



Edmonton Chamber
of Voluntary Organizations

December 6, 2021

Office of the Mayor,
Edmonton City Council,
2nd Floor, City Hall
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square,
Edmonton, AB
T5J 2R7

Dear Mayor Sohi and City of Edmonton Councillors

Who We Are

The Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO) is a member-based non-profit organization that works to build and sustain the programs and services of other non-profit organizations through resources, networking, and skill development opportunities.

Our mission is to strengthen the public service voluntary sector in Metro Edmonton by leading, building capacity, and giving voice to issues that impact the ability of the voluntary sector to be effective.

Non-Profit Impacts

Some quick facts:

- Alberta's nonprofit sector contributes *\$5.5 billion* in GDP contributions to Alberta's economy
- Alberta's nonprofit sector employs *450,000* people
- There are more than *6,000* non-profit and charitable organizations in Edmonton

Context

The Alberta Nonprofit Network (ABNN, in conjunction with ECVO, completed a report in November 2020, titled: *Pulse Check Results on the Impact of COVID-19 on Edmonton's Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations* (attached). This report summarizes data collected from 120 nonprofits and charitable organizations in Edmonton. While this is a drop in the bucket compared to the many organizations that make up the sector, it can be treated as a snapshot of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector.

Three key trends emerged:

- *Staff mental health* consistently emerged as a key concern for respondents: it was highlighted as the most significant operational challenge. Moreover, two of the top impacts of COVID-19 on workforce was increased staff stress and workload. Increased volunteer stress was also reported as an impact of the pandemic.
- The sector is being asked to work in more complex environments, with access to fewer resources.

- Most respondents identified that having *access to core operational funding* being integral to their ability to deliver on their mission in the next 12 months.

Our Budget Asks

With respect to The City Council Non-Statutory Public Hearing – Budget Agenda, Attachment Two, pg. 57: Community Investment Operating Grant (CIOG) Program (attached)

ECVO respectfully asks, on behalf of themselves and the 6,000 nonprofit organizations in Edmonton, that the CIOG temporary grant funding provided in 2021 be shifted from temporary to on-going funding.

We also request that that this funding, should it be moved to ongoing funding, increase annually in line with cost-of-living allowance increases and inflation impacts.

With Respect to Mental Health Supports

In the Supplemental Operating Budget Adjustment, the City of Edmonton notes the importance of the Employee and Family Assistance program (EFAP) on maintaining the mental health and wellbeing of their employees. Due in part to the nature of funding and outcomes expectations, most non-profits are financially incapable of utilizing a program such as EFAP for the benefit of their staff.

We are asking the City to consider how their funding may be utilized to fulfill this identified need. Specifically, we are asking that City Council and City Administration reconsider its funding outcomes to leave space for organizations to put funding toward mental health and wellbeing programs such as the EFAP program

With Respect to Budget Considerations Overall:

While we move towards recovery, it is critical that we do not limit our notions of recovery to the private business sector; nonprofit and charity organizations are businesses too.

We are asking that City Council and City Administration keep recovery efforts for *all* sectors at the forefront of all decisions that are being made, including policy, funding, red tape, and engagement strategies.

Alignment with Edmonton City Plan

The non-profit sector in Alberta has very few operation funding opportunities available to them. The CIOG provides vital core funding to ensure that non-profit organizations can keep their doors open. The non-profit sector has been identified by the City of Edmonton and the Province of Alberta as vital partners in our continued efforts to address the challenges that have been heightened by COVID.

To this end, we have identified numerous avenues through which this funding request aligns with the currently approved Edmonton City Plan:

- *I want to BELONG and contribute.* Pg. 42 – 48. Specifically points 1.1; 1.1.1.4; 1.1.2.3; 1.1.3.1; 1.1.4.3; 1.3.3; 1.3.3.2
- *I want to LIVE in a place that feels like home.* Pg. 55. Specifically point 2.2.2.3

- *I want opportunities to THRIVE.* Pg. 62 – 67. Specifically points 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 3.1.3.4; 3.1.3.7; 3.2.2; 3.3.1; 3.3.1.1
- *I want ACCESS within my city.* Pg. 70 – 75. Specifically points 4.1; 4.1.3; 4.1.3.1; 4.1.3.2; 4.1.3.3; 4.1.3.5; 4.3.2
- *I want to be able to CREATE and innovate.* Pg. 85 – 89. Specifically points 6.1; 6.1.1; 6.1.1.3; 6.1.1.5; 6.2.1; 6.2.1.6; 6.3.1; 6.3.1.2; 6.3.1.3

We sincerely thank you for your time and consideration to our requests above. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'GD' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line.

Gemma Dunn
Executive Director