

COMMON OUTCOMES INITIATIVE

Annual Summary
For the reporting year 2020

UPDATED JUNE 2021

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INTRODUCTION

Edmonton Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), United Way of the Alberta Capital Region (UWay) and numerous funded community agencies work together to provide a continuum of programs and services to meet the needs of vulnerable community members. To provide a summary of the social impacts and outcomes these partners are achieving; funders and funded agencies to work together to implement a common outcomes reporting form aimed at simplifying data collection and highlighting the positive difference programs are making in the community.

The contents of this summary are based on information provided to the Common Outcomes Initiative.

Common Outcomes Initiative (COI)

The Common Outcomes Initiative is a partnership between FCSS, UWay and 99 community agencies working together to streamline and improve reporting and evaluation for the social services sector in the Alberta Capital Region.

Common Outcomes Report (COR)

The Common Outcomes Report is a form used to collect data from multiple community programs on different outcomes. The data is collected annually and rolled up to share the story of the social services sector and its impact in the community.

How COR is organized

Impact area – Each funded program reports to at least 1 of 5 impact areas.

- Resilient Individuals*
- Thriving Families*
- Welcoming & Engaged Communities*
- Strong Sector*
- Strong Connections and Relationships*

Outcome – Each program must report on at least 2 and up to 5 outcomes.

Indicator – Each program must report on at least 1 indicator for each outcome.

Throughout this report directional arrows and percentages are used to indicate the change in the data from previous year.

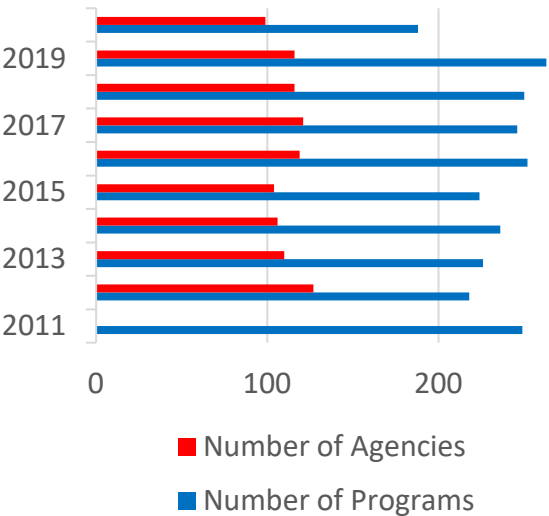
REPORTING

While not exhaustive of the Social Services sector, this Summary report represents a significant volume of accomplishment.



Total Agencies reporting in 2020: **99**
Total Programs reporting in 2020: **188**

Number of Agencies & Programs Reporting Yearly



NOTABLE SHIFTS IN THE NUMBER OF PROGRAMS REPORTING

To a large degree the shift in the number of programs reporting to COR can be attributed to changes in how programs report and the number of programs funded. However, there were a few notable shifts during this period.

2020, Government of Alberta, Children’s services (CS) who was previously a member of COI began using a different reporting tool and programs funded by CS no longer reported to COR.

2019, Inclusion of Regional Investments funded by the United Way and programs not funded by the COI partners but who had requested to report using COR.

2016, Agencies in the Strong Sector Impact Area reported for the first time.

2015, UWay allocated the same funding amount but fewer programs applied for funding.

2012, Improved reporting.

FUNDING

Total Funding: **\$84,783,459 OVERALL** (↓ 19%)

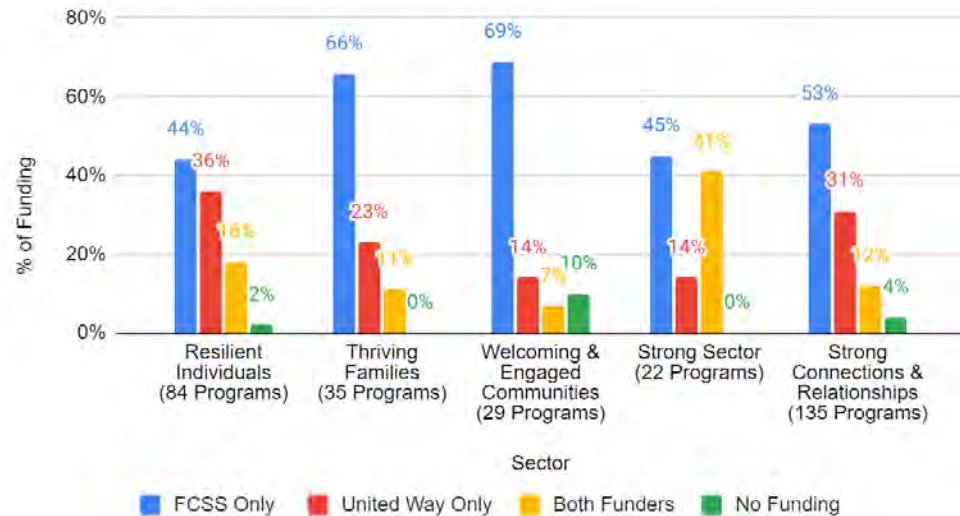
49% of COR programs received FCSS only funding

35% of programs received UWay only funding

13% of programs received funding from FCSS & UWay

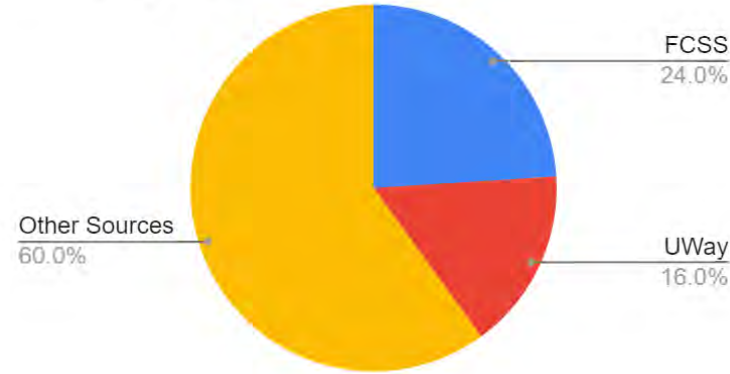
3% of programs did not receive funding from either funder

COI Funding Source

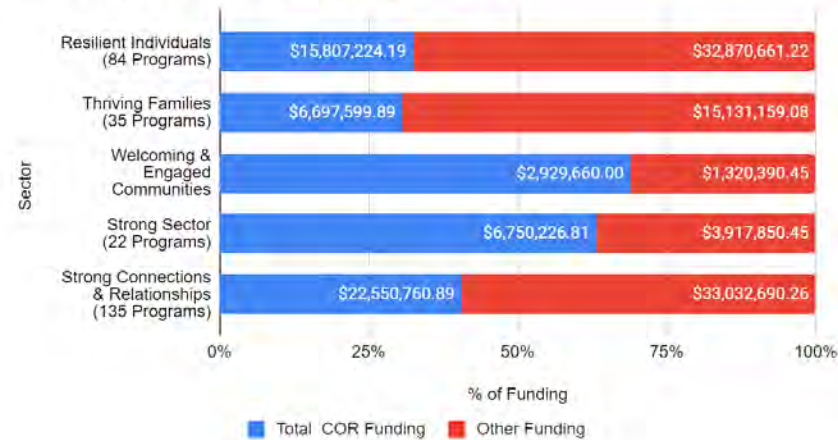


Important: Programs were able to report to multiple impact areas, so the sum of numbers reported by impact area may be greater than the overall totals.

Funding Sources



Total Reported Funding by Impact Area



In 2020,

- 49% of COR programs operated with budgets of less than \$100,000
- 46% of COR programs had a budget in the \$100,000 - \$500,000 range
- 3% of COR programs had a budget in the \$500,000 to \$1 Million range.
- 2% of COR programs operate with budgets over \$1 million.

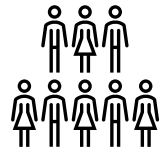


The most frequently cited sources of “Other” funding included: 1) Donations, 2) Other Government of Alberta Funding 3) AGLC/Casinos, 4) Fundraising, and 5) Revenue from membership and/or fees



The Strong Sector and Welcoming & Engaged Communities Impact Areas identified that a majority of their programs were COR funded, while the remaining three sectors reported that a majority of their funding was received from other sources.

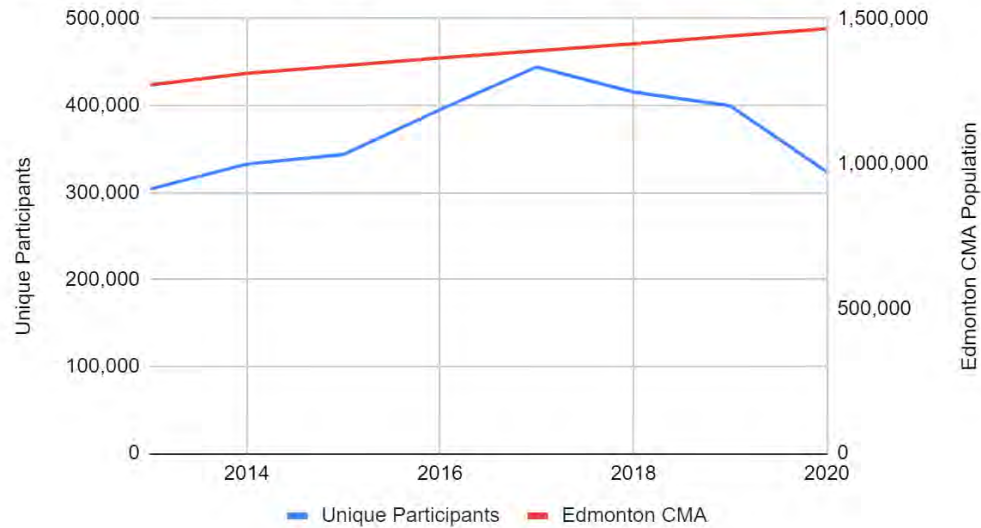
PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



In 2020, **323,866** (↓19%) Unique Participants (UP's) were supported.

- 16,796** participants were 0 - 5 years old (↓59%)
- 25,155** participants were 6 - 12 years old (↓40%)
- 44,604** participants were 13 - 17 years old (↓17%)
- 21,037** participants were 18 - 24 years old (↓46%)
- 108,167** participants were 25 - 64 years old (↓37%)
- 21,629** participants were 65 + years old (↑3%)
- 86,478** participants were Age Unknown (↑174%)

Unique Participants & Edmonton CMA Population Over Time



NOTABLE SHIFTS IN UP's REPORTED

General fluctuations in the number of participants supported year over year are to be expected but can also signal community trends. The funders reach out to funded agencies to understand significant changes year over year, below is context provided by our funded partners.

2020, the 19% decrease from the previous year is explained by changes in CS reporting and the impact that COVID-19 had on programming.

2017, Agency partners attributed the large increase to the negative impacts of the local economy on the vulnerable, an increase in Newcomers & improved communication about services available and comfort with participants accessing those services.

2016, The Wood Buffalo wildfire impacted the sector as funded partners responded by supporting those displaced to our community.

2013 to 2015, increases were attributed to improved reporting and increasing need in the community.



In this summary, population information was used for Edmonton and Area or the Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area (Edmonton CMA). For more information on which municipalities are included in the Edmonton CMA, click the following link [Statistics Canada](#)



At an estimated population 1,447,143, Statistics Canada reported that between 2019 & 2020, Edmonton CMA had a growth rate of 1.8%, eighth among CMAs within Canada. Recognizing that the number of unique participants may have some duplication, the funded programs supported close to one-quarter of the Edmonton CMA population in 2020.

Canada's Population Estimates: Subprovincial Areas, July 1, 2020 (2020). Statistics Canada. Accessed from: [Statistics Canada](#)



According to FCSS Calgary, only 7.3% of participants accessed more than one FCSS-funded program. Though mechanisms are not in place to track this in Edmonton, a similar rate is anticipated here.

FSII Analysis Summary by Survey, Domain, and Dimension (2020): 15th. FCSS Calgary, Accessed here: [Calgary.ca](#)

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS CONTINUED

For this report, Indigenous populations are those who **self-identify** as First Nations, Métis or Inuit. In 2020, 57% (↓4%) percent of programs gathered this demographic data.

For the programs that gather this information,
13% of Program Participants identified as Indigenous

2020 – **18,773** participants identified as Indigenous as reported by 108 programs.
2019 - **26,183** participants identified as Indigenous as reported by 161 programs.
2018 - **27,199** participants identified as Indigenous as reported by 158 programs.
2017 - **31,164** participants identified as Indigenous as reported by 174 programs.



Edmonton Social Planning Council reported that the Indigenous population calling Edmonton home “has been growing at over twice the rate of the overall population.” Sheloff, S., et. al. *Tracking the Trends* (2020): 15th Edition. Edmonton, Canada: Edmonton Social Planning Council; page 3.

For this report, a Newcomer is defined as someone who **self-identifies** as dealing with the challenges of being new to Canada regardless of how many years they have lived in Canada. In 2020, 52% (↓ 3%) of programs gathered this demographic data.

For the programs that gather this information,
9% of Program Participants identified as Newcomers

2020 – **12,025** participants identified as Newcomer as reported by 97 programs.
2019 - **25,586** participants identified as Newcomer as reported by 145 programs.
2018 - **29,724** participants identified as Immigrant and Refugee as reported by 149 programs.
2017 - **41,345** participants identified as Immigrant and Refugee as reported by 165 programs.



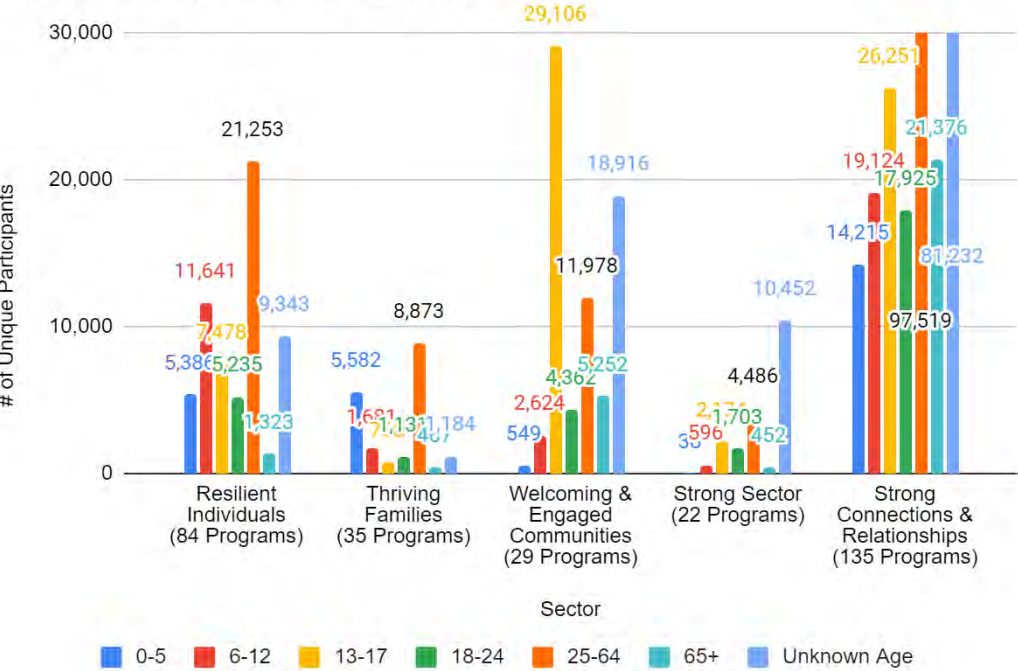
The number of immigrants and refugees who permanently settled in Edmonton between 2000 and 2019 increased by 277%, from 4,304 permanent residents arriving in the year 2000 to 16,240 arriving in 2019. Sheloff, S., et. al. *Tracking the Trends* (2020): 15th Edition. Edmonton, Canada: Edmonton Social Planning Council; page 5.



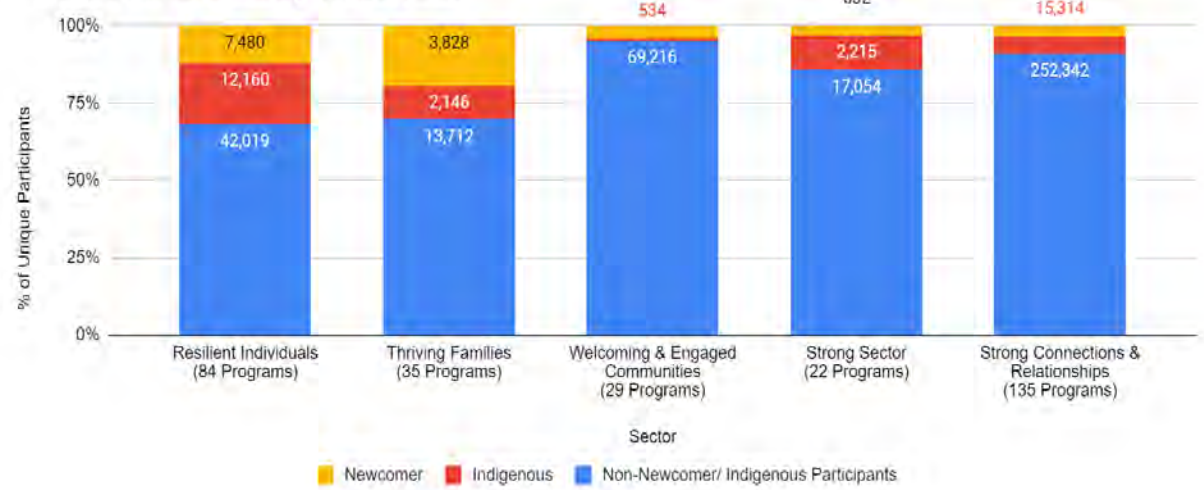
It is interesting to note that the number of programs reporting this information tends to decrease year over year but there is increasing interest in understanding race-based data to support equity, diversity & inclusion in our community. In 2021, COI will support learning and development in this area.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS BY IMPACT AREAS

Participant Age Range by Impact Area



Unique Participants by Impact Area



Program participants within the *Resilient Individuals* and *Strong Connections & Relationships* impact areas were most likely to be between the ages of 25-64. Program participants in the *Welcoming & Engaged Communities* impact area were most likely to be youth between the ages of 13-17, most likely because a number of these programs were in the area of public education. The data also illustrate that most of the impact areas had a considerable portion of participants who had 'unknown age'.



In general, Edmonton has a high proportion of working-aged families, so it's no surprise that almost half of program participants (44%) fall within the 18-64 category. Sheloff, S., et. al. *Tracking the Trends (2020): 15th Edition*. Edmonton, Canada: Edmonton Social Planning Council; page 12



According to the 2019 Edmonton Municipal Census 26% of the reported population was between the ages of 0 - 24. In the 2020 COR, 37% of the unique participants served were within that particular age range. Given that prevention and early intervention are the strategic mandates for COI, the high proportion of young people served is not unexpected.

2019 Edmonton Municipal Census. Accessed via [Edmonton.ca](https://edmonton.ca)

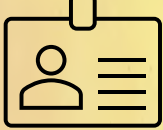


Senior citizens comprised 11% of the population in 2019 but only 7% of unique participants within COR programs. City of Edmonton Dashboard: Reported Volunteer Rate. Accessed via: [Edmonton.ca](https://edmonton.ca)

STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS

Funded programs represent an essential part of the social services sector and our community. Below is a summary of the people power that goes into supporting our community.

1,032 (↓ 15%) Full Time Equivalents (FTE's)



6 FTE's on Average per program

2.5 Median FTE's per program

11,783 (↓ 34%) Volunteers

448,291 (↓ 37%) Volunteer Hours

563 (↓ 53%) Students/Practicum Students

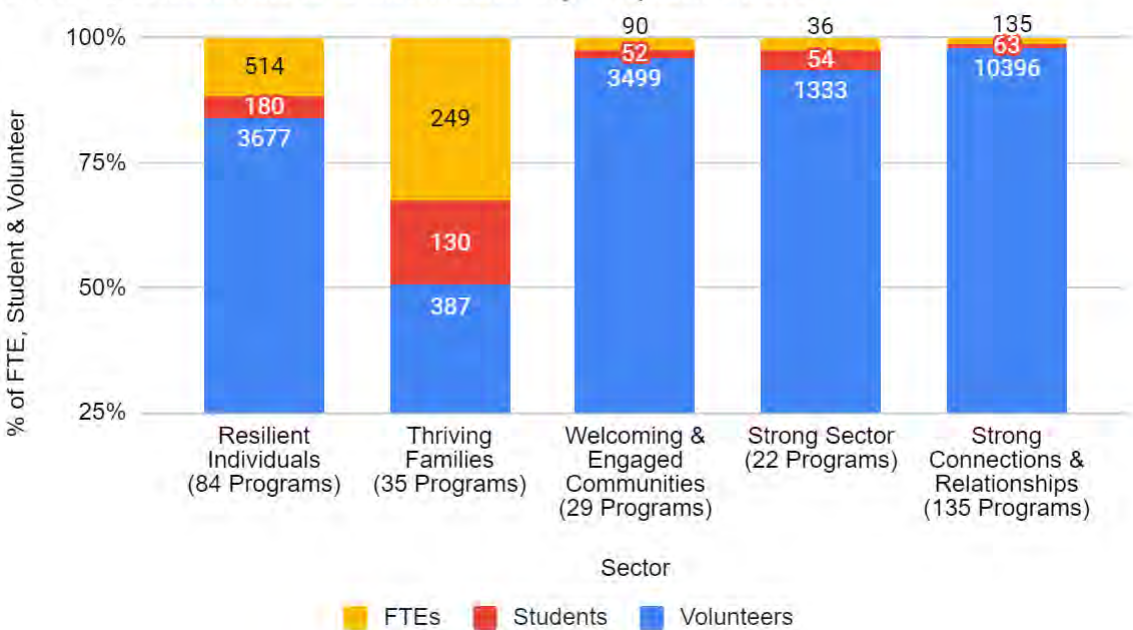
67,371 (↓ 45%) Student/Practicum Student Hours

For every **1 FTE** position working in the sector there were **12** volunteers or students!
If each was paid Edmonton's living wage (\$16.51), as calculated by [Edmonton Social Planning Council](#),
their contribution would total over **\$7 million dollars!**



In the June 1, 2021 *Owl Newsletter*, ATB indicated that "The health care and social services sector employs the most people in Alberta at 14 per cent of all workers." [ATB The Owl](#) The combination of staff, students and volunteers supporting our sector are vital to overall community wellbeing.

FTE's, Students & Volunteers by Impact Area



The majority of programs (81%) reported 5 or fewer FTE's. Programs reporting to the *Strong Connections & Relationships* impact area reported the highest number of volunteers and volunteer hours, this is not surprising given the importance of supportive relationships on outcome achievement within the social services sector.



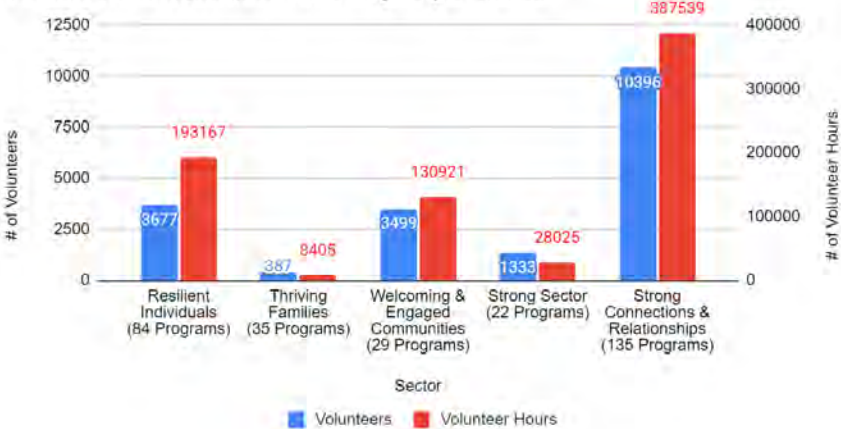
The latest data provided by the City of Edmonton's data dashboard, reported the volunteerism rate in Edmonton to be 44% (slightly below the target of 55%). City of Edmonton Dashboard: Reported Volunteer Rate. Accessed via: [Edmonton.ca](#)



Province-wide, 1.6 million people provide more than 262 million volunteer hours. Within COR programming, volunteers are essential to ensuring that high quality programs are offered to participants.
Government of Alberta: *Profiling Volunteerism (2020)*. Accessed via: [Alberta.ca](#)

STAFF, VOLUNTEERS & STUDENTS CONTINUED

Volunteers & Volunteer Hours by Impact Area



According to the Alberta Non-profit Network (ABNN), over two-thirds (69%) of organizations within the sector reported a decrease in their capacity to offer services while 43% of organizations reported an increase in demand for services. Further, almost 80% reported that the complexity of participant needs has increased while 94% reported an increase in the complexity of program delivery during 2020.

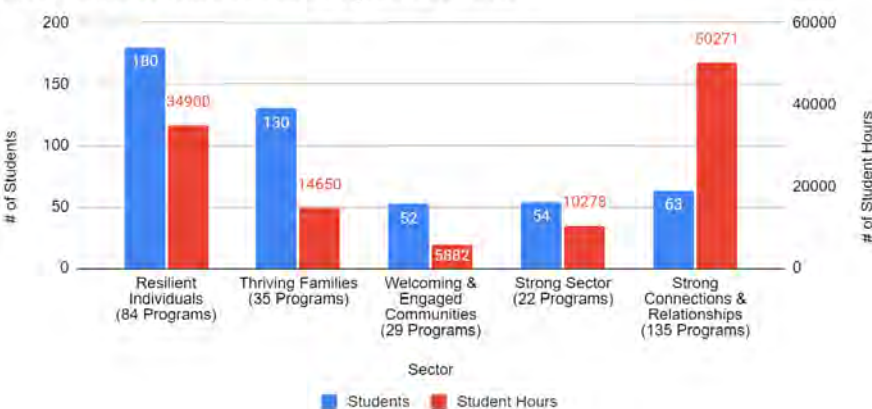
Pulse Check Results on the Impact of COVID-19 on Edmonton's Non-profit and Voluntary Organizations (2020). Alberta Non-profit Network; page 9



Agencies reporting to COR indicated a decrease in the number of students and volunteers, this impacts program delivery.

Resilient Individuals impact area saw the highest number of hours per volunteer indicating that each volunteer contributed more hours to volunteering, when compared with the other program areas.

Students and Student Hours by Impact Area



Programs reporting to the *Resilient Individuals* impact area reported the largest number of students and student hours; however, it was the *Strong Connections & Relationships* impact area that had the highest contribution of hours per student.

DATA COLLECTION

Programs were asked to report on their primary data collection methodology. The majority of the data continued to be collected through surveys/questionnaires (↓60%), followed by direct observation (↑14%) and interviews (↑10%). Less frequent forms of data collection remained the same: Group discussions/focus groups (7%), administrative statistics (4%), and review of charts or other documentation (3%). One percent of respondents identified text messaging as a means of data collection for 2020.

Programs may collect data more than once with each participant. In total, data collection was attempted **288,181**. Programs reported an **84%** response rate, which meets and exceeds standard data collection completion rates.

Data collected...

During program: **33%** (↓)
Post: **23%** (=)
During & Post: **21%** (↑)
Pre, During & Post: **12%** (↑)
Pre & Post: **5%** (↓)
Follow Up: **6%** (↑)
Pre: **0%** (↓)



In 2020, COVID-19 impacted not only program delivery and design but also data collection.

Common Outcomes

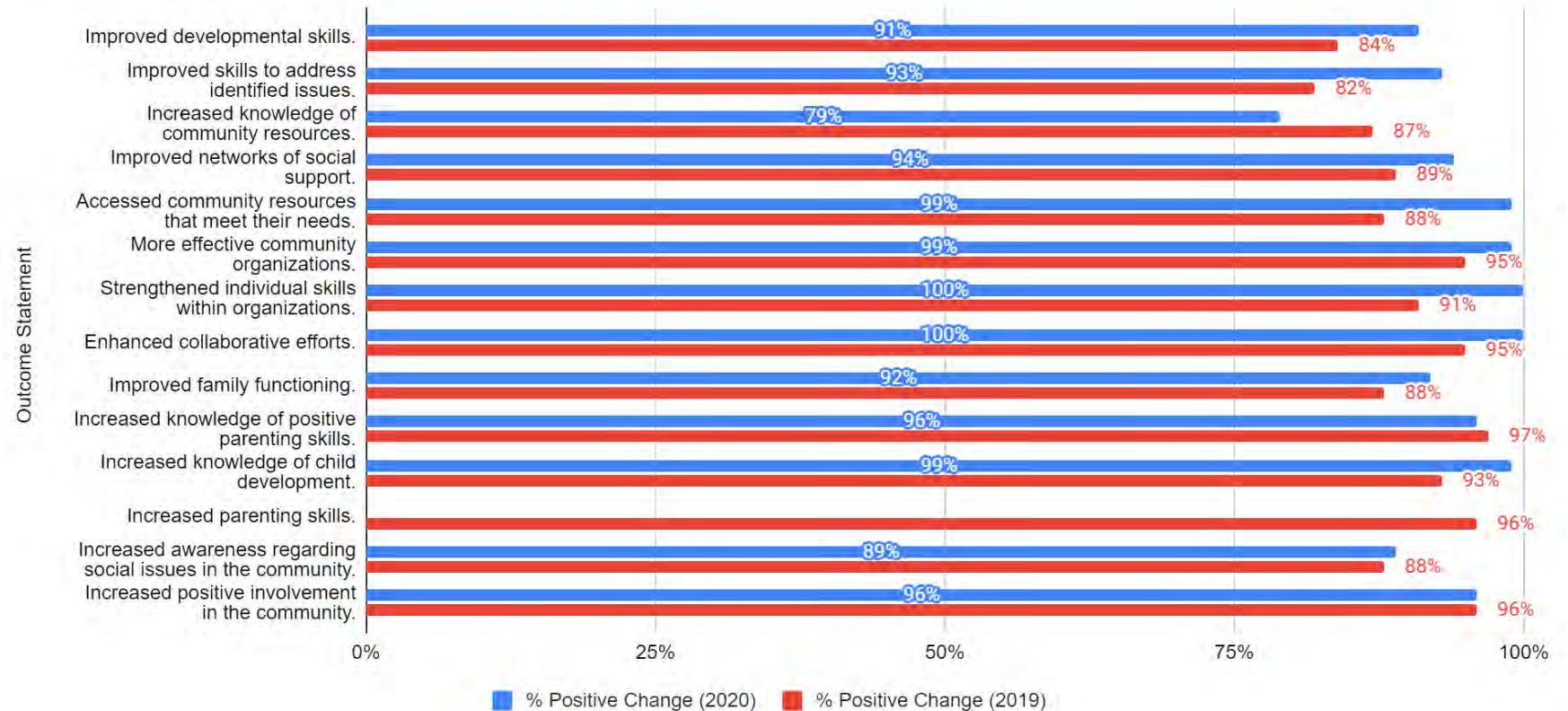
Common Outcomes were developed in consultation with funded partners and each program reports on 2-5 outcomes. Below is a summary of all the programs that reported in 2019 and 2020. For the first time in 2020, no programs reported to the *Increased parenting skills* outcome. It is important to recognize that positive change is measured in many ways across programs. While it does reflect improvements and changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours it does not mean that the participant no longer requires the services being provided. The nature of the program, population being served, complexity of the challenges being addressed and the availability of community resources can all impact these results.



In general, participants in COR programs were likely to report positive change across all 14 identified outcomes, with the positive change ranging from 79% (*Participants have increased knowledge of community resources*) to 100% (*Strengthened individual skills within organizations* and *Enhanced collaborative efforts*).

When looking at changes year over year, those reporting to the *Resilient Individuals* outcomes showed the largest positive change between 2019 and 2020. For summaries of indicators by impact area see Appendix I.

Positive Change by Outcomes, 2020 & 2019



OVERALL THEMES

2020 was a year of change, nimbleness, flexibility and adaptation for individuals, families, communities, and society in general. It was a year of resilience and reckoning. A time where many of our assumptions about ourselves and our communities were challenged and the impact of inequities and oppressive practices and systems were highlighted. 2020 was a year like no other and the heroic efforts of the social service sector was highlighted and will continue to be experienced.

Individual and Family Level Findings

2020 saw significant impacts to individuals and families. These impacts included:



Financial challenges due to high levels of unemployment and sudden job loss. This resulted in many individuals and families not being able to meet their basic needs specifically related to food, shelter, clothing. Further, access to culturally appropriate foods posed an additional complexity. In some cases families were forced to choose between their financial stability, mental health and/or growth and development opportunities for their children. Affordable housing for families with more than 3 children became especially challenging along with securing adequate and affordable furniture. On a positive note, there were some reports of individuals using unemployment as an opportunity to explore further education and upgrading.



Physical Health challenges arising from the COVID-19 virus itself and from the changes to people's employment status which impacted their access to health benefits and medications.



Mental Health challenges included reports of increased levels of anxiety, trauma, depression, fear, despair, and suicidal ideation, and attempts. Addictions increased with a significant number of overdoses witnessed. Grief and loss was also reported at higher levels and for various reasons. For example, people were grieving not only the loss of loved ones, but also loss of jobs, relationships, health and lifestyles. There were reports of inequitable access to mental health supports and access to long term mental health services were limited, while immediate crisis supports seemed to be more readily available. As the pandemic continues, the impact of social isolation on individuals and families will continue to impact the mental health of individuals of all ages.



Social well being was challenged as individuals and families were mandated to isolate themselves and social connections and supports from family and friends became limited. The levels of reported feelings of loneliness and social isolation were at a significant high. Further, as families were experiencing increased levels of stress, increased reports of domestic violence and gang involvement occurred. The disruption to daily routines and structures added further strain to family dynamics.

Technological challenges shone a light on the ever present digital divide. Access to both the hardware and software required to access online platforms created additional inequities and barriers for individuals and families. Some people did not have access to computers or tablets, and/or wifi. This became ever more evident when many public spaces that offered free wifi closed down throughout 2020. Additionally, digital literacy emerged as a key gap in service. As the pandemic continued, there were increasing reports of virtual burnout. On a positive note, for those individuals who were connected and able to access technology, the levels of social isolation and loneliness was somewhat lower. There were also reports of businesses and individuals rallying to provide access to technology to minimize this impact.



Program and Sector Level Findings

A number of findings emerged that were at the program and sector level.

- Early on in the pandemic all program providers were forced to pivot and find new and creative ways to ensure that program participants were able to access programs and services. Relationship building, a critical aspect of service provision, was challenged. Online, phone check ins, door knocking, and front “porch” visits became the norm for many service providers who worked hard to remain connected with program participants.
- The move to online afforded some unexpected benefits including, ease of access and increased attendance (as barriers such as transportation and childcare were resolved). Additionally, there were reports from some programs that participants were better able to engage in the program from the safety of their own homes. Further, online programs increased access to a broader segment of the community and was a helpful way to connect with those segments of the community who were more comfortable with virtual platforms. Together, this helped to mitigate and delay the experiences of disconnection and isolation that was experienced.
- Some programs had to stop program delivery for a time, due to the nature of their programming, they were unable to move online or adapt to AHS guidelines. This impacted some segments of the community more than others (e.g., seniors were at greater risk of serious illness or death from COVID-19 impacting services offered and how they were delivered). Programs which continued in-person services pivoted to new AHS guidelines including using PPE, instituting regular sanitization practices, tracking attendance, and social distancing.
- The number of volunteers available to support program delivery in its various formats was reduced, in part due to the AHS guidelines and the impact of COVID on the older population (many of whom contribute significant hours to volunteering).
- As the economy struggled, the sector experienced reduced opportunities for fundraising activities, casinos were paused and in general, there were fewer investments from within the business community. This resulted in a decrease in overall revenues.
- Impacts on staff well-being were noted as stress levels reached higher than normal levels.
- There was increased impetus to discuss systems change within the sector.
- A number of collaborative efforts formed or were strengthened in an effort to respond to the increased complexity and distress in the community.



Community and System Level Findings

Finally, community and system level impacts were noted.

- Closing down schools affected food security for many families.
- Ageism was rampant.
- Access to services became challenging, especially in the case of individuals and families with limited access to technology and digital literacy.
- Public transportation remained a challenge but for a different reason. In the past challenges were related to cost and locations of bus stops. In 2020 concerns were related to fear of exposure to COVID-19.
- Lack of affordable and adequate legal supports was noted.
- Delays in processing immigrant applications delayed family reunification.

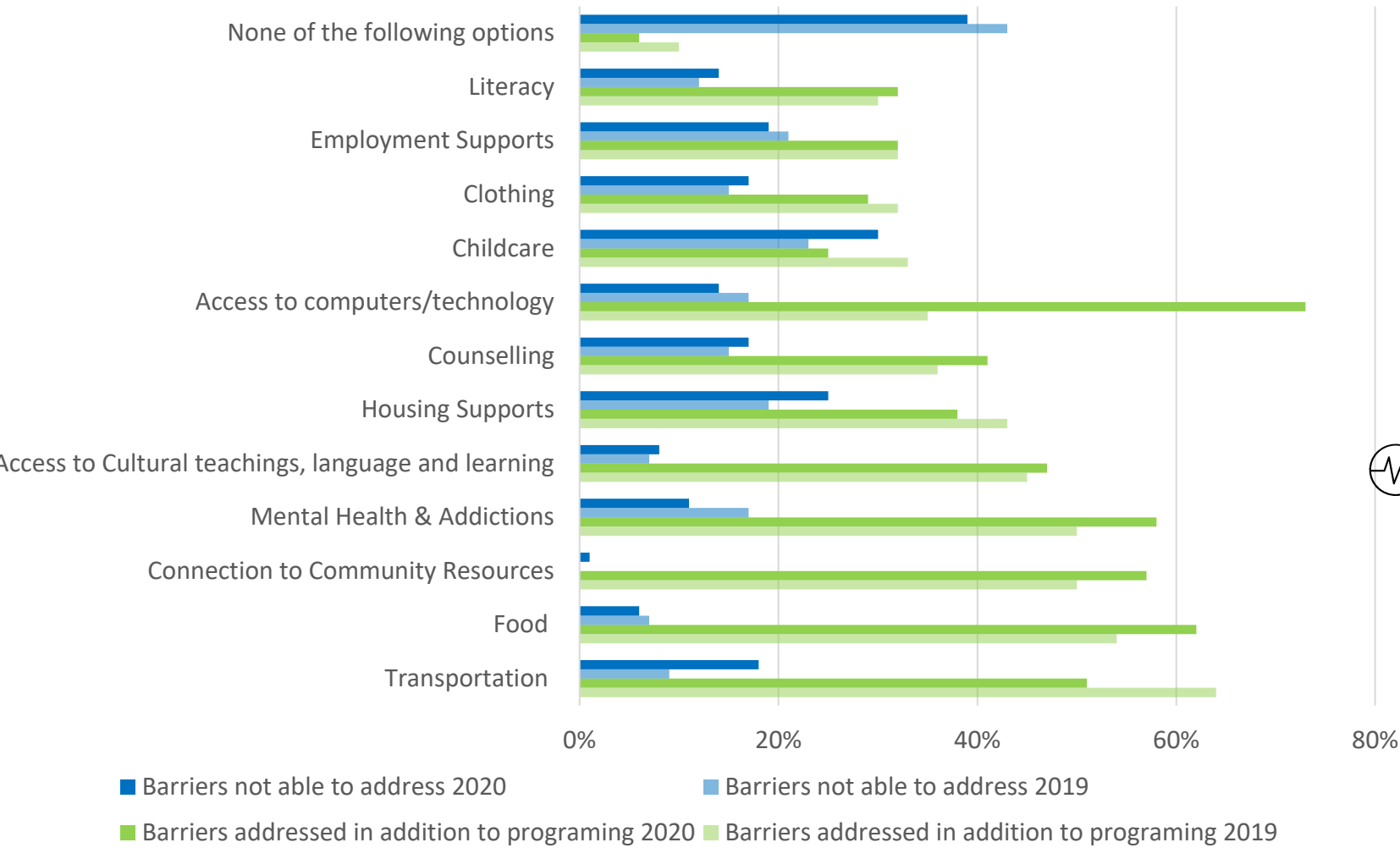
COVID-19 and Beyond

Agencies reflected on learnings from the pandemic and how program adaptations during COVID would affect their programs going forward.

- Many programs expressed a desire to utilize hybrid virtual and in-person program models in the future. As discussed above, in many cases virtual program delivery reduced certain barriers to access such as transportation and child care, and agencies were able to serve participants from a wider geographic area through virtual offerings. Yet, particularly from the perspective of relationship building and technological barriers, COVID-19 has reaffirmed the importance of in-person delivery for certain types of programming, and these programs look forward to returning to their pre-COVID model.
- The collaborations that were formed or strengthened during COVID-19 have been important for the community in providing high-quality supports, addressing complex needs, and tackling systemic problems, and should continue.
- Based on their experience over the past year, agencies made the following recommendations to support our community's readiness for future large-scale emergencies.
- The community should engage in thoughtful risk assessment and preparations that allow for a coordinated response and tactics to pivot quickly.
- Particularly in the early days of the pandemic it was difficult for participants to access and understand the information that they needed. Communication and outreach planning which takes into consideration participant barriers such as language, low literacy levels, and limited connections or supports is vital.
- Addressing basic needs is vital but secondary issues (such as, in this case, mental health and domestic violence) also need to be understood and supported. Similarly, it is important to remember that preventive services are significant for community members, even in emergencies.
- Collaborative approaches are powerful. Agencies noted both the impact of working together for the bigger picture, as well as the ways that individual programs and their service provision can be elevated through simple information sharing and discussion as agencies tackle common problems.
- During emergencies, agencies are often doing more with less and may require additional funding to meet increased community need. COVID-19 emergency grants were important in allowing agencies to hire additional staff to meet demand, provide participants with items needed during the pandemic including technology, and to provide programs addressing emerging needs.

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

Participant Barriers



The funded partners were asked to report on barriers participants faced that were outside of core programming (i.e. a program intended to deliver financial literacy training may consider providing bus tickets and childcare to enable participation). Program providers were asked to indicate whether or not they were able to address these barriers through additional program planning, activities and/or budgets. The following is a summary of program barriers reported by 178 programs. The numbers represent either the percentage of programs that addressed the additional the barriers listed (green) or that were not able to address them (blue).



In 2020 and 2019, food security and mental health were both identified in the top three barriers to participation that programs were able to address. However, early in the pandemic access to technology emerged as an essential need and was listed as the top barrier addressed in 2020, this replaced transportation that was reported as number one in 2019.



ENGAGING IN REFLECTION

In 2020 much of the learnings were related to the impacts of having to quickly pivot and adapt to online and virtual programming. This resulted in many changes specific to evaluation processes, programming, workplace and organizational systems, identification of community gaps and much more. This year, some of the learning was nuanced depending on who was being served (age, immigration story, comfort with digital technology etc.).

Specific to the evaluation process itself, many programs changed how (the tool) and how often (frequency) they gathered their evaluation data in order to respond to the change in how programs were being delivered. Most programs reported moving to an online email survey process. For those that moved their surveys to online, many noted a significant decrease in response rates. A variety of strategies were implemented to address this including: using the poll feature embedded in the online platforms and ensuring that participants understood how the information would be used. While some programs reported that the online evaluation process resulted in more thoughtful and fulsome responses to open-ended questions, others noted the opposite. In 2020, more programs used observation, administrative data, interviews and review of files to further support their evaluation process and to respond to what was described as “survey burnout”.

Recognizing the speed that things were changing in the community, some programs increased the frequency of their evaluations to get a sense of how individuals were coping. This provided more immediate information that helped programs modify and adapt how and what they were delivering. 2020 saw some reports that the existing data collection processes were not well aligned to all age groups. For example, surveys seemed to be effective for adults, while children were less likely to complete them, leading to the exploration of more creative options.

Program adaptations were significant in 2020, in large part due to COVID-19 and the Alberta Health Services Guidelines but many were also made as a result of the evaluation feedback gathered. For example, some programs reported that building relationships via online technology or the phone was more difficult and required a greater investment of time. Others reported that shorter group times with a smaller number of participants was key for achieving program success. There were many reports that the move to online was actually beneficial for some of the programs because it reduced the number of barriers that families had to overcome and resulted in time and resource efficiencies. Others reported that moving from face to face to online also resulted in increased individual follow-up with program participants which improved the effectiveness of the quality of referrals that were made, and further strengthened the helping relationship. When a pre-existing helping relationship was present, the move to online programming seemed to be smoother.

ENGAGING IN REFLECTION CONTINUED



Another theme that was identified across programs was related to partnerships. Some partnerships invested time in evaluating how they were working together. The characteristics of a strong partnership that was noted across many reports included: open communication, connections, collaboration, responsiveness, trust, conscientiousness and commitment. New partnerships formed quickly and were able to respond in a coordinated way to the significant large-scale needs that were highlighted by the impacts of the pandemic.

Learnings that impacted the workplace and organizations were also identified. Many groups learned quickly where there were gaps in their bylaws, policies, procedures and protocols. Quickly responding to the external crisis while also ensuring that their internal processes were clearly articulated became a priority. Organizations found that mobilizing teams and engaging with participants was easiest when technology and tools were already in place and strong communication processes existed. Creating communities of practice to help manage the competing and urgent needs of participants and staff occurred in some cases. Efforts to maintain the health and well-being of staff was paramount for organizations' service continuation. Staff training occurred to overcome any challenges that emerged due to the changing context.

Some organizations also highlighted the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement on their programs and organizational culture. Organizations reflected on how well they were demonstrating and living their purported values of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. Critically analyzing and listening to community criticism, while difficult, was tremendously important for many organizations.

COR NEXT STEPS & CONCLUSION

The Common Outcomes Initiative (COI) is committed to the following three actions throughout 2021.

1. Knowledge Mobilization.

In September 2021, COI will work with Policy Wise to deliver two knowledge mobilization workshops to the Common Outcome Initiative member agencies on Building Better Data information and tools.

Building Better Data is a resource and set of tools PolicyWise developed on collection of social demographic data in the non-profit sector. It guides community organizations through the thinking and design of data collection and data structure on common variables like age, gender, education, ethnicity, and employment. It provides the foundation for quality data collection and facilitates common measurements across organizations. PolicyWise worked with community organizations closely to develop the tools using research findings on these measures

2. Develop a COI orientation process & guide for new staff and programs.

Extensive work was done to the Common Outcomes User Guide to make it more user-friendly and comprehensive for those that were new to the Common Outcomes Report. In 2019 and 2020 we hosted two Common Outcomes Report training sessions where we walked through the forms, had all funders available to answer any specific questions and offered access to a computer lab so that reports could be completed with support from the funders.

What's Next? We will continue to explore how we best onboard new Executive Directors and evaluation or program staff to the Common Outcomes Report. We will continue to provide Common Outcomes Report training annually.

3. Explore enhanced data variables for COR.

There is increasing interest in data to support learning and innovation and the social services sector is no different. Leveraging data to understand more about the vulnerable community members we are supporting and using that information to enhance supports available is an area of growth for COI.

What's Next? Leverage the Race-Based Data table in Edmonton to explore how we support responsible advancement in this area. Reconvene the COI advisory to explore integrating additional variables into COR.

The Common Outcomes Initiative Funders Group continues to be thankful to all of the funded agencies and community partners that contribute to our goals each year. We look forward to another year of data collection, story telling, and evaluation with the Alberta Capital Region!

The COI Funders Group

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Thank You

Thank you to the following community funded organizations for completing and submitting a common outcomes report for 2020.

1. Abbottsfield Youth Project (AYP) Society
2. ABC Head Start Society
3. Aboriginal Counseling Services Association of Alberta
4. Action for Healthy Communities
5. Alberta Caregivers Association (Caregivers Alberta)
6. ASSIST Community Services Centre
7. Ben Calf Robe Society
8. Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society
9. Beverly Day Care Society & Family Resource Centre
10. Bissell Centre
11. Boyle Street Community Services
12. Boys & Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton & Area
13. Boys & Girls Club of Leduc
14. Boys & Girls Club of Strathcona County
15. Canadian Arab Friendship Association
16. Canadian Mental Health Association - Edmonton Region
17. Canadian National Institute for the Blind, The
18. Candora Society of Edmonton, The
19. Catholic Social Services
20. Centre for Family Literacy
21. Centre to End All Sexual Exploitation (CEASE)
22. City West Childcare and Community Support Society
23. Community Options - A Society for Children and Families
24. Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth and Families, University of Alberta
25. Connect Society
26. Council for the Advancement of African Canadians (Africa Centre)
27. Dickinsfield Amity House
28. Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations
29. Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation (e4c)
30. Edmonton's Food Bank (Edmonton Gleaners Association)
31. Edmonton Immigrant Services Association
32. Edmonton John Howard Society
33. Edmonton Meals on Wheels
34. Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

35. Edmonton Multicultural Coalition Association
36. Edmonton Seniors Centre
37. Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council
38. Edmonton Social Planning Council
39. ElderCare Edmonton Society for Adult Day Programs
40. Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton
41. Family Centre of Northern Alberta, The
42. Family Futures Resources Network Society
43. Fort Saskatchewan Boys & Girls Club
44. Fort Saskatchewan Families First Society
45. Free Play for Kids Inc
46. Fulton Child Care Association
47. Gateway Association
48. Governing Council of the Salvation Army
49. iHuman Youth Society
50. Inner City Youth Development Association
51. Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services (iSMSS), The
52. Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women
53. Islamic Family & Social Services Association (IFSSA)
54. Jasper Place Child & Family Resource Society
55. Jasper Place Wellness Centre
56. Jewish Family Services
57. KARA Family Resource Centre
58. Lansdowne Child Care & Family Centre Society
59. Leduc & District Food Bank Association
60. Linking Generations Society of Alberta
61. Mapping and Planning Support Alberta Capital Region (M.A.P.S.)
62. Metis Child and Family Services Society
63. Millwoods Seniors Association
64. Momentum Walk-In Counselling Society
65. Multicultural Family Resource Society
66. Native Counselling Services of Alberta
67. Next Step Senior High II - Fort Saskatchewan
68. North Edmonton Seniors Association
69. North West Edmonton Seniors Society

70. Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre
71. Old Strathcona Youth Society
72. Oliver Centre Early Learning Programs for Children & Families Society
73. Operation Friendship Seniors Society
74. Parents Empowering Parents Society
75. Pride Centre of Edmonton, The
76. Primrose Place Family Resource Centre
77. Project Adult Literacy Society (P.A.L.S.)
78. Riseup Society Alberta
79. Saffron Centre LTD.
80. SAGE Seniors Association
81. Senior Citizens Opportunity Neighbourhood Association (SCONA)
82. Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton
83. Shaama Centre for Seniors and Women, The
84. South East Edmonton Seniors Association
85. Spinal Cord Injury Alberta
86. St. Albert Community Village and Food Bank
87. St. Albert Family Resource Centre
88. Strathcona Place Society
89. Strathcona Shelter Society Ltd.
90. Terra Centre for Teen Parents
91. Terwillegar Riverbend Advisory Council
92. Today Family Violence Centre (Today Centre)
93. United Way of the Alberta Capital Region
94. Volunteer Program Association
95. Westend Seniors Activity Centre
96. Women Building Futures
97. YMCA of Northern Alberta
98. Youth Empowerment and Support Services(YESS)
99. YWCA Edmonton



COMMON OUTCOMES INITIATIVE

IMPACT AREA SUMMARIES

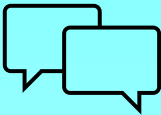
2020

APPENDIX I

RESILIENT INDIVIDUALS

Resilient individuals have the ability to bounce back from challenges and stress that they face. According to Michael Ungar, resilience is, “the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways (Ungar, 2008 and Ungar, 2011, <https://resilienceresearch.org/resilience/>

Resilient Individuals	
Outcome	% Positive Change
1: Children and youth have improved developmental skills.	91%
1a: Participants demonstrate developmentally appropriate skills in one or more of the following areas: personal/social skills, communication skills, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, problem solving skills, coping skills, literacy, numeracy	91%
1b: Participants demonstrate/report behaviours or feelings that are consistent with some of the following eight developmental assets: support, empowerment, boundaries & expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, positive identity.	91%
2: Participants have improved skills to address identified issues.	93%
2a: Participants demonstrate being able to positively cope with day -to-day stress.	91%
2b: Participants demonstrate an increased capacity to solve day-to -day problems and challenges (problem-solving skills).	93%
2c: Participants demonstrate skills in one or more of the following areas: money management/financial literacy (i.e. knowledge related to budgeting, asset building, financial literacy, government benefits and subsidies, savings, decreasing debt.); self-care; community involvement; socialization; self-advocacy; interpersonal/relationships; parenting; literacy; refusal skills.	95%
2d: Participants demonstrate characteristics that are likely to help them address their identified issues - e.g., resiliency (ability to 'bounce back' from setbacks), optimism (positive outlook for future), positive self-esteem (feeling good about self, seeing own strengths), sense of meaning/purpose - e.g., pertaining to family/friends, broader community, belief systems (e.g., spiritual), healthy sense of identity	93%
2e: Participants report being involved in activities that support or assist with education (degrees, certificates, credentials or qualified for continuing education) or employment readiness (job relevant licences, resume writing support, interview skills, accessing proper equipment, skills training, gaining proper ID).	95%
2f: Participants demonstrate that they have the capacity to navigate the options and resources available to them (i.e., understand the information and how it could apply to their situation, feel they have the 'tools' to make an informed decision).	47%
2g: Participants increased their wages or found employment	69%



"My new career has allowed me to just be free, I don't have to worry about money or security anymore." (Participant, Women Building Futures)

Success Story

Agency: Bissell Centre

Program: Early Childhood

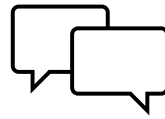
In early 2020, our respite child care expanded to include some full-time spaces for parents. One of our parents' V, applied for a subsidy as she was looking for work. V was successful in attaining a full-time space for her son A. V found full-time employment quickly in a position where she could not only use her existing skills but develop new ones.

Every day at drop-off and pick-up time, V would come with stories of how meaningful her work was and how thrilled she was that she was finally making an income in an honest way. V also expressed numerous times how happy she was that her son A could be in a quality early learning and childcare centre that he was familiar with, felt safe and was learning and growing at such a rapid rate. When the pandemic closed our doors in March of 2020, V was devastated. As an essential worker not deemed essential at the time by the province she was confused and concerned as to how she would keep having to go to work yet not have to care for A. Just under 2 weeks later, which honestly felt like an eternity to not only V but to all of us, the province extended the list of essential workers to include V's position. Upon hearing this news, we contacted V to let her know that her son A could return to our program. She stated, "he'll be there tomorrow"!

You see for V being "on the streets," "homeless" and "using drugs" prior to A's birth, finally being gainfully employed, and having affordable, quality childcare was beyond her wildest dreams. She often stated how "lucky" and "grateful" she felt to have her new life and that the Bissell Centre has played a part in that. "Without supportive programs like yours" she added, "I'm not sure where I'd be." V made a commitment to "get clean," have her son and "change her life forever." Our program being funded in the way that it gives us the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our parents and help them to change their lives, build their capacity and move out of poverty.

WELCOMING AND ENGAGED COMMUNITIES

Welcoming and Engaged Communities are open, diverse and inclusive. They ensure that all community members are active, connected and supported in achieving their goals. They can be geographic or interest based depending on the program focus area.



"This past summer really changed my life. I'm very grateful for the time I got to spend in the drop-in...I've applied to a Masters of Public Health using my experiences with Boyle Street as my main influence." (Participant, Boyle Street Community Services).

Success Story

Agency: Action for Healthy Communities
Program: Community Capacities

We connected with the Ethiopian Community at Queen Mary Park and Central McDougall area by starting a community conversation. The community animator invited them to an open house at our organization with other community groups in the area. The objective of the meeting was to raise awareness of their cultural traditions, food and dance.

After the meeting the groups decided to support their youth group (14 individuals) with their cultural dance initiative by providing free space and inviting them to showcase their dance and entertainment with other community members. AHC provided them free space and invited them to participate in several community events to facilitate intercultural connection. They created an initiative to connect to the neighbors by involving other cultural communities in a Block Party event. AHC community animator supported them to capture their event on video showcasing the intercultural activities that were demonstrated displaying acceptance and respect by multicultural communities.

This group is now connected to many other cross cultural communities, working on future projects. They met several times with the Indigenous Community Elders (4 Elders) in the Queen Mary Park and Central McDougall area. We started a community dialogue, to give the Indigenous Community Elders a platform for their voices to be heard and pooled in resources in developing the skills that enabled them to partake in the community initiatives. By sharing their protocols, traditions and ceremonies, showcasing their Little Elders (12 Little Elders) who will be shaping a new generation of Indigenous people. A learning circle was initiated by this group to encourage resilience and peaceful coexistence; to facilitate curiosity in, acceptance of, and respect for other cultures' customs and traditions.

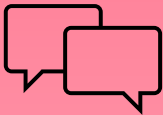
These two groups along with a network of other groups who have participated in this project are willing to work together to understand their culture and find ways to raise voice against systemic racism in the area. During the 2020 pandemic, we were able to support 1300 individuals with computers, food hampers, baby needs, digital assistance, leadership training, mental health support, transportations, medical resources, CERB assistance, etc.

Welcoming and Engaged Community	
Outcome	% Positive Change
7: Participants develop increased awareness regarding social issues in the community.	89%
7a: Participants identify social issues that impact their quality of life or that of others in their community (e.g., poverty, family violence, bullying, broader personal safety, crime, addictions, mental health, sexual health, healthy relationships, homelessness, physical disabilities/chronic health conditions).	92%
7b: Participants identify ways they could get involved in addressing social issues that impact their quality of life or that of others in their community (e.g., volunteering for or organizing events/activities, advocacy in areas like respect for human rights, policy changes to support or protect people, specific types of programs/services to fill gaps).	92%
8: Participants have increased positive involvement in the community.	96%
8a: Participants report or demonstrate becoming more interested in community activities or groups (e.g., try activities that are new to them, get involved in volunteering for or organizing community activities, become part of a group of people with common interests).	97%
8b: Participants report that they enjoy spending time in their community	100%
8c: Participants report that they feel a sense of belonging/citizenship in their community	99%
8d: Participants report being involved in cultural events/ceremony/teachings that are meaningful and significant to them	-
8e: Participants report way(s) in which their volunteering has made a positive difference in the community (- e.g., safety, community connectedness, access to supports (food, transportation), beautification, etc)	94%
8f: Volunteers identify what they have learned about their community and/or themselves through volunteering (e.g., community issues, how they can match their own interests or skills with volunteer opportunities).	93%
8g: Volunteers demonstrate skills that could assist in or enhance their contribution to other paid or unpaid work.	100%

THRIVING FAMILIES

Thriving Families work together to overcome challenges, learn, and develop. Caregivers within the family have the capacity to support the physical, social, psychological, emotional and spiritual development of the children, youth, adult or senior. Creating stable environments that promote quality interactions support achieving the goals for the family group.

Thriving Families	
Outcome	% Positive Change
3: Participants have improved family functioning	92%
3a: Participants report a positive change in their family's routine (more structure & stability).	-
3b: Participants demonstrate increased positive interactions among family (e.g., listening to each other, accepting each other for who they are, praising each other, solving problems together, supporting other family members to feel good about themselves/each other).	92%
3c: Participants report doing more activities together as a family	100%
4: Caregivers have increased knowledge of child development.	99%
4a: Caregivers identify activities that are appropriate for their child(ren)'s development (e.g., what activities they would encourage children to do, or do with their children, at a particular age/stage).	84%
4b: Caregivers identify ways they can interact with their child(ren) in a way that matches their level of development (e.g., read to child(ren), engage in interactive play in home or community).	100%
4c: Caregivers identify the developmental stages that can be expected of their child in relation to: communication, physical development, attention, focus.	94%
5: Caregivers have increased knowledge of positive parenting skills.	96%
5a: Caregivers identify aspects of a nurturing environment for their child(ren) at home (e.g., defining home, have books, toys in the home, play with child(ren), engage in conversations about things of interest to the child, create social opportunities for child(ren) with peers).	99%
5b: Caregivers identify strategies to apply in one or more of the following areas: providing a nurturing environment, helping their children develop age-appropriate skills, providing positive feedback to children, addressing children's behaviour challenges, setting boundaries, transmission of traditional knowledge or skills.	92%
6: Caregivers have increased positive parenting skills.	-
6a: Caregivers use developmentally appropriate strategies learned during the program (e.g., healthy attachment behaviours, positive feedback, constructive criticism/behavioural alternatives, etc.).	-
6b: Caregivers report using positive parenting strategies at home (e.g., have books, toys in the home, play with child(ren), engage in conversations about things of interest to the child, create social opportunities for child(ren) with peers).	-



"This program has provided a great sense of normalcy during this pandemic." (Participant, Community Options: A Society for Children and Families)

"The pandemic has brought changes for our whole family. Suddenly my elementary-aged kids weren't going to school in person, and my husband was working from home. Participating in Unpack N Play online this fall was a joy for me and my preschool aged daughter. I felt more connected to community resources, and it helped my relationship with my daughter to have a dedicated time for her "school" where she could do crafts, listen to songs and stories, and share her ideas and enthusiasm. It also helped us to reinforce healthy boundaries as we learned to adapt to our new way of sharing the home environment. I am grateful for this support in a time of challenges for all." (Participant, City West Childcare and Community Support Society)

"Little did I know that day the program would be a true miracle for our family at a time when everything was in turmoil. My children were very happy to attend and I could go to work each day knowing that they were in the best care possible." (Parent, Oliver Centre Early Learning Programs for Children & Families Society)

Success Story

Agency: Centre for Family Literacy
Program: Multicultural Rhymes that Bind

"Thank you for the multicultural rhymes that bind program, especially on Saturdays. I work during the week and cannot attend at that time.

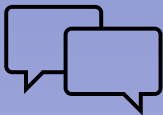
Recently things have felt daunting in life and overwhelming once again. We are all at home when not at work, and tensions are running high. When we join in this program on Saturdays it reminds us that we can still connect. I feel like a better parent and that although this is different we can still make it through this pandemic with the support from programs like this. The bonus is I get that reminder every Saturday to reconnect, take time away from all the other stuff in my head, and enjoy my family.

I know it is for supporting literacy, and it does that, my daughter has an amazing vocabulary which I say comes from when we used to attend programs in person and all I have learned then. But right now this program is a small reminder of reconnecting with our family at a time when our family under one roof is all we see and it is stressful. We used to go out every single day. So, this is what this program has done for me. I feel positive at the end of each class and we usually sing a few more songs even when zoom is done. Then my daughter brings me a book and we read together and just enjoy being together. Thank you for continuing to offer us this program."

STRONG CONNECTIONS & RELATIONSHIPS

Strong Relationships and Connections are the glue between individuals, families, communities and the not for profit sector. It is through relationships that we can achieve a strong and supportive community where all people can thrive and contribute. Individuals and families have access to a network of community and social supports that can address their needs.

Strong Connections & Relationships	
Outcome	% Positive Change
12: Participants have increased knowledge of community resources	79%
12a: Participants identify community resources that could address their information or service needs (e.g., could be for caregiving, relationships, mental health, physical health, basic needs, abuse, community connections, intergenerational trauma or other issues).	95%
12b: Participants ask for information about or referral to one or more community resources that address their information or service needs.	74%
12c: Participants report awareness about the options and resources available to them (e.g., types of housing, counselling, safety-related information/support, financial information/support, community involvement, health-related services).	94%
13: Participants access community resources that meet their needs.	99%
13a: Participants access nutritious food (e.g. fruits, vegetables, multiple food groups).	100%
13b: Participants access housing that is safe, adequate, affordable, permanent -- in either independent or supported living arrangements, as appropriate to their needs (e.g., their physical, mental or social health; economic situation).	82%
13c: Participants access appropriate clothing	100%
13d: Participants access transportation.	100%
13e: Participants access resources that promote safety (e.g., protection from physical, emotional, or financial abuse; assistance with daily living tasks as needed).	-
13f: Participants access mental health resources (e.g.,counselling).	88%
13g: Participants access resources that promote social inclusion (e.g., group activities, outings, home visits).	50%
13h: Participants access resources that promote financial stability (e.g., employment opportunities, career counselling, financial literacy training, accessing benefits and/or subsidies).	99%
13i: Participants report referrals provided were relevant to meet their needs.	77%
14: Participants have improved networks of social support.	94%
14a: Participants report referrals provided were relevant to meet their needs.	89%
14b: Participants report having sources of personal, cultural, community, or professional support.	95%
14c: Participants report that they feel safe (physically, emotionally, financially) with people in their lives.	98%
14d: Participants report feeling heard/understood/respected by program staff, volunteers and/or participants.	91%



I like how supportive (staff) are to me. I always feel better after I come. They don't judge me and aren't looking for me to do anything really. I can just be there and that's fine. (Participant, Boys and Girls Club of Leduc)



I am not alone anymore. I still grieve the loss of my family. But I have new friends who are in the same boat I am. An old, rickety boat but now I have companions to help me bail the rising waters and stay afloat. (Participant, Edmonton Seniors Centre)

Success Story

Agency: Bissell Centre

Program: Bissell Community Centre

On March 23 we adapted by moving and expanding our Community Space services to the Edmonton EXPO Centre. We partnered with the City of Edmonton, Homeward Trust, Boyle Street Community Services, The Mustard Seed, Native Counselling Services and many more agencies to provide a safe and inclusive environment that met the daily demands of our participants amongst a shutdown of our city's public spaces and public transportation. Throughout this operation we were able to support, on average 800 individuals each day.

The Edmonton EXPO Centre closed at the end of July and we re-opened our Community Space on August 17. We adapted services and programs to meet public health orders while still providing basic needs and support the areas of housing, mental health, employment, cultural teachings and victim support. Prior to the pandemic we could have 100-125 participants in our Community Space at one time, as a result of the pandemic our capacity has decreased to 35 people.

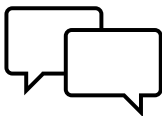
Our operations shifted for a third time on October 30 when we partnered with the City of Edmonton, Boyle Street Community Services, The Mustard Seed, Bent Arrow Cultural Services and Homeward Trust to open the City's largest 24/7 shelter, Tipinawâw, at the Edmonton Convention Centre. This partnership will continue to operate until March 31, 2021. Tipinawaw is a low barrier, housing focused shelter that is providing: showers, laundry, emergency clothing & hygiene items, 3 meals a day, day sleeping, overnight shelter, medical services, overdose prevention site, cultural services, as well as, mental health, victim support, housing and financial support in order that people can become housed.

One participant, Tanner, had lost his parents when he was young and now, in his early 20s, he struggles as he bounces between couch surfing and sleeping rough, with no income or stability to maintain regular employment. At the beginning of March, he had just connected with a housing worker and they were working together to apply for Income Support but when the province city shut down, the housing worker's struggled to locate Tanner. However, our Community Support Workers at the Edmonton EXPO Centre recognized Tanner right away and quickly connected with him to make sure his housing worker knew he was safe. It was a joint effort in ensuring Tanner's needs were met at the EXPO Centre by supporting him to be ready for housing appointments each day. Through Bissell Centre's Outreach Housing Team and the Community Support Worker, Tanner moved into his very first apartment at the end of March. The day after he moved in, he came back to the EXPO Centre and surprised the Community Support workers with coffee from Tim Horton's as a thank you. Since he moved into his apartment we rarely see him at the Community Space except for when he comes by "to make sure we are all still doing our job without him".

STRONG SECTOR

Individuals, families and communities exist and function within society. Within Edmonton and area the not for profit sector is critical to creating an integrated and connected web of support to reduce and eliminate people falling through the cracks. Ensuring that the individuals and organizations working within the sector have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to be successful and healthy is critical.

Strong Sector	
Outcome	% Positive Change
9: Strengthened individual skills within organizations	100%
9a: Organization staff or volunteers report new knowledge to serve their participants.	100%
9b: Organization staff or volunteers report new skills to address identified needs.	-
9c: Organization staff or volunteers report commitment to and/or confidence in implementing knowledge and/or skills.	-
9d: Organization staff or volunteers report relationships/connections have been enhanced.	100%
10: More effective community organizations.	99%
10a: Organizations report training has strengthened organizational capacity (e.g., board and financial governance, succession planning, evaluation support).	-
10b: Organizations report resources (e.g., research, tools and templates) have strengthened organizational capacity (e.g., board and financial governance, succession planning, evaluation support).	94%
10c: Organizations report making evidence informed decisions.	-
10d: Organizations report making improvements to their practice/policy.	100%
11: Enhanced collaborative efforts.	100%
11a: Organizations report increased capacity to engage in collaborative efforts.	100%
11b: Participants of the collaborative report that they are better able to meet community needs due to working together.	99%
11c: Participants identify how their communities (as a whole) are demonstrating progress in one or more of the following domains of community capacity: Participation; Leadership; Community structures; External supports; Asking why; Obtaining resources; Skills, knowledge, and learning; Linking with others; Sense of community	99%



“I think the partnership with CUP helps keep us on a path that respects the broad range of research required to solve complex problems to improve health outcomes for children and their families.” (Community University Partnership)

“What emerged from this challenging year was the fact the M.A.P.S. was able to quickly respond to emerging needs and refocus our attention where it was needed. We look forward to the year ahead, with a continued focus on assisting our social service sector to adapt, improve and evolve in the face of uncertainty.” (Mapping and Planning Support)

Success Story

Agency: Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

Program: Governance & Leadership and Volunteerism

Traditionally, ECVO's role has been in building the capacity of organizations and individuals through in-person programming. This often sees individuals gaining new skills and building new relationships while organizations are strengthening their capacity and making new connections. 2020 looked different then most years though, as we saw many of our programs cancelled or transitioned online as a result of COVID-19. It quickly became apparent that while programming was important to our members capacity building needs, resources to navigate the everchanging restrictions and guidelines were a priority. In response, we began used existing infrastructure, relationships, and technology to support the ever increasing need for direction.

We collected information, developed resources, and shared them widely, both through our networks and on our website's resource page (www.ecvo.ca/covid19). Some examples of this included the development of our AGM resource and our resources on volunteerism. Many restrictions limiting public gatherings came right in the middle of what is traditionally known as AGME season; in Edmonton alone, there were over 80 AGMs planned during this period. Leveraging existing relationships with Alberta Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women as well as with Service Alberta, we were able to successfully advocate for a ministerial order suspending the need for AGMs while in a state of emergency. This then allowed us to develop a resource to support organizations in understanding how they can hold their AGMs when required. Resources around volunteerism have also been significant in supporting organizations to transition their volunteer programs online (or to COVID-safe in-person opportunities) and in supporting individuals to stay connecting with their communities. As a regional partner with VolunteerConnector, we began encouraging organizations and individuals alike to join the platform as a means to match opportunities with people, and saw a very large increase in site visits (153277), organizations with volunteer opportunity postings (515), and applications submitted (4494). We shared resources on remote and safe volunteering and also used our site to highlight how to conduct volunteer screening online. At the same time, we recognized that many employees from the business and industry sectors were out of work as a result of layoffs (temporary or otherwise), yet non-profits were still in need of support. We created a matching program to encourage "skilled volunteers" to connect with organizations in need of specific supports, and were able to see successful matches that resulted in positive change for volunteers and organizations; "I cannot express how valuable this program was and how much we appreciate the connection made."

Feedback from members has been that no matter the topic, organizations are incredibly grateful for the informative and easily accessible resources housed on our website.



STRONG SECTOR

CO-ANALYSIS

APPENDIX II

STRONG SECTOR CO-ANALYSIS

Individuals, families and communities exist and function within society. Within Edmonton and area the not for profit sector is critical to creating an integrated and connected web of support to prevent people from falling through the cracks. Ensuring that the individuals and organizations working within the sector have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to be successful and healthy is critical.

In early 2021, programs reporting to the *Strong Sector* impact area met to co-analyze their data and discuss their experiences over the past year. The aim of the co-analysis session was to allow programs to provide their own subject matter expertise and knowledge to the data interpretation, to support programs' ownership of their data and its use, and for agencies to reflect together as a community of practice. COI hopes to expand this co-analysis practice to other impact areas in the future.

Individuals, families and communities exist and function within society. Within Edmonton and area the not for profit sector is critical to creating an integrated and connected web of supports to reduce and eliminate people falling through the cracks. Programs in the *Strong Sector* impact area support the individuals and organizations working within the sector to have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to be successful and healthy.

Over the past several years, there has been a shift in the number of and types of programs reporting to the *Strong Sector* impact area. Prior to the 2019 reporting year, a small group of agencies whose mandate is to support front-line agencies and build capacity within the Social Services Sector reported to this impact area (For example, 9 programs from 7 agencies reported on 2018 data.). For the purposes of this discussion, these agencies will be termed Traditional Capacity Building agencies.

However, in 2019 and 2020, certain front line agencies began reporting to the *Strong Sector* impact area. 2020 data contains reporting from:

- 8 Traditional Capacity Building programs (Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth and Families; Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations - Governance & Leadership and Volunteerism Programs, ECVO & Creating Collective Capacity; Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council - Coordinated Home Supports, Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council; Edmonton Social Planning Council; M.A.P.S. (Mapping and Planning Support) Alberta Capital Region; United Way of the Alberta Capital Region - Community Mental Health Action Plan)
- 6 front-line programs reporting to a mandatory *Strong Sector* outcome through City of Edmonton FCSS' Partnership/Collaboration funding (Bissell Centre - Housing Outreach Program; Multicultural Family Resource Society - Intercultural Multilogues (Coming Together) Project; United Way of the Alberta Capital Region - All In For Youth, Empower U, Communities United; Youth Empowerment and Support Services - Planning for a City Model for the Prevention of Youth Homelessness),
- and 8 front-line programs voluntarily reporting to the impact area through an optional outcome (Boyle Street Community Services - Inner City Recreation and Wellness Program, Volunteer Program; Africa Centre - Africa Centre Prevention Services Program; Gateway Association - Inclusive Employment; iHuman Youth Society - Authenticity Program / iSucceed; Jewish Family Services - Integrity Counselling; Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre - Relentless Connector; Operation Friendship Seniors Society - Volunteer Program).

Traditionally, programs reporting to the *Strong Sector* impact area co-analyze their data. This was not done with 2019 data due to COVID-19 but was resumed in 2021 for 2020 data. As such, this was the first year co-analyzing this larger pool of data, with a variety of agencies and programs attending. The discussion was wide-ranging and represented a multiplicity of perspectives.

2020 Data

Agencies noted two caveats regarding 2020 data:

1. With a wider variety of programs reporting to these indicators, it is important to ensure that all programs understand and are reporting to the indicators in the same way. Both Traditional Capacity Building and front-line programs are doing vital work for the social services sector and vulnerable community members; it is crucial that these stories are told accurately and effectively.

2. Due to the extraordinary circumstances of the past year, it was challenging for programs to gather *Strong Sector* data from collaborative partners or agencies accessing their services. Many agency staff were experiencing “survey fatigue,” and as agencies attempted to pivot to COVID-19 service delivery and address the multitude of needs emerging within the community, little time was left to engage in reflection to support an external evaluation. At the co-analysis, agencies discussed including time to reflect and evaluate in collaborative meetings to support data gathering and even more, the additional capacity building that can take place from intentional sharing and reflection.

Relationships

As has frequently been discussed in previous Common Outcomes Report Summaries, relationships are key to the work of *Strong Sector* programs and the social services sector as a whole. The relationships and collaborative culture already in place due to the work of *Strong Sector* programs were vital to the sector’s ability to pivot effectively and address emerging community needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, relationships and networks continued to develop in 2020 as collaborations were formed or grew in response to identified issues.

Agencies noted an increase in knowledge sharing and mentorship among front-line organizations in 2020. These agencies worked together to enhance efficiency and effectiveness, and played capacity building roles for each other.

In other situations and particularly when tackling complex systems and needs, Traditional Capacity Building agencies played vital backbone and connecting roles in the formation and day-to-day work of collaboratives. Particularly in a year of high staff turnover across the sector, these agencies acted as an anchor for the collaboratives and ensured that the work remained stable and moved forward.

Strong Sector programs now face an additional challenge of maximizing the effectiveness of the new and enhanced collaboratives created during the pandemic as COVID-19 grants run out and the sector faces a lean funding environment.

Systems Change & Going Forward

The disruptions placed on our community and sector in 2020 presented opportunities to consider and address systemic issues in new ways. For example, as emergency COVID-19 funding was distributed to support food needs, agencies recognized the importance of coordinating food security efforts and formed the Edmonton Community Coordination of Food Resources Committee. The committee acknowledged the opportunity to manage not only the emergency situation at hand, but to examine the continuum of food security supports within the community and to enhance the effectiveness of these systems. With the support of M.A.P.S. (Mapping and Planning Support) Alberta Capital Region, a Food Security Continuum was developed to map how current and future work contributes to sustainable food ecosystems in Edmonton.

The essence of the work of *Strong Sector* programs is to provide the research, tools, and collaborative support needed to enhance the sector as a whole and to ultimately support positive change for vulnerable community members. In the co-analysis discussion, programs frequently referenced the ripple effect of their work across the sector and community, and the ways that they are working, particularly in 2020, to create systems change. Yet, measuring this ripple effect to its end point is nearly impossible. As 2020 has shown, *Strong Sector* programs play an integral role in the ability of the social services sector to effectively respond to emerging community needs and provide the research, evaluation, and collaborative backbone strength required to begin to address systems change. However, *Strong Sector* programs are one piece of this puzzle: all members of the sector which they build capacity for share in COI’s work of creating a vibrant and caring society where everyone is able to thrive and succeed.



NOTES

ABOUT THIS REPORT

APPENDIX III

APPENDIX III – Notes about this report

It is important to recognize that this report is not exhaustive of the work the social services sector in our region is accomplishing as it only includes data from those programs that utilize the Common Outcomes Report (COR). Additionally, although the interventions and activities provided by the reporting programs contribute to achieving the outcomes in this report, attribution cannot be claimed.

Below are a few things to note about the contents of this report and the use of the information submitted:

- Funders and funded agencies continue to work together to revise and refine the data collection tools and methods.
- The funders do not have expectations about the percentage of positive change programs report.
- When possible, funders and funded agencies engage in dialogue and co-evaluate the data.
- While funded agencies are asked to report the number of unique participants in each program, it is important to recognize that for some programs this is challenging. As well, there is no system in place to track unique participants across the spectrum of services. Examples of programs where tracking unique participants is most difficult include drop-in, information and referral and public education programs. Despite these limitations the number of total unique participants does represent the significant volume of work occurring in the social services sector.
- It is of value to gather data and report on the number of Indigenous and Newcomer participants the funded agencies supported. This data is self-reported by participants of funded programs and not all programs gather this data. For these reasons, funded agencies confirm that this number is underreported.
- The themes included in this report are taken directly from the 2020 Common Outcomes Reports submitted by funded agencies.
- The outcome results provided in this report are based on the number of participants who responded to data collection attempts by the program staff. In most cases, the data collected is from a sample of the total program participants.



- Across all outcome areas, programs report on *positive change* as a result of participants accessing programs and services. It is important to recognize that positive change is measured in many ways across programs. While it does reflect improvements and changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours it does not mean that the participant no longer requires the services being provided. The nature of the program, the population being served, the complexity of the challenges being addressed, and the availability of community resources can all impact these results.
- Programs can report on more than one outcome in each impact area. The impact area summaries (including outputs) reflect this.
- Funders and funded agencies continue to improve their work on data collection and evaluation to improve services to participants. Some ongoing challenges include:
 - Collecting demographic data (age, cultural background, etc.).
 - Defining “positive change” consistently.
 - Collecting data at drop-in programs.
 - Collecting data in large groups (particularly for public education programs).
 - Collecting data from those with low literacy or for whom English is a second language.
 - Collecting data from participants who leave the program unexpectedly.

This is a living document and in order to accommodate new information and learnings from our funded partners this document may be updated as needed. Please be sure to download the most recent version found here: <https://www.myunitedway.ca/common-outcome-agencies/> or www.edmonton.ca/fcss