Alberta Government

Information
Sharing Toolkit

FOR SOCIAL-BASED SERVICE DESIGN AND DELIVERY

February 2018

This guide was developed in partnership with the Information Sharing Strategy participating ministries: Children's Services, Community and Social Services, Education, Health, Justice and Solicitor General, Seniors and Housing, and Service Alberta.

It is not intended to provide legal advice and is not to be used as a substitute for legal advice. If there is any doubt about the proper application or interpretation of the relevant privacy legislation please review the provisions, or consult with your privacy coordinator or legal counsel.

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Introduction

The Alberta government is committed to working more effectively and collaboratively with social-based service delivery organizations to ensure a holistic approach is used to enable better outcomes when providing services to Albertans and their families.

Working together to achieve better outcomes also requires a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the various organizations, based on an analysis of what is required to support a collaborative or integrated approach.

Designing and implementing a coordinated or integrated social-based program or service means developing policies and emerging practices that take into consideration the need for authorized information sharing between organizations in a manner that continues to respect the privacy and security requirements set in legislation.

Who should use these resources?

This *Information Sharing Toolkit for Social-based Service Design and Delivery* contains resources such as themed frequently asked questions and checklists and complements the *Information Sharing Guide for Social-based Service Design and Delivery*. These two documents provide resources to help reduce the complexity that arises when applying different privacy legislation while planning and designing social-based services and programs.

This toolkit is designed to support decision-makers and frontline service delivery staff within government organizations, health care organizations, contracted service provider agencies and other community agencies.

Note: The term 'Service Provider' is defined more narrowly under the *Children First Act*.

Information Sharing Approach – Template

The Information Sharing Approach consists of seven elements, all of which must be addressed when a program or service is being planned and designed.

Working together to build and implement a program or service that applies an information sharing lens promotes due diligence, accountability and transparency. This allows the best possible decisions to be made to support Albertans' health, education and safety, which in turn helps them achieve better outcomes.

Refer to the *Information Sharing Guide for Social-Based Service Design and Delivery* and use the following template when designing a collaborative, coordinated or integrated program or service.

Setting the Direction › Legislation › Governance › Risk Management › Program Controls › Performance › Beyond Implementation

Information Sharing Approach – Template		
Work through the seven elements to understand the information sharing environment and requirements that will effectively support ongoing service design and delivery.		
Approach Elements	**Information Considerations**	**Information Sharing Best Practices**
Setting the Direction • **Vision** • **Principles** • **Purpose** • **Outcomes**	Who needs to be involved in developing the program or service? How will partner organizations work together? Have you considered a performance management process? Has the Alberta government's information sharing vision and principles been adopted? Does the purpose of the program or service align with and support the Alberta government's information sharing vision and principles? What outcomes will the program or service achieve? Do the outcomes align with the vision, principles and purpose? How will partner organizations know when outcomes are realized?	Align the purpose of the service with the information sharing vision and principles. This will guide the organizations in working together.

Information Sharing Approach – Template		
Work through the seven elements to understand the information sharing environment and requirements that will effectively support ongoing service design and delivery.		
Approach Elements	**Information Considerations**	**Information Sharing Best Practices**
Setting the Direction **Drafting Notes:**		
Legislation	Which privacy legislation applies to each partner organization? What legal authority will support the flow of information?	Complete a comprehensive legal analysis throughout the development process to address information consideration questions.
Legislation Drafting Notes:		

Information Sharing Approach – Template

Work through the seven elements to understand the information sharing environment and requirements that will effectively support ongoing service design and delivery.

Approach Elements	Information Considerations	Information Sharing Best Practices
Governance	Who are the decision-makers and subject matter experts (SMEs) that can contribute to the development of the program or service? Who is in a position and has the authority to make the necessary decisions for each organization? Are partner organizations clear about their representatives' roles and responsibilities? Are partners clear about their organization's responsibilities? Do the governance mandate, structure and tools support efficient work flow and decision-making? Is there a process for resolving conflict?	Establish a governance structure to provide a process for decision-making, policy approval and implementation. Demonstrate accountability and transparency through clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Ensure partner organizations are represented by individuals with delegated authority to make decisions that will advance the work. Subject matter expertise must come from an information privacy, security and management perspective. Use tools such as terms of reference, protocols, approaches or agreements to support governance.
Governance Drafting Notes:		

Information Sharing Approach – Template		
Work through the seven elements to understand the information sharing environment and requirements that will effectively support ongoing service design and delivery.		
Approach Elements	**Information Considerations**	**Information Sharing Best Practices**
Risk Management	How does an Albertan benefit when information is shared appropriately and effectively? How do the partner organizations benefit when information is shared appropriately and effectively? What can jeopardize an Albertan's personal or health information when it is collected used and disclosed within and between organizations? Does the governance for the program or service address risk mitigation and management? What are the most effective practices to allow partners to take controlled and considered measures to share information appropriately within and between organizations? Have health and safety issues been considered and assessed? Can they be mitigated by sharing personal and health information?	Manage risk in a way that is shared and supported by all partners. Ensure a process is in place to regularly review and evaluate information sharing initiatives. Address and support risk management through governance and policy controls. This strengthens accountability. Have a team of subject matter experts complete Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs). Subject matter experts should include privacy, security, legal, program and information technology. When a PIA is completed for an Information Sharing Approach that supports service design and delivery, one overarching PIA is submitted. **Note:** If the program or service will require the collection, use or disclosure of an individual's health information, the HIA stipulates that a PIA must be completed and submitted to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner prior to implementation. See **Privacy Impact Assessment** entry in Common Terms for more information.

Information Sharing Approach – Template

Work through the seven elements to understand the information sharing environment and requirements that will effectively support ongoing service design and delivery.

Approach Elements	Information Considerations	Information Sharing Best Practices
Risk Management Drafting Notes:		
Program Controls	Do information sharing policies address key privacy, confidentiality and security practices including: • the authority to collect, use, disclose and retain information; • providing notification; • using consent to disclose (where required); • returning an individual's personal or health information through informal or formal channels; • establishing information security controls (technical, physical, administrative); and • offering competency-based training? Do information sharing policies, procedures and practices: • comply with relevant legislation; • support collaborative, coordinated or integrated	Align information policies, procedures and practices across the partner organizations. Align training requirements and ensure they are supported across partner organizations.

Information Sharing Approach – Template		
Work through the seven elements to understand the information sharing environment and requirements that will effectively support ongoing service design and delivery.		
Approach Elements	**Information Considerations**	**Information Sharing Best Practices**
	service delivery and ensure the service meets its targeted goals, objectives and outcomes; • align across partner organizations?	
Program Controls Drafting Notes:		
Performance	Does the performance management plan for the program or service include performance goals, indicators and reporting standards that address information sharing and facilitate ongoing quality assurance? Will the plan help partners manage and improve information sharing governance and accountability, policies, practices, processes and systems?	Ensure shared performance measurements point to measurable outcomes.

Information Sharing Approach – Template		
Work through the seven elements to understand the information sharing environment and requirements that will effectively support ongoing service design and delivery.		
Approach Elements	**Information Considerations**	**Information Sharing Best Practices**
Performance Drafting Notes:		
Beyond Implementation	Is there a change management plan to help operationalize and sustain information sharing that supports program or service delivery? Is there a communication plan with tools and messaging to build awareness and understanding of information sharing, while supporting issues and change management? Will employees need education or training to understand how to share information appropriately? If so, what is needed? Are there any processes to increase information use and manage knowledge? Have succession management and knowledge transfer programs been established?	Develop governance plans that establish leadership, oversight and monitoring. Improve decision-making by allowing access to knowledge and collective expertise. Ensure that knowledge management and knowledge mobilization practices support all partner organizations. Have processes and activities in place to disseminate knowledge to the right people at the right time.

Information Sharing Approach – Template		
Work through the seven elements to understand the information sharing environment and requirements that will effectively support ongoing service design and delivery.		
Approach Elements	**Information Considerations**	**Information Sharing Best Practices**
Beyond Implementation Drafting Notes:		

Information Sharing FAQ

What is the Information Sharing Strategy?	The Government of Alberta's (GoA) Information Sharing Strategy is grounded in the vision: "information sharing practices will improve service delivery to Albertans through increased collaboration across the GoA and service delivery partners."
Why is information sharing important?	Albertans often see Government as one entity that should and does share their personal and health information where and when needed to enable them to receive programs, services and benefits. They have shared that they want Government to operate seamlessly and that they only want to tell their story once.
	By appropriately sharing an Albertan's personal and health information, partnering organizations can ensure individuals and families receive the services they require, in a more holistic manner. Decisions can be made by fully considering an Albertan's needs and the opportunities available to meet those needs.
	There are legitimate limits on sharing information, particularly around issues involving children, violence, abuse, criminal matters and health. Despite this sensitivity, much of this information can and should be shared to ensure the best decisions are made and Albertans are supported as fully as possible.
Why has the Alberta government developed the *Information Sharing Guide for Social-based Service Design and Delivery* and companion toolkit for partner organizations?	Cross-ministry and cross-organizational initiatives are a key part of the integrated approach the Alberta government is taking to service design.
	Information sharing is foundational to the successful design and delivery of integrated programs and services to Albertans.
	Together, the guide and toolkit aim to reduce the complexity that arises when applying different privacy legislation within the social-based services environment.
What is the Information Sharing Approach to Social-Based Service Design and Delivery?	The Information Sharing Approach consists of seven key elements and a template that partnering organizations can work through when designing a collaborative, coordinated or integrated program or service.
	It is meant to assist partnering service provider organizations in understanding when an individual's information can be shared to provide coordinated or collaborative service delivery, while respecting an Albertan's access and privacy rights.

Who does the Information Sharing Guide apply to?	The guide is intended for subject matter experts including privacy specialists, legal advisors, program and policy advisors, and decision-makers from partnering organizations.
	The guide applies to the decision-makers within government programs and services, health care organizations, contracted service provider agencies and other community agencies.
	These organizations may work together to provide collaborative, coordinated or integrated service delivery to ensure Albertans receive preventative and responsive supports that meet their needs over time.
	Note: The term 'Service Provider' is defined more narrowly under the *Children First Act.*
Where can I learn more about information sharing?	Visit infosharing.alberta.ca to learn more about the Alberta government's Information Sharing Strategy.
	Take online training and access resources to manage and share health and personal information effectively.
Where can I learn more about Alberta's information and privacy legislation?	Learn more about the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* that governs public bodies at servicealberta.ca/foip.
	To find out about the *Health Information Act* that governs custodians, go to health.alberta.ca/about/Health-Information-Act.html.
	Get a better understanding of the *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA) that applies to provincial private sector organizations, businesses, and in some cases, non-profit organizations by visiting servicealberta.ca/pipa-overview.cfm.
Where can I find out about information sharing that supports planning and providing services for children?	Go to infosharing.alberta.ca to find out how the *Children First Act* supports information sharing.
	Take the online Information Sharing Under the *Children First Act* e-Learning and access resources to understand how to share information appropriately when planning and providing services for children.
What if I am working with a partner organization that is uncertain about their authority to share a client's personal information?	Each organization must understand their roles and responsibilities under privacy and program legislation.
	Refer to the Critical Considerations document on page thirteen of this toolkit for guidance.

Information Sharing Critical Considerations

Critical questions
Service providers should ask themselves the following questions to assist in the decision-making process

What legislation applies to me?
Each service provider may be subject to different legislation. A service provider who is under contract with the government must look at its contract to determine its authority and responsibilities.

What authority do I have?
Determining your legal authority to collect, use, or disclose information is always the first consideration.
That legal authority may be extended through a contract to service providers.

Collection	Use	Disclosure	Consent for Disclosure
Do I have authority to collect information? Do I have authority for indirect collection of information? Does the notification statement state that information will be shared with various service providers to collaborate, coordinate and plan programs and services?	Do I have authority to use the information collected to collaborate, coordinate and plan programs and services?	Do I have authority to share information to support collaboration and coordination of services and planning without consent? If there is no authority to disclose, do I really need to disclose the information to achieve the purpose? Can I disclose non-identifying information?	If identifying information is required and I do not have authority to disclose without consent, can I obtain consent from the individual?

What is the minimum amount of information necessary?
Even if I have legislative authority or consent, am I only disclosing information that is necessary to enable the service providers to carry out the purpose in a reasonable manner?
When a custodian as defined in the *Health Information Act* intends to collect, use or disclose health information, the custodian must consider in relation to the specific purpose of the collection, use or disclosure:

- first, whether aggregate information is adequate for the purpose;
- second, if aggregate information is not adequate, whether non-identifying health information will suffice; and
- third, if neither is adequate, only then may the custodian collect, use or disclose identifying health information.

Further, custodians must consider any expressed wishes of the individual who is the subject of the information before health information is disclosed.

When is notification needed?
Providing notification is a legal requirement under Alberta's privacy laws.
Whenever you intend to collect an individual's personal or health information within your own organization or share with partner organizations, you must inform the individual before you collect their information. Doing so:

- recognizes the individual's right to know and understand why their personal or health information is being collected and shared, and who to contact if they have questions;
- facilitates partners coordinating multiple programs and services to meet the individual's needs; and
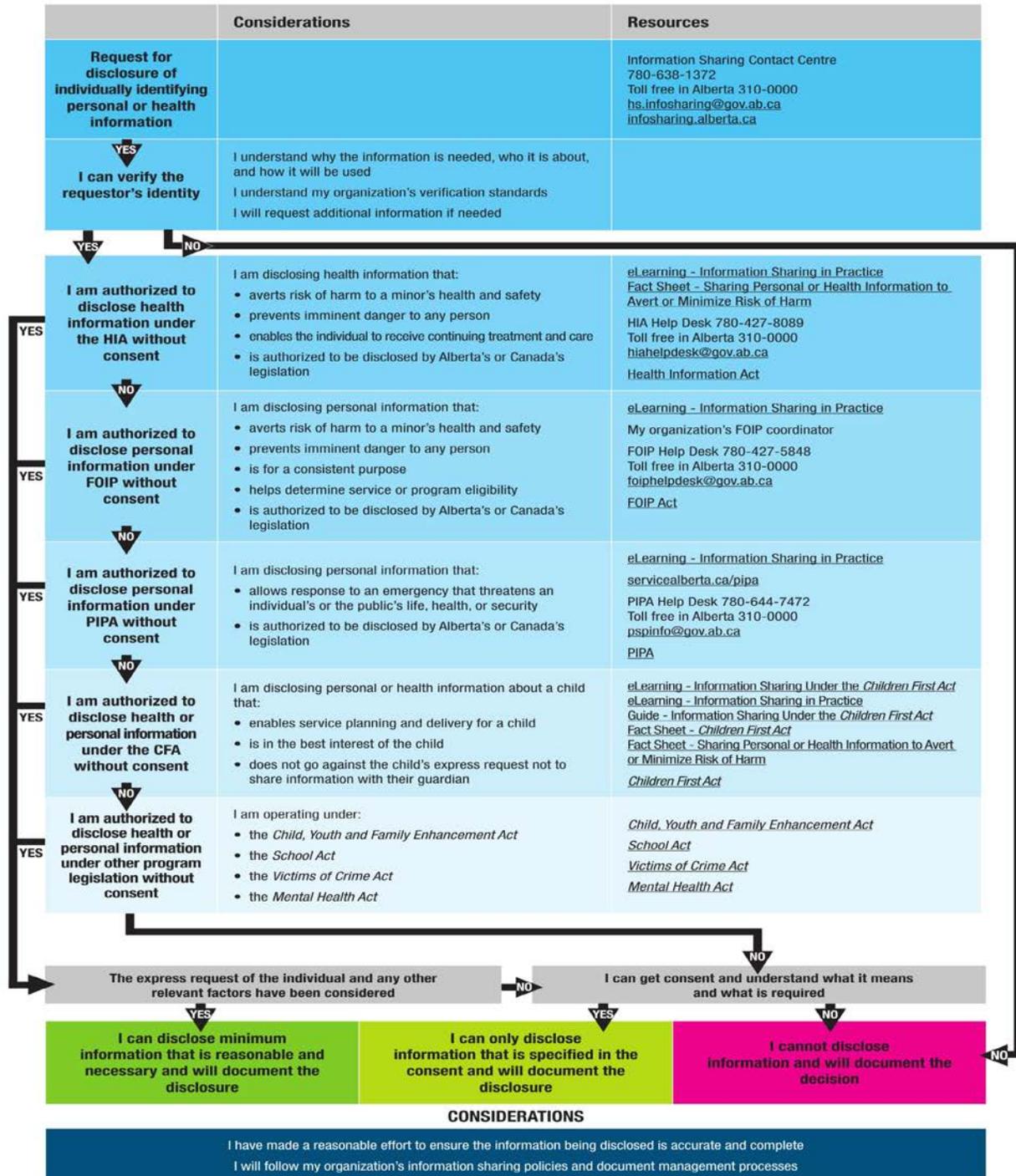- supports accountability and transparency.

Disclosure Decision Tree

Information Sharing Decision Tree — Alberta

Information SHARING

For disclosure under the *Health Information Act* (HIA), *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP), *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA) and *Children First Act* (CFA).

	Considerations	Resources
Request for disclosure of individually identifying personal or health information		Information Sharing Contact Centre 780-638-1372 Toll free in Alberta 310-0000 hs.infosharing@gov.ab.ca infosharing.alberta.ca
YES → **I can verify the requestor's identity**	I understand why the information is needed, who it is about, and how it will be used I understand my organization's verification standards I will request additional information if needed	

YES / NO

	Considerations	Resources
YES — **I am authorized to disclose health information under the HIA without consent**	I am disclosing health information that: • averts risk of harm to a minor's health and safety • prevents imminent danger to any person • enables the individual to receive continuing treatment and care • is authorized to be disclosed by Alberta's or Canada's legislation	eLearning - Information Sharing in Practice Fact Sheet - Sharing Personal or Health Information to Avert or Minimize Risk of Harm HIA Help Desk 780-427-8089 Toll free in Alberta 310-0000 hiahelpdesk@gov.ab.ca Health Information Act
NO — YES — **I am authorized to disclose personal information under FOIP without consent**	I am disclosing personal information that: • averts risk of harm to a minor's health and safety • prevents imminent danger to any person • is for a consistent purpose • helps determine service or program eligibility • is authorized to be disclosed by Alberta's or Canada's legislation	eLearning - Information Sharing in Practice My organization's FOIP coordinator FOIP Help Desk 780-427-5848 Toll free in Alberta 310-0000 foiphelpdesk@gov.ab.ca FOIP Act
NO — YES — **I am authorized to disclose personal information under PIPA without consent**	I am disclosing personal information that: • allows response to an emergency that threatens an individual's or the public's life, health, or security • is authorized to be disclosed by Alberta's or Canada's legislation	eLearning - Information Sharing in Practice servicealberta.ca/pipa PIPA Help Desk 780-644-7472 Toll free in Alberta 310-0000 pspinfo@gov.ab.ca PIPA
NO — YES — **I am authorized to disclose health or personal information under the CFA without consent**	I am disclosing personal or health information about a child that: • enables service planning and delivery for a child • is in the best interest of the child • does not go against the child's express request not to share information with their guardian	eLearning - Information Sharing Under the *Children First Act* eLearning - Information Sharing in Practice Guide - Information Sharing Under the *Children First Act* Fact Sheet - *Children First Act* Fact Sheet - Sharing Personal or Health Information to Avert or Minimize Risk of Harm *Children First Act*
NO — YES — **I am authorized to disclose health or personal information under other program legislation without consent**	I am operating under: • the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* • the *School Act* • the *Victims of Crime Act* • the *Mental Health Act*	*Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* *School Act* *Victims of Crime Act* *Mental Health Act*

The express request of the individual and any other relevant factors have been considered — NO → **I can get consent and understand what it means and what is required**

YES ↓ | YES ↓ | NO ↓

| **I can disclose minimum information that is reasonable and necessary and will document the disclosure** | **I can only disclose information that is specified in the consent and will document the disclosure** | **I cannot disclose information and will document the decision** |

NO ↗

CONSIDERATIONS

I have made a reasonable effort to ensure the information being disclosed is accurate and complete
I will follow my organization's information sharing policies and document management processes

Notification FAQ

What is notification?	When organizations subject to privacy legislation collect an individual's personal or health information, they must inform the individual about three key elements: • purpose for collecting and sharing (disclosing) the information; • organization's legal authority to collect and share the information; and • name and contact information for the person in the organization who can answer questions about information collection and use. This is often referred to as 'notice' or 'notification'. **Note:** Within an integrated service delivery context a notification statement must include information about the range of organizations and programs that will require an Albertan's information for the coordination of services. 'Common notification' is an example of such notice.
When is notification needed?	Providing notification is a legal requirement under Alberta's privacy laws. Whenever you intend to collect an individual's personal or health information within your own organization or share with partner organizations, you must inform the individual before you collect their information. Doing so: • recognizes the individual's right to know and understand why their personal or health information is being collected and shared, and who to contact if they have questions; • facilitates partners coordinating multiple programs and services to meet the individual's needs; and • supports accountability and transparency.
How do we provide notification?	You need to develop a consistent notification statement for all your programs, services and/or benefits. It may be provided by: • printing it on a program or service application or intake form • printing it on a separate brochure or page accompanying a form • embedding it an online form or brochure, or as a pop-up window linked to the online form or brochure, and/or • reading it to the individual during a face-to-face meeting or over the phone. **Note**: If you use more than one format, the text of the notification statement must remain the same.

How do we develop a notification statement?	Use plain language that is meaningful for the individual. Start with a brief description of the program, service or benefit they will receive. Then develop a notification statement that clearly explains the: • purpose for collecting and sharing (disclosing) the individual's information; • organization's legal authority to collect and share the information; and • name and contact information for the person in the organization who can answer questions about how the information is collected, used, shared and retained. **Note:** Within an integrated service delivery context, partnering organizations must maintain a list of the programs/services, including the legislation authorizing each program. This is often referred to as an Authority Table, and must be maintained as the document that identifies the legislation supporting the various programs and organizations involved in integrated service delivery.
Do we need to keep a record that notification was provided?	Yes. Keep a copy of the completed notification statement on file, or document how and when the notice was provided verbally.
Do we need to re-state notification?	If you provide an individual with notification during a crisis, you may want to reconnect with them when the situation has stabilized and re-state the notification to ensure they understand why their personal or health information is being collected and shared, and who to contact if they have questions about it. As well, when collecting additional information, whether for a new or the same program or service, it is a good practice to remind the Albertan about the notice.

Notification Statement Requirements

Providing notification is a legal requirement under Alberta's privacy laws. Whenever you intend to collect and share an individual's personal or health information within your organization or with partner organizations, you must inform the individual before you collect their information. Below are the required elements and sample language to use in a notification statement.

Note: Within an integrated service delivery context a notification statement includes information about the range of organizations and programs that will require an Albertan's information for the coordination of services. This is referred to as 'common notification'.

✓	Required Elements	Sample Language
☐	Explain the purpose for collecting and sharing (disclosing) the individual's personal or health information.	Your personal information is being collected to determine your eligibility and support your participation in a number of different programs, benefits, products or services offered in a collaborative manner by the Government of Alberta and service providers involved in providing services. The information you provide will be used and shared in the application process and ongoing assessment, planning and verification of your eligibility if you choose to apply for these programs, benefits, products or services.
☐	Describe the partner organizations' legal authorities for collecting and sharing the individual's personal or health information.	The personal information you provide is collected, used and disclosed under the authority of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP), s. 33 [and various statutes establishing the programs]. Where necessary, your health information is collected under the authority of sections 20(b) and 22(3) of the *Health Information Act* (HIA) as it is directly related to and enables custodians to carry out an authorized purpose(s) under section 27 of the HIA.
☐	Provide the name and contact information for a person who is familiar with the program and can answer questions about how the information is collected, used, shared and retained.	If you have any questions about this collection and use of your information, please contact _[name of contact person]_ at _[business address]_ , _[phone or email address] .

Legal Authority Table – Template

Integrated service (XYZ) – describe purpose including the approach with different service providers working together. You may wish to link back to notification statement. The legal authorities that apply ensure the planning and delivery of services are provided in as seamless process as possible depending on the services that are needed.

Program or Service		Organization	Authorizing Legislation
Housing and Rent Support	What type of housing and rental supports do clients typically access/are assessed for? • Affordable Housing • Seniors Housing Programs • Supportive Housing Programs • Rent Support Program		
Financial support	What type of financial help do clients typically access/are assessed for? • Income Supports • Health Benefits • AISH • Student Aide		
Personal Supports	What type of personal supports do clients typically access/are assessed for? • PDD • FSCD • OPG/OPT • Safety supports • Employment and training supports		
Health Services including Addictions	What types of addiction and health services do clients typically access/are assessed for? • Addictions counseling • Mental health counseling • Rehabilitation services • In-home care • Community medical facilities		

Consent to Disclose FAQ

What is consent to disclose?	Consent to disclose occurs when an individual or legal guardian gives a partner organization in a service delivery environment written permission to share their/ the person under guardianship's personal or health information according to applicable legislation.
	Note: This document refers only to consent for the disclosure of personal and/or health information. It does not recommend changes to the practice of obtaining informed consent to provide treatment or services. Providers with questions related to consent for treatment should reference their standards of practice or organization's policies.
When is consent needed?	Consent is required only when you have no legal authority to disclose an individual's personal and/or health information without consent.
	You should be familiar with the legislation, regulations and policies that govern your programs or services to understand when consent to disclose is needed.
Is it problematic to use consent when it is not needed?	Yes. This puts you at risk if the individual chooses not to provide consent or revokes it mid-stream in program service delivery.
	This may leave you in a difficult situation where you are unable to deliver a required support to the individual.
How does consent to disclose apply to public bodies, such as the Alberta government?	Public bodies are governed by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP Section 40) and often do not require consent to disclose information to provide benefits and services through their programs. When consent to disclose is obtained, they are only permitted to disclose personal information to the extent necessary as outlined.
How does consent to disclose apply to custodians governed by the Health Information Act (HIA)?	Custodians governed under the *Health Information Act* (HIA) have a duty to collect, use or disclose health information with the highest degree of anonymity possible, in a limited manner, and must consider any expressed wishes of the individual (HIA s.57 and 58).
Do we need a form to get written consent?	Yes. Use a consent to disclose form that meets the legislative requirements for all the organizations partnering to provide collaborative, coordinated and/or integrated programs and services. Each partner's logo should be included on this form. The template on the next page shows the elements that need to be included to be compliant with both the HIA and FOIP.

Common Consent to Disclose Form – Template

	CONSENT TO DISCLOSE INDIVIDUALLY IDENTIFYING PERSONAL AND/OR HEALTH INFORMATION	
✓	Authorized by: - *The Health Information Act* (HIA) - *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP Act)	
✓	Client Information:	Full Legal Name:
		Also Known As:
✓	I authorize my individually identifying personal and/or health information related to:	
✓	to be disclosed by: (name of custodian / public body)	
✓	In accordance with: - HIA s.34 - The FOIP Act s.40(1)(d) and section 7(2) of the FOIP Regulation	
✓	to: (name of recipient / role / organization)	
✓	for the following purpose(s) and how the information may be used: (description of the information)	
✓	*I understand why I have been asked to disclose my individually identifying information, and am aware of the risks and benefits of consenting, or refusing to consent, to the disclosure of my individually identifying information. I understand that I may revoke this consent in writing or electronically at any time.*	
✓	Effective Date:	Expiry date under HIA (if any)
✓	Signature of client/authorized representative.*	X
✓	*If you are signing on behalf of the client, the following information must be provided: Print Name of Authorized Representative:_____ Print Source of Representative's Authority (HIA s.104 or FOIP Act s.84(1)	

Health and Safety FAQ

How does information sharing support the safety and wellbeing of Albertans?	Sharing information appropriately results in increased communication and more informed decision-making.
	It allows organizations to share personal or health information for case planning to identify critical supports and services that meet the needs of Albertans and their family or caregivers.
	It enables risks to be managed properly by ensuring organizations are informed about urgent supports an Albertan may require. It also helps identify any health or safety risks the Albertan, staff or others could experience.

Appropriate information sharing must be balanced with an individual's right to privacy.

This balance helps achieve continuity and quality of care, safety, and timely supports to Albertans.
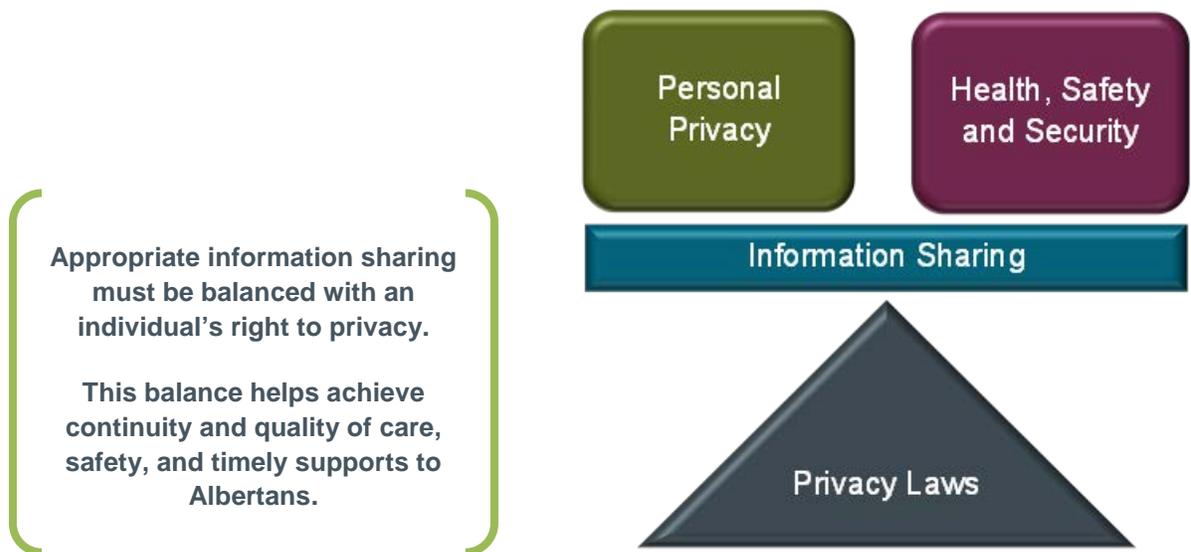
Health and Safety FAQ (continued)

Which legislation supports information sharing to minimize health and safety risks?	Information related to health and safety may be identified as necessary for providing ongoing supports. In these cases, the authority to share information is the same as for other areas of care and wellbeing.
	In cases where disclosure is not required for providing ongoing supports, other provisions may apply, such as:
	Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) - S.40(1)(ee)
	• If the head of a public body reasonably believes disclosure will avert or minimize:
	o risk of harm to the health or safety of a minor; or
	o imminent danger to the health or safety of any person.
	Health Information Act (HIA) – S.35(1)(m)
	• If a custodian reasonably believes disclosure will avert or minimize:
	o risk of harm to the health or safety of a minor; or
	o imminent danger to the health or safety of any person.
	Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) – S.20(1)(g)
	• If the disclosure is necessary to respond to an emergency that threatens the life, health or security of an individual or the public.
	Children First Act (CFA)
	• Changed the test in FOIP and HIA from "imminent danger" to "risk of harm" to a minor.

Risk Management FAQ

What is risk management?	Risk management involves understanding, analyzing, and addressing risks to ensure that partnering organizations understand their collective responsibilities.
	These responsibilities include providing adequate supports and services, and ensuring staff and the public are protected.
What is risk assessment?	Risk assessment is a proactive approach to identifying risks that have the potential to cause harm. It also helps determine the likelihood and probability of identified risks.
	It helps organizations gain awareness of the most critical risks and develop a plan for mitigating them.
Why is it important to consider risk assessment?	Risk assessment can be a difficult process for any organization or service provider. When reviewing potential risks that may occur due to a lack of information sharing, gaps can be identified in existing processes in program and service-delivery areas.
	Assessing and managing risk will help partnering organizations to develop balanced solutions and engage in information sharing practices.
	A balanced approach to risk assessment can help improve the strategic use of information and help establish a comprehensive plan for implementing the Information Sharing Approach.
What does risk management have to do with information sharing?	Risk management must be supported by governance and policy controls. Strategic policies and procedures can identify acceptable levels of risk in sharing information and enable coordinated or integrated service delivery.
	With governance and policy controls, partner organizations will understand their accountability for sharing or not sharing an Albertan's personal and health information.

Assessing Risk

These are examples of potential risks that may occur when designing and delivering a program or service along with examples of best practices that illustrate how information sharing can support risk mitigation.

Risk	Mitigation Best Practices
Ministry programs and initiatives are undertaken in a shifting and complex government environment.	Strengthen accountability through governance. Develop clear and concise policies and strategies.
Hesitancy to share information between organizations due to a risk adverse culture.	Ensure stakeholders and partners understand the benefits of, and authority for, information sharing for Albertans.
Resistance to change from program areas for on-going or existing processes.	Develop and implement proactive change management and communication plans.
Albertans' personal or health information shared inconsistently within and between organizations.	Develop a process to ensure regular reviews and evaluation of information sharing initiatives.
Working around practices to share information rather than best practices.	Collaborate and communicate with partners and stakeholders about their responsibilities to share information effectively to support integrated service delivery. Deliver training and engagement sessions to help partners and stakeholders understand the privacy legislation and information sharing best practices.
Lack of tools or practices to assess specific privacy concerns.	Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs) for an Information Sharing Approach can be completed by a PIA team with subject matter experts (SMEs) from programs, privacy, security, legal, and information technology.

Assessing Risk (continued)

These are examples of potential risks that may occur when designing and delivering a program or service along with examples of best practices that illustrate how information sharing can support risk mitigation.

Risk	Mitigation Best Practices
Health and safety issues have not been considered or assessed.	Develop training in order to inform staff or caregivers of potential risks a client may pose so they can access the appropriate supports to deliver the best services and programs while maintaining personal and public safety.
Contractors and multiple service providers working on behalf of the ministry program area are unaware of privacy legislation and information sharing practices	Develop consistent information sharing practices and policies for all partners and stakeholders. Establish common notification and legal authority for all program contracts for external service providers. Ensure all contractors and service providers are aware of their responsibilities for information sharing.
Unintentional disclosure of an Albertan's personal information. Unauthorized access to an Albertan's personal information.	Provide awareness on breach reporting protocols and procedures. Provide education and training on breach prevention.
Reluctance to share information due to legal liability concerns.	Determine if the risk is greater if the information is not shared and whether that would lead to negative consequences. Provide training on applicable privacy and program legislation to ensure staff are informed and aware of their responsibilities.

Common Terms

Affiliate

An affiliate is an individual or organization that is employed by, or performs a service for, a custodian. This includes contractors, volunteers, students, and/or appointees of the custodian and information managers. Refer to the HIA for a complete definition.

Approach

An approach is a set of principles and goals that form the basis for setting direction, decision-making, and guidelines to give overall direction to planning, development and implementation of a program or service. This includes ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the program or service.

Collaborative or Coordinated Service Delivery

Service delivery approaches that involve the coordination of services across multiple organizations with the shared goal of providing consistent and seamless services to Albertans.

Partner organizations have a shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities and share information in a timely and authorized way according to common operating principles such as guidelines, processes and best practices.

Collaborative Service Clusters

Broad coalitions of service providers who work in a coordinated manner to serve similar demographics with common needs.

Custodian

A custodian is an organization or a regulated health professional, as defined by the HIA or designated in the Health Information Regulation, who provides a health service. Examples include: Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, nursing homes, pharmacists, nurses and physicians in their own private office/clinic. Refer to the HIA and the Regulation for a complete definition and list of designated custodians.

Data

Data refers to facts, ideas or discrete pieces of information, especially in the form originally collected and unanalyzed.

It is often used to refer to information in its most atomized form, as numbers or facts that have not been synthesized or interpreted, such as the initial readings from a gauge or obtained from a survey. In this sense, data is used as the basis of information, the latter distinguished by recognized patterns or meaning in the data. The phrase 'raw data' may be used to distinguish the original data from subsequently 'refined data' (Society of American Archivists http://www2.archivists.org/glossary).

Employee

An employee as defined under FOIP includes, in relation to a public body, a person who performs a service for the public body as an appointee, volunteer or student or under a contract or agency relationship with the public body.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP)

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) came into force on October 1, 1995. FOIP was the first access and privacy law in Alberta and provided the foundations on which the OIPC was created.

FOIP provides individuals with the right to request access to information in the custody or control of public bodies while providing public bodies with a framework for conducting the collection, use and disclosure of personal information.

Health Information

Heath information, as defined in the *Health Information Act* (HIA), includes:
- Registration information[1] (examples include: personal health number, address, phone number, and health service eligibility information);
- Diagnostic, treatment and care information[2] (examples include: lab results, medical conditions, medical treatments, prescription information) and any other recorded information about an individual that is collected when a health service is provided to the individual.

Health Information Act (HIA)

The Health Information Act (HIA) came into force on April 25, 2001.

The Health Information Act (HIA) sets out the rules for the collection, use, disclosure and protection of health information that is in the custody or under the control of a custodian. The HIA strikes a balance between the protection of privacy and enabling the appropriate amount of information sharing to provide health services and manage the health system. It also provides individuals with a right of access to their health information, the right to request a correction or amendment to their health information.

Information

A collection of data, ideas, thoughts or memories. Information and data are near synonyms. Where data connotes facts or ideas in their most atomized form, information refers to more complex concepts made up of multiple data elements. Information may take many forms, including words, sounds, images and formulas. Like data, information is independent of any medium in which it is captured as content. Information is intangible until it has been recorded in

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[1] HIA s.1(1)(u)
[2] HIA s.1(1)(i)

some medium. Recorded information may be captured in databases, spreadsheets, documents, sound recordings or motion pictures. Even when captured in a document or other form, the information remains distinct from the medium. (Society of American Archivists http://www2archivists.org/glossary)

Information Governance

An established set of policies, procedures, processes and controls implemented to manage information within an organization that:

- Address common information needs once, thereby establishing best practices for all stakeholders.
- Promote best practices in order to identify and support effective solutions.

Integrated Service Delivery

An approach that involves one or more organizations working closely together and sharing information based on more formalized and overarching governance, policies, systems and processes than collaborative and coordinated service delivery. This enables partner organizations to share information as appropriate and authorized, seamlessly providing Albertans with a continuum of preventative and responsive supports to meet their individual needs over time

Knowledge

Practical use or application of evidence or information. It involves personal experience to interpret and apply the evidence of information.

Non-profit Organization

Non-profit organizations are independent legal entities – a corporate 'person' that exists separate and apart from its members or owners (shareholders). The inclusion of a non-profit organization under privacy legislation in Alberta is significantly limited under the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA).

Personal Information

Personal Information as defined in FOIP is recorded information about an identifiable individual, including, but not limited to:

- the individual's name, home or business address, or home or business telephone number;
- the individual's race, national or ethnic origin, color, or religious or political beliefs, or associations;
- the individual's age, sex, marital status or family status;
- an identifying number, symbol or other particular assigned to the individual;
- the individual's fingerprints, other biometric information, blood type, genetic information or inheritable characteristics;
- information about the individual's health and health care history, including information

about a physical or mental disability;
- information about the individual's educational, financial, employment or criminal history, including criminal records where a pardon has been given;
- anyone else's opinion about the individual; and the individual's personal views or opinions, except if they are about someone else.

Note: When health information is shared with a public body and is no longer under the control of a custodian, it is defined as personal information under FOIP.

Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)

Applies to private sector organizations and governs the means by which they collect, use, or disclose personal information, similar to FOIP, recognizing both the right of an individual to access their personal information, and the needs of the organization.

Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)

A risk management tool used to identify and evaluate the impact of a proposed change or practice may have on privacy. It assists in identifying areas of policy or alternative options that may address by mitigating or minimizing the risk. PIA can be a helpful tool for proactively identifying the potential impacts a new process or practice may have on individuals or the organization.

Note: The HIA requires a custodian to submit a PIA to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for review and comment before implementing a new administrative practice or information system, or changing an existing practice or system, relating to the collection, use or disclosure of individually identifying health information. The PIA must describe how the proposed practice or system may affect the privacy of the individuals who are the subject of the information. PIAs are also required in other circumstances under the HIA.

Public Body

Public body, as defined in FOIP, includes:
- a department, branch or office of the Government of Alberta;
- an agency, board, commission, corporation, office or other body designated as a public body in the regulations;
- the Executive Council Office;
- the office of a member of the Executive Council;
- the Legislative Assembly Office;
- the office of the Auditor General, the Ombudsman;
- the Chief Electoral Officer, the Ethics Commissioner, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Child and Youth Advocate or the Public Interest Commissioner; or
- a local public body[3].

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[3] Includes an educational body, a health care body, or a local government body. *FOIP s.1(j)*

Service Provider Organizations

Provide direct support to clients and work directly with stakeholders as it relates to the agency program mandate. Service providers include government programs and services, health care organizations and contracted service provider agencies.

Note: The term 'Service Provider' is defined more narrowly under the *Children First Act.*

Social-Based Services

A variety of social, personal and health care services that enable individuals and families to achieve meaningful outcomes that contribute to their wellbeing. Services may include government programs and services developed and/or provided through Government of Alberta ministries and their social-based service delivery partners and stakeholders.

Stakeholder

Any person, group or organization in a position to affect or are impacted by the approach. A stakeholder may not necessarily be involved or included in the decision-making process.

Wraparound Supports/Services

An approach by which service providers take an individualized and interdisciplinary approach to meet the full range of client needs. These services are typically offered for only as long as they are needed. In many instances, services are transitional to help stabilize the individual or family.