

**VOLUNTEER
ALBERTA**

2021 Annual Report

LAND AFFIRMATION

Volunteer Alberta's main office is situated on Treaty 6 Territory, specifically, [amiskwaciwâskahikan](#) as it was referred to by the plains Cree peoples among other indigenous names, and the homeland of the Métis Nation. Our staff, board, and our work reach across Treaties 6, 7, and 8 and we affirm that the land we call Alberta is the traditional and ancestral territory, as well as present-day homes of many Nations, including the Blackfoot Confederacy – [Kainai](#), [Piikani](#), and [Siksika](#) – the [Cree](#), [Dene](#), [Saulteaux](#), [Nakota](#), [Sioux](#), [Stoney Nakoda](#), the [Tsuu T'ina Nation](#), and the Métis People of Alberta, which includes the Métis Settlements and the Six Regions of the Métis Nation of Alberta. Since time immemorial, First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples have cared for these lands, and they continue to do so today. We encourage you to visit <https://native-land.ca/> to learn more about the land and its Nations where you live, work, and play.

Volunteer Alberta identifies and affirms the historical and current relationships of these Nations to the land as an act of reconciliation and with the awareness that acknowledging, recognizing, or affirming these facts is a small step and not enough. Quoting Sheila Batacharya and Yuk-Lin Renita Wong, *Sharing Breath* (2018):

"This recognition of land theft, while important, is discursive and thus remains limited. Indeed, our determination, as [mostly] non-Indigenous inhabitants of ... Turtle Island, to respect treaty relationships and acknowledge settler responsibility for the historical appropriation of Indigenous land is inescapably compromised, given that, in Canada, land can evidently be stolen and not returned provided you admit to wrongdoing, say you're sorry, speak solemnly about the need for reconciliation, and continue to make promises that, in fact, have never materialized."

Volunteer Alberta is committed to reflecting on, critiquing, and changing our ways of knowing, being, and doing in order to start concretely contributing to Indigenous resurgence in ways we have not yet done.

The Volunteer Alberta Team
June 2022

LOOKING BACK

Civic engagement and voluntary work in Alberta has changed along with so much over the last year. Volunteer Alberta's team has been tending the garden in inclement weather- fortunately, alongside so many of our members, colleagues and friends who are supporting their communities at home, across the province and around the world.

Together, we're looking ahead to find the opportunities that come alongside crises. As we grapple with the repercussions of COVID-19, war, and deepening inequality at home and abroad, we are finding ways to respond that will serve us for generations to come.

With our 2021-23 Strategic Plan in place, Volunteer Alberta focuses on strengthening - and creating - pathways to volunteerism and civic engagement through our core functions: bringing people together as a Connector, amplifying the voices that stand up for civic engagement as a Champion, and creating space for action as a Catalyst.

In 2021, we started a new phase of equity, diversity and inclusion work by starting an (un)learning process with a core team of staff, board and learning partners. We created new partnerships to connect with Alberta's nonprofits through ACCESS shared services, collaborative research on the Future of Volunteerism, and more. We worked with partners to learn and respond collectively to challenges through groups like the Alberta Nonprofit Network and the Alberta Volunteer Centre Network. We also thanked Karen Link for her service as she retired, and welcomed Miki Stricker-Talbot as our incoming Executive Director in 2022.

And so, as some seeds come to maturity, and others are just planted, it is my pleasure to thank you - Volunteer Alberta's supporters, staff, board members and other volunteers - for all the work you have done to help civic engagement and volunteerism flourish.

Whether you are working on a farm or a city street corner, in Treaty 6, 7 or 8 -- every mutual aid organization, word of kindness, and helping hand creates a brighter world for us all. So, thank you!

We look forward to the year ahead with you.

Hero Laird
Excutive Director
(any pronouns)



OUR FUNDERS

With the generosity of our funders, Volunteer Alberta has been able to further connect, promote and strengthen volunteerism and Alberta's nonprofit sector in 2021. We would like to send them a special thank you. They include:



The image features a light gray background with a network of thin lines connecting small circular nodes. In the center, there is a large, irregular orange shape. Inside this orange shape, the word "Connector" is written in a white, bold, sans-serif font with a thin black outline.

Connector

Networks & Engagement

A large part of Volunteer Alberta's role is to connect and enhance engagement with organizations within our provincial network. A key highlight of our work with and within communities across the province in 2021 included realigning our Volunteer Alberta evaluation framework with our new Strategic Priorities. VA created new and comparable indicators to help our Board reflect on our progress towards our Strategic Plan.

Alberta Volunteer Centre Network (AVCN)

In an effort to allow us to connect with members, and to stay attuned to the trends happening in the different regions of the province, we hosted province-wide, bi-weekly calls through the Alberta Volunteer Centre Network. Through AVCN, participants have had space to network with, and learn from and alongside each other. In addition, AVCN provided a platform for Volunteer Centres to showcase their accomplishments and milestones. In the fall of 2021, AVCN used its regular meeting time to showcase the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO) Equity, Diveristy & Inclusion round tables.

Alberta Nonprofit Network (ABNN)

ABNN Network Stewards led discussions on nonprofit data, government relations, nonprofit workforce and value and impact of the sector - thanks to funding from the Suncor Energy Foundation. VA was grateful to collaborate with fellow Network Steward leaders in 2021 from the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO), Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO), FuseSocial, IntegralOrg, Impact8, PolicyWise for Children and Families, and Volunteer Lethbridge. VA also provided fiscal agent, administrative support and participated on various Steering Committees and Task Teams. We helped mobilize knowledge and shared resources for nonprofits across Alberta. In 2021 ABNN Network Stewards conducted an environmental scan and strategic planning process while also surveying organizations on Vaccination Policies (in partnership with the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations).

MEMBERSHIP

We work to connect Alberta's nonprofit sector. We do this through network engagement, VA's membership program, and through the creation of relationships and partnerships with and within our communities.

Membership

In 2021, VA shifted its membership practice to a rolling membership model. On this new model, each member is enrolled for a whole 365 days - no matter when in the year they join. This new model built in additional flexibility to allow our members to renew when it works for them. In addition, VA offers a 60-day free trial that provides organizations with the chance to explore the membership before paying for the year. To increase accessibility to membership for a greater diversity of organizations, we also adjusted membership fees to a sliding pay scale to help offset costs the smaller nonprofits with smaller revenues

As an unlearning organization, the responses we receive from our annual Member's Survey is extremely valuable. This feedback helps us better shape the membership program to the needs of members.

Thank you to our members for your continued support and feedback, and helping make a membership that works for you.

In 2021, we learned that the benefits members accessed the most frequently were:

- webinars
- free resources online member area
- participation in the Alberta Volunteer Centre Network

2021 Member Spotlights

- FuseSocial recently announced a three-year partnership agreement with **NorthStar Ford** that will ensure the **Wood Buffalo Volunteer Centre (WBVC)** continues to thrive and support local social agencies that depend on the power of volunteers to fulfil their mission.
- **Volunteer Lethbridge** developed a new program called *Keep In Touch*. The program connects seniors with a friendly person to chat with, and helps reduce the effects of isolation during the pandemic for seniors. The program is being held in Strathmore and Wheatland County via **Strathmore FCSS** and **Wheatland FCSS**.

Members also shared that the top reasons they are a member::

- OASSIS Employee Benefits
- Access to Volunteer Alberta Program services, and resources



WHAT WE HEARD FROM OUR MEMBERS

“ It allows us to provide a benefit plan for our employees. While our nonprofit does not compete with other salaries, having the benefit plan allows us an opportunity to find committed, professional staff to deliver programs meeting the organization’s mandate and the needs in our communities ”

91%
of members would
recommend
Volunteer Alberta

96%
of members purchased
memberships to meet
the needs of their
organizations

234
Total
Members

“ It allows us to benefit from the advocacy and coordination work that VA does on our behalf. ”

10
Individual
Members

16
Honorary
Memberships

“ Great network that supports volunteer building and has great resources to offer. Love networking with other volunteer centres to learn about new ideas and initiatives. ”

The image features a background network of light gray nodes and connecting lines. A prominent orange, rounded shape is centered in the middle, containing the word "Champion" in white, bold, sans-serif font with a thin black outline. The orange shape is irregular, resembling a drop or a teardrop, and is positioned slightly to the left of the center.

Champion

PROMOTE

Website Refresh

After months of team effort, we are thrilled to share our new website with you! Our site has been designed to make engagement easier. Visitors are guided to the area of the website that will be of most use to them, whether they are volunteers looking for volunteer opportunities, organizations looking for resources to support their volunteer efforts, or individuals learning about volunteering. Everything is one click away.

VA & Alberta Students' Executive Council (ASEC) Partnership

We believe volunteerism and civic engagement are crucial for health and well-being and vibrant communities need voices from Canada and from around the world.

In 2021, Volunteer Alberta (VA) and Alberta Students' Executive Council (ASEC) joined in partnership to bring international voices to Alberta's nonprofit and voluntary sector! Through this online campaign, our respective teams promoted joint messaging to bring global talent to help address local issues.

National Volunteer Week (NVW) Enhancement Funding

Annually, the Government of Alberta (GOA) partners with VA to provide National Volunteer Week Enhancement Funding. As the program entered its 27th year, we distributed \$64,153 in NVW Grants to 67 organizations across 122 municipalities to celebrate and recognize Alberta's volunteers. We continued to expand the eligible expenses and extended the reporting timelines to provide communities with more flexibility in the time of the pandemic. To celebrate the NVW 2021 theme of "The Value of One, The Power of Many", communities demonstrated their creativity and adapted their celebrations to safely thank and cheer on their volunteers. During NVW, VA worked to demonstrate the resilience and brilliance of the sector by sharing volunteer stories, volunteerism facts and community celebrations online.

**On Facebook,
we reached
8,537 people &
generated 355
engagement**

PROMOTE

The VA Communications team is always looking for new ways to engage and build our audiences over social media while also driving online traffic to our website. Here are some of our stats for 2021:

**9,388
Twitter
Followers**

**2,309
Facebook
Page Likes**

**2,122
LinkedIn
Followers**

**81,645
website visitors
in 2021**

The image features a background network of light gray nodes and connecting lines. A central node is highlighted with a large, irregular orange shape. The word "Catalyst" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font with a thin black outline, centered within the orange shape.

Catalyst

STRENGTHEN

Intersectionality Project

Many organizations, including Volunteer Alberta, are integrating Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) into their work and operations, from hiring and recruitment to policy and procedure, from employee retention to stakeholder and volunteer engagement, and much more.

Volunteer Alberta, funded by Suncor Energy Foundation, are working in partnership to promote EDI in our communities and recently kicked off our [Intersectionality Project](#).

Intersectionality is a crucial element in EDI, and begins from the understanding that the different vectors of social diversity, (race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, nationality, religion, language, age, etc.) do not exist separately; instead, the various vectors of social diversity are interwoven and affect each other.

With this project, we hope to encourage other organizations to consider the importance of creating an equitable, diverse, and inclusive community for the people we serve.

Enhanced Capacity Advancement Program (ECAP)

With ECAP funding from the Government of Alberta, we help build the capacity of other nonprofits in the province, as well as build our internal capacity. As we implement our 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, this funding has supported a wide range of VA work including:

External Capacity Building

- enabling us to convene, lead and participate in networks (provincial and national tables)
- providing programs and services that are responsive to the needs of the communities we serve
- collaborating and partnering with nonprofits and other stakeholders on initiatives
- sharing resources, opportunities and referrals for public inquiries

Internal Capacity Building

- alignment of our evaluation framework with our new strategic roles
- applications for funding and development of new funding streams
- the creation of collaborative workspaces in the VA office and for remote work
- (un)learning around equity, diversity, and inclusion

Volunteer Screening Program (VSP)

Funded by the Government of Alberta and administered by Volunteer Alberta, VSP provides financial and educational support for nonprofits' volunteer screening. In 2021, our educational programming emphasized developing new content related to virtual volunteer screening, which will be released in 2022. We also spent important time engaging in emerging discussions about anti-racism and equity in volunteer screening. Lastly, we provided financial support to organizations by delivering Vulnerable Sector Check Fee Waivers to 11 communities throughout Alberta and distributing 13 Volunteer Screening Development Grants to a variety of nonprofit organizations from across a variety of sub-sectors.

Allied Community & Cooperative Shared Services (ACCESS)

In 2021, VA joined the operational team of Allied Community and Cooperative Shared Services (ACCESS), a new nonprofit service co-op led by Alberta Community and Cooperative association (ACCA). ACCESS will offer backend services to nonprofits and co-ops through the shared service model, which shares the time of specialized service providers across multiple organizations. Right now, ACCESS is developing its first suite of services: IT, bookkeeping, and legal.

Youth @ The Table (Y@TT): Year 3 Launch & Community Practice

Volunteer Alberta's Youth @ The Table (Y@TT) is a leadership and civic engagement program that matches Alberta's young adults (aged 18-30) with nonprofit boards across the province. With support from Canada Service Corps, Youth @ the Table (Y@ TT) launched its third program year composed of 23 young leaders and 15 host board organizations. We hosted several virtual, in-person, and hybrid events for participants to learn, connect, and engage amid changing COVID-19 restrictions.

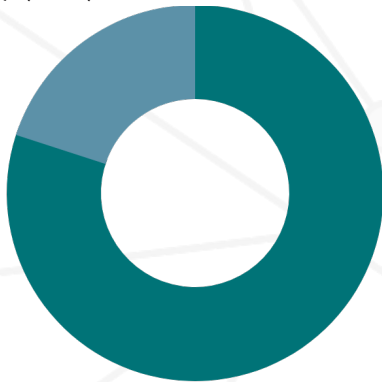


2021 STAFF RETREAT

In September 2021, the VA team met in person at Queen Elizabeth Park in Edmonton for a staff retreat. The sun was shining, and although our planned ghost tour of Edmonton was canceled due to re-surgng health regulations, the team had a delicious lunch from Farrow, and spent the day chatting, walking, and getting to know each other. We shared many laughs and learned a lot about about who we are as individuals, how we work together as a team, and that we all care deeply about the work we do.

FINANCE

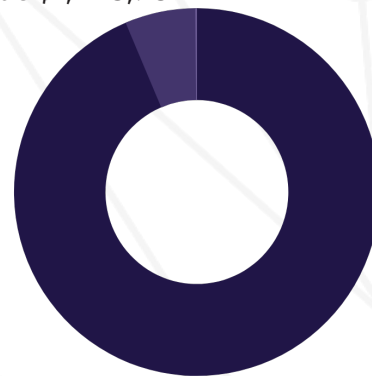
Expenses \$1,483,058



Programs/Services/Resources
\$1,186,446

Management/Admin
\$296,612

Revenue \$1,445,982



Contracts/Grants/Contributions
\$1,344,432

Membership/Workshop/Donation
\$89,391

Interest
\$2,159

A Message from our Executive Director

Well, hello.

It's nice to be here with you. And by "here," I mean in this remarkable time that we collectively find ourselves. This is a time where we are trying to find our way through an evolution, where old structures and systems are giving way, and new ones are emerging. Where dominant world views and narratives are being challenged. Where we, as individuals and as a collective, are being asked to step in and step up to create the futures we want to see in the world.

It is simultaneously exhilarating and daunting to join Volunteer Alberta during this pivotal time. Volunteer Alberta is in the midst of a transition. We are already working to better understand how our organization and the communities we serve must evolve to meet the needs of the changing sector. This means looking hard at our structures and systems: which need to be hospiced? It also means exploring which of the new practices, knowledge, and environments that are emerging do we need to embrace and champion.

My role is to steward the organization through this transitional time and to nourish the conditions for success for all of the organizations and individuals we serve.

In order to do so, we are deeply curious about the future of volunteerism. As an (un)learning organization, some of the questions we hold in this realm include:

- What is the role of civic engagement and volunteerism to restore trust in and between people, communities, organizations, and institutions?
- What does re-investing in volunteer infrastructure require from an intersectional perspective?
- What are alternative models of volunteering and civic engagement, beyond the dominant models based on good will?
- How might we best support others to mobilize people in their communities in ways that are meaningful for them?
- How might we cultivate a culture of caring through civic engagement and volunteerism in Alberta?

Of course, while we explore pathways towards answering these questions, Volunteer Alberta will continue to cultivate our organizational health and sustainability. In the year ahead, we will experiment with new practices to nurture a positive employee experience, we will actively seek to diversify our organization's revenue streams, and we will look for ways to boost our operational dexterity.

As Volunteer Alberta embarks on this journey in 2022, I look forward to connecting with and deepening our relationships and connections across the sector. My door is always open, and I am excited to (un)learn alongside you.

With appreciation,

Miki Stricker-Talbot (she/her)
Executive Director



BOARD MEMBERS 2021-2022

Board Members

Hero Laird - President

Morgan Bamford - Past President

Lisa Gilchrist - Vice President

Naomi Mahaffy - Secretary

Sian Anderson - Treasurer

Bonnie Chiu - Director

Corinne Ethier - Director

Dave Maffitt - Director

Lesley MacKinnon - Director

Meera Kassam - Director

VA STAFF 2021/22

Operations & Finance

Miki Stricker-Talbot - Executive Director

Cindy Walter - Manager, Operations & Board Relations

Jennifer Brownridge - Manager, Finance

Michael McOuat - Coordinator, Operations

Networks & Engagement

Alison Besecker - Senior Coordinator, Networks & Engagement

Learning & Development

Graeme Dearden - Manager, Learning & Resources

Vicki Shaughnessy - Senior Coordinator, Learning & Resources

Kendra Fincaryk - Senior Coordinator, Evaluations

Youth @ the Table

Eunice Doroni - Manager, Youth Engagement

Darryl De Dios - Senior Coordinator, Youth Engagement (Evaluations & Research)

Melody Santiago - Senior Coordinator, Youth Engagement

Marketing & Communications

Haylee Freake - Coordinator, Communications

The Volunteer Alberta Team expresses its appreciation to Karen Link, who served as Executive Director of Volunteer Alberta from 2018 through 2021.

We would also like to share our gratitude to everyone who was apart of the VA Team throughout 2021 who have left to explore other opportunities! Thank you for having chosen to share your knowledge and expertise with Volunteer Alberta.

The Association of Volunteer Centres and Volunteer Engaging Organizations in Alberta

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MISSION

To strengthen and create pathways for
volunteerism and civic engagement in Alberta.

VISION

Engaged, connected, and empowered
communities building a flourishing Alberta



volunteeralberta.ab.ca



Volunteer Alberta



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