



Edmonton Chamber of
Voluntary Organizations

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Reimagining the Non-profit Sector

2020 brought surprises and challenges that inspired our organization—and the sector at large—to look inward for opportunities for fundamental change and growth.

ECVO began 2020 with a new Executive Director and a focus on operationalizing our 2020-22 Strategic Framework. The framework outlined new desired outcomes and inspired new ways of thinking about capacity building, program delivery, and advocacy. Even before COVID-19 reached our shores, ECVO was set for some dramatic shifts in operations. The pandemic affirmed that change was not only needed, but it was also possible.

The pandemic and the measures put in place to manage it presented acute challenges for ECVO's members and the non-profit sector at large, while exposing significant inequities that had long been present in the sector. An opportunity to connect with the community for much-needed discussions about transformation had presented itself.

Throughout 2020, ECVO placed considerable focus on reaching out to the community to collectively explore opportunities to shift the sector for the better—to single out shared visions of transformation that could guide the sector in the decades ahead.

Operationalizing Our Strategic Framework

A YEAR OF LOOKING INWARD

In 2020, ECVO took significant steps to translate our 2020-22 Strategic Framework into an operational plan that reflects the challenges and opportunities facing Alberta's non-profits. We engaged with members, spoke with numerous sector leaders, and looked inward as a team to discover the most effective ways to communicate our vision for the coming years and organize our operations to achieve success.

Our Operational Plan is divided into six pillars, each representing a distinct area that ECVO plans to prioritize in the coming years.

PILLAR 1: Organizational Management

We aim to build the capacity, confidence, and resilience of non-profit voluntary sector organizations in areas of core operations and organizational management. We will do this by developing the capacity of staff and volunteers in organizational management, and facilitating the development of stronger organizational systems and structures.

PILLAR 2: Governance

We aim to steward the non-profit voluntary sector to explore more proactive and sustainable governing structures, processes, and values. By sense-making and amplifying information and resources, we aim to provide boards with educational resources, relevant training, timely council, and informative networking opportunities.

PILLAR 3: Leadership

We aim to contribute to the sustainability of the non-profit voluntary sector by maximizing the ability of leaders at all levels to be adaptive, transformative, and collective. Our focus is on boosting the capacity of the sector leaders — from Executive Directors and CEOs to emerging leaders throughout the non-profit community.

PILLAR 4: Volunteerism

We aim to increase awareness of volunteerism in all its forms and promote the value it brings to individuals and in creating empowered, resilient, and safe communities. Our focus is on amplifying positive stories and perspectives on volunteering while creating pathways to meaningful and purposeful volunteer opportunities that are equitable, diverse, and inclusive.

PILLAR 5: Collective Action

We aim to strengthen the non-profit voluntary sector's ability to effectively work together by building collaborative capacity and readiness and facilitating collaborative processes. We plan to support organizations with sense-making, create opportunities for purposeful dialogue, and leverage shared resources by fostering connectivity and collaboration.

PILLAR 6: Strategic Voice

We aim to amplify the collective voice of the non-profit voluntary sector and boost awareness of key issues and opportunities at the regional, provincial, and national levels. We will do this contributing to strategic conversations and advocacy efforts in tandem with local, regional, and national organizations and networks.

INTRODUCING ECVO'S New Executive Director

The ECVO board of directors welcomed new Executive Director Gemma Dunn in January 2020. Gemma brings many years of non-profit sector experience to the position, including six years with ECVO.

Gemma hails from the United Kingdom, where she worked in the voluntary sector for more than a decade. She resettled in Edmonton in 2012. Gemma's career has seen her work with a diverse range of community-based voluntary organizations

and charities. Her expertise has supported organizations to review and update policies, revitalize income strategies, and promote the valuable work of the voluntary sector.

Gemma is excited to lead ECVO toward exciting new conversations and opportunities, including implementing ECVO's 2020-22 Strategic Framework and advocating for a stronger and more sustainable sector on behalf of Alberta's non-profits.

2020 Highlights

Like many organizations, COVID-19 significantly impacted ECVO's capacity to deliver programs to the non-profit community. In the early stages of the pandemic, we focused on providing the sector with up-to-date information and resources necessary to be able to continue operating under challenging circumstances. We found opportunities to be adaptive, so that we could still provide training to the sector while placing added effort on advocacy to ensure strong lines of communication between non-profits, funders, and governments.

PILOTING NEW WAYS OF PROVIDING DIRECT SUPPORT

In 2020, we responded to a dramatic increase in direct requests for support by launching a regular Q&A series called Answering Your Questions (AYQ).

Throughout the year,

99 attendees joined six AYQ sessions to post their governance questions directly to experts.



BOOSTING GOVERNANCE CAPACITY THROUGHOUT THE SECTOR

41 board leaders participated in Alberta Board Member Essentials in 2020. The five-part blended learning program made the transition to the Teachable platform, making it more accessible for remote learners across Alberta.



9 mentors + 9 mentees

participated in the Executive Director mentorship program in 2020, forging new relationships between established and emerging non-profit leaders.

FORGING NEW PATHWAYS FOR POST-PANDEMIC GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted opportunities to create stronger lines of communication between legislators and the non-profit sector.

In 2020, **46 organizations** joined an interactive webinar that supported non-profits to more effectively engage with governments.



CONNECTING EDMONTON'S VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT SPECIALISTS

86 Volunteer Engagement Specialists attended four networking discussions focused on creating stronger connections between those who recruit or manage volunteers, setting a firm foundation for the ongoing inVEST community of practice.



WORKING TOWARDS EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

In 2020, we started work to examine what we can do to make ECVO as inclusive as possible. This work included staff and board training and resulted in the creation of an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Framework and Strategic Plan, which reflects our focus on creating an inclusive organization. Among the initial commitments we have implemented are establishing an EDI board committee and creating an EDI book club for the ECVO team.



ADVANCING A COHESIVE AND RESILIENT NON-PROFIT SECTOR IN ALBERTA

ECVO continues to play a leadership role in the Alberta Nonprofit Network (ABNN), an independent network of organizations working together to leverage learning and resources and take collective action in response to strategic issues impacting Alberta's non-profits.

albertanonprofits.ca



SUPPORTING NON-PROFITS THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

ECVO created a COVID-19 Web Portal, with updates and resources to help organizations navigate the many challenges of responding to the pandemic, from social distancing measures and working from home to returning to the office and hosting virtual AGMs.



ADDRESSING NEEDS FOR EDMONTON'S NEWCOMERS

ECVO supports the Edmonton Local Immigration Partnership (ELIP), a group of newcomer-serving organizations working collaboratively to address challenges faced by Edmonton's newcomers. In 2020, ELIP's Computers for Students working group built an initiative which distributed

450 computers to newcomer students.

elip.ca



Snapshot of Our Membership

(as of December 31, 2020)



37 INDIVIDUAL Members

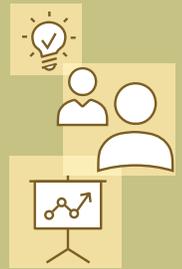


161 ORGANIZATIONAL Members



4 SUSTAINING Members

Transforming the Non-profit Sector

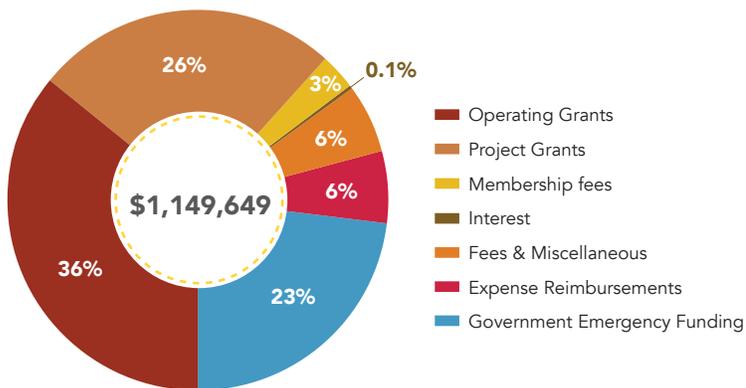


In 2020, ECVO initiated a multi-phase process intended to mobilize people around shared imaginations of transformation. Guided by the principles outlined in ECVO's Strategic Framework 2020-2022, we developed a strategic engagement process that was meant to create opportunities for purposeful dialogue about the non-profit sector's past, present and future.

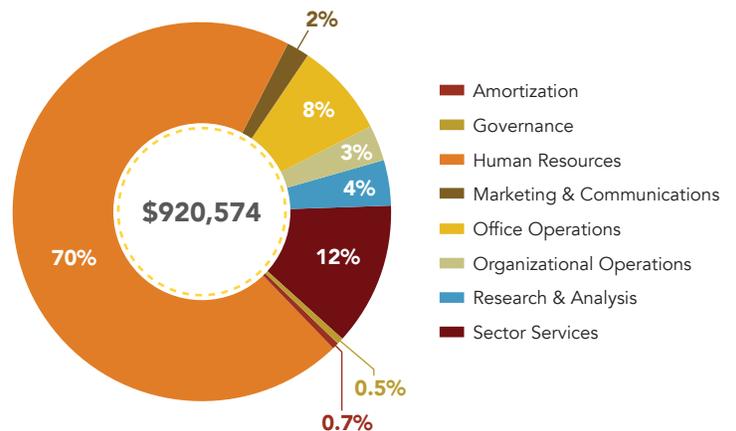
As part of this process, we engaged in a series of exploratory conversations with 82 people, co-hosted six gatherings with Edmonton-based agency Naheyawin, and published the document *Transforming the Non-Profit Community in Edmonton: Myths, Trends and Areas for Change*. While the ECVO understands that transformation takes time, we are committed to continuing to invest in a process that promotes bottom-up mobilization in order to build new forms and methods of participation, decision-making, leadership and resource distribution.

Financial Outlook

2020 REVENUE



2020 EXPENDITURES



WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE OUR FUNDERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF ECVO AND EDMONTON'S NON-PROFIT COMMUNITY.

