



Edmonton Chamber
of Voluntary Organizations

History of Edmonton's Human Services Sector



OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL
Friend
OF THE
BOYS

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL
DIME
FOR THE
MILE OF DIMES

City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-1533 (1948 - Mile of Dimes for YMCA boys' club and Optimists' boys' home)

Edmonton **is Innovative**

Examples of innovation can be seen throughout the sector and in the services it provides. Edmonton developed Canada's first food bank and is the site of the nation's first assisted living facility.

Edmonton **is Cooperative**

Collaboration has been a key aspect of the sector's success and growth over the years. Edmonton's unique community league model shows the city's character, and it's history has accordingly been marked by cooperation and mergers. A cooperative spirit can be seen in the city's collective funding models or the merger of Big Brothers and Big Sisters with the Boys and Girls Club.

Edmonton **is Resilient**

Edmonton has faced a number of crises over its history—from major population explosions and growth, to the refugee crises of the 1970s. In every instance the social services agencies have stepped up to assist people in need. The Human Services Sector makes Edmonton resilient!

History of Edmonton's Human Services Sector

Commissioned Research

History of Edmonton's Human Services Sector was commissioned by the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations and written by ALIF Partners. This report seeks to inform and help shape deliberation and messaging on policy issues through an analysis of Edmonton's history. The information in this report reflects community voices, interests, and understandings. Members of the Human Services community were included in this research wherever possible.

We would like to thank our contributing consultants from ALIF Partners – Omar Yaqub, Leslie Holmes, and Leslie Chiang – for their assistance in preparing this report.

Published by ALIF Partners on behalf of the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations



**ALIF LET'S BEGIN
PARTNERS**
alifpartners.com

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City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-1616e (YWCA sewing class making immigrants feel welcome at tea)

Letter from the Executive Director

The History of Edmonton's Human Services Sector is a gift the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO) is proud to share with you.

This research maps the history of the Human Services Sector in Edmonton as a collective. Through individual stories and historical accounts, our researchers, ALIF Partners, have identified the key influences and themes that underlie the development of the Sector and its' contributions to Edmonton's social, cultural and economic prosperity.

As you read the stories and follow the pictorial journey, ECVO hopes the historical significance of Edmonton's Human Services Sector will take on new life and bring context to why organizations have adapted and changed over time to meet the needs of those who call Edmonton "home".

ECVO sincerely appreciates the support of the City of Edmonton, the Edmonton Heritage Council, Edmonton Community Foundation, and United Way of the Alberta Capital Region all of whom have provided financial support to this important endeavour. We also wish thank the many individuals in the Human Services Sector who participated in interviews and unearthed their archives to recover the past and share it with us. While it was not possible to include every story we heard, it is our belief that this collection is representative of the influences and responses of the Sector through Edmonton's history.



Russ Dahms
Executive Director
Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

Russ Dahms

We sincerely hope this story will be a resource you will want to share with your stakeholders and that it may even spark an interest in developing your own organizational narrative.

I leave you with a final quote from researcher and historian David Thelen.

"The challenge of history is to recover the past and introduce it to the present.



These stories do more than tell us about our past – they prompt us to think about the impact of the Human Services Sector and contemplate the future we want to live in.

City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-637a

(Needy Edmonton child whose Christmas gift will be provided by a city welfare organization)

Executive Summary

The history of Edmonton's Human Services Sector is filled with many rich stories. This history touches not only on economic booms and busts, immigration patterns and changes in society, but also on the impact of areas such as urban planning on our exposure to economic disparity and the effect that global events can have in our own backyard.

Researching the Human Services Sector proved to be a challenging endeavor—those working in the sector are rarely given the luxury of deep contemplation because they are often overrun with immediate and dire needs of those they serve. Developing this report required exciting exploration through the City of Edmonton and Province of Alberta, in addition to personal literature reviews and interviews.

Through this research, three defining attributes emerged that best described the sector: innovation, cooperation and resilience. Seven themes emerged as catalysts: advocacy, collaboration, diversification, booms and busts, professionalization, government involvement, and the status of women. Finally, four calls to action emerged from our research: greater collaboration, investing in people, addressing growing complexity and the need for planning.

This history will hopefully help those who work with and in the sector to anticipate challenges, advocate and plan.

Secondly, we hope that our research will help showcase and share important stories. The stories of our early pioneers are the road maps for our budding social entrepreneurs.

About the Project

The Human Services Sector in Edmonton is made up of organizations that cover a multitude of issues and provide support to individuals and communities. The issues they deal with are vast, complex and dynamic. Agencies provide services and support to help people navigate crisis, uncertainty and chronic situations. They work to ameliorate problems and enhance the quality of life of individuals, families and communities.

This project provides an accurate history of the Human Services Sector in Edmonton by identifying significant elements of its development, highlighting important events and uncovering trends. It is written to provide documentation of the contribution the sector has made to Edmonton's social, cultural and economic prosperity. This report is a tool that users can share with their stakeholders and utilize aspects of the history in the development of their own organizational narratives.

This project provides an accurate history of the Human Services Sector in Edmonton by identifying significant elements of its development, highlighting important events and uncovering trends.

Research Questions

- How did the Human Services Sector start in Edmonton and how did it evolve?
- What forces and factors influenced it?
- What are the distinctive aspects of the Human Services Sector in Edmonton?
- What impact has it had on Edmonton?

Objectives

- To document the development and evolution of Edmonton's Human Services Sector.
- To raise awareness of the role of and contribution of the sector to the social, cultural and economic prosperity of Edmonton.
- To support the development of a common narrative about the history of the sector and the role it has played in the growth of Edmonton.

Outcomes

- Improved awareness by nonprofit leaders, policy makers, funders and other stakeholders about the nonprofit Human Services Sector in Edmonton.
- Increased ability of sector leaders to articulate and contextualize their organization's story and contribution to Edmonton's prosperity and development.
- The compilation of information and stories that provide a qualitative account of the value and impact the sector has had on Edmonton.

Methodology

The goal of research and reporting is to provide an overview of the sector, highlighting a selection of organizations that existed over the course of Edmonton's history. It is not meant to provide in-depth analysis on any single organization, but instead demonstrate the changes to the sector over time. Research was planned to represent a variety of different types of organizations, representing different causes and needs, but also different time periods in Edmonton's history.

The research focused on three fronts: archival research, secondary source research and sector interviews. This methodology allowed for a clear timeline of the sector to be created, along with a variety of organizations to be studied and represented. Through this, key moments and stories were pulled out to highlight the major themes in the history of Edmonton's Human Services Sector. Ultimately, this research brings to light the issues of the past and what they mean for the sector's future.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with a number of leaders in Edmonton's Human Services Sector. Through this process, it became clear that there were common themes and larger lessons that could help guide the sector.

Discussion revolved around the following questions:

- How have you seen the sector change or adapt?
- What have been the highs and lows of your work within the sector?
- Describe the issues you're seeing (have seen) in the community?
- Tell us about the Human Services Sector's challenges. How have the challenges been addressed historically? How do you think we should be addressing them going forward?
- What are the external factors that impact the sector?

Experts included...

Lewis Cardinal, Aboriginal Metis Leader

Yvonne Chiu, Executive Director, Edmonton Multicultural Health Brokers (EMCHB)

Russ Dahms, Executive Director, Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO)

Jim Gurnett, Former Executive Director, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN), Manager of Community Services at Bissell Centre, current Executive Director, NDP Caucus, Alberta Legislature

John Kolkman, Research Coordinator at Edmonton Social Planning Council (ESPC), formerly with Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN), Boyle McCauly Health Centre & Edmonton Inner City Housing Society (EICHS)

Lenora LeMay, Ph.D., Hope-Focused Educator/Researcher (Former Manager, HOPE KIDS at the Hope Foundation of Alberta for 12 years. Lenora saw the inception and eventual end of the organization.)

Liz O'Niel, Executive Director, Boys & Girls Clubs and Big Brothers Big Sisters

Craig Stumpf-Allen, Director of Grants and Community Engagement, Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF)

What is Human Services?

The Human Services Sector is comprised of community-driven responses to supporting populations in need and challenges in society. The sector is dynamic, changing and values driven—it both shapes and is shaped by government(s) and society.

This project is focused on the City of Edmonton, but not limited to its formal boundaries or date of incorporation. Our goal is to better understand what is unique about the Human Services Sector in our city; be it our original inhabitants, migration patterns, how the city has evolved over time, our economic cycles, social movements, government policy or other factors.

The research does not include organizations based on arts, advocacy, lobbying, recreation, leisure or sports, nor does it include government programs.

1. How did the Human Services Sector start in Edmonton?

The provision of Human Services in Edmonton can be traced back to as long as the region has been a migration corridor for First Nations people. However, the formal origins of the sector are based in the religious and social reform movements of the early 1900s; in Edmonton's early history, almost all of the work done in Human Services was by groups like The Salvation Army, Misericordia Sisters and Catholic Women's League. These groups were primarily concerned with the moral, emotional and physical well-being of their users. Edmonton's significant population growth from 1892–1914 forced the industry to expand. Religious organizations and grassroots initiatives eventually grew to become the agencies we know today.

As Edmonton established itself as a city, the sector grew. Through the 1940s–60s, the industry was characterized by continuous professionalization, a trend that affected North America (although late to arrive in Edmonton). By the 1970s, the sector had evolved and organizations within the Human Services sphere began to conduct advocacy and policy work.

2. What are the distinctive aspects of the Human Services Sector in Edmonton?

Edmonton's Human Services Sector has distinguished itself through its commitment to cooperation and innovation. Through its long history, organizations within the sector have shared staff and resources. This collaboration has been a key aspect of the sector's success and growth. Cooperation was initially done informally, in support of service delivery between apostolic organizations. The nature of cooperation between organizations has changed as the industry modernized—today, we see organizations cooperating and pooling resources on a larger scale.

The sector has shown a remarkably innovative spirit. Edmonton was the site of Canada's first food bank, and its success led to similar agencies being quickly established throughout Canada. Canada's first assisted living facility was also envisioned and built in Edmonton. This entrepreneurial, innovative mindset has made Edmonton's Human Services Sector one of the strongest in Canada.

3. What forces and factors influenced it?

As discussed further in this document, the Human Services Sector has been heavily affected by issues of economic booms and busts, the changing status of women, immigration patterns and government policy. To deal with changing conditions, the sector has had to be adaptable, flexible and open to change. This is demonstrated by large historical shifts within the sector: from a beginning founded on religious principles to the dedicated professional social workers that we see today.

The sector has displayed remarkable resilience in the face of challenges. The industry's grassroots nature carried it through the depressions of the 1920s and 1930s. The 1950s were marked by a population explosion that relied on the sector for assistance during Edmonton's harsh winters. Refugee crises through the 1950s and 1970s stressed the sector even further. Investment in youth in the late seventies

and eighties allowed the sector to take on work as government divested itself of social responsibilities in the nineties. Strong leadership, adaptability and inter-agency cooperation have allowed the sector to deal capably with these challenges.

4. What impact has it had on Edmonton?

The impact of the sector has been tremendous. Edmonton’s human services industry has taken initiative to fill gaps in government services. Beyond the obvious positive social effects of alleviating poverty and hunger, Edmonton’s incredible growth in the latter half of the 20th century would not have been possible without the support of Edmonton’s Human Services agencies. Surprisingly, the times that the industry has been the most strained are times of booming economic growth. As more and more immigrants come to Edmonton, many fall between the cracks and turn to our various social agencies for support. The importance of Human Services was seen shortly after the oil boom in the 1950s—many workers who came to Edmonton for work in the oil patch would be laid off in the harsh winters. These workers would not have survived without the support of the Human Services industry.¹

Through historical research, we drew three key characteristics about Edmonton’s Human Services Sector:

Edmonton is Innovative

Examples of innovation can be seen throughout the sector and in the services it provides. Edmonton developed Canada’s first food bank and is the site of the nation’s first assisted living facility.

Edmonton is Cooperative

Collaboration has been a key aspect of the sector’s success and growth over the years. Edmonton’s unique community league model shows the city’s grassroots character, and it’s history has accordingly been marked by cooperation and mergers. A cooperative spirit can be seen in the city’s collective funding models or the merger of Big Brothers and Big Sisters with the Boys and Girls Club.

Edmonton is Resilient

Edmonton has faced a number of crises over its history—from major population explosions and growth, to the refugee crises of the 1970s. In every instance the social services agencies have stepped up to assist people in need. The Human Services Sector makes Edmonton resilient!

1 M. Mildon, “A Wealth of Voices: The Edmonton Social Planning Council 1940-1990” (Edmonton, 1990)

Time Periods

The following time periods mark distinct eras in Edmonton's Human Services Sector.





City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-5048b

(Nurse-in-charge, M. Mary Myers, at Edmonton Creche and Day Nursery, one of the Community Chest services)

Establishment: 1890–1918

Edmonton established itself as a city and capital of the Province of Alberta during this period. It grew from a town of a few hundred people in 1890 to almost 70,000 by 1914. This growth was followed by economic uncertainty and war, putting stress on the agencies in existence at the time. The early 20th century marks a period of significant social and religious movements, which influenced and shaped the demands and needs of the sector.

Economic Uncertainty: 1919–1939

Following World War I, Edmonton faced significant economic uncertainty, putting a burden on the sector. The 1920s and thirties were not favourable decades for the city. The economic effects of the Great Depression of the 1930s were exacerbated by the drought the prairies experienced. This time period was marked by slow growth and general economic uncertainty for the people of Edmonton and surrounding areas. The sector saw slow growth and relied heavily on neighbourliness, as well as religious organizations for support.

Services that did exist were often duplicated by a number of organizations.²

The War Years and Baby Boomers: 1939–1969

As a result of the economic boom of World War II and the oil boom beginning in the late 1940s, the city began to grow and thrive again. Facing limited resources and a growing population, the sector began to consolidate and coordinate its services. Secularization became more prominent as a result of demographic shifts and the changing landscape of gender roles. The Hungarian refugee crisis and major immigration from Europe forced the sector to organize and grow along with this new larger population. This period also saw more established professional standards and expectations within the sector. Compounding these events was the discovery of the Leduc No. 1 oil well in 1947, which transformed Alberta's economy and led to enormous growth in the Edmonton area.

2 M. Mildon, "A Wealth of Voices: The Edmonton Social Planning Council 1940-1990" (Edmonton, 1990)

The Big Oil Boom: 1970–1992

Although the discovery of Leduc No. 1 shifted Alberta's economy to oil and gas, it wasn't until the 1970s that the boom began—a result of high oil prices. The Human Services Sector was forced to grow commensurately. As the sector grew, it was able to diversify its services, which meant taking on the role as an advocate for its users along with providing essential services. Human rights and egalitarianism movements became a major part of Canadian society and the industry as a whole mirrored that in its actions. Work began to be performed with a focus on human rights in addition to traditional religious principles. This era also saw a significant change in government, with a larger public service, increased budget and changes in policy. This altered the relationship between government and the Edmonton's Human Services agencies. During this period, the sector experienced significant investment and growth.

The Klein Era: 1992–2006

The Klein Era had a major impact on the Human Services Sector. During this time, government relinquished responsibility over much of the Human Services work it had previously been accountable for. As a result, the sector was called on to do significantly more work with fewer resources. This shift led not only to more stress in the industry and high attrition but also the emergence of larger, more complex societal challenges.

The Present: 2006–Present

Towards the end of the Klein era, the amount of government spending towards the sector had been restored but the human capital deficit inflicted during the time of cutbacks could not be as easily repaired. This post-Klein era left the sector with tougher, more complicated and compounded problems to be handled by less experienced staff.

Efforts like the Social Policy Framework began to reimagine what the relationship between government and the sector could be. New initiatives like the Social Enterprise Fund (SEF) marked a new period of innovation.

Themes and Stories

The seven themes: advocacy, coordination, diversification, booms and busts, professionalization, government involvement and the status of women that are captured here highlight the major forces that drove the sector. Associated with each theme are stories that help capture particular moments in history. The stories are not meant to provide an overview or in-depth history of any single organization. Instead, these stories are here to provide context and demonstrate some of the major themes, issues and challenges the Human Services Sector has faced in Edmonton's history.



CHRIST IS THE ANSWER

City of Edmonton Archives EA-10-848 (Salvation Army – Social Services Centre)

Advocacy

During the 1960s, the priorities and outlook of many organizations and the sector in general, began to shift towards advocacy on behalf of clients. Though organizations continued to provide programming and a variety of services, there was an acknowledgement that people in need and the vulnerable population required organizations to assist them with standing up for their rights. From legal assistance to patient rights, the industry took on a variety of issues.

The sector also began to advocate for and promote itself more and more. In an increasingly competitive market, organizations needed to highlight the value and impact of their work in order to influence public policy and attain increased funding (both public and private).

Edmonton's Food Bank

Edmonton's Food Bank, created by the Edmonton Gleaners Association in January of 1981, began after a group of local non-profit organizations and agencies considered ways in which to deal with hunger and food waste in their communities. These individuals primarily worked in inner city neighborhoods where they saw hunger impacting everyone—from children in school, to the homeless and domestic violence victims. Edmonton's Food Bank was the first food bank in all of Canada and its creation influenced other communities across the country to do the same. Today, it collects fresh food from grocery stores, food producers and warehouses that would normally go to waste (not marketable or near best before date.) Around 70% of the food from the Food Bank is from the food industry, with the other 30% from donations.

The creation of the Edmonton Food Bank and others across the country brought awareness to issues of hunger and food security. The Edmonton Gleaners Association, in responding to a question of the legitimacy of Food Banks, said: "Until such time as governments fulfill their responsibilities, it was agreed that food banks must continue to operate, to salvage waste, to feed the poor, to speak up clearly on behalf of clients and to uphold in both thought and operation a conception of the intrinsic value and dignity of those served."³

Jewish Family Services (Jewish Welfare Society)

Jewish Family Services took on a variety of roles and responsibilities over the years. One of their major successes early on was making changes to the Child Welfare Act's adoption procedures. President Clara Mintz fought the province on its policy to place Jewish children with non-Jewish parents. Jewish religious law prescribes that a child be the same religion as its mother, and Mintz attested that the Act was ignoring the needs of Jewish children. She put pressure on the provincial government to update the Act and requested that they make every effort, for up to one year, to place adoptive children in a home with the same religious faith as its mother. Her spirited advocacy led to the eventual adoption of policies to place Jewish children with Jewish families.⁴

3 C. Ivany, *Sharing the harvest 1981–2001, Edmonton's Food Bank, 20th anniversary* (Edmonton: Edmonton Gleaners Association, 2001)

4 "Edmonton Jewish Family Services Fonds"

John Howard Society

Created in 1948, the John Howard Society of Alberta's main goal was to help offenders recently released from incarceration. The organization has provided a variety of services, programs and initiatives to assist in reintegrating offenders into the community. One example is Howard House, which provides care and treatment to young men with mental health and addiction problems and an Employment Assistance Program to help offenders secure employment after release. The Society has had to adapt to changing times and societal needs. Today, the John Howard Society provides computer learning programs, and other educational opportunities, to help men adapt to new technology and expectations in the workforce. Not only do they provide opportunities for former offenders, they are also responsible for counselling and services through their Victims Assistance Program and Family Violence Prevention Centre.⁵

Today, the John Howard Society advocates as a national organization to ensure that correctional and criminal justice policy adheres to "effective, just and humane" principles. The organization also engages in the research and study of the criminal justice process to advocate for reform and change in the law and its administration.

Youth Empowerment and Support Services (Formerly Youth Emergency Shelter Society)

The Youth Emergency Shelter Society (YESS) was created in 1978 when it became clear that there was a lack of services and support for youth at risk in the Edmonton area. Youth ages 16–18 had very few places to turn for shelter and assistance. They "fell through the cracks"—too old to receive children's aid services, but too young to access services for adults. These young people had no help to finish high school, and were often living on the streets without regular meals, or a safe place to live. Many became involved with drugs or prostitution and had no chance of completing high school without social assistance.

YESS opened its doors to the public in 1981, with a mandate to provide shelter, safety and hope to the youth that came through its programs. They see their role as providing possibilities, options and support to youth that need it. Today, YESS provides not only shelter (short and long term), but also medical care, counselling and educational programs. The organization works to change the perception of homeless youth, and to increase awareness of the lack of support available.⁶

5 John Howard Society Edmonton, "A Milestone Project: 60 Years of Service to Our Community," http://www.johnhoward.org/images/60_Years_for_WEB.pdf (accessed January 18, 2016)

6 YESS About Us. (n.d.). Retrieved January 17, 2016, from <http://yess.org/about-us>



 YOUTH EMERGENCY SHELTER

MILLCREEK POOL
OVERFLOW
PARKING


City of Edmonton Archives EA-207-379

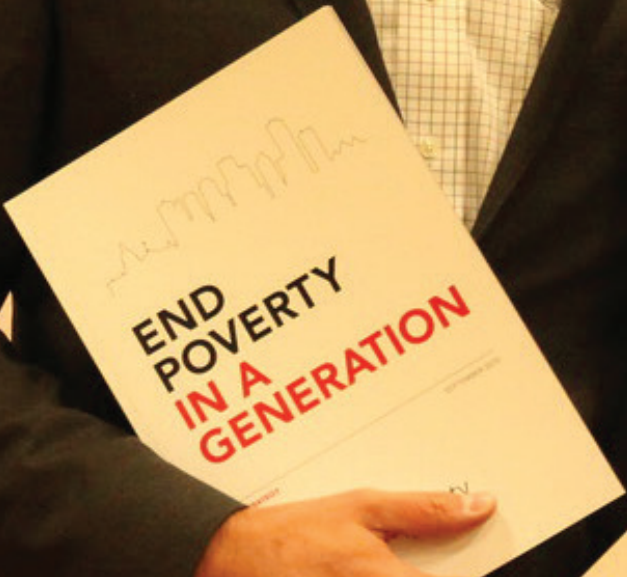
(Youth Emergency Shelter—Salvation Army Eventide Home was converted for use as a Youth Shelter in the 1980s)

88 5 29



Who We Are

The Creating Hope Society is a non-profit organization that recognizes that the voices of Aboriginal children and youth are essential to the development of effective policies and programs. We are committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for every Aboriginal child.



End Poverty Edmonton Launch

Collaboration

Edmonton's Human Services organizations tend to have regularly collaborated on projects and initiatives. Some of the sector's most successful endeavours have come from inter-agency partnerships. The Christmas Bureau, formed by a committee comprised of members from many Human Services agencies, is just one example. Cooperation between organizations arose partially out of necessity and partially out of innovation. Organizations have worked together on new projects and initiatives, or even merged to create new organizations, often as a result of economic challenges and uncertainty. In other instances, organizations saw coordinating as mutually beneficial for everyone involved, instead of continuing to overlap on projects. Edmonton's United Way (historically the Edmonton Community Chest and United Community Fund), the Edmonton Social Planning Council and the Edmonton Community Foundation serve as a unifying presence for the city's various agencies.

Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton & Area

This organization is an amalgamation of two child-serving organizations: Boys & Girls Clubs and Big Brothers Big Sisters. The merger between the two organizations took place over a number of years. In 1977, the Partners Program of the Boys & Girls Club merged with the mentoring programs of Big Sisters & Big Brothers. The amalgamation of the two agencies was finalized in 2010, completing a long, collaborative history between the clubs.

Both organizations have their own strong independent history, dating back to the 1960s and 70s. Under the umbrella of these two organizations BGCBigs provides programming specifically for children and youth in the Edmonton area, focussing on their physical, emotional, academic and overall well-being. The organizations have grown considerably over the years; the 2012–13 year saw 5,000 children and their families access BGCBigs' programs. Children are provided with a safe place after school in nine neighbourhood clubs, where they can access programming, meal provisions and mentoring. The organization also provides additional mentoring in over sixty Edmonton and area schools.⁷

Centennial Villa (1967–1973)

Centennial Villa was a group home for adolescent girls established by Catholic Women's League and Catholic Social Services. It was an open group setting for 12 girls between 13 and 18 years old and provided a place for girls who could not function in a foster home, but who had sufficient strengths to live in the open community. The goal was to develop the girls' independence, responsibility and personal growth. The building was donated to Catholic Charities by the Catholic Women's League, Edmonton Archdiocese, as its centennial project. Girls were referred to the Villa by federal, provincial and municipal child-care agencies, family counselling agencies, schools, guidance clinics and individuals in the community. The girls had to abide by specific rules (e.g. they must leave if they quit school).

The Villa was staffed by Sisters from the Grey Nuns and a director (who was a social worker). Social Workers provided lessons on such topics as cooking and sewing and a psychologist visited regularly. There were considerable challenges getting the city and public to accept the plans and location for the home. They had to raise \$50,000 over and above their regular activities and both organizations took on a variety of fundraising efforts to make the Villa a reality.⁸ Ultimately, maintaining the Villa and its original plan was not sustainable. Catholic Social Services took over the operation and shifted the plans into a long-term care home.⁹

7 Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton and Area, <http://bgcbig.ca/> (Accessed March 3, 2015)

8 "Catholic Women's League, Edmonton Diocesan Council Series"

9 J. Rasmussen, K. Yuzwenko and D. Drager, *Catholic Social Services of Edmonton: The first 25 years* (Edmonton: CSS, 1986)



*Provincial Archives of Alberta A9203
(1970 – Catholic Women's League – Mrs. Timmerley receiving a cheque for Centennial Villa)*



City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-6258d (Lady Aberdeen League readies hampers for needy Edmonton families)

The Christmas Bureau

The Christmas Bureau that Edmonton knows today was formally created in 1954. However, the origins of the organization came out of the formation of a Christmas Committee by the Edmonton Council of Social Agencies in 1940. Their goal was to coordinate the Christmas hamper programs put on by a variety of social agencies across the city. The Committee wanted to ensure consistency and cooperation between the organizations, so all those receiving hampers had the same experience. Through this process, they created quality standards and uniformity among the agencies' hampers, allowing for more families to be supplied with a hamper. In its first year, 54 organizations came together under the Committee's "Christmas Exchange" and reached over 1,000 families that Christmas season. Today, the Christmas Bureau works with over 100 social service agencies in Edmonton to provide food hampers and certificates to more than 67,000 Edmontonians from all walks of life during the holiday season.¹⁰

¹⁰ "Christmas Bureau History," Christmas Bureau of Edmonton, <https://www.christmasbureau.ca/about-us/history/> (accessed January 17, 2016)



City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-657 (Edmonton Rotary Club members deliver toy and food hampers to needy families)



City of Edmonton Archives: EA-160-188 (1922 – Jasper Highway Parade Float – Kiwanis Club)

The Kiwanis Club of South Edmonton

Since 1948, the Kiwanis Club of South Edmonton has been involved in fundraising, community service and assisting children locally and internationally. Over the years, the club has worked with other organizations on a variety of levels. They had a long-term partnership with Easter Seals starting in 1950, which included the creation of the Edmonton Cerebral Palsy Clinic in 1953 (now part of the Glenrose Hospital). Another example was in 1982 when Kiwanis Club provided funds for a swimming pool for physically disabled swimmers at the new YWCA. In 1994, Kiwanis Club purchased furniture and donated it to the Good Samaritan Nursing Home. That same year, Kiwanis Club, in collaboration with the City of Edmonton, the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) and Workers' Compensation Rehabilitation Centre, built a house for a low-income family through the 'Home Works Program.'¹¹

11 The Kiwanis Club of South Edmonton, <http://www.kiwanis-southedmonton.ca/> (Accessed March 5, 2016).



Provincial Archives of Alberta—A9200 (1970 – Catholic Women’s League, Archdiocese of Edmonton – Meals on Wheels)

Meals On Wheels

In 1967, a group of women from the Garneau United Church (and other women’s groups) discovered a need for a system of delivery of hot, prepared meals for those people unable to prepare their own. The Victorian Order of Nurses assumed responsibility for developing the Meals on Wheels Program. An Advisory Committee was set up and Mrs. Daisy Wilson of the Catholic Women’s League served as the Chairman of the Committee for several years.

Meals on Wheels relied on cooperation from a variety of organizations to function and grow. Meals were prepared in a variety of locations and depots included the Mount Pleasant Good Samaritan Nursing Home, Royal Alexandra Hospital, Grey Nuns Regional Centre and the Hardisty Nursing Home. The first meals were delivered in April 1969. Initially, the daily average was six delivered meals; by 1970 it was up to 22 meals.

The program grew and adapted over the years, expanding into the north side of Edmonton in 1970. Brochures were also printed in French and Ukrainian and through a partnership with Jewish Family Services, Kosher meals were made available as well. Meals on Wheels continues to provide hot meals to those in need. In 2014, the organization served a total of 154,330 meals. It’s efforts have been supported corporate groups, schools, and the community at large.¹²

¹² Brief History Meals on Wheels Program, 1967–1982 (Edmonton, 1983).

A Diversifying Population

Edmonton's diversity has been a major factor in its Human Services development—from First Nations people using this land as a migration corridor and teaching early settlers how to live in its harsh climate to present day refugee arrivals, the city has risen to embrace newcomers..

Immigrants arriving in the thousands in the early 1900s often required shelter, meals, clothing, job assistance and additional health care. Being completely new to the city and even to Canada, these immigrants often did not have family or community support as a social network to rely on. Though a large number of immigrants were from Great Britain and Eastern Canada, many from Eastern Europe faced language & social barriers, in addition to economic challenges.

In the post-war years, agencies began to focus on providing assistance to the increasing number of immigrants moving to the city. The Hungarian Refugee Crisis of 1956 involved a number of agencies working towards assisting those arriving in Edmonton. Starting in the 1960s, increased immigration from South Africa, Poland, and Czechoslovakia began to influence the sector across the board. Very few organizations were not touched by this influx of new people to the city. In the 1970s the sector faced a new refugee crisis— those fleeing Vietnam in 1978 and 1979 (known as the “boat people”.) The sector shifted from providing not only the basic necessities such as shelter, food and clothing, but continued to work with these new populations, assisting them with educational opportunities, professional development, advocacy and therapy .



Bent Arrow Family Nights

Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society

Bent Arrow was formed in 1994 to provide programming for Aboriginal children and families based in traditional Indigenous teachings. The origins of the organization's name lie in a traditional story about a warrior and hunter who designed his bows and arrows with near perfect straightness and accuracy. Bent arrows, conversely, would not find their mark. Bent Arrow's mission is to provide guidance and support to "bent arrows" who have veered off their path. The organization's creation reflects a larger trend in recognizing the special considerations that should be made when providing services for Aboriginal peoples.¹³

Programming covers all aspects of life, from family wellness to housing and employment. One example is Bent Arrow's "New In Town Aboriginal Welcome Service," which welcomes individuals and families new to Edmonton. Partnering with Boyle Street Community Services and Boyle Street Aboriginal Services, this program helps its users establish new relationships, develop skills and attain overall support and balance for their lives. Bent Arrow and its supporting organizations are aware that there are specific challenges related to urban and modern life that Aboriginal newcomers will face when arriving in Edmonton.¹⁴

¹³ History. (n.d.). Retrieved February 04, 2016, from <http://bentarrow.ca/about/history/>

¹⁴ "New In Town Aboriginal Welcome Service," Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, <http://bentarrow.ca/programs-and-services/community-safety/new-in-town-aboriginal-welcome-service/> (Accessed March 3, 2016)

Catholic Social Services

Catholic Social Services' Immigration and Settlement Services formed in 1962 to assist with new immigrants arriving in Edmonton. It was part of the Edmonton Interfaith Immigration Committee, which represents various religious denominations in the city. The Committee's main function is to welcome immigrants, assist in resettling and to provide community referrals. The first year they assisted 1,212 immigrant families and individuals; in 1971 that number increased to 8,600 and 14,000 in 1976. The focus of the services was on office interviews, home visits, visits to agencies with or on behalf of clients and assistance with finding employment.

In the late 1970s, the arrival of large numbers of Southeast Asian immigrants meant expanded service by Catholic Social Services. In January of 1978 Edmonton started accepting 50 families of small boat refugees a month; by September it was up to 70 a month. In 1980, Catholic Social Services alone dealt with 1,727 cases. A variety of programs were created to assist the high number of immigrants arriving in Edmonton with adapting and coping with their new lives. Programs included the Youth Outreach Project and Intercultural Education and Communication Project, Employment and Career Access Project.¹⁵

Catholic Women's League

One of Catholic Women's League's first projects was *Rosary Hall*, established in 1912 as a home for immigrant women new to Edmonton. Those living there paid \$4.50 (the equivalent of about \$95 in 2016) a week for room and board and were provided with coats, hats, dresses, as well as employment assistance. A news clipping noted that "At the hostel she is trained in the elements of Canadian citizenship, there she finds courage to face her new life and to make good in it. In a word the hostel tries to take the place of the home she has left."¹⁶

The Catholic Women's League was still providing assistance to new immigrants to the area in the 1970s. The National League created the Citizenship and Immigration Committee to welcome new immigrants, direct them to English classes, advise them on their problems related to health, employment, education, recreation, citizenship. They also assisted in acquainting new Canadians with government institutions and organizations and services and resources in their community.¹⁷

15 J. Rasmussen, K. Yuzwenko and D. Drager, *Catholic Social Services of Edmonton: The first 25 years* (Edmonton: CSS, 1986)

16 "Catholic Women's League, Edmonton Diocesan Council Series"

17 Ibid.



Provincial Archives of Alberta A9202 (Catholic Women's League—Immigrant Assistance of Sisters of Service)

Islamic Family & Social Services Association (IFSSA)

Established in 1992, the Islamic Family & Social Services Association (IFSSA) initially began as a religiously sensitive food bank. As the community it served grew, it began to fill a niche other organizations were unable to: that of a culturally and spiritually sensitive agent for preventative youth programming, domestic violence intervention and counselling. It was able to leverage the trust and familiarity it had within its core community to provide services to women and youth who would otherwise not access help.

IFSSA began as an organization of immigrants serving immigrants, but as it has grown a significant portion of its client base and staff has shifted to naturalized and second, third and fourth generation Canadians. IFSSA's move from food bank to a broader social service agency was part of a larger recognition by the community, government and funders of the city's shifting demographics and the need for partnerships, new approaches and capacity building to deal with the challenges of diverse communities.

IFSSA: Volunteers prepare to serve a roast beef dinner to inner-city residents at Boyle Street Community Services Co-operative





Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative Ltd.

Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative

The Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative was formed in 1993 to identify and support immigrant and ethnic communities not well-served by the public health system. The Co-operative was founded on principles to connect and bridge communities and systems. Early research conducted by the Co-operative indicated that immigrant and ethnic minority individuals in the Chinese community did not attend pre-natal classes (which were free of charge at the time). Staff discovered that there was a lack of awareness about the classes, a general lack of confidence to find out about services and a wariness about sharing health concerns with professionals.

In response, the Co-operative partnered with Alberta Health Services and Grant MacEwan College to offer training to 12 women, nominated as natural leaders and community mobilizers by their communities. This training was based on the mutual learning framework, where both teachers and students learned from one another. With the proper training, the women were able to deliver pre-natal classes in their own languages. Later, the Brokers began a post-natal care system based on a holistic belief in community development and mutual support groups.¹⁸

¹⁸ "Our History", Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative, <http://mchb.org/history/> (accessed March 3, 2016)



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: Community and non-profit leaders create the Edmonton Council of Social Agencies to provide a voice for the Human Services Sector. The Council also serves an important role as a platform for cooperation and the sharing of resources between agencies.

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.

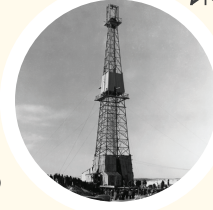
1942: The Jewish Welfare Society (later Jewish Family Services) is formed to provide social support for the Jewish community in Edmonton. It soon makes its services open to all Edmontonians.

1945: John Howard Society forms. Its mission is to provide support and training to the formerly incarcerated.

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.





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.

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.

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

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

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.

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

1994: Bent Arrow Healing Society is established.

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.

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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.

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.



Economic Booms and Busts

Edmonton's economy has been through significant changes over the past century. The original growth of Edmonton from a small town to city and capital of the Province of Alberta placed stress on the City of Edmonton and the provincial government. In response, Edmonton's formal and informal Human Services Agencies stepped up to fill the void in social assistance by providing services such as shelters, employment bureaus and health clinics.

A depression in the 1920s and the great depression of the 1930s severely hurt Edmonton's growth. The post war period saw the greatest change to Edmonton's economy—the 1947 crude oil discovery at Leduc No. 1 and the oil boom that followed. Since then, Edmonton's economy has been at the mercy of the price of oil. The result is a Human Services Sector shaped and defined by Edmonton's unique economic realities.

These economic booms and busts created different challenges and stressors on the sector. In fact, economic booms often caused significant challenges, as they marked an increase in population, stress on infrastructure, low vacancy rates, high rents, transient populations, drug & alcohol abuse and family stress. Economic busts marked funding shortfalls along with increased demand and need for the industry's services. As Edmonton's population grew from a small city of 70,000 in 1914 to 650,000 by the year 2000, the sector had to grow along with it and felt the impact of economic instability more and more as the years went by.¹⁹

¹⁹ "Population History", City of Edmonton, http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/facts_figures/population-history.aspx (Accessed March 5, 2016)



Volunteers at Fort Edmonton Park support the Edmonton Food Bank

Edmonton's Food Bank

Edmonton's Food Bank has seen its share of ups and downs over the years. Their first major fundraising effort was a "Radiothon" in 1982; since then there have been major efforts throughout the year by various organizations, including Heritage Days in August and major sporting events, to raise funds and donations. The Food Bank has also seen an increase in need since its beginnings. Since the 1980s, the population of Edmonton has grown considerably, while funding and support to Human Services organizations has not been consistent. The organization sees its need grow during economic uncertainty, but even during times of economic prosperity, demand has continued to rise.²⁰

The role of the Food Bank has grown, feeding thousands of Edmontonians a month. It has become a resource for individuals and families across the city (by 1997 there were over 30 depots around the city, distributing food hampers to 16,000 people every month). In September 2015, the Food Bank was distributing 2,000 more hampers a month than it had been a year earlier—a sign of the economic and population changes to Edmonton.²¹ The Food Bank has become a barometer of economic and social challenges Edmonton faces from year to year.

²⁰ K. Ivany, *Sharing the harvest 1981–2001*, Edmonton's Food Bank, 20th anniversary (Edmonton: Edmonton Gleaners Association, 2001)

²¹ "Edmonton food bank struggles to fill shelves," *CBC News*, September 12, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/edmonton-food-bank-struggles-to-fill-shelves-1.3225593> (accessed January 17, 2016)



City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-92b (Dormitory of Bonnie Doon Evantide Home)

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army of Edmonton established itself in Edmonton in 1893, but did not begin its role in social work in the city until 1909. The Salvation Army was set-up during Edmonton's first major economic boom and growth spurt. The city was rapidly expanding, and immigrants were pouring in. The organization had a broad scope in social work, from providing shelter, clothing and food, to new immigrant assistance. Many immigrants could not find jobs or adequate accommodation. For the Salvation Army, such problems presented the opportunity to show its real worth to the community.²²

Its first endeavour was allowing transient and out-of-work men to redeem work for a free meal. In 1911, the Salvation Army opened a free library and employment bureau, with funding assistance from the City of Edmonton. The Metropole (working man's hostel) opened in 1914 at 534 Fraser Ave. It had room for up to 17 homeless men. By 1923, with a downturn in the economy, the need for shelter became much greater; the Working Men's Hostel was opened and could accommodate up to 100 men. The Salvation Army opened Evantide Home for men in 1926, which was a residence with room for 50 men located in Bonnie Doon. The home was for elderly men in their last years of life.²³ Regardless of the economic situation, the Salvation Army has also pushed to provide as many services and programs as possible to those in need.

²² "Salvation Army Fonds"

²³ R. Moyles, *Not Just Another Church: A History of The Salvation Army in Edmonton 1983-1993* (Edmonton: The Salvation Army Temple Corps Edmonton, 1992)



City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-661a (The Salvation Army's Annual Christmas dinner for homeless men at army hostel)



City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-92j (1947 – Dormitory of Y.M.C.A Men's Hostel)

Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)

The YMCA of Edmonton was established on March 15, 1907. Early on the YMCA provided a variety of programs, from evening school and a boarding house, to services for men seeking employment. Veterans of World War I were welcomed to the YMCA, with dormitories opened to them and additional space built for their needs. As the years went by, the YMCA continued to serve its community, even through financial hardship. The organization was challenged in finding its place amidst increasing competition from other social services and church campaigns. Financial challenges and social changes, impacted its program strategies. In the 1970s, many adult social, boys' and youth programs at the Central and Downtown YMCA were cancelled due to low interest and enrolment.

As a result, the YMCA shifted its perspective and began moving out of its building to meet the community. Programs included City Social Services, where the YMCA worked with young offenders on probation or who were awaiting trial; Youth Leadership Program; Employment Program (1972), which helped disadvantaged, unemployed youth to overcome the barriers they faced in finding employment; and Employment training programs for refugee and immigrant women (1987). The YMCA has grown considerably over the years and has a wide variety of programming and services available. The association has always had a policy that no one is turned away because of an inability to pay. Through fundraising, government support and grants, the YMCA is able to ensure that everyone can benefit from their programs and services.²⁴

²⁴ C. Hatcher, *YMCA of Edmonton: The First One Hundred Years* (Edmonton, YMCA of Edmonton, 2007)

Professionalization and Secularization

Until formal social work was established as a field in North America through the 1930s and 1940s, Human Services Sector was based heavily in grass-roots and religious organizations that relied primarily on volunteers who learned on the job and in the field.²⁵ Influenced heavily by the social reform movements of the time, these organizations' mandates focused on providing basic necessities, such as food and shelter, as well as moral and religious guidance to assist those in need in establishing a clear path for their lives in Edmonton. Many of the organizations that established themselves in the early part of the 20th century and that still remain in Edmonton today, benefitted over the years from national or even international support from their larger umbrella organizations, such as the YMCA/YWCA and Salvation Army.

By the mid-1900s, the Edmonton Human Services Sector began to formalize, establishing professional standards and qualifications amongst its staff and volunteers. Established in 1958, the Alberta Association of Registered Social Workers marked a change in organizational approaches to programming and services. During this time, agencies changed their attitude towards mental health issues, with the belief that institutionalization was often too extreme for most and instead established community supports, programming and resources.

In the more contemporary era, the internal structure of organizations have changed considerably as a result of professionalism, unionization and external standards. No longer are these organizations simply mission-based charities; many of them are also large businesses working with multi-million dollar budgets to support their goals. More sophisticated funding structures and government requirements mean there are more possibilities, but also considerably more administration. Finally, rapidly changing technology puts pressure on the sector to adapt and constantly update—something that was not an issue 100 years prior.

25 M. Mildon

Bissell Centre (All Peoples Mission)

The Bissell Centre (originally All Peoples Mission) started as a Methodist mission working with Edmonton's Ukrainian population in 1910. They provided a variety of educational opportunities, such as teaching English, "Canadian" house-keeping and Sunday school. As Edmonton's population grew and diversified, so did the organization's programs & services. They began providing shelter, food, employment assistance and opened a Welfare Store and warehouse in 1961. The original All Peoples Mission had changed its mission, vision and program delivery considerably from 50 years previously. 1965 signified the beginning of major changes and updates to the organization: a number of board members retired, marking a shift in governance and future planning, and the first staff member with a degree in Sociology was hired. The same year, a report highlighted the need for better organization, communication, planning and staffing within the organization, as well as the need for better co-ordination with other organizations.

In 1972, the Bissell Centre established a new mission and vision, which created clear goals and parameters for the organization. In particular, the agency sought to promote human rights and dignity by providing a variety of social service options. They also strived to provide services that met new needs not already covered by other agencies. One year later, Margery Stelck, a professionally trained and educated social worker, became director of the Bissell Centre.²⁶

The Edmonton Social Planning Council

The Edmonton Social Planning Council (ESPC) was formed in 1940 to provide a co-ordinating body for the delivery of Human Services in Edmonton. The formation of the ESPC reflected a larger trend across North America in the professionalization of social work services. The ESPC was tested not long after its formation. In 1943, the organization wrote a report criticizing the government's adoption policies and procedures. The Superintendent of Child Welfare was reported to have bundled children in his car, driven down the highway and stopped at farms along the road to offer babies.²⁷ This sparked a Royal Commission Investigation into child welfare practices in Edmonton, resulting in a report supporting the ESPC's earlier findings.

This report was not to the government's liking and it was ordered that absolutely no copies be made of the original report. In response, a concerned group of volunteers and social workers smuggled the report out of the legislature the night before its presentation, typed out stencil copies and returned it before the next morning. This ensured the report's survival and marked one of the first times the ESPC conflicted with an organization it had to cooperate with.

26 "Bissell Centre: Our History," Bissell Centre Website, <http://www.bissellcentre.org/our-history> (accessed February 23, 2016)
A.Peyton, *The friendly door: A history of Bissell Centre* (Edmonton, 1979)

27 M. Mildon

Jewish Family Services (Jewish Welfare Society):

The Jewish Welfare Society (formed in 1942; renamed Jewish Family Services (JFS) in 1961) went through considerable internal changes as an organization over the years. These internal expectations also influenced the rest of the Human Services Sector. In the 1950s, JFS felt the impact of the oil boom and post-war population explosion. Edmonton's population had tripled and many new families and transients to the region had no one to turn to but the JFS assistance. Early on, JFS recognized the need to employ professionally qualified social workers. Clara Mintz, the original president and director, formed The Alberta Association of Registered Social Workers, which established professional standards and expectations not only for professionals, but for the entire sector.

Newcomers have represented up to 80% of Jewish Family Services' clientele. Services provided have included employment assistance, therapy, training and housing assistance. JFS assisted immigrants from Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and South Africa despite limited resources and staffing. In the 1970s and eighties, over 500 Russian immigrants were assisted by only two JFS social workers.

The organization's board has faced many obstacles over the years, including limited budgets, staffing, office space, inexperience and more. Events such as the Hungarian refugee crisis in 1957 put substantial stress and pressure on the agency. JFS, however, thrived during this time and continued to see tremendous growth over the years. In 1959 their budget was only \$2,000; in 1973 it was \$50,000, by 2015 it had grown to more than \$300,000. They have never charged individuals for their services.²⁸

28 "Edmonton Jewish Family Services Fonds"

Government Involvement

Edmonton and Alberta's political landscape has had a significant influence on the Human Services Sector. Economic policies have had the largest impact on the sector, as a large portion of funding for agencies come from government. When economic times were good, agencies reaped the benefits of a plentiful budget by getting increased funding for their programming, services and infrastructure; when times were tough, less overall resources and funding were provided, which often led to internal cutbacks or downsizing to services provided.

Changes to legislation and policies impacted the sector in a variety of ways. While some legislation directly impacted the sector, agencies have often had to react to the consequences of legislative policies (both intended and unintended) and the way in which those decisions influenced and altered the social fabric of the city. The relationship between government and Human Services agencies is constantly in flux and the sector has had to react to government influence, filling in the gaps in the system and taking on new and changing responsibilities.

Government has also been a meaningful partner for many organizations over the years. Government provides stability, support and resources that allow for specific endeavours to move forward more quickly and successfully.



Provincial Archives of Alberta A15026

Good Samaritan Society

Good Samaritan Society arose out of a need for long term health care and residences for Edmonton’s aging population. With increasing life expectancy, shifting family values, limited resources for the elderly and no formal government strategy to respond to the needs of those requiring long term care, the Good Samaritan Society established plans to open its first hospital in 1955.

In the 1960s, the Alberta Government began mass deinstitutionalization of mental patients in what were deemed “non-threatening” categories. In a decision that would have a major impact on hospital and nursing care, the government established a program in 1971 to move elderly mental hospital patients with a variety of mental disorders into nursing homes or auxiliary hospitals. There were no specific psychiatric support programs in place and after some residents set fires within their homes on a daily basis (trying to light imaginary altar candles), the Society refused to admit any more mental health patients beyond those who had already been admitted.

The various Good Samaritan Society operations, programs and residences have been impacted by the economy and government funding. An example of this was seen in 1989, when the provincial government started to classify all nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals and base funding on complexity of care and patient load. In 1993, funding for nursing hours was cut by over \$220,000, which was a major cutback to an organization like the Good Samaritan Society. By 1994, the Society had to downsize staff and could no longer subsidize clients based on their ability to pay.²⁹

29 M. Scott



Provincial Archives of Alberta A10774 (Misericordia Hospital–Maternity Wing, Edmonton)

Misericordia Hospital

In 1900, four Misericordia Sisters arrived in Edmonton to run a new hospital at the request of Bishop Grandin of St. Albert. The Maternity Hospital served not only as a hospital, but as a boarding house and orphanage. It was meant to complement Edmonton's first hospital, the Edmonton General, which was built five years earlier. Specifically, it was a specialized institution for unwed mothers and their babies.

Post World War Two, Edmonton saw major growth and the Misericordia Hospital was a large part of that. In 1949 a new nurses' residence was built, which included lounges, a chapel, recreation room, classrooms and science laboratory. Unwed pregnant mothers and orphans were not forgotten—the creation of the Misericordia Hospital Welfare Centre ensured they would still be cared for. However, the nursery at the Misericordia eventually closed as children were increasingly placed in foster homes instead of at the orphanage.

The 1960s saw the creation of the modern Misericordia Hospital we know today. The hospital moved away from being an entirely independent hospital and organization. With that, the hospital saw increased staff, size and scope.

In 1976, one of the most important changes in the operation of the new hospital occurred: the departure of the Misericordia Sisters. Due to their declining numbers, along with increased government involvement and the greater complexity of hospital services, the Misericordia Sisters decided to withdraw from Edmonton and the hospital.³⁰

³⁰ J. Gilpin, *The Misericordia Hospital: 85 years of Service in Edmonton* (Edmonton: Plains Pub. for 85th Anniversary Celebration Committee, Misericordia Hospital, 1986)

Status of Women

The status of women is intrinsically linked to changes in the Human Services Sector. Early on, the focus on and concern for women was primarily for single, unemployed women or (unwed) mothers. The social identities of women were largely linked to those of their male counterparts and employment opportunities were limited in scope. Maternal health, maintaining virtue and educating women new to the city was the priority for organizations such as the YWCA.

By mid-century, women's rights began to change considerably and they required different services and support from the sector than they had 50 years earlier. Women were entering the work force in larger numbers and traditional gender and family roles began to shift. These changes put substantial stress on Human Services agencies, forcing the sector to adapt and update its approaches and outlook. In more recent years, the industry has diversified to assist women of all backgrounds and their larger family units.



City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-2309a (April 26, 1949 – Kids at Edmonton Creche put on stage production)

Edmonton Creche and Day Nursery

The Edmonton Creche and Day Nursery opened in March of 1930, with the goal to supply daytime care for children of pre-school age working mothers who were not able to provide for them otherwise. A group of women were inspired to open the Creche after a small boy was burned in a fire while his mother was away at work. The staff's goal was "to keep intact the home that might otherwise be broken up, if the only wage earner, the mother, was not able to keep her employment; also to keep the child healthy and happy."

Typically, the clientele were working mothers, or mothers that required time to go shopping or to an appointment. Others were women from the country or women who were travelling through the city and needed assistance with childcare. During the war years, the Creche cared for the children of soldiers'. Over the years, the Creche provided care for thousands of children.

By the 1960s, the Creche staff and board felt that their responsibilities and scope had grown past their original purpose. The changes of in the role of women from pre to post-war life greatly influenced the decision to close. The Edmonton Creche published in the Edmonton Journal: "We feel we have done our job well and it is time to fold up," and "We have found in recent years that while there are certain mothers who still require this service, there are also a great many cases in which both the husband and wife are working as a matter of choice rather than necessity and that these families are using the Creche facilities for the care of their small children in order to give both parents a free hand in obtaining employment."³¹ The Creche closed in 1968, primarily as a result of the changing role of women in society and its unwillingness to change alongside society.

31 "Edmonton Creche and Day Nursery Society Fonds"



City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-1152a (June 11, 1948- Creche and Day Nursery: Children eat their dinner)

Elizabeth Fry Society

Established in 1977, The Elizabeth Fry Society is the only agency working with women in contact with the legal system in Greater Edmonton. It offers a variety of programs for women in the prison and legal system. Early on, it became clear to volunteers that the longer they worked with individual women in prison, the more they were able to create plans for them to be successful outside of prison. The Prison Visitation Program (Prison Liaison Program), established in 1979, expanded to include pre-release planning, one-on-one support and group work.

Since then, the organization has developed a variety of programs focussed on women's rights in the legal system. This includes the Daily Living Skills program (established in 1989), which provided an alternative to prison for women who could benefit from programs and supervision in the community. The society has also assisted female youth, making sure these young women are fairly represented and also educated and empowered to make good life decisions.

The Society's Aboriginal Women's Program, developed with the assistance of an Aboriginal steering committee, began by offering cultural awareness workshops to staff, clients and other social services agencies. The Aboriginal Women's Program now provides a variety of programming, including talking and healing circles, craft circles, sweats, workshops and Aboriginal retreats.³²

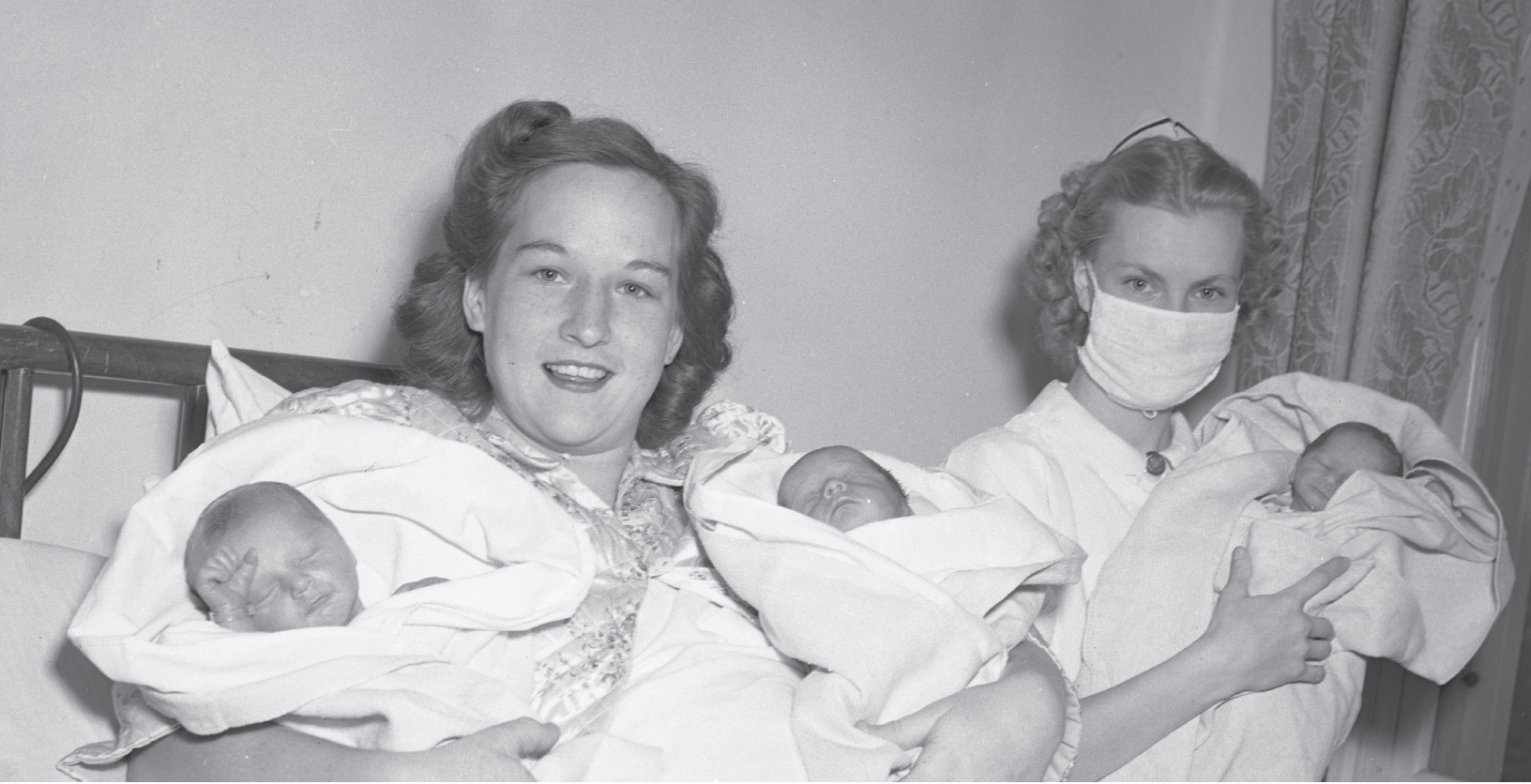
Misericordia Hospital

In addition to its government advocacy role, the Misericordia Hospital played a significant social role for many women in Edmonton's early history. The Misericordia Sisters dedicated themselves to caring for isolated women, unmarried mothers, and their children. Their work was apostolic in nature, and this was reflected in the care they provided.

The Sisters welcomed their first patient before they had even unpacked or completed renovations on the building, demonstrating the demand and need for their new hospital. They would see approximately 200 patients in their first five years in Edmonton. The majority of their patients were not unwed pregnant young women, but instead were often married women and even at times men in need of medical attention. As a result, the hospital began offering general medical care on top of its specialized services for pregnant women. Their focus, however, remained with women. The Sisters demonstrated their commitment to women's care with the opening of the hospital's maternity wing in 1940, the first addition in almost 20 years.

The hospital steadily grew and throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the Sisters continued to assist unwed pregnant young women and abandoned children. The operation of the Misericordia Crèche was described in 1925 by the *Western Canadian*:

32 Elizabeth Fry Society Edmonton, "Our History," <http://www.efryedmonton.ab.ca/history.html> (accessed January 18, 2016)



City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-1438a (Triplets at Edmonton Misericordia)

“The prospective mother is usually admitted a few months before confinement and while waiting works for her board. If possible she will pay her hospital bill while under the doctor’s and nurses’ care and if she cannot do this, remains afterwards and works until her expenses are paid, in the meantime caring for her child. The Sisters then assume the responsibility of the child unless the mother wishes to keep the baby which is seldom done.”³³

33 J. Gilpin



City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-1616C (YWCA Sewing Class)

Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)

Edmonton's YWCA was established in 1907, with an initial focus on providing shelter for women travelling from afar or seeking work in the booming prairie city of Edmonton. At the time, women had little political or economic power. The YWCA represented part of the women's movement of the time period, in which Christian women created organizations of and for women, resulting in channels where social reform could be brought forward.

As Edmonton changed, the YWCA adapted along with it. The World Wars, oil industry and boom years, city growth and increasingly ethnically diverse population forced the YWCA to diversify and change its programs and services. For example, the YWCA residence originally preferred women who either worked or went to school. Over time, the YWCA sponsored housing for other groups of women, such as homeless women, or those needing other types of support. In the 1950s, the YWCA focused on helping Hungarian refugees, other immigrants, and Aboriginal women new to the city who needed help finding work and inexpensive permanent housing. The YWCA also developed two halfway houses: Hill Top, for women leaving jail and McDougall, for women with social problems.³⁴

As the needs of women changed and became more complicated, the YWCA offered more programs and support. In the 1960s, more women entered the workforce, which meant entire families started to utilize the services the YWCA provided. The YWCA creates an "open door" feel, where everyone is welcome to help serve the organization and use its services. What began as an organization focussing on just young women now serves women (and their families) of all ages.

³⁴ M. Bauer, *Retrospect—the Edmonton YWCA, 1957–1991* (Edmonton: YWCA History Project Group, 1993)

What Does Our Past Mean For Our Future?

What does the history of the Human Services Sector tell us? What can we learn from the past to help plan for the future?

First: Collaboration is Important and Necessary

Since the early years of the social services sector in Edmonton (late 19/early 20th century) the sector has grown holistically, reacting to new issues and problems as they arose. Early on, organizations became aware of the utility and power of collaboration with one another and cooperation has grown to become a unique and significant part of Edmonton's Human Services Sector. Collaboration is not only useful as it provides enhanced opportunities and options for agencies, but has become an essential part of the system. This technique combines all potential resources available by partnering groups, making it an ideal method to make the most of limited resources.

“We need a more collaborative approach and a long term strategy for the entire Human Services Sector.”

– Lewis Cardinal,
Aboriginal Metis Leader

When organizations share their resources and work demands, they are more likely to succeed and thrive.³⁵ Executed properly, partnerships lead to stronger communities, relationships and more successful long-term endeavours.³⁶ Collaboration can be a one-time project, a long-term agreement, or even lead to the merging of two autonomous organizations. This approach puts the clients' needs first over those of independent organizations and strengthens the sector as a whole.

There are various reasons Edmonton's Human Services Sector has taken a collaborative approach. First and foremost, it is a way to make the most out of limited funding.³⁷ By working together organizations stretch their budgets further than they would on their own. Sharing overhead, administrative resources and knowledge make collaboration valuable. Secondly, the official merging of two organizations can be motivated not just by financial reasons, but also by retirement of staff and the changing landscape of the sector's workforce.³⁸ These pressures make collaboration a useful (and often essential) method for moving programs and services forward.

The numerous methods of collaboration also make it an effective choice for the sector. There are, of course, partnerships between Human Service Sector agencies on everything from small programming initiatives and fundraising, to the complete merging of organizations. There is also collaboration between the sector and government and/or the private sector on a variety of programming and services, which gives these organizations additional resources, funding and visibility. Finally, Edmonton's Human Services organizations are lucky to be provided support by two large funding organizations: the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region and the Edmonton Community Foundation, which lead collaboration between groups. This is unique: as Craig Stumpf-Allen of the Edmonton Community Foundation notes, "in other jurisdictions across the country, these agencies compete for donors instead of working together."

Looking towards the future, the sector must rely on this approach to move forward and grow. It will create longevity in the sector—everything from the lifespan of individual agencies, to their programming, services and staffing. As funding and resources continue to be limited, the sector should incentivize collaboration instead of competition. The Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations identified collaboration as a key way to leverage limited resources and reduce costs in a 2011 report.³⁹

Collaboration leads to more productive conversations, less redundancy and more efficiency. The potential for creativity and growth through partnerships outweighs individual organizational needs or desires. But these relationships are not solely between sector organizations; this conversation must include government and private industry as well. Liz O'Neil (Executive Director, Boys & Girls Clubs and Big Brothers Big Sisters) notes that, "we need business and charitable leaders to spend time together. This framework must not be a funder and funded dynamic, but between true collaborators."

35 Fisher, J. & Govindarajan, V. (1990). Sharing, Control Systems, and Resource Sharing: Effects on Business-Unit Performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(2), 259-285. <http://amj.aom.org/content/33/2/259.short>

36 Wellesley Institute. (2011). *Collaboration in the Third Sector*. Toronto: Wellesley Institute

37 (Cardinal, L., & Stumpf-Allen, C., among others. Personal interviews.)

38 (Kolkman, J., among others. Personal interviews.)

39 Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations. (2011). *CCVO Economic Climate Survey of Alberta's Nonprofits and Charities*. Calgary: Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations.

Second: The Sector Needs People

“Our sector is being impacted by inequalities across the workforce; we have a barbell situation—older and younger people make up the majority of our staff and there are less staff in the middle. Talent is being poached by for-profit and public service and we need to make it a priority to hold on to staff and start succession planning.”

— Jim Gurnett

In the 1970s and eighties, the sector benefited from substantial investments in training a new generation to work in the sector. Liz O'Neil notes that, "the significant investment in youth we saw 30–40 years ago led directly to the growth and capacity development of the non-profit sector we see today. Similar investment is necessary to alleviate the human capital challenges of the sector we see today." The professionals that came out of this training and continued to work in the non-profit arena are its leaders today. The sector has been through some significant stress over the years and lost a number of professionals to other industries in the 1990s. The majority of these people never returned to the sector, leaving a generational gap in the industry. In present day, due to the baby boomer generation (the largest group of the workforce) approaching retirement, the sector generally lacks a strong succession plan, or mentorship for its younger workforce.⁴⁰

One main question arises out of this current predicament: Where is future talent going to come from? Part of the answer is in collaboration. By adapting and thinking creatively, agencies have the opportunity to engage their younger workforce. Partnerships also provide more opportunities for staff, in addition to greater resources and funding, allowing staff to maintain their career in the sector.

Investment in the industry and its workforce is also necessary. Not only a financial investment, but also the same kind of investment the sector saw 40 years ago to get young people interested and invested in the future of these organizations. As Yvonne Chiu (Executive Director, Edmonton Multicultural Health Brokers) explains, "People are working in the sector out of love, choosing it because they care. These workers shouldn't have to bear the burden entirely." Agencies require succession and mentorship plans so talent and future leaders feel valued, engaged and empowered to work in the sector and stay with these agencies in the long-term.

⁴⁰ McFarland, J., McKenna, B. and Parkinson, D. (November 8, 2015). *The Boomer Shift*. The Globe and Mail. Retrieved from theglobeandmail.com

Third: It's Getting Harder

The majority of organizations that emerged in the 1970s and eighties had focused objectives and clear problems they were tackling. Human Services Agencies have had difficulties developing and adapting to deal with long-term challenges. As Russ Dahms, Executive Director, Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, explains, “The sector’s major players were an accident of history, there was no design, no plan.” John Kolkman (Research Coordinator, Edmonton Social Planning Council) notes that, “organizations reflect the time they exist in.” The sector’s focus, until recently, had been on specific individual issues and reacting to problems as they came up.

Cases have become more complex, more chronic in nature and difficult to anticipate.

In more recent years, cases have become complex, more chronic in nature and increasingly difficult to anticipate. Social problems are maintaining themselves in communities and individuals. Increasingly, these problems are becoming multi-generational issues. Lewis Cardinal, when speaking specifically about the Aboriginal population, notes that “trauma is being transferred from generation to generation. This is a recipe for keeping jails full, not building a fair society.” This is caused in part by a larger (and continually growing) population, general underinvestment in Human Services agencies and the cyclical boom-bust nature of Alberta’s economy. Edmonton’s diverse population also adds complexity to the issue. Each community deals with its own unique challenges and obstacles.

The new frontier for the Human Services Sector is tackling how to manage this complexity. The current generation of front line and social workers need experience, They suffer from a lack of senior mentorship and the challenges of dealing with increasingly complex problems.⁴¹ One single social problem is intimately interlinked with the other issues. For example, poverty is now multi-generational, systemic rarely a lone concern. This is important because services now have to take on issues from various perspectives and approaches. One size does not fit all. These problems do not exist in a bubble—it is not just on an individual or even local community level, but on a larger social level that must be considered first. Urban planning should instil connection and create demographic and economic diversity throughout the city. Edmonton has grown larger and support networks have not kept up with this growth. Instead of shallow networks, the sector needs to create deeper support networks.⁴²

41 (Gurnett, J. Personal interview.)

42 (Cardinal, L. Personal interview.)

Fourth: We Need to Plan

The sector is clamouring for an opportunity to collaborate further and wants a plan that will help guide it.⁴³ Organizations know the benefits of working together and while it is a prominent method being used, it is not being utilized to its full potential. Much of the sector’s energies are focused on what has happened, which has been left to chance, reacting to events instead of planning ahead. Lewis Cardinal explains that the sector as a whole needs a plan. He asks, “What kind of services do we want to put in place to create opportunity? This needs long-term funding—we need move from thinking ahead five years to five generations.”

“The sector needs space for collaboration and introspection. It needs to be treated like NASA – allowed time for research, investigation, and analysis, without focusing only on immediate fixes. Some things take time.”

– Lenora LeMay

⁴³ Collaboration was a recurring theme in almost all industry interviews conducted as part of this research. See also *Collaboration in the Third Sector* (Wellesley Institute, 2011).

Moving forward, industry leaders are aware they need to think ahead not just two–three years, but 10 to 15 years and beyond. Currently, essential services’ funding is being left to what people happen to have to donate and share. Long term planning must take precedent so groups can save and prepare for the future. Funding is not always consistent, which impacts all aspects of stability—from programs and services, to retaining employees. Lenora LeMay, formerly with the Hope Foundation, notes that the sector needs time to learn and discover, instead of being constantly overwhelmed by the day to day. She states, “The sector needs space for collaboration and introspection. It needs to be treated like NASA - allowed time for research, investigation, and analysis, without focusing only on immediate fixes. Some things take time.” This requires committed and consistent funding from public (government funds and public donations), as well as from private industry.

One of the ways in which the sector can be provided with additional time and support is through its community and cooperative support organizations. “The sector needs to be and can be, influential. Not just putting on band aids, but by working with cooperative bodies like ECVO (The Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations), housing groups and umbrella bodies to make major change,” says Jim Gurnett. The key to success is further supporting these forums and industry-leading organizations such as Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, and the Edmonton Social Planning Council. These organizations provide new opportunities and ways to advocate for the sector that individual organizations do not have the ability to do on their own. Through these groups, additional funding can be procured, along with greater overall advocacy, awareness and support. Most importantly, relying on an organization such as ECVO allows the sector and individual organizations to plan for the long–term future as it takes pressure off of their day to day and gives them the chance to look forward to the future.

Concluding Remarks

The history of the Human Services Sector in Edmonton teaches us much about our city; not only its past and its people but also about what makes a vibrant community and what we need to be doing to plan for our future.

Successful agencies consistently re-evaluate their purpose, strategies and role. This renewal is essential for longevity in the sector.

The Organizational Life Cycle

Every organization has its own life cycle and journey. There are a few aspects in an organization's history that are fairly consistent across the sector. The first is that there is usually an instigating event that propels the organization or a group of people to tackle a particular problem. In the time that follows creation, most agencies take a number of years to find their footing and role in the community. They will succeed with some endeavours and fail with others, but this process helps clarify what works and what the community needs.

Secondly, successful agencies consistently re-evaluate their purpose, strategies and role. This renewal is essential for longevity in the sector. They make the most of the community connections around them (community and umbrella organizations, other agencies, government, private sector), which helps them succeed and grow. Collaboration and partnerships make up a significant part of organization's growth.

Organizations that do not update their approach to match the change in Edmonton's population and needs often close their doors. Some last a few years to a few decades, but without renewal and updating they cannot cope with the new stressors and changes in their community.⁴⁴ The groups that thrive often have umbrella organizations that assist with funding, structure and marketability. Smaller organizations may merge with other agencies to create something new and to make sure they continue making a difference regardless of limited resources.⁴⁵

The Human Services Sector Provides Basic Infrastructure

We need to invest in the Human Services industry the way we invest in basic infrastructure like arenas and airports. The Human Services Sector plays a foundational role in our city and requires more collaborative long-term research and planning.

We need to begin planning now for what we hope the sector will look like in future generations. Where will future talent come from? How will it be developed? What will the relationship between funders and the sector be like? What services do we imagine future Edmontonians needing and how will we deliver these services?

Our past shows that we are innovative, cooperative and resilient. These values, which have contributed so much to our city's success, will help illuminate the path forward.

44 (LeMay, L. Personal interview.)

45 MAP for Nonprofits, (2011). *What Do We Know About Nonprofit Mergers?*. St. Paul: MAP for Nonprofits.

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ALIF Partners Team

ALIF Partners is a worker owned co-operative providing management, research and strategic planning consulting services. We focus on growing the **for-benefit**¹ sector by bringing together talented professionals with a wide range of experiences in heritage, management and academia.

DIRECTOR

Omar Yaqub MBA
omar@alifpartners.com

MANAGER

Les Chiang
les@alifpartners.com

RESEARCHER

Leslie Holmes MA
leslieh@alifpartners.com

DESIGNER

Kit Walton
kit@alifpartners.com



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Front Photo: City of Edmonton Archives EA-600-6258b (1950 – Kiwanis Ladies Club ready Christmas parcels for Kiwanis Home for Children) *Back Photo:* Edmonton City Archives EA-600-3492 (Salvation Army charity fund. (Carol Ann Henry makes contribution))

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