OUTWARD BOUND CANADA

Outward Bound. Inward Change.



Outward Bound Canada Strategic Plan 2027-2030



EMPOWERING YOUTH TO LEAD THE WAY

The Outward Bound movement officially began in 1941 with a pioneering month-long training course founded by Kurt Hahn and Lawrence Holt. Inspired by an earlier outdoor program led by Hahn's colleague Marina Ewald, the course helped young people build resilience, leadership and character through challenging, authentic experiences in nature. It sparked a global movement that continues to inspire us more than 85 years later.

Today, as climate anxiety, declining mental health, excessive screen time, and global uncertainty weigh heavily on our youth, Outward Bound Canada's programs are more relevant than ever.

Outward Bound Canada (OBC) is at a pivotal moment in its history. Following a period of significant operational restructuring, financial discipline, and mission preservation, we are well positioned to harness the power of philanthropy, innovation, and collaboration to expand our impact and transform the lives of more young people through outdoor education.

Our strategic priorities share one common purpose: to empower youth to discover their strengths, build resilience, and realize their full potential. Like the young people we serve, our organization will continue to learn, adapt, and grow as the needs of youth and the outdoor education sector evolve. We are committed to regularly reviewing our priorities, refining our approach and maximizing our impact for young people across Canada.

None of this work would be possible without the enduring generosity, compassion, and commitment of our volunteers, donors, partners and supporters, or the dedication of our talented staff who bring our mission to life every day. **Thank you for being part of this journey and for helping empower the next generation of leaders.**



THE EVER-EVOLVING LANDSCAPE

We are operating in a time of ongoing change, complexity, and uncertainty. As we look to the future, several key forces are shaping the lives of children, youth, and families, as well as the systems in which we work.



Greater Diversity

Increasing cultural, gender, linguistic, and lived experience diversity is reshaping the communities we serve. Canada has a rapidly growing newcomer population that is increasingly seeking belonging and connection to the land.



Complexity of Needs

Children and youth are navigating more layered and interconnected needs, including mental wellbeing and identity. Rising anxiety, isolation, screen dependence, and climate anxiety are influencing how supports are delivered.



Economic Vulnerability

Many families are experiencing greater financial strain and instability. At a systems level, schools are seeking cost-effective whole-child learning outcomes, and the charitable sector is under increasing pressure from growing demand.

OBC'S INTERNAL REALITY

OBC has a powerful mission and a trusted legacy brand with recognized outdoor education expertise within the sector. The outcomes of our programs have a proven impact in building resilience, leadership, and social-emotional development, which are highly relevant today.

However, there is limited awareness of OBC outside the sector, which has resulted in uneven market penetration in provinces outside of Ontario. OBC is also navigating cash constraints brought on by a debt burden that stems from a challenging COVID recovery. OBC needs stronger operational systems, a financial model that is adaptable to today's changing environment, and a broader reach.

Canada is facing rising youth anxiety, disconnection from nature, social fragmentation, newcomer integration needs, and a growing demand for experiential learning within the school system. OBC is well positioned to respond.

Looking ahead, Outward Bound Canada has identified three strategic priorities that will sharpen our focus, strengthen our financial sustainability, deepen our partnerships, and expand our impact on young people. Together, they provide a clear roadmap for the years ahead and reflect our commitment to building a stronger, more resilient organization. As we put this plan into action, we will measure our progress, learn from our experiences, adapt as needed, and continue listening to our community. Because when we work together, we can create more opportunities for young people to discover their strengths, build resilience, and realize their full potential.

THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Vision

- We envision a Canada where all youth have access to high-quality, impactful outdoor education experiences that help them realize their potential.

Mission

- We are a vocal champion for outdoor learning and Canada’s leading provider of transformative outdoor education experiences, expanding access for young people facing barriers to participation.

2030 Strategic Ambition

- A financially healthy organization with the reserves to grow and boldly innovate.
- More than 10,000 youth served annually.
- National recognition as Canada’s leading youth outdoor education organization.
- Regional outdoor learning hubs in Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia.
- Corporate, non-profit, and government partnerships that expand youth access to outdoor learning.



OVERVIEW

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	DRIVERS	INITIATIVES
Increase revenue and financial sustainability	Grow Philanthropic Revenue	• Create a network of corporate partners • Establish BC and AB regional hubs • Grow OBC's alumni community
	Increasing Earned Revenue	• Expand corporate leadership and executive development "premium" programs • Create a national training and certification platform • Develop innovative urban programs for new audiences
	Build a Resilient Business Model	• Flexible organizational structure • Regional hubs are year round centres of excellence • Invest in internal staff development
Develop and scale programs to maximize youth impact	Delivering High School Credit Programs	• Expand academic credit options • Model Toronto program in Calgary and Vancouver • Develop a consistent continuum of outdoor learning
	Establish Funded Wilderness Programs	• Grow Indigenous partnerships • Scale workforce training • Increase funded access to outdoor journeys
Be a leading voice for outdoor education in Canada	Build National Awareness	• Launch national awareness campaigns • Strengthen OBC's brand • Build strategic partnerships with youth-serving organizations
	Strengthen Government Advocacy	• Advocate for increased government investment • Position OBC as a trusted advisor to government • Join strategic industry coalitions

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1



Increase revenue and financial sustainability

To achieve long-term financial sustainability, OBC will build a diversified and resilient revenue model that balances philanthropy, earned revenue, and strategic partnerships, while strengthening financial reserves and aligning investments with mission impact. Through disciplined financial stewardship, innovative revenue generation, and an adaptable operating model, OBC will ensure it has the resources to expand access and maximize outcomes for young people.

Strategic Priority 1 represents a shift from simply raising more money to building a sustainable enterprise, reflecting OBC's evolution toward a social enterprise model. Financial sustainability is not an end in itself, but rather the foundation that enables OBC to increase access to transformational outdoor education and achieve greater impact for youth.

Drivers

Grow Philanthropic Revenue

Philanthropy will become a cornerstone of OBC's financial model, enabling the organization to expand access, invest in innovation, and reduce reliance on cyclical funding sources. By 2030, philanthropic revenue will represent 50% of OBC's total revenue, creating a strong foundation for long-term growth and impact. Key initiatives include:

1. Launch a national corporate partnerships and sponsorship program that supports wilderness journeys, urban programming, and signature events.
2. Build transformational partnerships with foundations to support regional hubs in British Columbia and Alberta.
3. Grow an engaged national alumni community that fosters a lifelong culture of giving through meaningful outreach, events, programs and volunteer opportunities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Increase revenue and financial sustainability

Drivers

Increasing Earned Revenue

Earned revenue will provide a sustainable source of unrestricted funding while extending OBC's expertise to new audiences. By strengthening existing programs and developing new market opportunities, OBC will create revenue streams that directly support its charitable mission. To achieve this, we will:

- Expand corporate leadership and executive development programs that leverage OBC's expertise in experiential learning, leadership, and team development.
- Transform the Training Academy into a nationally recognized training and certification platform for educators, outdoor leaders, and partner organizations.
- Develop innovative urban programs that engage new audiences and generate sustainable, year-round revenue.



Building a Resilient Business Model

A resilient operating model will enable OBC to respond effectively to changing economic conditions while maximizing operational efficiency and year-round program delivery. By integrating operations, investing in people, and maintaining financial discipline, OBC will strengthen organizational capacity and long-term sustainability. This work will be supported through the following initiatives:

1. Design a flexible organizational structure that scales with demand, aligns resources with strategic priorities, and adapts quickly to changes in funding and operating conditions.
2. Integrate regional urban and wilderness operations into year-round centres of excellence that improve program delivery, operational efficiency, and the participant experience.
3. Invest in leadership development, succession planning, financial literacy, and organizational capability to build a high-performing culture and strengthen long-term organizational resilience.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Increase revenue and financial sustainability

Enablers

Financial stability requires ongoing focus and a high degree of adaptability. This will be achieved by incorporating the following elements on an ongoing basis:

- Annual capacity-based sales planning
- Pricing reviews and profitability reporting every season
- Rigorous expense management
- A robust alumni database
- Sophisticated marketing and pitch deck materials
- Corporate leadership curriculum
- A robust sales pipeline

Performance Indicators

- Five corporate sponsorship partners and two multi-year foundation partnerships secured.
- Two-month operating reserve by 2029.
- Working capital ratio of 1.0 by the end of 2028.
- Accounts payable (AP) within net 60 by the end of 2027.
- Revenue mix goal:

SOURCE	2026	2030
Philanthropy	30%	50%
Earend Revenue	30%	30%
Government	40%	20%



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Develop and scale programs to maximize youth impact

Increase equitable access to transformational outdoor education by creating robust pathways that guide youth from introductory experiences to immersive outdoor journeys. By establishing regional program hubs near large population centres and developing innovative, high-impact programs that attract strategic investment from leading funders, Outward Bound Canada will expand its reach, deepen participant outcomes, and empower more young people with the resilience, leadership, confidence, and environmental stewardship needed to thrive.

Strategic Priority 2 represents more than program growth. It reflects OBC's commitment to expanding equitable access to transformational outdoor education while creating a seamless continuum of learning that enables more young people to develop resilience, leadership, confidence, and environmental stewardship.

Drivers

Delivering High School Credit Programs

Urban learning hubs provide an accessible entry point into outdoor education, creating pathways that engage more youth and prepare them for progressively more immersive experiences. Delivering high school credit programs differentiates Outward Bound Canada, strengthens educational outcomes, and positions the organization as a preferred partner for schools, governments, and major funders. Key initiatives include:

1. Expand academic credit options with delivery in British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario.
2. Launch regional outdoor learning hubs in Calgary and Vancouver, modelled on the successful Toronto program, and engage with equity-deserving communities communities and populations to expand access.
3. Develop a nationally consistent continuum of outdoor learning that enables youth to progress from introductory urban experiences, skill development, school credit and personal growth to immersive experiences in nature,, outdoor journeys, leadership development, and career-focused programming. This continuum will meet young people where they are and foster authentic adventure, regardless of setting.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Develop and scale programs to maximize youth impact

Drivers

Establish Funded Wilderness Programs

Outdoor journeys remain the cornerstone of the Outward Bound Canada experience, delivering profound and lasting outcomes in resilience, leadership, wellbeing, and connection to nature. To ensure these transformative experiences remain accessible regardless of financial circumstance, OBC will establish diversified, long-term funding models that remove barriers to participation and support program growth. Key initiatives include:

1. Grow Indigenous outreach and partnerships to co-create culturally relevant programming while leveraging government and private funding.
2. Scale workforce training and foundational skills development through strategic government and corporate funding.
3. Leverage private and individual funding to increase access to outdoor journeys focused on wellbeing, resilience, and leadership development.

Together, these priorities position OBC not only as a leader in outdoor education, but also as a national innovator in expanding access for young people. By creating a scalable continuum of outdoor learning, OBC will support participants throughout their journeys, from their first outdoor experience to advanced leadership and career development opportunities.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Develop and scale programs to maximize youth impact

Enablers

Scaling access and demonstrating program impact require streamlined technologies and a seamless customer experience. This work will be supported by:

- Admissions technology to facilitate accessible registration for urban programs.
- A registrar structure that supports high school credit credentialing.
- Strong evaluation methodologies and outcome measurement frameworks that can be integrated into all programs, regardless of location.
- Internal capacity and expertise to deliver and accredit high school credits.
- Scaffolded program development supported by curriculum and resources.
- Survey data collected from all programs with data that is disaggregated across various identities and demographics.

Performance Indicators

- 50% of outdoor journey participants receive financial support through grants and donations.
- Three regional learning hubs established by 2028.
- 70% of participants connected to a regional hub by 2029.
- 50% of participants by 2030 will identify as equity-seeking.

YEAR	YOUTH SERVED
2026	5,000
2027	6,500
2028	8,000
2029	9,500
2030	11,000

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3



Be a leading voice for outdoor education in Canada

Outward Bound Canada will strengthen its position as the national leader and trusted voice for outdoor education by building strategic partnerships, increasing public awareness, and advancing policies that expand access for all youth. Through collaboration with governments, education systems, and the broader outdoor sector, OBC will help shape the future of outdoor education, influence public investment, and ensure more young people benefit from transformative experiences in nature.

Strategic Priority 3 positions OBC as the national catalyst advancing outdoor education across Canada. It reflects an evolution from delivering programs alone to influencing systems, shaping public policy, and building a movement that enables many more young people to benefit from outdoor learning.

Drivers

Build National Awareness

To inspire greater participation, influence public perception, and increase investment, OBC will increase national awareness of the transformative power of outdoor education and establish itself as Canada's leading voice on youth development through nature-based learning. This will be achieved through the following initiatives:

- Launch national awareness campaigns that showcase the impact of outdoor education on youth wellbeing, resilience, leadership, and environmental stewardship, supported by compelling evidence and research.
- Strengthen OBC's national brand through storytelling, research, media engagement, and thought leadership.
- Build strategic partnerships with youth-serving organizations that amplify OBC's mission and share its focus on outdoor education, environmental stewardship, and positive youth development.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Be a leading voice for outdoor education in Canada

Drivers

Strengthen Government Advocacy

OBC will influence public policy and investment to make outdoor education an essential component of youth development and education across Canada. By strengthening relationships with all levels of government, OBC will advocate for sustainable funding, equitable access, and policies that recognize outdoor learning as a critical contributor to healthy, resilient communities. Key initiatives include:

- Advocate for increased government investment in outdoor education, youth wellbeing, environmental education, and workforce development.
- Position OBC as a trusted advisor to governments by contributing research, policy recommendations, and evidence that demonstrate the long-term social, educational, and economic benefits of outdoor education.
- Join strategic industry coalitions and trade associations to grow the collective voice of the sector and build momentum behind government support.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Be a leading voice for outdoor education in Canada

Enablers

- Strategic marketing leadership with expertise in creating impactful national campaigns.
- A research committee that engages appropriate partners to demonstrate key outcomes.
- Identify key market segments with associated audience profiles.
- An active government relations committee with relevant expertise and established government relationships.
- Internal expertise in government advocacy.
- Events, activations, and Reach Beyond Expeditions.
- A strong engagement funnel supported by marketing infrastructure, including the website and CRM dashboards.
- Integrated AI tools to improve the customer experience and manage alumni communications.
- Board member with expertise in PR and Government Relations.



Performance Indicators

- Unaided awareness increased 10% year over year.
- Website traffic doubled by 2030.
- Lead conversion increased by 8% year over year.
- 3 national campaigns launched.
- 3 national partnerships by 2029.
- Qualified inquiries and program bookings increase by 5% year over year.
- Substantive media features, interviews, speaking invitations and citations of OBC research or evidence. Target for 4 per year.
- At least one active partnership each year with youth-serving organizations that produce a defined joint result, such as a campaign, referral pathway, research product, policy position or expanded access to programs.
- Priority ministries or agencies with sustained engagement and a concrete next step: a working group, request for advice, co-designed pilot, formal partnership or funding opportunity.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION MAP

2027

Priority on operational stability & increased revenue

- Grow board fundraising cabinet
- Launch nationally Case for Support
- Launch transformational gift strategy
- Launch corporate sponsorship program
- Develop annual pricing strategy and program profitability reports
- Implement monthly dashboards
- Start new program innovation: urban programs and Training Academy platform
- Launch organizational redesign
- Calgary regional hub established
- Participant funding policy
- Registrar model implemented
- Ontario Ministry of Education strategy
- Director of Development hired

2028

Priority on building systems and infrastructure to fuel growth

- Alumni engagement and giving strategy
- Leadership succession: CFO & COO hired
- National awareness campaign launched
- Vancouver regional hub established
- BC academic credit delivered
- Trusted partner for school delivery in ON
- National consistent continuum of learning created
- Indigenous partnerships & outreach strategy
- Workforce development pathway expanded with diversified funding streams
- National communications strategy and refreshed brand messaging
- Content development strategy to support story telling campaign
- Research partnership established
- Mid level & planned giving portfolio established
- Training Academy platform launched
- Internal expertise for government relations hired
- Reserve policy adopted

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION MAP

2029

Priority on scaling impact and access

- National corporate sponsorship program
- CMO hired
- Federal advocacy strategy
- Corporate leadership program
- Three urban hubs at scale
- Alberta academic credit
- Evaluation framework operational
- Provincial government engagement: education & tourism ministries
- Automated integrations for customer experience
- Donor funded wilderness scholarships
- Admissions technology implemented
- Whitepaper/position paper release

2030

Priority on influencing sector, policy and systems

- Reserve fund established
- 10,000+ youth served
- Indigenous partners with long-term funding
- Government advisory meetings
- Host outdoor educational summit
- Longitudinal outcomes research published - national research hub
- Expanded adult programming to generate revenue
- National awards and recognition within sector and partners



ONGOING OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

- Succession planning
- Board Development
- Financial Oversight
- Policy review
- Process improvement
- Capacity planning
- Pricing reviews
- Budget discipline
- Risk management systems
- Staff development and retention
- Leadership development
- Culture & engagement
- Impact measurement



OBC'S MISSION HAS NEVER BEEN MORE RELEVANT.

With disciplined execution, stronger systems, and courageous growth, Outward Bound Canada can become one of the country's most important youth development organizations while remaining rooted in **transformational outdoor experience**.

OUTWARD BOUND CANADA

