

VCC INITIATIVES LTD. (VIBRANT COMMUNITIES CALGARY)

Mandate: Vibrant Communities Calgary (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, and believe that everyone has a right to fully participate in their communities. There are important systemic factors that contribute to poverty, and VCC believes that the whole community has a vital role to play in changing these conditions. Change occurs through engagement, inspiration and action.

Line of Service: Community Strategies

2021 City Investment

Operating Grant: \$484,000

2021 Results

- Engaged over 30,000 Calgarians through events and ward poverty profiles.
- VCC and its committee Poverty Talks! Held conversations and events to help people experiencing poverty engage with community including: a series of peer connection community conversations about key issues in the municipal election; and hosted *Poverty: It's a trap* on the International Day for Eradication of Poverty (October 17)
- Key focus on income supports in 2021 as co-chair of the Social Policy Collaborative. Led advocacy with the Government of Alberta focused on improving the effectiveness of Alberta's income and employment supports programs.

COVID-19 impact:

Impact on implementation of *Enough for All: Calgary's poverty reduction strategy*. Needed to act urgently with limited resources as the number of people in Calgary experiencing poverty grew due to COVID-19 and other affordability pressures.

Advancing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Ensuring equity for equity-deserving groups is a key focus of *Enough for All*. In 2021, VCC hosted sessions for Strategy Champions focused on how to be effective allies and offered them a series of Indigenous learning events. Supported the Be Local Network's efforts to advance anti-racism by facilitating sessions to explore how to engage and encourage enrollment of black, indigenous and people of colour who own businesses. Started development of an equity, diversity and inclusion framework for *Enough for All*.



STRUCTURE

1. Vision, Mission and Mandate:

Vision: We live in a community where there is enough for all.

Mission: We will create opportunities to align and leverage the work of hundreds of organizations and thousands of Calgarians to reduce poverty in our city.

Mandate: Vibrant Communities Calgary (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, and believe that everyone has a right to fully participate in their communities. There are important systemic factors that contribute to poverty, and VCC believes that the whole community has a vital role to play in changing these conditions. Change occurs through engagement, inspiration and action.

As of January 1, 2015, VCC became the stewards of Calgary's community-driven poverty reduction strategy: [Enough for All](#), which was refreshed in 2019.

2021 RESULTS

2. What key results did your organization achieve in 2021 that contributed to one or more of the [One Calgary Citizen Priorities](#), or contributed to Council-approved strategies such as *Calgary in the New Economy: An economic strategy for Calgary*, *Calgary Heritage Strategy*, *Cultural Plan for Calgary*, *Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy*, or other strategy.

Calgary's Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy: "Housing" is identified in *Enough for All* as a [Lever of Change](#) and outlines that access to affordable and appropriate housing decreases the likelihood that families and individuals will fall into or remain in poverty. In 2021 VCC invested significant resources to continue advocacy on this file. Examples of this advocacy include a detailed analysis of the [Government of Alberta's affordable housing strategy](#) in conjunction with the Edmonton Social Planning Council and provided [concrete critical feedback on planned housing investment strategies](#) for use by policy makers. VCC was also instrumental in the merger of CHAC into ASCHA to influence affordable housing policy at the provincial level.

Truth and Reconciliation, White Goose Flying: One of three goals of *Enough for All* 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 *Enough for All*, an [Indigenous Poverty Reduction Strategy](#) was developed and it is being implemented, including work focused on establishing an Indigenous Gathering Place that was recently approved by Council. Our shared commitment to ensuring that all Indigenous People are equal participants in Calgary's future was at the forefront of VCC's work in 2021 and VCC is guided in this work by the *Enough for All* [Indigenous Advisory Committee](#). Throughout 2021, VCC held a series of Indigenous learning events for our [Champions](#). Participants were asked to reflect on their own Truth and Reconciliation journey and its place in the *Enough for All* strategy, and the barriers to moving Indigenous engagement work forward. These collaborative sessions are a step-in building understanding and

mutual respect with Indigenous communities. On National Indigenous Peoples Day, VCC Champions were privileged to learn from Elders and members of our Indigenous Advisory Committee about reconciliation, transformative change and honouring the learnings we have been given. Additionally, VCC supported the Be local Network in their efforts to explore ways to engage and encourage the enrollment Indigenous-owned businesses.

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 participated in the updating of the economic strategy, and a representative of Calgary Economic Development participated on the *Enough for All* Refresh Steering Committee to enhance and support alignment between the two strategies. In 2020, VCC contributed to an update of KPIs for Calgary in the New Economy and continued to track intersections with this strategy related to [living wage](#), transit, and housing affordability.

Recreation Master Plan: *Enough for All* identifies "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.

Resilient Calgary: In 2021, VCC continued its advocacy related to Basic Income, both by providing backbone support to Basic Income Calgary, as well as co-chairing and founding [Basic Income Alberta](#) (BIA) in conjunction with End Poverty Edmonton. BIA has created widespread public awareness and policy traction over 2021 to leverage this unique policy window. Basic Income is included in Resilient Calgary's strategy.

Age Friendly Calgary: VCC identifies older adults as a unique demographic of Calgary's population that requires targeted policy and system change solutions. VCC works with the Age-Friendly Calgary staff at the City of Calgary to share data and identify intersections about seniors who live in poverty.

3. Using the chart below, please report your 2021 performance measures that demonstrate: how much you did, how well you did it, and how Calgarians are better off.

NOTE: A detailed accounting of organizational outcomes will be provided in the annual *Enough for All* evaluation which will be released in June 2022 that is compiling data from the City of Calgary, United Way, Momentum (our MOA Partners) and other sources. The City of Calgary is a member of the *Enough for All* Evaluation Committee.

Performance Measure Name: All Calgarians live in a strong, supportive and inclusive community

How much did you do? In addition to the allyship and Indigenous reconciliation activities listed throughout this report, VCC, with its committee Poverty Talks! held a number of important conversations and events to encourage people who live in poverty to get [engaged in our community](#) through civic participation. Below are some of the activities that were held this year to reach this goal:

- Starting in May, 2021, PovertyTalks! held a series of peer connection community conversations discussing key issues in the municipal election.
- Poverty Talks! hosted Poverty: it's a trap on October 17 - the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The event included an in-depth conversation about poverty in Calgary, led by people with lived experience and a keynote address from Mayor Naheed

Nenshi.

- On Dec. 21, the Longest Night of the Year, the Poverty Talks! youth team interviewed unhoused people to hear their stories. The videos were released leading up to the Calgary Homeless Foundation's Longest Night of the Year memorial service.

How well did you do it? Across these events and the ward poverty profiles linked above, we engaged over 30 000 Calgarians.

How are Calgarians better off? Calgarians who live in poverty are not always aware of the municipal policies and systems that hold poverty in place. By engaging citizens in these issues, Calgarians became aware of the key role that the municipality plays in poverty reduction and the citizen role in participating in local government to advocate for issues that affect people in vulnerable situations.

Performance Measure Name: All Calgarians have sufficient income and assets to thrive

How much did you do? Income Support advocacy was a major focus for VCC in 2021. Calgarians are facing elevated levels of unemployment, employment volatility, and income instability as we work to recover from the overlapping crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and the crash in oil prices that have shocked Alberta's economy. VCC is both backbone and co-chair of the [Social Policy Collaborative](#) that created [this brief](#) and led advocacy with this province in this area with the goal of improving the effectiveness of Alberta's Income and Employment Support programs. These programs will be essential to the province's economic recovery as Calgarians seek support to meet their essential needs and find new opportunities to become self-sufficient through employment. Additionally, VCC continued to lead the [Basic Income Alberta](#) and [Alberta Living Wage Network](#) work for Calgary.

How well did you do it? VCC has had several meetings with policy makers and business to increase adoption of income support policies that work for all Calgarians. Additionally, VCC is called on as the subject matter expert in many fora related to income support policy with the goal of increasing population-level understanding of how adequate income addresses most areas of poverty reduction (for example, the answer to food insecurity is not more food, it's adequate income).

How are Calgarians better off? Adequate income support programs (e.g., Employment Insurance, Social Assistance, Guaranteed Income Supplement) are a critical part of the community's social safety net. They complement and fill the gaps when well-paying employment is currently unavailable or for people unable to work full-time hours or at all.

Performance Measure Name: All Indigenous People are equal participants in Calgary's future (see alignment with the Truth, Reconciliation and White Goose Flying section for progress against this outcome).

4. Briefly describe the any key impacts of COVID-19 on your operations in 2021.

As VCC is not a service provider impacts have been manageable. With that said, there is a high-level impact to VCC's operations related to the implementation of the *Enough for All* strategy that has required VCC to act with urgency on limited resources as the number of people in poverty in Calgary grows due to pandemic and other affordability pressures.

5. Briefly describe any quality improvement changes or operational efficiencies your organization was able to achieve in 2021.

VCC shifted to an online convening methodology at the start of the pandemic, which has had the positive outcome of allowing a greater number of Calgarians to participate in important conversations where there may have been barriers to doing so pre-pandemic (including ability to take public transportation, time/schedules etc.).

6. Did your organization implement any strategies or approaches in 2021 that supported racial equity in the delivery of programs or services?

Ensuring equity for equity-deserving groups is one of the key tenets of *Enough for All* implementation which considers how the *Levers of Change* may express themselves uniquely for racialized people, Indigenous people, women, youth, seniors, newcomers and refugees, and LGBTQ2S people in our community. In 2021, the [Enough for All Principle](#) of *Reducing racism and discrimination and promoting diversity in the development and evaluation of policies, services, programs and workplace practices* was a major focus of VCC’s work. Below are some examples of the work we did in this area in 2021:

- VCC continued its awareness raising and capacity building for *Enough for All* Champions on its [Racism is a Root Cause of Poverty work](#) which included sessions on how Champions can be effective allies in their organizations.
- VCC launched a series of Indigenous learning events for our Champions. Participants are asked to reflect on their own Truth and Reconciliation journey and its place in the *Enough for All* strategy, and the barriers to moving Indigenous engagement work forward. These collaborative sessions are a step-in building understanding and mutual respect with Indigenous communities.
- VCC supported the Be local Network in their efforts to advance anti-racism. VCC facilitated several sessions, which explored ways to engage and encourage the enrollment of black, Indigenous and people of colour-owned businesses.

7. Did your organization implement any further changes to strategies, programs or services in 2021 to address equity, diversity or inclusion?

VCC started work on the development of an EDI framework which will be applied to the *Enough for All* strategy. This framework will be launched in summer, 2022 and is the first of its kind for any poverty reduction strategy in the country.

8. Briefly describe how your organization worked in partnership with other community, private or public organizations to achieve shared results for Calgary and Calgarians in 2021.

The *Enough for All* model is one of collective impact that brings together organizations, businesses, governments and individuals to work towards the implementation of the strategy. In 2021, *Enough for All* worked with [its Champions](#) to implement the strategy.

RESOURCES

9. Please estimate how The City’s operating funding was allocated in 2021. Mark all areas that apply by approximate percentage. For example, 45% allocated to staffing costs, 10% to evaluation or research, etc.

2%	Advertising and promotion
16%	Programs or services
2%	Office supplies and expenses
5%	Professional and consulting fees
63%	Staff compensation, development and training

0%	Fund development
0%	Purchased supplies and assets
4%	Facility maintenance
5%	Evaluation or Research
	<i>Other, please name:</i>

10. Did volunteers support your operations in 2021? If yes:

How many volunteers?	13
Estimated total hours provided by volunteers:	Approx. 2000 hours

11. What resources or funding sources did your organization leverage to support operations in 2021?

VCC receives funding from the United Way of Calgary and Area and the City of Calgary to implement the *Enough for All* Strategy.

12. Did your organization receive any awards or recognition in 2021 that you want to highlight?

N/A

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

Asset: N/A

a) **Provide a summary of your organization’s 2021 capital work, including specific lifecycle/maintenance projects or capital projects.**

b) **What funding did your organization leverage to support capital activities in 2021?**