with individuals with appropriate skills and experience.
- 4.3 Terms of Reference (ToR) for committees are developed for all CAA Committees.

Committee output is regularly reviewed and ToRs are updated as the needs of the CAA evolve.

Goal 5: Efficient and Sustainable Operations

The human, fiscal and intellectual resources of the CAA are deployed efficiently to ensure the sustainability of the organization.

Objectives:

- 5.1 Fiscal – The CAA’s annual financial plan is based on a sustainable long-term financial plan.
- 5.2 Fiscal – CAA core programs are self-sustaining.
- 5.3 Fiscal The CAA keeps a reserve fund sufficient for six months of operations, and a distinct Intellectual Property Development Fund adequate to meet the needs of the Industry Training Program and other Intellectual Property needs.
- 5.4 Organizational – Staff, committees and board skills will keep pace with the demands of the organization and update policies and procedures accordingly.
- 5.5 Organizational – Information technology services for web, customer relationship management, and networking are managed to meet the CAA’s current and future needs.
- 5.6 Human resource sustainability – CAA Staff, board and committees are managed to avoid burn out and to ensure growth, retention, reasonable workloads.
- 5.7 Environment – CAA operations are managed to reduce carbon and other environmental footprints to the greatest degree possible.

Goal 6: Products and Services

Where aligned with the CAA’s mission and strategic interests, the CAA may deliver various products and services, or enter into collaborative efforts with other entities.

Objectives:

- 6.1 To maintain and operate InfoEx software in an effective way for the InfoEx Community, employing a self-sustaining financial plan, fair subscriber contracts, and appropriate engagement of subscribers.
- 6.2 To develop new products and services are developed in partnership with government, industry and other stakeholders where appropriate to the CAA’s mission and goals.
- 6.3 To maintain and leverage the CAA’s nationally and internationally recognized brand when entering any new arrangements or partnerships.

Goal 7: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

To develop plans by which support the Canadian Avalanche Association’s objectives for Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI).

Objectives:

- 7.1. The Board of Directors incorporates DEI into common governance responsibilities.

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- 7.2. Annual Priorities are developed to address the CAA's DEI goals.
- 7.3. DEI initiatives and training are properly resourced.
- 7.4. DEI initiatives are communicated to CAA members.

Goal 8 Mental Health

The CAA develops support systems to help members, students and staff face the mental health challenges common to our industry.

Objectives:

- 8.1 The Board of Directors incorporates Mental Health initiatives into common governance responsibilities.
- 8.2 Annual Priorities are developed to address the CAA's Mental Health goals.
- 8.3 Mental Health initiatives and training are properly resourced.
- 8.4 Mental Health initiatives are communicated to CAA members.

Appendix I - Terminology

This section describes **terminology** that informs the content and structure of this plan;

Strategic Plan Terminology

A strategic plan provides relatively high-level guidance to the functioning of an organization. At its highest level this plan states the CAA's vision and at the most detailed level the plan identifies annual objectives.

To understand this plan, it is important to distinguish between various strategic planning terms. These differences are more than semantic; they impact how the organization thinks and acts, ultimately determining how effective we will be.

Vision: A vision is intended to be aspirational, describing a desired future state that reflects the best or most desired conditions that the organization strives towards within its scope, but which have not yet been achieved or completely realized.

Mission (Purpose): A mission describes what the organization provides and to whom—essentially why the organization exists.

Values: Values are the organization's commitment to behave in a certain way, both as individuals and as an organization. Values are especially important when having to make tough choices or in challenging situations.

Goals: A goal is an end state, an outcome—but defined more specifically than the organization's mission/purpose or vision. Goals typically have a timeline of several years to accomplish, if not longer.

Objectives: An objective is a sub-component of a goal. It may have a shorter timeframe than the goal it supports (like a milestone). In other cases, it may more clearly define a required focus area to achieve the goal it supports.

Strategy: A strategy is the combination of linked activities that accomplish an objective or a goal. Strategies can be broken down into more narrow focus areas. In some cases there may be a number of separate strategies for a goal. It is not given that every objective will have its own strategy. Strategies may overlap two or more objectives.

Work plan: Work plans set forth a set of performance expectations to execute activities (chosen strategies) to achieve objectives or goals. Work plans usually detail outputs and timelines, and who is responsible: board member, committee member or staff. These specific details remain to be addressed by the Board and Staff.

Other Terminology in this document

CAA Educational Programs

The CAA's Industry Training Program includes most of the CAA's educational offerings. However, Continuing Professional Development seminars during the CAA Spring meetings and other ad hoc workshops also form part of the CAA's Educational Programs.

CAA Core Programs

CAA operations can be divided into ongoing core programs, and projects. Core programs include: The Industry Training Program, Association (services for CAA Members) and InfoEx. These core programs exist year after year, generate their own revenue and have their own expenses. Projects are specific initiatives outside of routine core operations. Projects are of varying length and financial requirements. If funds are required, these may come from external sources (fee-for-service contracts, grants, other sources) or internal resources such as the CAA's Intellectual Property Development Fund or other reserves.

Information technology

The CAA uses a several sophisticated software programs intended to support efficiency of operations. We use Microsoft's Great Plains to manage our financial controls. As CAA members visit our website they interact with the front end of a complex client-management system from Yourmembership.com. These services require diligence in their acquisition and execution. The CAA seeks to maximize efficiency through these and other IT services we purchase or license to provide CAA services.

Professionalism in the Public interest

Self-Regulated professions or associations operate in the public interest with a dual mandate.

First, the regulatory body serves the public. This includes, incorporating measures such as: a clear code of ethics, publicly available practice standards, a complaints process that allows the public or other members to compel the association to review allegations at unethical or poor practice. Such measures act as a covenant with the public to ensure experts do not protect each other against a public without the expertise to understand the nature of the profession. These measures are implemented with transparency and accountability.

Second, for its members, the professional association offers support by way of membership, training, continuing professional development, standards and guidelines that enable practice, and other services that allow members to pursue their vocation. Again, this accomplished through transparent and accountable processes.