



Calgary Celiac Association

— 2026–2029 — **STRATEGIC PLAN**

Empowering the **Gluten-Free Community**
through Education, Advocacy, and Support

Executive Summary

This strategic plan represents a renewed commitment to supporting individuals and families living with Celiac disease across Calgary and Southern Alberta. Guided by our Board of Directors and developed in close collaboration with our operations team, the plan reflects a thoughtful, inclusive, and evidence-informed process that is rooted in community voice and alignment with the national priorities of Celiac Canada.

Over the past year, the Calgary Celiac Association (CCA) engaged its members, volunteers, and stakeholders through surveys and ongoing dialogue to better understand the lived experiences of those navigating celiac disease and the gluten-free lifestyle. These conversations revealed both challenges and emerging needs across the lifespan, from diagnosis and education to food security, social inclusion, and aging well with celiac disease. Market research and environmental scanning further strengthened our understanding of gaps, opportunities, and identified areas where we can lead with greater clarity and impact.

The insights gathered through this process directly informed the development of our strategic priorities. Each priority reflects a balance between responsiveness to current member needs. It also illustrates a forward-looking approach that strengthens the sustainability of our chapter, partnerships, and long-term community impact. This plan is intentionally designed to be practical and actionable, while remaining flexible enough to adapt to a changing healthcare and nonprofit landscape.

This document outlines our refined vision and mission, affirms our core organizational values, and defines the strategic priorities that will guide our work over the next three years. Together, these elements provide a clear framework for decision-making, resource allocation, and accountability. Above all, this plan reinforces our role as a trusted voice, connector, and advocate for people living with celiac disease, working collaboratively to improve quality of life, raise awareness, and build a more informed, inclusive, and supportive community. We hope this strategic plan will present you with the opportunity to engage with the CCA and become a part of that transformation. Should you have any questions or are interested in further information on anything outlined in this document, please contact me at: president@calgaryceliac.ca



Lisa Cerato, President

Calgary Celiac Association

Introduction

The Calgary Celiac Association (CCA) is pleased to present our 2026-2029 Strategic Plan, a comprehensive guiding framework for our efforts over the next three years. This plan reflects our unwavering commitment to supporting people living with celiac disease and gluten-related disorders across Calgary and surrounding area. It builds upon the strong foundation of advocacy, education, and community connection we have fostered over the years, while evolving to meet new challenges and opportunities within changing healthcare and community landscapes. Its purpose is to ensure that the chapter remains responsive, effective, and forward-thinking as it works to improve the quality of life for all individuals living with celiac disease and gluten-related disorders.

Celiac disease impacts the health and daily lives of thousands of Albertans. From safe food access to effective diagnosis and treatment, individuals living with celiac disease face unique challenges that require ongoing attention, advocacy, and support. This strategic plan reflects our holistic approach to addressing these challenges, ensuring that the Calgary celiac community is informed, empowered, and supported. United by our shared mission and values, we stand behind a simple but powerful statement:

EMPOWERING THE GLUTEN-FREE COMMUNITY THROUGH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, AND SUPPORT.

Background

Established in 1980, the Calgary Celiac Association has grown into a trusted voice and essential resource for many thousands of individuals and families navigating the complexities of gluten-free living. Over the last 45 years, we have played a pivotal role in providing education and resources for newly diagnosed individuals and their families. A community has been built to provide connection through support groups, social events, and peer mentoring programs. We have engaged in national conversations through collaboration with Celiac Canada. We have championed alongside other provincial celiac chapters to advocate for food safety standards, improved food labeling, and better coordinated healthcare access for those with celiac disease. Finally, the chapter has fostered partnerships with local businesses, local healthcare providers, and researchers to advance understanding and improve quality of life for those living gluten-free.

Population Stats

Celiac disease is increasing in Alberta, with incidence rising from roughly 31.5 to 40.3 per 100,000 persons between the years of 2015-2020, driven by environmental factors, though diagnosis rates remain higher in females and younger individuals. Nationally, about 1 in 100 Canadians have it, but 90% are underdiagnosed with studies highlighting challenges like food insecurity for families and links to mental health issues, even as the province of Alberta advocates for more awareness and testing. (*CMAJ 2025 November 11;197: E1258-65.*)

While great progress has been made, celiac disease awareness, diagnosis rates, and access to safe gluten-free options continue to evolve, increasing our understanding of gluten-related disorders. Advances in research, changes to food production and labeling regulations, and shifts in healthcare delivery models all impact the work of the Calgary Celiac Association. Additionally, newly diagnosed individuals and families face challenges in navigating medical care, along with social isolation, food safety, and access to accurate information.

Shaping Our Plan

Our 2026-2029 strategy reflects the voices and needs of our members, healthcare and research partners, and broader community, and ensures that our programs, advocacy efforts, and partnerships are aligned with emerging research and community expectations. We conducted surveys, focus groups, and environmental scans to ensure this plan is both evidence-informed and community-driven. This collaborative process has reinforced our commitment to listening, adapting, and working together to build a healthier, more inclusive future for people living with celiac disease. Acting as a framework for accountability, this plan will allow the CCA to measure progress, adapt to changing circumstances, and demonstrate our impact to members, funders and partners.



Purpose







At the heart of the Calgary Celiac Association is a vision of a community where people with celiac disease feel understood, empowered, and connected. Our mission is to walk alongside individuals and families at every stage of their journey, offering education, support, advocacy, and opportunities to build confidence in gluten-free living. We partner with healthcare providers, food service organizations, and community groups to create safer environments and stronger networks for everyone affected by celiac disease.

CCA Vision – Improving the quality of life for all people living gluten-free.

CCA Mission – Leading support and advocacy for those with celiac disease and gluten-related disorders.

Defining the Calgary Celiac Association’s values and guiding principles provides a clear foundation for decision-making and ensures that our strategic priorities are aligned with who we are and how we serve our community. Values represent the CORE beliefs that define what the CCA stands for, while guiding principles translate those beliefs into actionable behaviors and standards. Together, they ensure consistency, integrity, and alignment in how goals are pursued and how people react. These values guide how we lead, govern, and serve our members and community in Calgary and across southern Alberta.

CCA Values and Guiding Principles:

<h3>Community</h3>  <p>We foster connection, trust, and inclusion for all affected by celiac disease, grounded in equity, diversity, and access for underserved communities.</p>	<h3>Education</h3>  <p>We provide credible, evidence-based information to support informed decision-making.</p>	<h3>Awareness</h3>  <p>We increase public and professional understanding of celiac disease.</p>
<h3>Advocacy</h3>  <p>We champion systemic change to advance food safety, food security, and healthcare equity.</p>	<h3>Empowerment</h3>  <p>We equip individuals and families to live confidently with celiac disease.</p>	<h3>Care</h3>  <p>We lead with compassion by listening, responding, and supporting community needs.</p>

Strategic Priorities

Our strategic priorities reflect the core areas of focus that will guide our work over the next three years. Rooted in member and community insights and shaped through collaborative planning, these priorities are designed to elevate the Calgary Celiac Association, strengthening our community and deepening member engagement across our jurisdiction. Each priority supports our mission and values while positioning us to lead with purpose in a rapidly evolving landscape.

Education & Awareness

Expanding access to credible, up-to-date information and resources to support safe, gluten-free living at every stage in life.

Key actions include engaging education for children and families, developing local resources such as grocery and dining guides, and providing clear, evidence-based information on food labelling, and gluten-free cooking. We are also exploring future youth programming activities and continuously reviewing our education offerings to ensure they reflect community needs.

Advocacy & Policy Engagement

Championing the rights of individuals with celiac disease by working with national policymakers and industry to ensure safe food access, accurate labeling, and improved healthcare access.

Key actions include building partnerships with food distributors, supporting gluten-free certification and best practices in restaurants, and amplifying national advocacy efforts. We will continue engaging schools, post-secondary institutions, and government partners to raise awareness and reduce barriers for those living with celiac disease.

Community Support & Engagement

Strengthening our peer networks, fostering community connections, and ensuring no one feels alone in their diagnosis or journey.

Key actions include expanding peer-led support groups, enhancing programs for seniors, and offering inclusive community events that bring people together in safe, welcoming environments. Social, educational, and outdoor activities will continue to support connection and confidence.

Healthcare Collaboration & Research Support

Building stronger partnerships with healthcare providers and supporting research to improve diagnosis, treatment, and understanding of celiac disease.

Key actions include professional education opportunities, accessible learning resources for healthcare professionals, and support for research initiatives that advance understanding and culturally responsive care.

Sustainability & Organizational Growth

Ensuring Calgary Celiac remains a strong, responsive organization, able to meet the evolving needs of our community through sound governance, funding diversification, and volunteer engagement.

Key actions include leadership development and succession planning, clear governance and role clarity, strong volunteer and staff onboarding, and investment in future leaders through initiatives such as scholarships. Collaborations with Celiac Canada and other celiac chapters nationwide remain central to sharing knowledge, aligning advocacy, and building collective strength.



Monitoring and Evaluation

Measuring performance is an important aspect in maintaining the highest standards of excellence and is essential for clearly communicating our accomplishments to our community. The CCA engages in all levels of leadership in matching outcomes, goals, objectives, and strategies to performance indicators that specifically and annually measure progress toward our goals. Indicators are transparent and updated regularly.

The Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Plan for the Calgary Celiac Association 2026-2029 Strategic Plan provides a structured framework to assess the chapter's progress, effectiveness, and impact across all five strategic priorities. The plan ensures that the strategic objectives remain on track, resources are used efficiently, and programs and initiatives adapt to the evolving needs of the community.

Key objectives of the M&E plan include:

- Tracking implementation progress
- Measuring outcomes and impact
- Ensuring accountability
- Informing adaptive management
- Celebrating successes and identifying gaps

Conclusion

The 2026-2029 Strategic Plan marks an important step toward strengthening education, advocacy, community support, and organizational stability for the Calgary Celiac Association. Our ability to achieve these goals depends on thoughtful planning and the dedication, energy, and compassion of our volunteers. Their commitment is the foundation that allows programs to grow, events to flourish, and our community to feel supported and connected. As we move into the next three years, we do so with confidence, knowing that together, with ongoing engagement of our volunteer community, we can build a stronger and more inclusive future for all those living with celiac disease and gluten-related disorders. We invite everyone to stay tuned to our website and newsletter for updates and new initiatives as this plan comes to life.

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