

Volunteer Calgary

ANNUAL REPORT

Who we've always been, reimagined

2025

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional and ancestral territories of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples across Turtle Island. We recognize the enduring presence, rights, and contributions of Indigenous Peoples and encourage ongoing learning about the history and impacts of Indigenous-settler relations, including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action. As an organization committed to equity and social justice, we view reconciliation as an ongoing responsibility that extends beyond acknowledgment into meaningful action.

We also recognize that volunteerism, as it is commonly understood and practiced, is shaped by colonial systems and does not always reflect the diverse ways communities contribute to collective well-being. We are committed to learning from Indigenous approaches grounded in reciprocity, relationships, and community care, and to advancing the decolonization of volunteer engagement. Through listening, reflection, and authentic partnerships with Indigenous communities, we strive to create more inclusive and responsive practices that honour the many ways people contribute to community and collective well-being.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD



Marla Kailly

Chair, Board of Directors

To our community, partners, volunteers, and supporters,

Volunteer Calgary has long been rooted in a powerful belief: when people are connected to meaningful opportunities to contribute, communities become stronger, more resilient, and more inclusive. Today, that belief feels more important than ever. Across Calgary and beyond, volunteers continue to be essential to the wellbeing of our neighbourhoods, the strength of the nonprofit sector, and the shared future we are building together.

We are seeing growing energy around the role of volunteerism, not only to meet immediate community needs, but as a civic force that builds belonging, leadership, trust, and connection. Our work ahead is to strengthen that momentum with the right supports, systems, and strategy so that volunteerism can continue to flourish in a changing environment.

We also recognize that strengthening volunteerism requires more than enthusiasm. It requires intentional design, inclusive practices, meaningful engagement, and practical tools that help organizations and volunteers succeed. Volunteer Calgary carries this work by convening partners, sharing knowledge, advancing promising practices, and helping create the conditions where volunteers and organizations can thrive together.

On behalf of the Board, thank you to every volunteer, partner, staff member, funder, and community leader who contributes to this work. With you alongside us we are building a future where everyone has a place to contribute to their community and belong.

With deep appreciation,

Marla Kailly

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

Near the Kahanoff Centre, there's a street called Volunteer Way. For about 70 years, this organization has been the reason it fits: Calgary's Volunteer Centre, the place people turn to when they want to help and organizations need them.

That role matters more now than it has in a long time. Fewer people are volunteering than a decade ago, and our organizations feel it. Reversing that isn't something any one organization can do alone, and it was never meant to be. It takes a volunteer centre: to carry the shared work, and make the sector stronger than the sum of its parts. That is the role this organization exists to fill, and the one we are stepping into again, fully and intentionally.

So in 2025, that's where we put ourselves. We spent the year strengthening the people who lead volunteers across this city, the staff and leaders who keep the sector running. When they're supported, whole organizations grow steadier, and the communities they serve feel it. We also began taking down the quiet barriers that turn willing people away before they start, because a sector that needs more people cannot keep leaving willing ones outside. In all of it, the goal is belonging.

None of this is new to who we are. It's who we've always been, reimagined to meet the sector's needs now. Most people know us through VolunteerConnector, one of the country's most significant volunteering platforms, with more than 6,400 organizations and 137,000 volunteers on it. Volunteer Calgary powers it, but it was always one of the things we do, never the whole of who we are. We are bigger than any platform: it's the trust, the relationships, and the steady work of helping a sector hold together.

To the team who make this real every day, and to every community and funding partner who chose to build alongside us, thank you. A city holds together because people show up for each other. When more people find a place to belong, the whole community is more resilient. That's the work that's ours to do, and we're just getting started.

With thanks,

Milton Ortega



Milton A. Ortega

Executive Director



About Volunteer Calgary

Strong communities depend on people who are willing to show up for one another. Volunteers help strengthen the programs, services, and initiatives that make Calgary a more connected and resilient place to live.

For more than 70 years, Volunteer Calgary has worked alongside organizations and volunteers to support that work. Through coaching, training, partnerships, and VolunteerConnector, our digital platform, we help strengthen volunteer engagement across Calgary, Alberta, and Canada. As volunteerism continues to evolve, we are reimagining how we support the sector while building on the relationships and trust that have guided our work for decades. We believe volunteerism is essential community infrastructure, creating more opportunities for people to connect, contribute, and belong.

Our Vision

A community where volunteerism strengthens civic engagement and belonging for everyone.

Our Mission

Grow volunteer participation and nonprofit capacity across communities, turning the will to contribute into lasting community connections.



A Year of Reimagining

**This past year
Volunteer Calgary
reflected, listened, and
reimagined how to
support volunteering.**

Our work focused on strengthening volunteer leadership, creating opportunities for connection, advancing equity and belonging, supporting volunteer infrastructure, and building partnerships across the sector. These areas shaped our work as we continued reimagining how Volunteer Calgary can best support volunteers and organizations today.

As we listened to organizations, volunteers, partners, and community leaders, one thing became clear: volunteerism is changing. Organizations are navigating growing community needs, volunteers are looking for new ways to contribute, and communities continue to rely on strong nonprofit organizations.

2025 Highlights



Building Connections Across the Sector

Organizations told us they needed more than digital tools. They needed opportunities to connect with peers, share ideas, and learn from one another. In response, Volunteer Calgary expanded in-person learning, coaching, and peer connection opportunities to help organizations navigate a changing volunteer landscape and strengthen volunteer engagement.

Bringing Volunteer Leaders Together

Volunteer Manager Communities of Practice created space for volunteer engagement professionals to connect, exchange ideas, and learn from one another. Volunteer Calgary also co-hosted a volunteer management conference that brought leaders together from across the sector to share knowledge and explore new approaches to volunteer engagement.



Advancing Equity and Belonging

We marked an important step forward in our commitment to equity and belonging. Completing the foundational work and securing funding for The Equity Commons brought this initiative to life, creating a space to help organizations create more inclusive, accessible, and culturally responsive volunteer opportunities so that more people can contribute, connect, and belong.

Strengthening Partnerships and Learning

Volunteer Calgary continued to build partnerships with organizations serving youth, newcomers, and communities across Alberta. We also strengthened our learning and evaluation efforts, listening to volunteers and organizations and using their feedback to better support the sector and the people at the heart of it.

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We have been so well supported by Volunteer Calgary staff over the past two years. Please know how much we appreciate each of you and the work you do.



Impact in Action

Organizations Supported

Every day, organizations rely on volunteers to deliver programs, strengthen communities, and respond to local needs. Throughout the year, organizations across Alberta and Canada used VolunteerConnector to connect with volunteers, build capacity, and support the work happening in communities large and small.

VolunteerConnector remains a core part of Volunteer Calgary's work. It continues to provide the tools, connections, and opportunities that organizations and volunteers rely on every day.

6,411

***Organizations actively used
VolunteerConnector***

3,270

Alberta organizations supported

1,463

Calgary organizations supported

389

unique regions reached

44

regional partners

Volunteers Connected

People want meaningful ways to contribute their time, skills, and experience. VolunteerConnector helped connect people with causes they care about, creating opportunities to support their communities, build relationships, and find a sense of belonging.

137,162

***Volunteer profiles on
VolunteerConnector***

53,414

***Alberta volunteers
actively engaged***

214,096

***volunteer applications
submitted***

“

We have seen great improvement on the platform over the past year, and the changes have made finding volunteers and organizations simpler and more efficient. I have been working through your resources and have gained great knowledge and insight into the volunteer world. Thank you



Community Engagement in Action

Volunteerism remains one of the ways people show up for one another. Interest in volunteer opportunities remained strong throughout the year, reflecting the many ways people continue to support the organizations and causes they care about.

2,150,524

volunteer opportunity page views

Capacity Built



Volunteer leaders continue to navigate growing demands, changing expectations, and evolving community needs. Community needs continue to evolve, expectations are changing, and many organizations are being asked to do more with limited resources. Through training, coaching, resources, and peer learning opportunities, Volunteer Calgary worked alongside organizations to strengthen volunteer engagement and build confidence for the work ahead.

588

Organizations participated in training, coaching, or resource-based learning

506

organizations reported increased knowledge, skills, and access to resources

86%

reported increased confidence and readiness to implement new practices

Stronger Volunteer Programs

When volunteers feel welcomed, supported, and connected to their work, organizations are better able to achieve their mission. Organizations reported stronger volunteer experiences, improved retention, and better alignment between volunteer interests and organizational needs.

1,154

***organizations reported
improved volunteer
satisfaction and
retention***



Communities Connected

Strong volunteer programs do not happen in isolation. They are built through relationships, shared learning, and collaboration across the sector. By working alongside partners across Alberta, Volunteer Calgary continued to strengthen volunteer engagement and support more connected and resilient communities.

“

Love, love the support from Volunteer Calgary staff. Anytime we or one of our member organizations has an issue or needs support, the Volunteer Calgary team is very responsive and issues are resolved quickly.

22

***Alberta-based
partnerships***

44

***active regional
partners***



Looking Forward

The year ahead presents an important opportunity for volunteerism. As Alberta advances its first provincial volunteerism strategy, conversations continue nationally about the future of volunteer centres and the infrastructure needed to support volunteer engagement. With 2026 recognized as the International Year of the Volunteer, there is growing recognition of the role volunteerism plays in strengthening communities.

Building on the work of this past year, Volunteer Calgary will continue to invest in the people, relationships, and initiatives that strengthen volunteerism across the sector. This includes expanding The Equity Commons, growing opportunities for learning and peer connection through Communities of Practice, supporting leadership development through initiatives such as Open Hearth, and continuing to bring organizations and volunteers together through National Volunteer Week and the Calgary Volunteer Fair.

We will also continue to enhance VolunteerConnector and strengthen partnerships across Alberta, helping more people connect with opportunities to contribute, lead, and belong.

Whether you're a volunteer, nonprofit leader, community partner, funder, or someone looking for a place to start, there's a role for you in strengthening volunteerism. We look forward to continuing this work alongside the people and organizations that help communities thrive.

Funders & Donors

We are grateful to the funders, donors, and community partners who stand alongside Volunteer Calgary and help strengthen volunteerism across our communities.



Government
of Canada

**Anonymous
Donor**

Partners & Collaborators

Our regional partners help strengthen volunteerism by connecting organizations and volunteers, sharing knowledge, and supporting communities across Alberta and Canada.

REGIONAL PARTNERS:

- Barrhead FCSS
- Campbell River & District Chamber of Commerce
- Christina Gateway
- City of Lloydminster
- City of St. Albert
- Cold Lake and District FCSS
- Community Initiatives Fund
- Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations
- FCSS Rimbey Volunteer Centre
- Government of Alberta
- KCR Community Resources
- Lanark County
- Lynks
- Medicine Hat Volunteer Connector
- Municipality of Northern Bruce
- Our High River
- Peninsula
- Red Deer & District Community Foundation
- Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership
- South Okanagan Similkameen Volunteer Centre Society
- Squamish Helping Hands
- Town of Calmar Community Services
- Town of Canmore
- Town of Innisfail & Family and Community Support Services Innisfail
- Town of Okotoks Volunteer Services
- Town of Strathmore and FCSS
- Vantage Point
- Volunteer Alberta
- Volunteer Burnaby

- Volunteer Centre of St. Lawrence-Rideau
- Volunteer Cochrane/FCSS
- Volunteer Halton
- Volunteer Lethbridge Association
- Volunteer Miramichi
- Volunteer Strathcona
- Volunteer Sunshine Coast
- Vulcan and Region Family and Community Support Services and Vulcan Food Ban
- Wheatland FCSS

PARTNERS, NETWORKS AND COLLABORATORS:

Collaboration helps strengthen communities by bringing organizations together to share ideas, build relationships, and create meaningful opportunities for volunteers to contribute.

- Alberta Network of Nonprofits (ABNN)
- Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
- Calgary Chamber of Commerce
- Calgary Volunteer Fair Society
- Camino Law Office
- CORDS
- Edmonton Volunteer Chamber of Commerce
- FuseSocial
- Imagine Canada
- IntegralOrg
- KRAK
- KRD Consulting Group
- LearningCITY
- Marox Consulting Group
- Mount Royal University
- The Ally Co.
- The Nonprofit Chamber
- TechnologyHelps
- Volunteer Management Hybrid Conference
- Volunteer Alberta
- Volunteer Canada
- Volunteer Lethbridge
- Youth Central

STAFF & GOVERNANCE

Volunteer Calgary's Board of Directors provides governance, guidance, and stewardship, helping ensure the organization remains responsive to the needs of the sector and the communities we serve.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Marla Kailly

Chair

Nowayrah Sadiq

Treasurer

Shauna Moscovich

Nicolette Miller

Public Committee Member

Jane Xu

Secretary

Sandhya Bogram

Lisa Morrison

Daniel Lengoyap

Public Committee Member

VOLUNTEERS:

Volunteers are at the heart of strong communities, contributing their time, skills, and care to causes that make a difference every day.

Elaine Mew

Megan Clark

Marcos Torres

Andrea Pérez Cárdenas



A dedicated team works every day to strengthen volunteerism and support organizations and volunteers across Alberta.

STAFF:

Milton Ortega

Executive Director

Katie Dodd

Director of Fund Development
& Community Action

Mariam Raji

Communications &
Marketing Coordinator

Nitu Purna

Equity & Community
Impact Specialist

Tristan Abbott

Capacity Building &
Partnerships Specialist

Tracy Merrin

Finance & Operations
Coordinator – Retired
2025

Skylar Johnson

Outreach & Project
Coordinator

Christian Argyll

Finance & Operations
Coordinator



Thank You

The work of strengthening volunteerism is shared work, and none of it happens alone. We are grateful to the volunteers, nonprofit organizations, regional partners, community partners, funders, donors, Board of Directors, and staff who stand alongside Volunteer Calgary and help create opportunities for people to connect, contribute, and belong.

Together, you help strengthen organizations, support communities, and ensure volunteerism continues to play an important role across Alberta and beyond. Thank you for being part of this work.

Address:

Volunteer Calgary
1240 Kensington Road,
#Unit 802
Calgary, AB T2H 0K2

Phone Toll-free: +1 (888) 688-2161

Email: info@volunteerconnector.org

Charitable Registration Number:

108 186 305 RR001



Accredited
IMAGINE CANADA