

Annual Report

# Currents of Community:

Flowing Forward  
Together

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# Land Affirmation

*We invite you in this moment to pause and breathe.*

*As you breathe in and out, let it be a reminder of your connection to other people and the land. We are all part of a cycle of nourishment, and just as the land cares for us, we must care for it.*

As Volunteer Alberta continues our ongoing (un)learning journey, we see the increasing importance of reflecting on our ties to each other and the land. Our main office is situated on Treaty 6 Territory, in an area that holds many Indigenous names but is referred to by the Nehiyaw people as amiskwaciwâskahikan (ᐱᓂᓕᓴᓕᓴᓕᓴᓂᐱᓂᓴ) and colonially as Edmonton. Our staff, board, and work extend into Treaty 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 Territories, and we affirm the importance of honouring these historic agreements as well as all future treaties. The land we call Alberta is the ancestral territory and present-day home of many Indigenous peoples, including the Nehiyaw (Cree), Dene (Denesuliné, Dene Tha, Tsuut'ina), Iyarhe Nakoda (Nakota Sioux, Stoney), Anishinaabe (Saulteaux, Ojibwe), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Inuit, and Métis. They have cared for and advocated for the lands, waters, and animals for many generations despite historical and ongoing harmful actions against their communities. We are grateful for their stewardship of this land, and as act of reconciliation and good will, it is our intention to ensure that our organization, along with the entire social impact/non-profit/voluntary sector, can become good partners in supporting the land and communities.

Inspired by Indigenous knowledge systems, we seek to become good organizational ancestors. In doing so we are committed to meaningful reflection and critiquing of our ways of knowing, being, and doing. To help communities thrive and illuminate good ways forward for the sector, we must recognize how colonial systems influence how Albertans perceive and participate in volunteerism and civic engagement. This includes considering the historical and ongoing barriers that exclude Indigenous people from meaningful engagement in our communities. In the spirit of reconciliation, we all have a responsibility to consider how our organizations can contribute to decolonized, inclusive, and equitable volunteer programming and take action to do no more harm. Volunteer Alberta is committed to meeting our responsibilities.

The Volunteer Alberta Team

June 2026

# Words of Welcome

As we look back on this past year, we find ourselves reflecting on the idea of ripples and what moves beneath them.

Ripples are what we see: a gathering, a celebration, a report released into the world, a program delivered across communities. 2025 held many of those visible moments for Volunteer Alberta (VA) through the Volunteer Screening Program, the Alberta Civil Societies Emerging Leaders Program (ACSEL), and National Volunteer Week, through learning events and partnerships, and through the work of our members across the province. But ripples don't appear on their own. They are energy made visible and are set in motion by something under the surface.

Much of what rippled out from VA this year was set in motion by our growing research efforts—including (Re)Engaged: Volunteerism from the Ground Up, the Dignified Retirement Research Project with ABNN, volunteer centres research, and the volunteer motivation survey, and work we contributed to the National Volunteer Action Strategy with Volunteer Canada are now beginning to inform action across the sector. And of course, it also emerged from the ongoing work we do to strengthen relationships with the people, organizations, and communities we serve.

There is also something else we noticed this year: convergence. Streams of work coming together locally, provincially, and nationally through collaborations, shared research, and collective priorities. Whether through the services we provide organizations, our consulting and social research and design work, or partnerships across networks, this convergence is shaping stronger, more connected volunteer infrastructure.

At the same time, we continue to navigate change. The broader environment VA operates in continues to feature high levels of uncertainty, and this year called upon us to move with that reality to adapt, to experiment, and to make thoughtful decisions about where we focus our energy to best serve our members and the nonprofit and voluntary sector. We planned for organizational shifts in 2026 including an office relocation, launching a new website and member portal, and beginning the process of winding down ACSEL. These transitions will mark evolutions at VA and are part of how we stay responsive while remaining grounded in purpose.

This year reminded us that the strength of this work isn't just in what's visible, but in the steady effort behind it—the relationships, commitments, and the dedicated people who show up, even in uncertain conditions. We're grateful for the innumerable ways our board, staff, members, partners, and community continue to contribute to that shared movement.

Miki Stricker-Talbot (she/her) Executive Director  
Amanda Reaume (she/her) Board Chair



# Converging Currents

Moving with the broader streams of  
volunteerism in Alberta and beyond.

## National Volunteer Action Strategy Round Tables in Banff and Calgary



## Converging Currents

Some currents run deeper when they flow alongside others. In 2025, Volunteer Alberta continued work with partners across the province and the country—helping shape strategies, convene networks, and contribute our perspective to broader conversations about volunteerism, civic engagement, and contribution. We are proud to reflect on the larger currents we are part of and the relationships that made this work possible.

## National Volunteer Action Strategy

Since 2024, Volunteer Alberta has worked alongside Volunteer Canada to advance the National Volunteer Action Strategy, convening volunteer centres, volunteer-engaging organizations, and peak bodies from across the country to shape a strategy grounded in deep research and community consultation. In 2025, we hosted two Alberta-based roundtables and three online gatherings to bring local depth and context to the national conversation, ensuring that the perspectives of Alberta's nonprofits are included into what emerges. We also convened the Volunteering Matters Technical Committee of peak provincial volunteer organizations, which met throughout the year online and culminated in an in-person gathering in St. John's. It was a meaningful moment of connection that closed with a clear, shared commitment to move forward together. The work continues, and so does the possibility it carries.



*VA at the National Volunteer Action Strategy Meeting in St. John's, NL*

## Alberta Volunteer Centre Network

The Alberta Volunteer Centre Network gathered eight times in 2025, creating space for volunteer centres across the province to connect, share experiences, and reflect on the broader impacts of their work. Participants consistently shared how meaningful it was to talk with peers, and that these meetings helped them feel more connected, learn from one another, and think collectively about volunteerism in their communities. These gatherings also held space for ongoing learning around Reconciliation, including sharing resources that support nonprofit learning. These conversations remain an important source of input and inspiration for VA's broader work including the Volunteer Centre Research Report, which explores the role of volunteer centres as community infrastructure across Alberta.



## Alberta Nonprofit Network

In 2025, the Alberta Nonprofit Network deepened its collaborative reach, including the launching of a road show in Grande Prairie that brought Network Stewards into community in new ways, providing in-person training and education to regions of the province currently without a capacity-building organization. Throughout the year, the partnership among the Network Stewards continued to grow stronger—a quiet but meaningful current beneath much of the sector-wide work VA contributes to, including phase one of the Dignified Retirement Research initiative.



*VA at the ABNN Network Stewards Meeting*

# Exploring New Depths

We follow the undercurrents. Through inquiry and reflection, we surface what we find.



## **(Re) Engaged - Volunteerism from the Ground Up**

(Re)Engaged is a research initiative led by Volunteer Alberta, InWithForward, and Boys and Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton & Area to better understand and re-imagine volunteerism in Alberta. In 2024, the team conducted ethnographic research in Fairview, Lethbridge, and Edmonton, exploring how Albertans experience volunteering—their motivations, the barriers they encounter, and how volunteer roles might better align with people’s values.

The findings, published in 2025 in “Crisis or Continuity: Insights and Opportunities to Reinvigorate Volunteering,” reframe volunteerism not as a sector in crisis, but as a powerful vehicle for meeting core human needs: security, purpose, esteem, and connection.

The initiative also brought communities together through a series of share-backs and co-design sessions across all three locations and other communities in Alberta. Participants used hands-on social design methods to explore opportunity areas and generate ideas for the future of volunteering.

Insights from (Re)Engaged have been shared with government officials, sector leaders, and nonprofits across Alberta. The initiative is now entering its next phase, focused on prototyping and testing new approaches to engaging volunteers.



*Shareback Session in Red Deer*



*Co-Design Day and Shareback in Lethbridge*



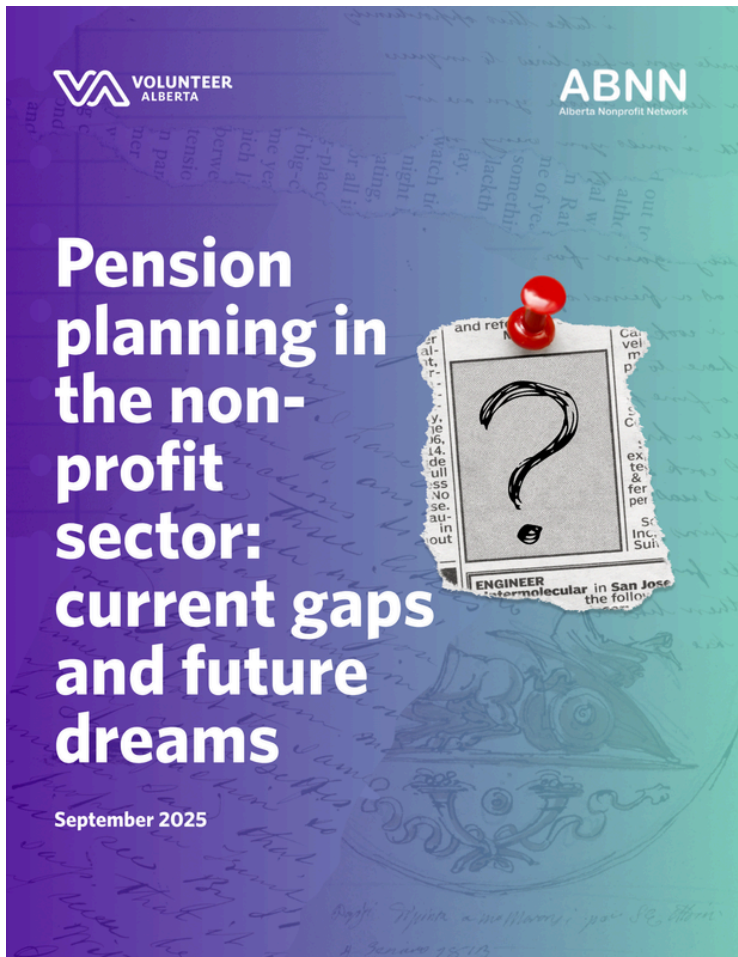
*Co-Design Day in Fairview*



[Read the report](#)

## Dignified Retirement Research Project

Building on sector conversations held in 2024, ABNN and Volunteer Alberta launched the Dignified Retirement Research Project, a timely provincial initiative led by a diverse task force, to explore retirement solutions for the nonprofit workforce. Surveying more than 200 employees and 90 organizational leaders, the research confirmed that existing retirement options are insufficient, and there is strong interest in flexible, sector-wide pension solutions. Findings have drawn interest from sector leaders and provincial government ministries, indicating that a long-overdue conversation is now finding its voice. The second phase of the project launches in 2026, shifting from problem definition to practical design, and the exploration of potential solutions to move a sector-wide solution forward.



[Read the report](#)



*Dignified Retirement Research Project survey engagement campaign for social media in 2025*

## Volunteer Participation Research

In 2025, VA published the Volunteer Participation Insights Report, “Bringing Meaning to the Volunteer Experience: Insights on What Motivates, Sustains, and Challenges Volunteers.” Drawing on insights from 839 volunteers from a national survey conducted in partnership with Volunteer Canada, the report explored the motivations, benefits, challenges, and supports shaping volunteer participation today and confirmed the vital roles that volunteers play in sustaining essential services, fostering connection, and supporting community life. To share these findings with the sector, VA launched a three-month blog series and social media infographics that generated strong engagement across our network. This report laid the foundation for our Volunteer Centre Research initiative, and VA hopes it will inform the development of practical tools and resources to support meaningful, inclusive volunteer engagement across Alberta.



[Read the report](#)

## Volunteer Centre Research


This two-year, community-based research project sought to better understand the purpose of volunteer centres in Alberta, the values that shape their work, and the roles they play in strengthening volunteerism and civic participation. Through a participatory approach, we interviewed 17 nonprofit, municipal, and FCSS staff from Calgary, Edmonton, Central Alberta, Northern Alberta, and Southern Alberta. The process generated rich dialogue about the importance of community and cross-sector collaboration, coordination, and relationship-building to sustain local volunteerism, especially for resource-constrained communities. The findings confirmed that volunteer centres serve as crucially needed, trusted, community connectors, linking people to resources, organizations, and belonging, while providing nonprofits and municipalities with training, tools, and coordination support. This work opens possibilities for future partnerships and resources that can further strengthen volunteer-engaging organizations across the province.



[Read the research brief](#)

## Members Village Customer Relationship Management System and Website

In early 2025, we explored new options for a Customer Relationship Management system and website. Guided by feedback from members and broader network, we saw an opportunity to better serve the sector with a platform that prioritizes accessibility, data security, and long-term value. Through a member-hosted conference, we discovered Members Village, a Canadian-based platform that matched our needs. Transitioning to the new system has been a dedicated effort through 2025 with the launch planned for spring 2026. We are grateful for our members, whose feedback shaped the direction and whose connections opened the door to a better solution. We also extend our thanks to the Edmonton Community Foundation for their generous support in helping us modernize and better serve our network.



# From Ripples to Waves

How VA creates impact through programs,  
learning, advocacy, and shared experience.

## From Ripples to Waves

Every ripple starts somewhere. This section highlights how Volunteer Alberta shows up for the volunteers, volunteer-engaging professionals, and organizations that make Alberta's communities thrive. Through workshops, mentorship, recognition, advocacy, and capacity-building, we turn small moments of connection into waves of impact across the province.



### Volunteer Screening Program (VSP)

In partnership with the Government of Alberta, the Volunteer Screening Program continued supporting nonprofits in building stronger screening practices and safer, more connected communities. We were pleased to offer new webinars, including the “Art of Volunteer Recruitment & Retention” series, the playful, engaging “Check Yourself! VSP Background Check Gameshow,” and a session focused on Risk Assessments. Importantly, the Vulnerable Sector Check Fee Waiver supported 20,197 checks—saving Alberta nonprofits and volunteers over \$300,000.

Through Screening Development Micro-grants (SDM), we supported 12 nonprofits across Alberta with funding and resources to enhance their screening practices. The response from grant recipients was affirming, with 100% of recipients reporting that the grant enhanced their screening processes and programming and helped them develop effective policies. As one recipient shared, “Working with Volunteer Alberta has been incredibly valuable in developing our volunteer program...It has led to a more rewarding and organized approach to volunteer involvement and shown our volunteers we care and respect the value they bring.”

***“It has led to a more rewarding and organized approach to volunteer involvement and shown our volunteers we care and respect the value they bring.”***

***- SDM Recipient***

## Workshops & Learning Events

In 2025, VA delivered 28 learning events, bringing practical tools, relevant knowledge, and network connections directly to nonprofits. Through these community-focused sessions, we worked with organizations to strengthen their volunteer programs, helping them build on what they already do well and find new ways to grow their impact. One key learning partner this year was the City of Medicine Hat. We delivered sessions for local nonprofits on volunteer screening and volunteerism, equipping organizations with practical tools and guidance to strengthen their programs. This work deepened our understanding of the challenges Medicine Hat nonprofits navigate and helped us nurture a good relationship with their community. We look forward to continuing this partnership in 2026, with a focus on delivering educational content on inclusive youth engagement and (un)learning.



*Medicine Hat's iconic Saamis Tee Pee, lit up by the Root Cellar Food and Wellness Hub in honour of volunteers for National Volunteer Week*

## Educational Delivery for the Town of Stony Plain

Drawing on years of experience and expertise in the realm of youth engagement, we were excited to support the Town of Stony Plain in their journey to become more inclusive to young people in their community. Our work with the community included three key deliverables: conduct field research and observations, hold workshops for youth leaders and youth champions, and create a study report capturing learnings from the experience. The workshops resonated well with participants, who described the space as safe and welcoming, found the goals clear, and felt confident applying what they'd learned. Their words captured the spirit of the work: "Youth are the heartbeat of the community," and "Youth voices and perspectives are important to be heard and valued."

## National Volunteer Week

This year's National Volunteer Week (NVW) theme, "Volunteers Make Waves," was a reminder that volunteerism ripples far beyond a single act of service. Across Alberta, our team saw how volunteers uplift voices, bridge diverse groups, and inspire others to build communities that are stronger, more inclusive, and resilient.

Through the NVW Enhancement Funding Grant in partnership with the Government of Alberta, VA celebrated wavemakers by amplifying their stories and deepening civic engagement province-wide. The ripple effect continues to spread: a 10% increase in grant applications indicates growing interest, and a new Evaluations Toolkit was introduced to help recipients better capture and share their impact.

Community investment reflected the momentum. Financial contributions grew 116% from the previous year, and reported volunteer hours for celebrations rose 73% (from 1,862 to 3,219 hours). Impact reports from grant recipients showed increases in recognition events, digital outreach, and multi-day celebrations, showing that Albertan communities are deepening their commitment to volunteerism. Online, our "Ride the Wave" campaign generated nearly eight times more impressions than the previous year, with engagement across all platforms increased, reflecting a message that resonated with our followers.

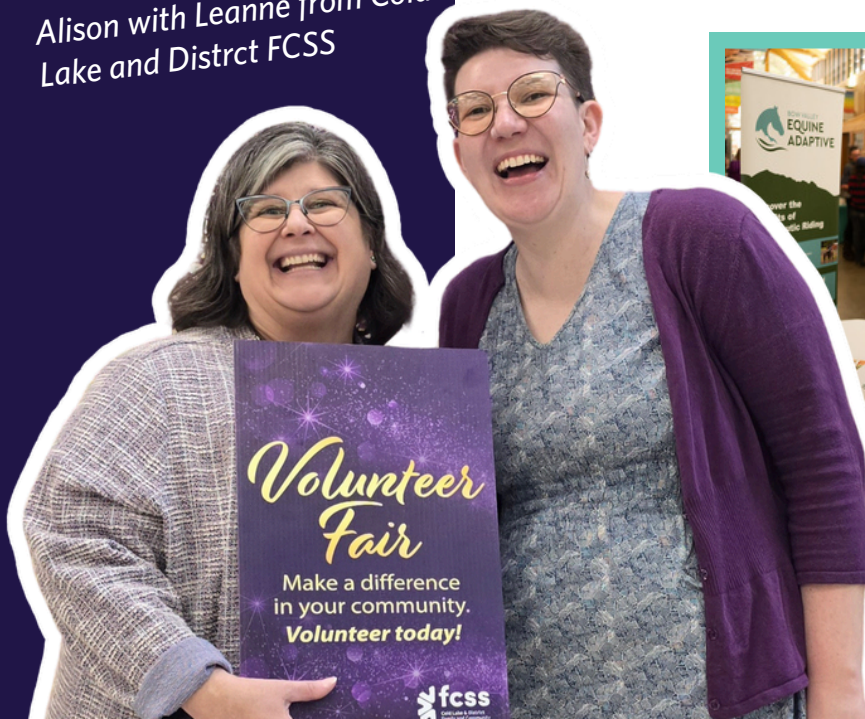


*Volunteer Appreciation Pizza Party in Banff*



*Celebrating Volunteers Making Waves in Vegreville for NVW*

*Alison with Leanne from Cold Lake and District FCSS*



*NVW Pancake Social in Canmore*

## International Volunteer Managers Day

This year's International Volunteer Managers Day theme, "Be BOLD," celebrated the courage it takes to lead with purpose and encouraged volunteer managers to deepen their impact in the communities they serve. To mark the occasion, we launched a postcard campaign to member organizations, addressed to the volunteer managers doing this vital work. We also partnered with Village Ice Cream, whose generosity brought a sweet moment of appreciation to 40 of Calgary's volunteer managers. We're grateful to every organization that takes time to thank and celebrate their volunteer managers, and we look forward to seeing this day continue to grow in recognition and reach.



Alberta Civil Society Emerging Leaders

## Alberta Civil Society Emerging Leaders

Built on the belief that young people can create meaningful change, ACSEL provided emerging leaders with microgrants and hands-on experience in project management, budgeting, and community collaboration. In the 2024–2025 program cycle, ACSEL supported 30 young Albertans in turning their ideas into action. From cultural celebration events and wellness initiatives to spaces for connection and belonging, these projects directly supported community wellbeing and connection. In 2026, the program will conclude, and we look forward to hosting "ACSEL Homecoming," where past participants can share the impact of their work and celebrate the remarkable impact of the program over the previous three years. We are deeply grateful to Canada Service Corps and the many partners, mentors, and supporters who made this work possible.



*Pearly Promise Drive*



*Calgary Youth Foundation Pilot*



*Cozy Crochet*



*The Age Collective*



*David at Calgary RISE  
Apathy is Boring Event*



Community Nonprofit Internship Program Pilot

## Community Nonprofit Internship Program (CNiP)

VA continued its partnership with BGCBig's Edmonton & Area in 2024-2025 to deliver another impactful year of CNiP. The program continued its work in addressing lower provincial volunteer rates while giving post-secondary students real-world skills and meaningful exposure to the nonprofit sector as a vibrant and rewarding career path. This year, 78 post-secondary students served as mentors for 146 youth, with 22 mentors returning from previous years and 9 mentors entering their third year of involvement. BGCBig's shared that returning mentors eased recruitment pressures and expanded program impact. Students rated their experience at an average of 9.72/10. As one student reflected, "I've really developed my communication skills through this experience." And from a young mentee named Dante, speaking about his three-year mentor: "I love him—he's my favourite mentor."

*"I've really developed my communication skills through this experience."*

*- CNiP Student*



# Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Staff and Volunteers Guide

This year, we released a practical guide to help nonprofit organizations create welcoming, affirming spaces for transgender and gender-diverse staff and volunteers. Featuring actionable steps for allies, managers, and supervisors alongside Alberta-specific resources, the guide reflects our belief that inclusive communities are stronger communities. It was shared in recognition of both the Trans Day of Remembrance and the Trans Day of Visibility, reaffirming our commitment to a sector where everyone belongs.



[Read the guide](#)

## National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Campaign

As part of VA's commitment to Reconciliation with intention, our Inclusive Engagement team developed a social media advocacy campaign for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The campaign invited nonprofits to reflect on what Reconciliation means in their communities, and to how it may be woven into organizational culture, policies, and relationships. The response was striking. The campaign generated some of the highest social media engagement VA has seen in recent years, signalling that it resonated with our network. It reinforced our belief that organizations rooted in community and service have a role in fostering accountability and belonging, and that together, we can honour truth, support collective healing, and build a more equitable sector.

**Tansi**

**Meet Joyce!**  
She's a:

- ✓ Retired schoolteacher
- ✓ Elder for the Manning Métis Local
- ✓ Contributor to countless committees

...and Micheal's Grandma

Micheal, VA's Operations Coordinator

Grandma Joyce

Reconciliation requires sustained attention from **all levels of civil society**, including nonprofits. How?

- Working to build respectful relationships with Indigenous communities
- Creating spaces of belonging and address barriers shaped by colonial systems
- Providing cultural competency and anti-racism training to staff and volunteers

Join us in honouring this day, and in committing to the **ongoing work of truth and reconciliation.**

VOLUNTEER ALEXRIA

For nonprofits and organizations, this is a moment to reflect deeply:

How are we moving towards true reconciliation in our work, and where might we be leaning on symbolic gestures?

Their interwoven stories remind us that **reconciliation begins with empathy and interconnectedness**

“ I believe we all have a responsibility to build and nurture connections... - Micheal

“ Connection keeps our family and our community intact - Joyce

# VA in Numbers

**20,197** Vulnerable Sector Check Fees waived, saving over **\$300,000** for Albertan nonprofits and volunteers

**338** organizations in the VSC Fee Waiver Program across **10** municipalities, including **14** new additions

**215** VA members, including **34** new members

**98** referrals to external resources and programs

**78** internship placements through CNiP

**23** youth supported with community projects through ACSEL, reaching **10,000+** Albertans over the program's 3-year cycle

**28** webinars, presentations, and workshops hosted

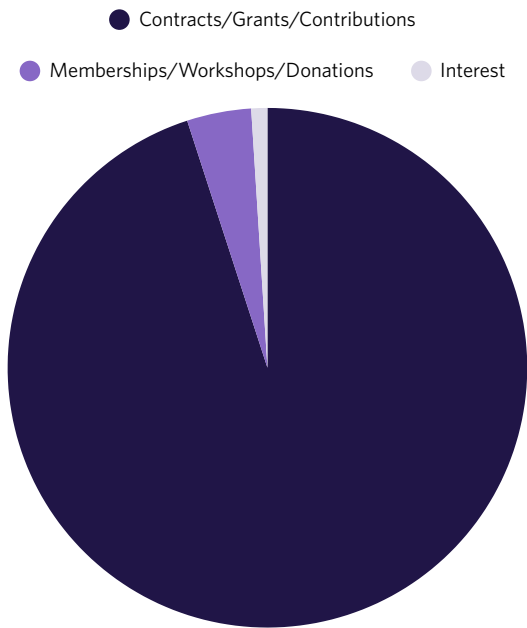
**24** free 1:1 coaching sessions on Volunteer Program Operations through VSP

**12** recipients of the Screening Development Micro-Grant

**37** e-blasts and newsletters, and **10** blog posts

**92,000+** website page views

# Finances



## Revenue: \$1,828,113

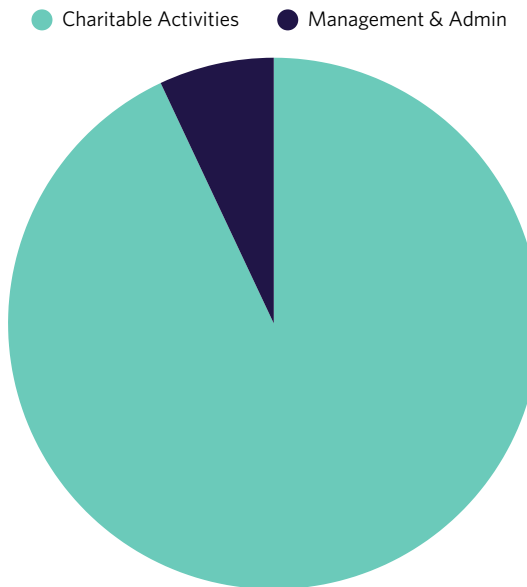
\$1,741,723

Contracts/Grants/Contributions

\$83,676

Memberships/Workshops/Donations

\$2,714 Interest



## Expenses - \$1,827,119

\$1,707,604 Charitable Activities

\$119,515 Management & Administration

# Thank you to our Supporters

We're deeply grateful to be surrounded by such a strong current of support. To our funders and collaborators—thank you for helping us make waves. Your continued partnership runs deep, nurturing the conditions for engaged, connected, and empowered communities across Alberta.



Boys & Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton & Area (BGCBigS)



Funded by the Government of Canada under the Canada Service Corps program



Anonymous Donor



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**Volunteer Bénévoles Canada**



**Medicine Hat**



Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations



Boys & Girls Clubs



Big Brothers Big Sisters

Boys & Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton & Area (BGCBigS)



**ANIMA LEADERSHIP**  
INSIGHT • IMPACT • INCLUSION  
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