

CIVIC PARTNER 2019 ANNUAL REPORT SNAPSHOT- VCC INITIATIVES LTD (VIBRANT COMMUNITIES CALGARY)

CPS2020-1051 Attachment 8
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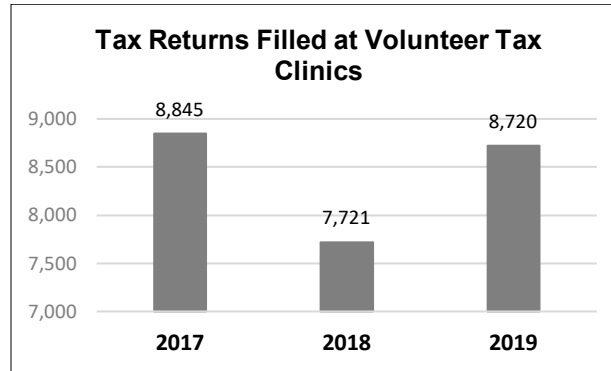
VCC INITIATIVES LTD. (VIBRANT COMMUNITIES CALGARY)

Mandate: VCC works to achieve a substantial and sustained reduction in the number of Calgarians living in poverty.

2019 City Investment

Operating Grant: \$484,000
City owned asset? No

2019 Results



The story behind the numbers

- Tax return figures represent part of the impact that the Financial Empowerment Collaborative programs (led by Momentum) have on the financial wellbeing of Calgarians.
- The Financial Empowerment Lever in the strategy prioritizes increases in income and financial assets while reducing debt. Six sample opportunities and three TRC calls to action are included. The Aspire brand and website launched in mid-2019 to better establish the Financial Empowerment Collaborative.
- 325 tax clinics filing 8,270 returns resulted in over \$43M in benefits, and the ability for new or previously lapsed filers to access ongoing benefits accessed through filing.

Current state 2020: COVID-19 impact

- Pivoted strategies and resource allocations to respond to the pandemic, and participated in numerous response and recovery task forces, planning groups and research efforts.
- Moved operations online including community engagement and knowledge dissemination.
- COVID-related priorities include food security, health, affordable housing, and income supports. Dedicated resources to Seven Brothers Circle (formerly the COVID-19 Task Force) in the areas of technology, housing and basic needs.

Service Impact: Minor

Current demand for service: Demand has increased notably

CPS2020-1051
ATTACHMENT 8



Organizational Structure: Independent External Organization

Fiscal Year: Ended December 31, 2019

Delivers Council Approved Strategy: Enough for All Poverty Reduction Strategy

City 2019 Operating Grant: \$484,000

STRUCTURE

Vision, Mission and Mandate:

Vibrant Communities Calgary (VCC) is a non-profit organization that engages Calgarians in advocating long-term strategies that address the root causes of poverty in Calgary. We work to make poverty history in our city.

VCC works to achieve a substantial and sustained reduction in the number of Calgarians living in poverty.

VCC works to grow the social, economic, and political engagement of Calgarians in their community. Vibrant Communities Calgary believes that everyone has a right to fully participate in their communities.

VCC believes that there are important systemic factors that contribute to poverty and that the whole community has a vital role to play in changing these conditions. Change occurs through engagement, inspiration, and action. VCC values leadership, collaboration social justice and pragmatism. As of January 1, 2015 VCC, stewards Calgary's community-driven poverty reduction strategy: Enough for All (E4A), which was refreshed in 2019 as Enough for All 2.0.

2019 RESULTS

1. What key results did your organization achieve in 2019 that contributed to one or more of the One Calgary Citizen Priorities? (*A Prosperous City, A City of Safe & Inspiring Neighbourhoods, A Healthy and Green City, A Well Run City*)

The following are highlights outlined in the Enough for All 2.0 2019 Evaluation Report that align with One Calgary Citizen Priorities:

1) **Community Hubs:** In 2019, 43,919 Calgarians engaged through Community Hubs. There are five Community Hubs in Calgary: Bowness, Greater Forest Lawn, North of McKnight, Sunalta and Village Square. The Hubs are designed to create welcoming and inclusive community gathering spaces for Calgarians to help foster connections to increase social inclusion and economic participation. Programs in each location vary depending on community priorities but include art programs, access to basic needs, lending libraries, employment, skill development, and financial supports like matched savings programs and tax clinics.

Results reported in the 2019 mid-term report showed that:

47% of people accessing the Hubs were newcomers to Canada

81% of people who accessed a Hub said the Hub made a positive difference in their lives

86% of volunteers reported an increased sense of community belonging

100% of volunteers believe the Hub has helped them build supportive relationships

96% of site partners reported that community social workers in the Hub sites have an impact on participants



2) **Low Income Transit Pass:** The continued uptake and success of The City of Calgary’s sliding scale Low Income Transit Pass and Fair Entry program significantly reduced monthly expenses for low income Calgarians. Fair entry subsidies are provided specifically through recreation, the property tax assistance program, seniors home maintenance program and a no cost spay/neuter program for pets. In 2019 106,000 Calgarians accessed the Fair Entry program and 98% reported that it made their life better.

Advocacy efforts led by E4A Champions and stakeholders including Keep Calgary Strong, included presentations to city council and strong social and mainstream media presence. It was announced in November of 2019 that City of Calgary will “address the funding gap needed for the Low-Income Transit Pass to remain at the 2019 sliding scale discount structure”.

3) **Truth and Reconciliation:** In the area of Truth and Reconciliation, Funding was secured in 2019 for the Indigenous Gathering Place (IGP) for Calgary, which was a project identified by VCC’s Indigenous Advisory Committee in 2018. The objectives of policy work for this initiative were for:

- The City of Calgary IGP Society to identify a suitable site as per the Business Plan prepared by the IGP Society.
- The Government of Alberta to approve the IGP’s application for funding from the federal infrastructure grant, Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

2. What quality improvement changes did you make, or operational efficiencies did you find in 2019?

The Enough for All 2.0 refreshed strategy, implemented in 2019, renewed the evaluation framework for which all work would be aligned to and assessed against the following metrics:

- Capacity Change: Increasing local capacity to work together to develop concrete initiatives to reduce any aspect of poverty
- Awareness & Will Change: Increasing the public’s awareness of, and support for, tackling a particular cause of poverty
- Programmatic Change: Concrete programs, services, and supports that help Calgarians ‘beat the odds’ in a key area
- Systemic & Policy Change: Changes in policies, regulations, investments, structures, and practices that help ‘change the odds’

This shift in way of working increased both operational efficiency and quality of strategic implementation work in VCC’s stewardship role of Enough for All 2.0.

3. What program, service or initiative was most successful in 2019? What lessons learned from this experience can inform future work?

The largest success for VCC in 2019 included the development process and the launch of the refreshed E4A 2.0 strategy and examples of increased collaboration and expansion of networks across sectors. Citywide initiatives like Financial Empowerment/Aspire, Thrive and Community Hubs have scaled up, some beyond their original ‘host’ organization and target numbers. In 2019, more than 55,000 people participated in these initiatives. The addition and proposed addition of more than 400 new affordable housing units in several Calgary communities and a 32% drop-in rates of homelessness are other



examples of capacity building work that is having an impact.

Enough for All 2.0 Champions reported multiple reasons for their commitment to the E4A strategy including wanting to be part of a collective effort to reduce poverty, that their organization’s vision and mission are aligned with the strategy and they believe that the E4A Strategy will be successful in reducing city-wide poverty.

In relation to informing future work, VCC believes it is critical to invest time and resources in ensuring that multiple stakeholders are consulted and investing in city-wide strategies to ensure long term buy-in and success.

4.What is one success story from 2019 that demonstrates how you worked in partnership with other community, private or public organizations to achieve shared results for Calgary and Calgarians?

The Justice Lever of Enough for All 2.0 is described as: “Calgarians need the knowledge, resources and capability to understand and address their legal issues and deserve a legal system that does not contribute to or cause poverty.” There are six sample opportunities and eight TRC Calls to action noted in the strategy. The Justice Sector Constellation, which is comprised of several legally focused organizations in Calgary and backboneed by VCC for this work, contributed the following in 2019:

“What if every community worker, lawyer and social worker understood how the factors that make someone vulnerable to poverty can make them vulnerable to legal issues and how having legal issues can make someone vulnerable to poverty? What if they understood the challenges faced by vulnerable populations as they try to address their legal issues?”

The mission of the Justice Sector Constellation is to intervene at the intersection of poverty and the legal system so that everyone facing a legal issue can access the justice sector resources and services he or she needs. To that end, in addition to other projects furthered in 2019, the Constellation commissioned a Poverty and the Law Module, to sensitize students, professionals and other service providers to the issues that arise at the intersection of poverty and the legal system, to better equip them to serve their clients and communities. Development of the module is being funded by the Catalyst Fund of Enough for All, Calgary’s poverty reduction strategy. The Module was completed in early 2020 and is already embedded in several academic institutions within the City as required learning for legal professionals.

RESOURCES

1. **Please estimate how The City’s operating funding was allocated in 2019. Mark all areas that apply by approximate percentage. For example, 45% allocated to staffing costs, 10% to evaluation or research, etc.**

2.1%	Advertising and promotion
14.8%	Programs or services
2.2%	Office supplies and expenses
22.8%	Professional and consulting fees
56.9%	Staff compensation, development and training
0%	Fund development
0.5%	Purchased supplies and assets
3.8%	Facility maintenance
0%	Evaluation or Research
16.8%	Other, please name: Charitable Agency Agreement



2. Did volunteers support your operations in 2019? If yes:

How many volunteers?	40
Estimated total hours provided by volunteers:	600

3. What resources did your organization leverage to support operations in 2019?

N/A

4. Using the chart below, please report your 2019 performance measures that demonstrate: how much you did, how well you did it, and how Calgarians are better off. *Please identify through BOLD font, 1-2 measures that are most significant and could be presented in a chart. **

	Performance Measure Name	2017 results	2018 results	2019 results	What story does this measure tell about your work?
How much did you do?	Tax Returns filled at Volunteer Tax Clinics	8845	7721	8720	These figures represent part of the impact that the Financial Empowerment Collaborative programs (led by Momentum) have on the financial wellbeing of Calgarians.
How well did you do it?	The Financial Empowerment Lever in the strategy prioritizes increases in income and financial assets while reducing debt. Six sample opportunities and three TRC calls to action are included. The Aspire brand and website launched in mid-2019 to better establish the Financial Empowerment Collaborative.				
How are Calgarians better off?	325 tax clinics filing 8,270 returns resulted in over \$43M in benefits, and the ability for new or previously lapsed filers to access ongoing benefits accessed through filing.				

**Additional data related to performance measures are available in the Enough for All 2.0 Evaluation Report. Due to delays in provincial and national data due to COVID19, comparative statistics to previous years for 2019 were not available for this report.*

5. Briefly describe how your key results in 2019 contributed to Council approved strategies (As applicable.) For example: Calgary in the new economy: An economic strategy for Calgary; Calgary Heritage Strategy; Climate Resiliency Strategy; Resilient Calgary; Enough for All poverty reduction strategy; Cultural Plan for Calgary; Downtown Strategy; Foundations for Hope: Calgary’s Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy; Open Spaces Plan; Recreation Master Plan; Sport for Life Policy.

Calgary in the new economy: An economic strategy for Calgary: Enough for All is a key component of Calgary’s Economic Strategy and supports the strategy’s focus on being inclusive across its four pillars, particularly under Talent and Place. VCC was involved in the updating of the economic strategy, and a representative of Calgary Economic Development participated on the E4A Refresh Steering Committee to enhance and support alignment. The goals of E4A 2.0 align and deliver on the economic strategy: *All Calgarians live in a strong, supportive and inclusive community; All Calgarians have sufficient income and assets to thrive; and All indigenous people are equal participants in Calgary’s future.*

Foundations for Hope: Calgary’s Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy: “Housing” is identified in E4A



2.0 as a Lever of Change, and notes that access to affordable and appropriate housing decreases the likelihood that families and individuals will fall into or remain in poverty.

Recreation Master Plan: Enough for All 2.0 identified “physical and mental health” as a Lever of Change. When an individual’s physical, mental and social health are compromised, their chances of falling into poverty are increased.

Other: Truth and Reconciliation: One of three goals of E4A 2.0 is that *All Indigenous People are equal participants in Calgary’s future*, which is aligned with The City of Calgary’s approach in the Indigenous Policy (i.e., that The City will strive to learn from and work with Indigenous communities, grounded in the spirit and intent of reconciliation).

As part of E4A, an Indigenous Poverty Reduction Strategy was developed and it is being implemented, including work focused on establishing an Indigenous Gathering Place. Ongoing engagement of Elders and Indigenous knowledge keepers is part of how Enough for All 2.0 will move forward.

Did your organization receive any awards or recognition in 2019 that you want to highlight?

N/A

6. CAPITAL AND ASSET MANAGEMENT (for Civic Partners managing City-owned assets)

Asset: *Insert Name of City owned asset managed or operated*

- a) **Provide a summary of your organization’s 2019 capital work, including specific lifecycle/maintenance projects or new capital projects.**

N/A

- b) **What funding did your organization leverage to support capital activities in 2019?**

N/A

COVID-19 UPDATE

7. Briefly describe the key impacts of COVID-19 on your operations to date.

COVID19 has experienced operational impacts in the areas of strategy and resource allocation throughout the pandemic, though as VCC is not a service provider, these impacts have been manageable. The key operational impacts to date include: pivoting VCC’s work to response and support for the first 5 months of the pandemic (deviation from initial 2020 plan) and talent/resource impact to the team as we participated in numerous COVID19 response and recovery task forces, planning groups, and research efforts.

8. What operational efficiencies did you implement to address the impact of COVID-19 up to September 1, 2020?

VCC underwent a rapid re-prioritization process to ensure that staff could devote their full attention to rapidly developing priorities that emerged during COVID19, and that continue to emerge. These included



but were not limited to the Food Security, Health, Affordable Housing, and Income Support levers of change within the strategy as well as significant anti-racism work. Additionally, VCC dedicated and continues to dedicate significant resources to the Seven Brothers Circle (formerly the Indigenous COVID19 Task Force) in the areas of Technology, Housing, and Basic Needs.

9. Were there any program or service changes made during the response to COVID-19 that you plan to integrate into longer term operations? For example, shifting some programming online, or modifications to your delivery model or operations.

VCC moved the entirety of its operations online, including community engagement activities, knowledge dissemination, etc. This migration has given the opportunity to engage with a broader segment of the community who may have experienced barriers to in-person participation in the past (i.e. accessibility, cost of transportation, etc.).

**COVID-19 Service and Impact Demand Update
Reporting for September 2020**

The following information is collected to align with City of Calgary report to Council on the current impact of COVID-19 on delivery of services and programs and may be shared with Council separately from the previous Civic Partner Annual Report Template content.

Service Impact

Please choose the one option below that best describes the impact of COVID-19 on your programs or service in the month of September 2020.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Negligible	Minimal to no impact on service. Service is currently operating close to normal.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Minor	Continuing to provide programs and services but some coping strategies required – able to be addressed with existing strategies and resources.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate	Some challenges on ability to achieve objectives. Some delay. Some aspects of the programs or service are only being met in part.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Significant	Difficulties to achieve objectives. Delays or notable aspects of objectives not completed. Falling well-short of normal operations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Severe	Unable to meet normal objectives due to serious extended disruption. (e.g. full facility closure, major decrease in users)

Service Impact Narrative:

Please briefly describe the impact of COVID-19 on your service for the month of September. You may want to include any major issues/events you experienced.

While VCC continues to experience a considerable increase in workload due to COVID19, these have not had a significant impact in ability to implement the Enough for All 2.0 strategy from a service perspective as we are not a front-line organization.

Current Demand for Service:



At this point in time, based on what you know right now, what is your best estimate of the current demand for your service compared to typical demand?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Demand is steady, largely business as usual.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Demand has increased notably.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demand has decreased notably.

Service Demand Narrative:

Please provide a supporting narrative that describes how COVID-19 has impacted the demand on your programs or services for September 2020. This may include any new program or service impacts that your organization has faced in the past month.

COVID19 has significantly highlighted inequities that existed prior to the pandemic and put thousands of Calgarians at additional risk of poverty in our community. These negative downstream impacts have affected every Lever of Change within the Enough for All 2.0 Strategy. VCC’s work moving forward has been focused on researching and understanding the impacts of COVID19 to Calgarians living in poverty, and creating new strategies centered on Enough for All 2.0 that meets these new realities.