



**Edmonton Chamber  
of Voluntary Organizations**

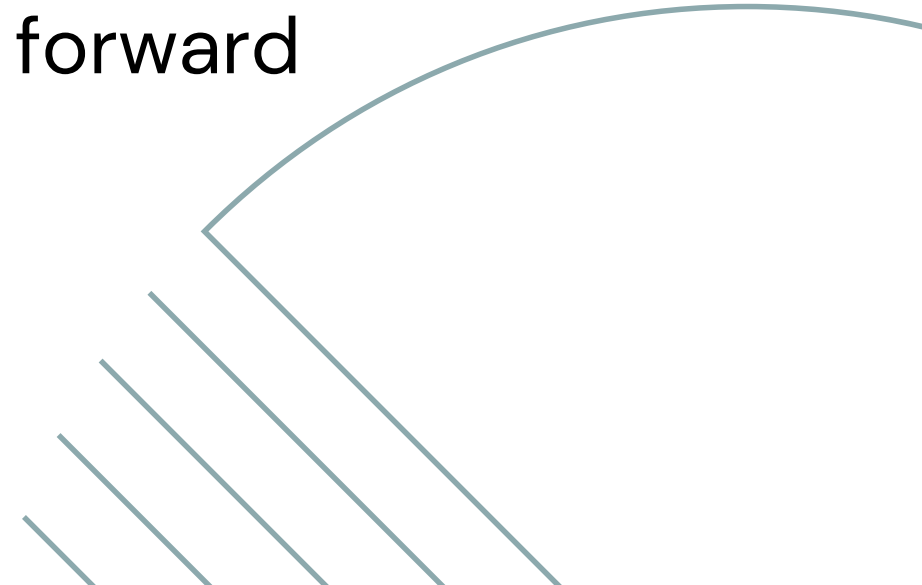

# **SECTOR TRANSFORMATION**

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR**



# INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

The Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO) was invited to provide feedback to current elected officials about future ministerial makeup and election platform priorities. To be as reflective of the sector as possible, ECVO hosted a series of town halls, inviting non-profit leaders to share their perspectives. What follows is a summary of the key themes that were brought forward throughout these sessions.



# THEME ONE: GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE – RE-IMAGINING MINISTERIAL MAKEUP

Non-profit leaders overwhelmingly agreed that there is a lack of a comprehensive, holistic approach to service delivery. This fact, when combined with the seeming lack of understanding and awareness of the value of the sector, results in a fragmented approach to addressing societal challenges, often resulting in increased costs, siloed service delivery, increased red tape, and, most importantly, often results in the person not being served appropriately. When these same leaders were asked how they would reimagine the ministerial makeup, the following were the most prevalent ideas.

There needs to be a 'reset' on the relationship between the GoA and the non-profit sector.

- Right now, the relationship feels punitive and there seems to be a lack of recognition of the value of the non-profit sector.

## Specific ministries mentioned included:

- Children's and Families Ministry (instead of Children's Services)
- Youth – currently, they are lost in Children's Services
- Seniors' Ministry

**“The sector really needs a seat at the table, not in the hallway.”**

~ Town Hall Participant

Have fewer, larger ministries, equipped with an appropriate number of staff.

- This approach allows for a more holistic, less fragmented approach to service delivery and results in less red tape and general confusion.
- This approach also provides a mechanism to help address, understand, and value the complexity of the issues and the people that are being served.
  - Would also provide the opportunity to align cross-ministerial language.
  - The former Human Services Ministry was pointed to as an example.
- Tying physical health (i.e., sports & rec) to the Ministry of Health in some meaningful way.

# A STABLE HOME IN GOVERNMENT

Sector leaders want meaningful acknowledgement that the work the non-profit sector does is valued, not simply that the sector is a cheaper service delivery alternative. While we recognize that the government must be restructured from time to time to best address the needs of Albertans, these changes create challenges in understanding which ministry is responsible for each need and, as a result, who needs to be connected with whom. Provision for a direct conduit between the non-profit sector and the government would not only help mitigate this challenge, but also provides a two-way accountability mechanism between both parties.

Meaningful representation in Government to give the sector a seat at the table and to connect the dots between ministries.

## Recommendations included:

- Dedicate a deputy premier who would be responsible for the sector and civic engagement, and who would report to the Executive Council. A dedicated deputy premier would have a structure within government to convene the sector and provide the infrastructure to do so.
- Alternatively, the GoA should create (or revamp) an umbrella arm or council that would report to the Executive Council. This non-profit sector council would embody the spirit of 'nothing about us without us,' and should be sector-selected and sector-led.
- A centralized point of access, akin to AGLC, but for the non-profit sector.

**“Federal, provincial and local governments need to treat the non-profit sector as a valued partner, on par with the way they treat other industries of similar size.”**

~ Imagine Canada

# THEME TWO: WORKFORCE STRATEGY

Addressing workforce challenges has been a defining characteristic of Alberta's non-profit sector for many years. The inability to pay competitive wages, chronic under-investment in human resources systems, and the inability to attract and retain skilled staff have been, and continue to be, issues that challenge the vitality of the sector. Furthermore, the fatigue and burnout of both staff and volunteers has become a significant operational challenge for non-profits.

If Alberta's non-profit sector is to continue to contribute to Alberta's social and economic recovery, and meet the needs of Alberta's communities, addressing the ongoing workforce challenges must become a priority.

## Key Recommendations

1

Investment in a sector-wide workforce strategy that focuses on decent work and the collection of meaningful workforce data.

2

A focus on structural transformation with an intentional move away from organizational relief. Providing fair working conditions, including living wages, benefits, pension plans, etc.

3

Address turnover and burnout

4

A recognition of the professionalism of the sector's workforce through an investment in activities such as research and development, digital transformation, human resources, professional development, etc.

5

Ultimately, the non-profit sector must be seen as a competitive alternative to the private and public sectors.

# THEME THREE: EQUITABLE FUNDING

According to 2019 Statistics Canada data, the non-profit sector contributes over \$7.73 billion in revenue to Alberta's economy. The non-profit sector is comprised of more than 35,000 organizations, employing over 286,000 Albertans. Importantly, 46% of the sector's income is earned revenue – not from government grants or contracts. Despite this significant economic contribution, there continues to be a lack of consideration about the structural processes through which the GoA provides grants or contracts.

## Red Tape Reduction

- The provision of long-term funding agreements
- A simplification of the grant application and reporting processes
- A review of the purpose of the Charitable Fundraising Act with the ultimate goal of removing this act as charities are already governed by the Canada Revenue Agency.

**"Funding follows what we value."**

~ Town hall participant

Indexing grants and contracts to inflation.

## Trust-based funding.

- The GoA needs to fund missions and organizations, not projects.
- Recognition of, and compensation for, the disparity between rural and urban complexities.
- In order to be eligible for funding, organizations applying for grants should meet the minimum standard of paying living wages to their staff. Grant funding should also allow organizations to pay a living wage to staff by indexing funding to inflations.



# THEME FOUR:

## INVESTMENT IN VOLUNTEERS & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

As has been indicated, fatigue and burnout of both staff and volunteers has become a significant operational challenge for non-profits. Many of the organizations ECVO works with are reporting a volunteer shortage, with the largest impact being seen by health, sport, and faith organizations. In addition to the reduction in the volunteer base itself, the non-profit sector is also seeing that volunteers are choosing to engage in volunteer activities differently than in pre-pandemic days. This volunteer shortage has a significant impact on community building and development.

# Key Recommendations

1

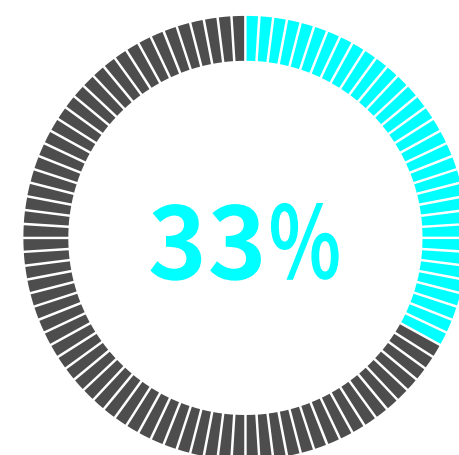
Intentional investment in volunteerism & recruitment.

2

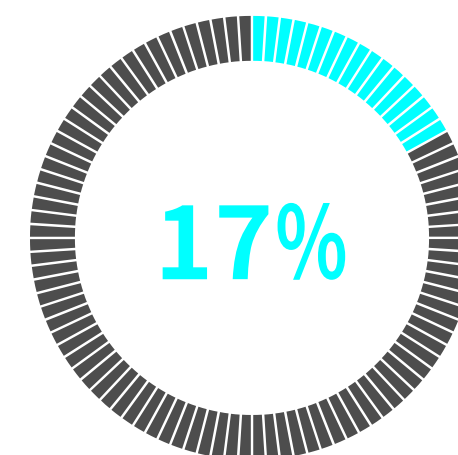
Evaluation and implementation of programs & incentives to encourage Albertans' participation in volunteerism.

3

Development and provision of training for volunteers.



Nationally, 33% of non-profits reported that the volunteer shortage is leading to a reduction of programs and services offered.



17% of non-profits report that the shortage of volunteers has led to an outright cancellation of programs and services.

# CONTACT

**More details about this and other findings can be found in ECVO's full Transformation report, available online at [www.transformation.ecvo.ca](http://www.transformation.ecvo.ca).**

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