

# 2024-27 Strategic Plan



**SUSTAINING HOPE &  
BUILDING RESILIENCE**

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## Sustaining Hope & Building Resilience

### Shared Leadership Message

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Since 1978, ARBI has been a leader in delivering community-based neurorehabilitation for brain injury survivors through an interdisciplinary team of allied health professionals, social workers, trained volunteers, and practicum students. ARBI's volunteer service model has been a keystone to contributing to the recovery success of so many, and we take great pride in ARBI's role in educating thousands of healthcare professionals over these years.

As we look ahead to the end of this three-year plan, we will be on the eve of ARBI's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2028. Foremost on our minds is continuing the legacy of ARBI's amazing success and ensuring the sustainability of the organization amid the increasing need for service, rising delivery costs, and government funding limitations.

While the majority of ARBI's programs are funded through provincial and municipal governments, ARBI receives many requests from those who are not eligible for this funding. This is where community support makes all the difference. On average, fundraising contributes to 35% of ARBI's \$2.4M annual revenue, illustrating a significant level of vulnerability jeopardizing the future of our programs. To overcome this, ARBI's path to sustainability will focus on the following:

With services funded by the government, we will maximize our capacity within the support provided. For services requested outside of government programs, ARBI will introduce sustainable support options including services fees, and/or subsidies through a donor-supported bursary program. This program aims to provide varying levels of assistance based on financial need.

We are immensely grateful for the community support that allows ARBI to overcome these challenges to continue to support more people with acquired brain injuries.



*Alex Hillyard*

Dr. Alex Hillyard  
Board Chair



*Nora Molina*

Nora Molina  
Executive Director

## ABOUT ARBI

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In 1972, a young naval officer was hitchhiking on his return from leave. Struck by a hit-and-run driver and left by the roadside, Mel Laine was then struck a second time. Fortunately, that driver sought help. In a coma for nine months, his family was told there was no hope.

Years later, Mel was able to share that he had heard the conversations around him but had no ability to respond. His family was at a loss until his mother, Alice Laine, was approached by Audrey Morrice who asked to visit Mel. Audrey was a retired school teacher and felt compelled to meet Mel. At the time they met all he could move was his eyes, but when their eyes connected, she simply said, "Hi, I'm going to help you." That meeting turned into six years of daily rehabilitation in Audrey's home. According to Audrey, it

took Mel two and half years to walk, three years to utter his first words, five years to walk without dragging his leg, and ten years to write again.

Mel's recovery success led to the founding of ARBI in 1978 by Audrey, Alice, and a team of volunteers. Word spread, and they began helping other brain injury survivors in the basement of the Woodcliff United Church in Calgary, AB. By 1989, the number of individuals requiring therapy services had grown, and ARBI expanded into its current location on Spruce Drive. Since then, the team at ARBI has expanded to nearly 30 team members, including multidisciplinary health professionals, social workers, and over 140 active volunteers each year.

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*From experience, it has been proven that the volunteer approach with professional supervision provides the answer. Because it has been found that to work with the severely brain injured on a one-to-one basis with professionals providing all the therapy on a long-term basis is cost prohibitive.*

**Audrey Morrice, Co-Founder, ARBI**

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## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

This strategic plan outlines ARBI's roadmap for achieving its vision of ensuring everyone impacted by acquired brain injury (ABI) lives their best possible life. Guided by the principles of hope, diversity & inclusion, and connection, ARBI will focus on three strategic intentions: creating a Centre for Hope and Resilience, providing lifelong support for recovery, and strategically collaborating to influence systemic change.

### Our Vision

- Everyone impacted by acquired brain injury lives the best life possible.

### Our Mission

- To transform the lives of people impacted by acquired brain injury through neurorehabilitation, community integration, and strengthening families and support networks.

## OUR VALUES

### Hope

- We hold the conviction that everyone has the ability to act in a way that can make things better. This hope is built on our experience supporting many remarkable recoveries firsthand and seeing our work's impact on individuals and families affected by brain injury.

### Diversity & Inclusion

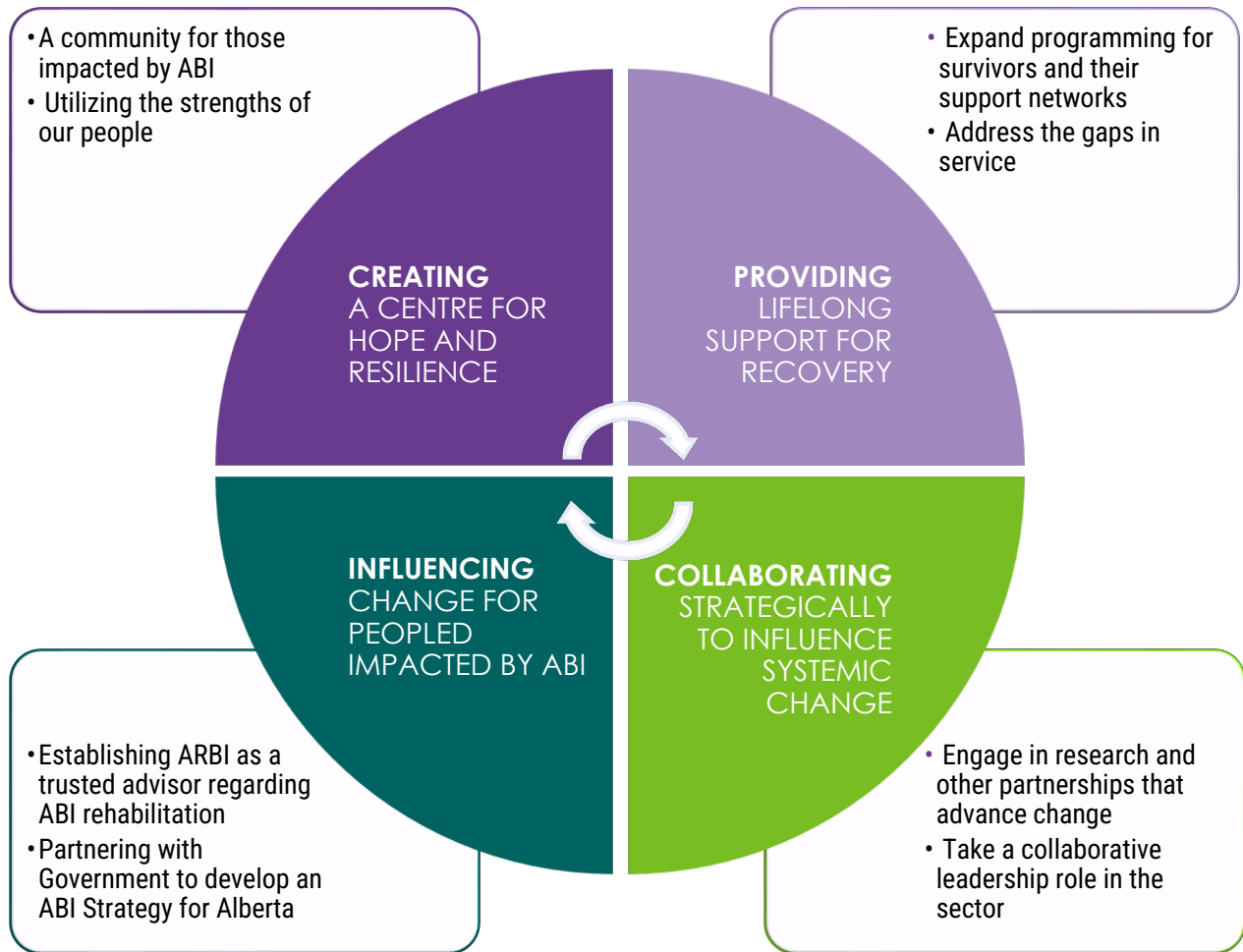
- We respect the diversity of our community and work to ensure all those we interact with feel they have a purpose and connection to places they can belong in the community. Working with community partners, we advocate for more inclusive opportunities for people with brain injuries to engage in society.

### Connection

- We value the dignity of each person and their opportunity to rebuild a purposeful life. We partner with individuals, families, and other professionals to empower individuals and families to experience meaningful connections and change throughout their recovery.

## Strategic Intentions

Four inter-connected strategic intentions frame ARBI's strategic plan. They will guide our aim for sustainability and stabilize our future through opportunities to innovate, collaborate, and advocate so that everyone affected by acquired brain injury can live the best life possible. The following framework outlines these intentions:



### Creating a Centre for Hope and Resilience

ARBI has a long history of being a supportive community for individuals and families affected by acquired brain injury. While neurorehabilitation is the foundation of our work, over the years ARBI's services have expanded beyond that scope. Through weekly programs supporting leisure, recreation and life skills, as well as frequent social activities, ARBI has fostered connections to create a supportive environment and community that sees and accepts people as they are and delivers person-centered programs to meet the unique needs of hundreds of people each year. While the pandemic disrupted everyone's ability to connect, many of our clients in long-term care felt these restrictions much longer than the average Albertan. In-person

programming resumed in the fall of 2022, and COVID-related restrictions were lifted in June 2023; since then, ARBI has been pleased to see engagement increasing annually.

Over the next three years, ARBI is committed to i) solidifying our role as a community for those impacted by ABI, ii) utilizing the strengths of our people (including both staff and volunteers) to maximize our services, and iii) ensuring ARBI's sustainability through increasing the diversity and stability of funding/revenue sources.

#### **TO ACHIEVE THIS, WE WILL:**

- Stabilize operations through increasing multi-year funding arrangements
- Implement a new approach to assessing and supporting individuals in financial need
- Continue to support our staff to ensure best practices in the delivery of ARBI-quality care to our clients

### **Providing Lifelong Support for Recovery**

Recovering from an acquired brain injury can take many years. As Mel's story conveyed earlier, recovery is a lifelong journey for the individual and their family. However, the typical AHS-funded program for "slow-stream" neurorehabilitation at ARBI allows 6-months. ARBI's history in supporting this journey surpasses the 6-month limitation through the use of volunteers and donor support.

ARBI remains deeply committed to supporting individuals and families as a lifelong partner in the recovery journey beyond the initial neurorehabilitation stage. Our focus in the coming years will remain on expanding programming and addressing the gaps to increase services for family and natural supports. **TO ACHIEVE THIS, WE WILL:**

- Seek cost-effective ways to continue support services through small-group programming
- Increase program scope by addressing gaps—increased support for families and caregivers through stable funding contracts
- Evolve services to address ongoing recovery needs, social inclusion, and community engagement.



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Hassan experienced a severe TBI from an accident on the job as a truck driver. In a coma for 6-months, he came to ARBI 15 months after his accident with a goal to sit up independently. **Three years after the accident, Hassan walked again**, thanks to his incredible perseverance, the dedicated team at ARBI and the support of WCB.

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## Collaborating Strategically to Influence Systemic Change

Most are likely familiar with the phrase, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” This African proverb provides wise words that remind us of the power of working together. This is the fundamental principle behind collaborating strategically as we aim to achieve more and go farther together.

Influencing systemic change will require long-term commitment, and intentional strategic partnerships through ii) agreements that support our goals and committing to a iii) collaborative leadership role in the sector. As we strive to influence change, we are reminded of the famous quote attributed to John F. Kennedy, “A rising tide lifts all boats” and we are committed to sharing the load and doing our part to affect change.

### TO ACHIEVE THIS, WE WILL:

- Engage in partnerships that will support systemic change
- Support and/or take on leadership roles elevating sector collaboration

## Influencing Change for people impacted by ABI

ARBI’s mission has remained steadfast over the years, to transform the lives of people impacted by acquired brain injury. Each year we strive to support as many people as we can, within the limits of our funding and fundraising, but we know the need goes beyond ARBI’s scope of service. Housing and home care, transportation, and social/leisure activities are the most frequently mentioned areas of support needed to live a better life after brain injury.

### TO ACHIEVE THIS, WE WILL:

- Seek to partner with government to create and implement an ABI Strategy for Alberta
- Explore opportunities for ARBI to engage in partnerships with research universities
- Establish ARBI as a trusted advisor regarding ABI rehabilitation

## Measuring Our Success

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ARBI will monitor progress toward achieving its strategic goals and objectives through regular data collection, analysis, and reporting.



Key performance indicators (KPIs) will help measure how we are fairing against what we set out to do and measure the impact of that work.



The strategic plan is dynamic and will be reviewed and adjusted annually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

## Acknowledgments

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*We thank the staff, board of directors, and all the clients and caregivers who participated in several surveys and focus groups throughout 2023. Thank you as well to the teams at Vera Causa, Impact8 Inc., and Avista Philanthropy that contributed to ARBI's organizational review. Our gratitude to ARBI's major funders, the Ministry of Seniors, Community, and Social Services, the City of Calgary, Family and Community Support Services, and the many donors and supporters who make ARBI's work possible. Thank you for believing in what we do and making the 'impossible' become possible.*



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