



Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

ECVO: A Timeline of Edmonton's Human Services Sector

Legend

- Establishment: 1890–1918
- Economic Uncertainty: 1919–1939
- The War Years and Baby Boomers: 1939–1969
- The Big Oil Boom: 1970–1991
- The Klein Era: 1992–2006

- 🏠 Internal/Sector
- 📈 Economic
- 👤 Global/Migration
- 🏛️ External/Government



1900: Four Misericordia Sisters arrive in Edmonton at the request of Bishop Grandin to open The Maternity Hospital. It is Edmonton's second hospital.

1905: The Province of Alberta is formed. Edmonton is chosen as its capital.

1893: Salvation Army of Edmonton opens its doors to assist the poor, destitute and hungry.

1892: The Town of Edmonton forms, with a population of 700.

1910: The Bissel Centre is founded as the "All People's Mission" by the Methodist Church.

1930s: The Great Depression begins, putting considerable strain on the sector.

1930: The Edmonton Creche opens its doors.

1929: The Kiwanis family establishes the Kiwanis Children's Aid Society and Kiwanis Home.

1940: The Christmas Committee, the precursor to the Christmas Bureau, is formed by the Edmonton Council of Social Agencies.

1940s: Oil boom begins in Alberta. Although Alberta experiences huge economic growth, many new immigrants to coming to Edmonton for work in the oil patch are laid off in the winters. They turn to the Human Services Sector for assistance.

1941: The Community Chest of Greater Edmonton (later United Way) is formed by 28 social services agencies, revolutionizing the way that fundraising is conducted in the city.



1953: The Edmonton Social Planning Council amalgamates its staff with the Community Chest.

1950s: Edmonton experiences a post-war population explosion, buoyed by the discovery of crude oil at Leduc No.1 in 1947. Over the next 20 years, Edmonton's population triples.



1955: The Good Samaritan Society is formed to provide continuing care services.

1957: Hungarian Refugee Crisis brings some 37,000 refugees to Canada, with many of them settling in Edmonton.



1960: The United Community Fund (later United Way) is established.

1960s: The Government of Alberta de-institutionalizes many mental hospital patients, who turn to the Human Services Sector for support.



1967: The Victorian Order of Nurses establishes a Meals on Wheels program in partnership with various women's groups in Edmonton.

1972: The Edmonton Social Planning Council and the Native Brotherhood Society partner to form Boyle Street Community Services Co-op to help the homeless and impoverished.

1972: Catholic Social Services opens. Its mission is to provide social support to all Edmontonians.

1971: The Government of Alberta establishes a program to move elderly mental hospital patients into nursing homes, stressing the Human Services Sector further.

1970s: Oil Boom in Alberta truly begins. High oil prices lead to huge investment and growth in the province as Canadians across the country move to Alberta for work.

1975–1980: Canada accepts a total of 55,608 Vietnamese refugees ("Boat People"), with many of them settling in Edmonton. This puts considerable strain on the Human Services Sector.



1978: Youth Emergency Shelter Society (yess) is formed to assist youth who are unable to access children's services, but are simultaneously ineligible for adult services.



1976: Due to declining numbers, increased government involvement and the increasing complexity of hospital services, the Misericordia Sisters withdraw from the Misericordia Hospital and Edmonton.

1977: Elizabeth Fry Society begins as a volunteer corps working out of the Provincial Courthouse. To date, the Society is the only agency working with women in contact with the legal system in the Greater Edmonton Area.

1982: Meals on Wheels separates from the Victorian Order of Nurses to become an independent non-profit. In its first independent year, it delivers meals to 51,000 people in need.



1981: The Edmonton Food Bank is created by the Edmonton Gleaners Association. It is the first food bank in all of Canada.

1981: The Federal Government's National Energy Program stresses the Albertan economy.

1990: The Good Samaritan Society opens Wedman House, the first assisted living home in Canada.

1990: The Government of Alberta begins to fund nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals based on complexity of care and patient load. This reduces overall funding for the sector.

1992: Islamic Family and Social Services Association (IFSSA) is legally incorporated and begins the city's first 'halal' food bank.

1990s: The Provincial Government begins to divest itself from Human Services Sector work, instead opting to offer contracts to non-profit agencies.



1994: The Multicultural Health Broker Co-op is formally incorporated.

1994: Bent Arrow Healing Society is established.

2002: The Edmonton Centre for Equal Justice (later the Edmonton Community Legal Centre) forms out of the Edmonton Social Planning Council. In 2005, it becomes a separate organization.

2002: The Edmonton Multicultural Coalition is formed out of the Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative.