



ADVANCING CHILD & YOUTH WELL-BEING ACROSS THE WEST SHORE-SOOKE REGION

The Business Case for a Dedicated Municipal Leaders' Advisory Team Coordinator

Fall 2025

THE OPPORTUNITY

The Municipal Leaders' Advisory Team (MLAT) is a bold initiative to improve the well-being of children and youth in the West Shore and Sooke Region.

A dedicated Coordinator is needed to serve as the central resource to drive forward and sustain regional action.

By investing in this mission, municipalities will help create the conditions necessary for young people to thrive across our rapidly growing region.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Various surveys indicate that West Shore-Sooke Region youth are falling behind in areas such as:

Social Connection

Hope for the Future

Mental Well-being



SOCIAL CONNECTION

- ▶ Youth in the South Island have experienced a **declining sense of belonging** to their schools, families, and peers in recent years*
- ▶ **Social isolation and loneliness** in youth has been linked to **poor mental health outcomes** such as depression, substance misuse, and suicide
- ▶ **Positive social connections** and feelings of belonging **promote psychological well-being**

*2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey Data, South Island (McCreary Centre Society)



HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

- ▶ South Island youth were **less likely to feel hopeful about their future** in 2023 than they were in 2018*
- ▶ **One third** of grade 6 students in SD62 **disagree with the idea that they can make a difference in the world⁺**
- ▶ Higher levels of hope in youth have been linked to **better academic performance and stronger psychological well-being**

*2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey Data, South Island (McCreary Centre Society)

+2024-2025 Middle Years Development Instrument, Sooke School District (Human Early Learning Partnership)



MENTAL WELL-BEING

- ▶ In 2023, South Island youth rated their mental health as **worse** than youth did in 2018 and 2013*
- ▶ **One in four youth** in the South Island report experiencing challenges with **anxiety**. A similar proportion report challenges with **self-harm**.*
- ▶ Grade 6 students in the Sooke School District have **lower levels of optimism, self-esteem, happiness, and self-regulation** than students of the same age across BC+
- ▶ Kindergarten teachers in the Sooke School District have reported **increases in anxious, aggressive, and inattentive behaviour from kindergarten children** over the period of 2004-2022†

*2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey Data, South Island (McCreary Centre Society)

+2024-2025 Middle Years Development Instrument; †Early Development Instrument, Wave 8 (Human Early Learning Partnership)

THE UPSIDE

*Municipalities have many tools to improve child and youth well-being**

Providing welcoming places for youth to gather

Developing a built environment conducive to play

Creating opportunities for youth to connect with nature

Offering robust, youth-friendly transportation options

Facilitating opportunities for youth employment

Providing opportunities for youth to engage in community-building and planning

*BC Healthy Communities Child and Youth Well-Being Resources

THE UPSIDE

West Shore-Sooke Region municipalities have already prioritized innovative upstream work to improve child and youth well-being in areas such as transportation, civic engagement, youth-friendly spaces, and recreational opportunities.

The MLAT offers an important opportunity to build on this work and deliver more impact through **strategic regional collaboration**.

THE UPSIDE

The MLAT also benefits from the active participation of key partners

The Village Initiative's [wide network](#) of community service organizations, including:

Island Health's Population and Public Health Team

Sooke School District (SD62)

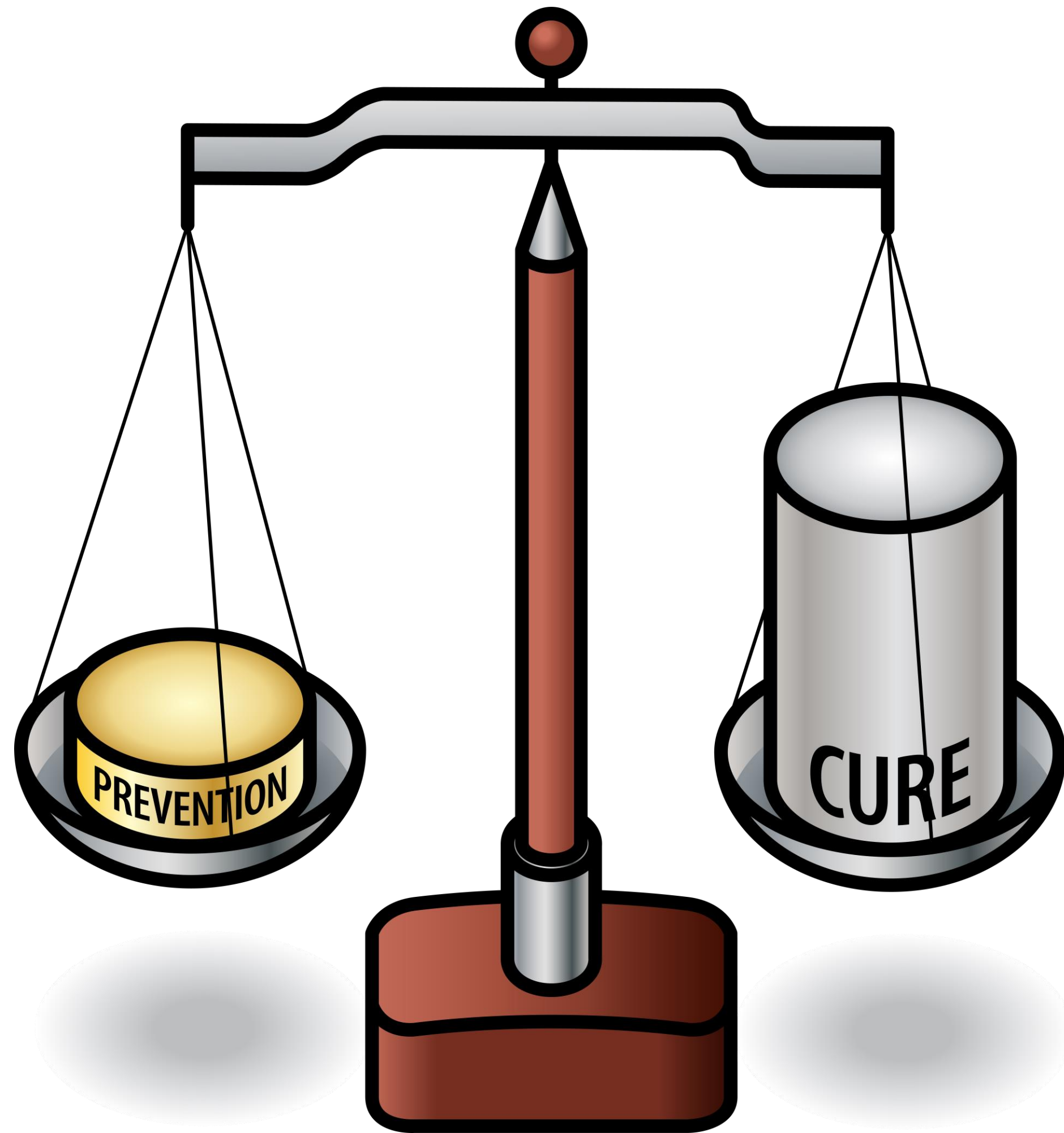
and others

THE UPSIDE

*Investing in youth well-being via a successful MLAT
can lead to long-term cost-savings by:*

**Empowering young people to thrive, engage in school, and
contribute meaningfully to their communities**

Reducing future reliance on costly reactive services



AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

Working proactively to provide regional youth with the tools they need to be successful, municipalities may be able to reduce costs like:

- **Policing**
- **By-law Enforcement**
- **Repair of Public Property**
- **Homelessness and Subsidized Housing**
- **Lost Economic Potential**

OUR COLLECTIVE OPPORTUNITY

Momentum for the Municipal Leaders' Advisory Team is strong.

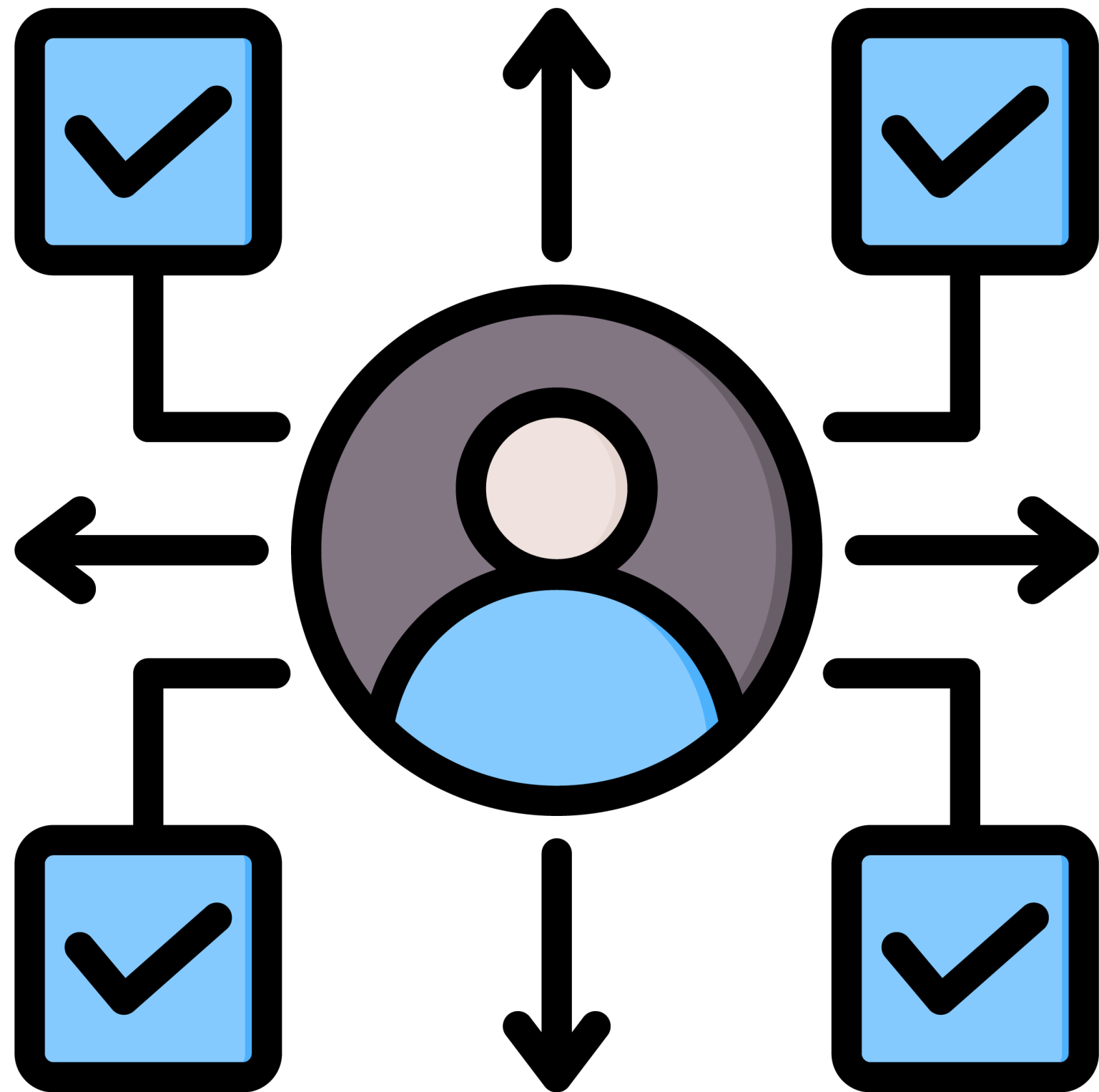
Our success will require a common vision, mutually-reinforcing activities, regular communication, and shared measurement and evaluation frameworks.

Dedicated coordination support is required to achieve the team's success.

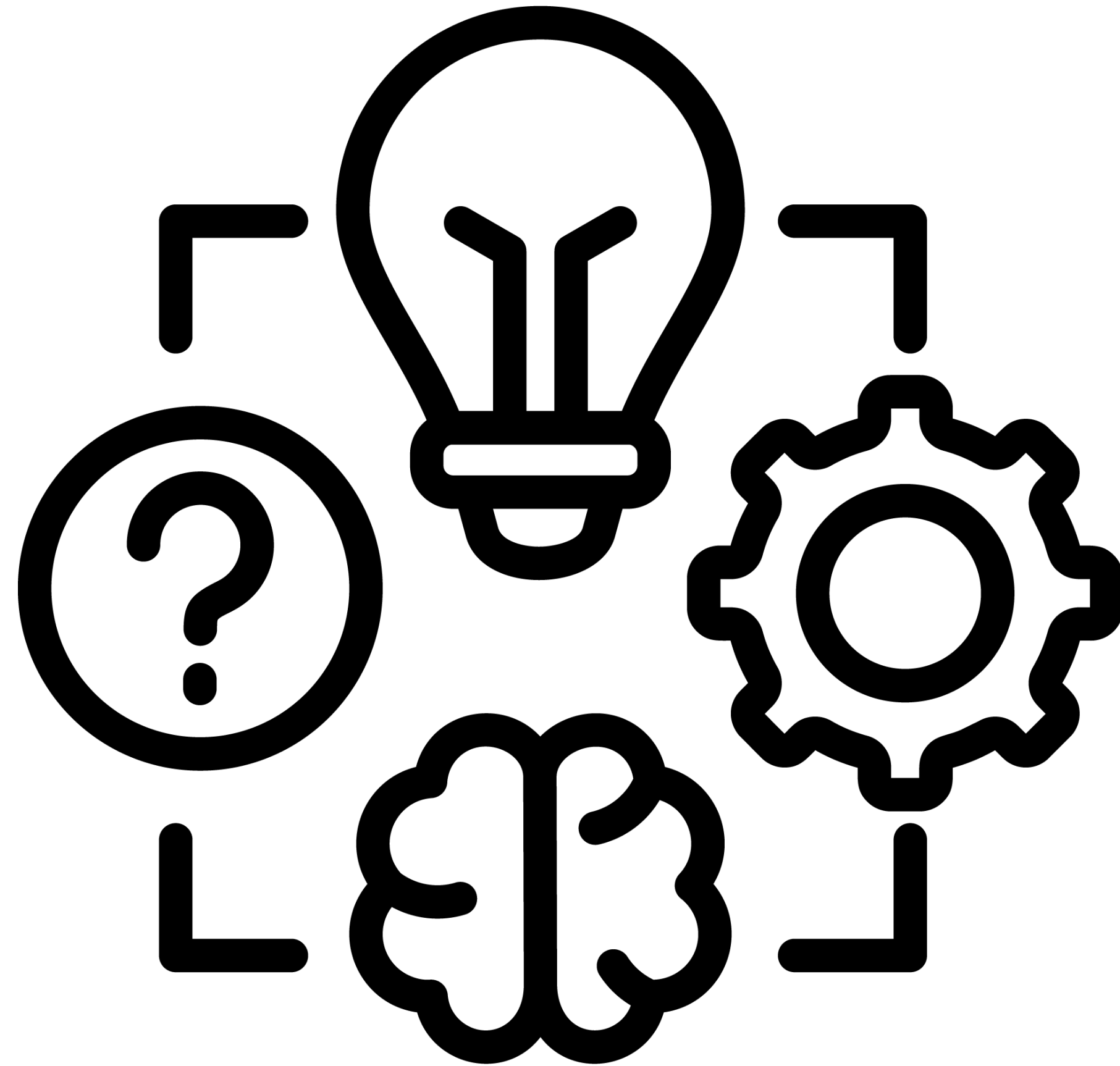
THE PROPOSED APPROACH

A dedicated Coordinator will provide the vital backbone support the MLAT needs to effectively and efficiently achieve the region's objectives.

KEY TEAM COORDINATOR FUNCTIONS



- Serve as the **central point of contact and trusted liaison** for all aspects of the MLAT initiative
- **Monitor existing and proposed municipal policies** and **identify opportunities** for collaboration
- **Establish and maintain strong relationships** with key partners
- **Secure ongoing financial support** for MLAT initiatives
- **Coordinate with staff** across municipalities
- **Establish a shared measurement and evaluation plan**
- **Prepare meeting agendas** and supporting information



RATIONALE FOR MEETING THE MOMENT

*Evidence demonstrates that backbone support is a key element of successful multi-partner initiatives**

A dedicated team Coordinator drives progress by:

- ▶ **Creating a shared vision and strategy**
- ▶ **Coordinating efforts and resources among partners**
- ▶ **Building public interest/will**
- ▶ **Advancing policy**
- ▶ **Mobilizing funding**
- ▶ **Establishing shared measurement practices**

*See: Kania & Kramer. Collective Impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. 2011.

BENEFITS OF A DEDICATED TEAM COORDINATOR

- ✓ **Enhanced regional collaboration**
- ✓ **Increased regional efficiency**
- ✓ **Improved sustainability**
- ✓ **Stronger relationships with community partners**
- ✓ **Cost savings**
- ✓ **Stronger accountability**
- ✓ **Improved child and youth well-being outcomes**

ESTIMATED COST & FUNDING STRUCTURE

Estimated annual cost: \$105,000-\$115,000

Salary: \$85,000-\$95,000

Benefits: \$17,000

Equipment/Training: \$3,000

Funding pooled from municipalities based on population size.

GOVERNANCE & OVERSIGHT

Coordinator is embedded in a neutral body that has agreed to host the role:

The Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria (CSPC)

Position reports to the CSPC Executive Director

Strategic direction from MLAT

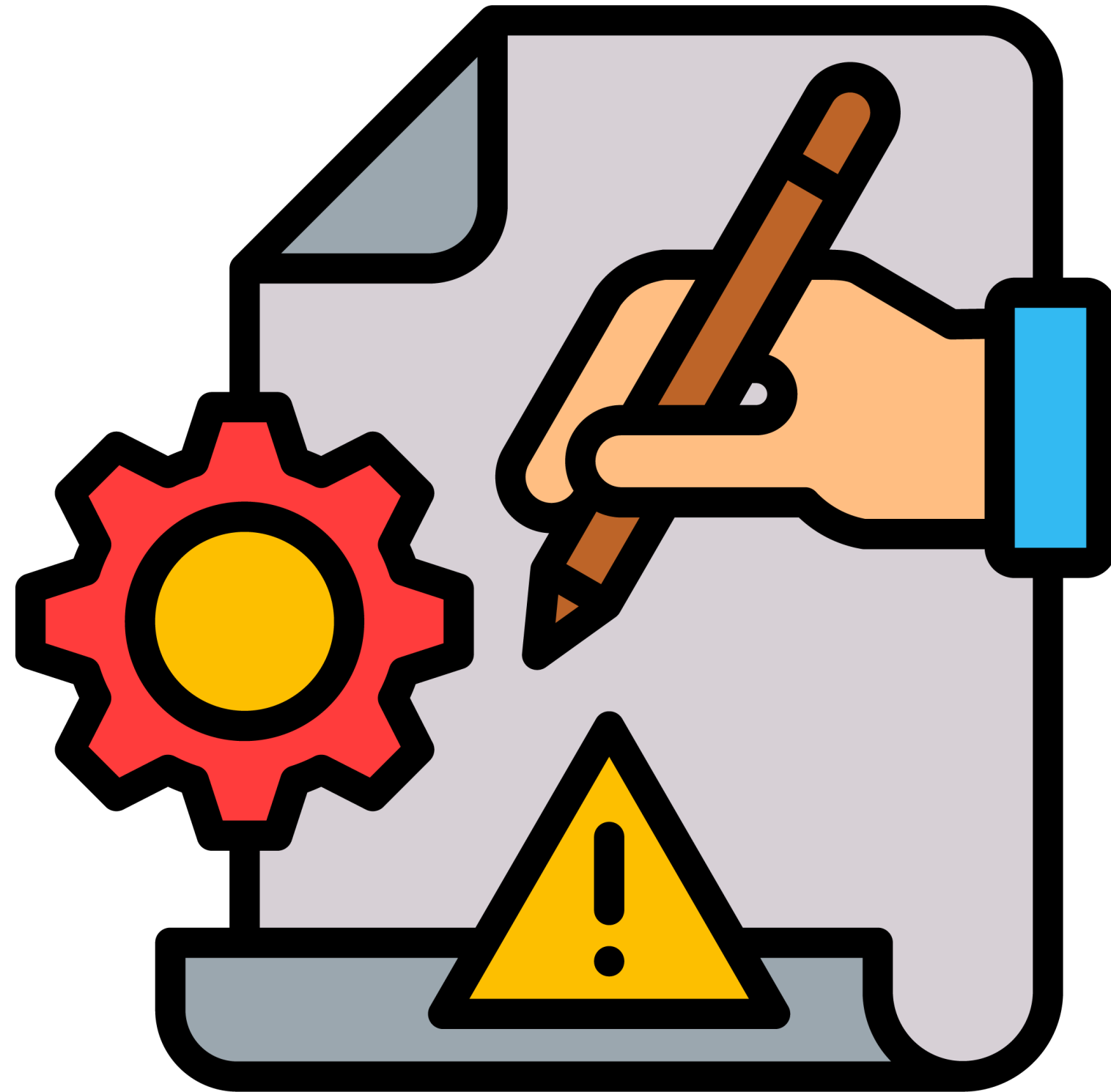
Bi-annual updates to all West Shore-Sooke Region municipal councils



COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL
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POTENTIAL RISKS & MITIGATION STRATEGIES



- ▶ **Financial Instability** → Ratify a multi-year funding agreement with contingency planning
- ▶ **Staff Retention** → Ratify a multi-year funding agreement, embed the role in the CSPC, provide benefits and an adequate salary
- ▶ **Differing Expectations** → Detailed job description and work plan created collaboratively
- ▶ **Challenges Navigating Diverse Priorities** → Embed the role in the CSPC, and develop a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines shared objectives, decision-making protocols, and conflict resolution mechanisms

IN CLOSING

TOGETHER WE ARE BETTER



- ▶ **Municipal governments play a key role** in supporting the well-being of children, youth, and families
- ▶ **The Village Initiative's members are eager to work together through the MLAT** to co-create meaningful change for youth, children, and families
- ▶ **The MLAT offers an important opportunity to improve child and youth well-being across the West Shore-Sooke Region**
- ▶ **To realize the MLAT's potential, hiring a dedicated team Coordinator is essential**



THE Village
INITIATIVE
Helping children, youth and families thrive