

# VolunteerConnector

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT To The Community

Volunteer Centre of Calgary operating as  
VolunteerConnector is a registered charity  
CRN 108 186 305 RR001

**Website:** [www.volunteerconnector.org](http://www.volunteerconnector.org)

**Address:** PMB #307 104-1240 Kensington Rd. NW, Calgary, AB. T2N 3P7

# Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land on which we operate is the traditional and ancestral territory of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. These lands are governed by more than 70 historic and modern treaties, and in many cases, remain unceded. Today, they are home to over 600 First Nations communities and represent the ongoing presence, rights, and contributions of more than 1.6 million Indigenous Peoples across what is now known as Canada, or Turtle Island.

We encourage everyone to deepen their understanding of the history and ongoing impact of Indigenous-settler relations in this country. This includes engaging with the 94 Calls to Action outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report.

As an organization grounded in social justice and equity, we believe that acknowledging the traditional peoples of this land is a necessary step on the path toward reconciliation.

We also recognize that land acknowledgments are only one small part of this journey. True reconciliation requires ongoing, meaningful, and decolonized action. Our team is committed to continuous learning and reflection to ensure our programs and services do not create barriers for First Nations peoples, and that they are inclusive of the diverse Indigenous communities across Turtle Island.

We know there is still much more work to do. We are committed to doing that work and to building authentic, long-term partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations across the country.

# Our Mission

We provide digital volunteer engagement solutions across Canada that promote access, innovation, and community connection.

## Who We Are

- We put volunteers at the centre of everything we do
- We support grassroots leadership and social justice movements
- We believe in building communities through care, connection, and collaboration
- We honour the land by acknowledging Indigenous peoples as the traditional stewards of the places we work and serve

# About VolunteerConnector

VolunteerConnector is a civic infrastructure organization that helps individuals find meaningful ways to contribute their time, skills, and energy to causes that matter to them. Its impact is significant and far-reaching. As a central hub for the nonprofit sector, VolunteerConnector offers organizations flexible and accessible support, whether through personalized coaching, professional development, or 24/7 access to our robust digital platform. These services are intentionally designed to meet organizations where they are, recognizing that the path to equitable volunteer engagement is not a one-size-fits-all approach.

With 81% of Canadian nonprofits relying on volunteers to fulfill their missions, VolunteerConnector plays a vital role in sustaining and expanding the sector's capacity. Whether supporting grassroots, volunteer-led initiatives or larger, established charities, we remove systemic barriers and offer practical tools that help organizations engage volunteers with care, intention, and impact.

Our commitment extends far beyond technical support. We champion innovation grounded in anti-colonial and anti-racist principles, centring community voices and lived experience in all that we do. By embedding justice, accessibility, and equity into our services, we help nonprofits build stronger, more resilient communities and reimagine volunteerism as a vehicle for systemic change.

# Strategic Priorities

## Volunteers Leading

We place volunteers and their experiences at the heart of our digital platform by advancing the **Promote-Connect-Strengthen-Lead framework**.

## Strengthening Volunteerism

We strengthen the volunteer sector by equipping organizations with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to optimize volunteer engagement for greater community impact.

## Building Connections

We create space for advocacy, experimentation, and innovation to shape the future of volunteerism.

## Organizational Sustainability

We remain purpose-driven while strengthening our core pillars of sustainability: People, Digital Platform, and Financial Health.

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHAIR OF THE BOARD



**Milton A. Ortega**

Executive Director



**Marla Kailly**

Chair, Board of Directors

**Dear Friends,**

This past year has been one of profound renewal, alignment, and impact for the VolunteerConnector. Following a period of transition, we are emerging with new clarity of purpose and a renewed sense of connection to the communities we serve across Canada. Today, we are proud to lead an organization that makes meaningful contributions to the strength and resilience of the nonprofit sector.

At the centre of our work is a belief in the transformative power of volunteerism, one that advances belonging, leadership, and systemic change. Our digital platform, VolunteerConnector, remains Canada's most significant civic infrastructure for volunteering. In 2024, more than half a million volunteers utilized the platform to connect with opportunities in nearly 300 communities across Canada. These connections are unique stories of individuals stepping forward, organizations advancing their mandates, and communities becoming more vibrant, inclusive, and resilient.

This year, we deepened our investment in infrastructure with the launch of a new widget tool. At the same time, we began translating the millions of data points we collect into meaningful insights that will soon drive sector-wide learning, advocacy, and innovation. Our capacity-building team supported over 478 organizations with one-on-one coaching and training, many of which serve newcomers, youth, and other equity-deserving groups. These engagements are building a sector that is more inclusive, more adaptive, and better equipped to meet the evolving expectations of today's volunteers. Whether supporting a first-time volunteer, redesigning a screening process, or guiding a grassroots organization through systems change, our work is rooted in a commitment to access, equity, and trust.

At the same time, we've laid the foundation for long-term organizational sustainability. We have re-engaged with our vision, clarified our governance, and refined our internal structures to ensure alignment between our strategic plan and day-to-day decisions. We are building an organizational foundation that will enable innovation to flourish. This summary tells stories that highlight what happens when people are supported to act on their values, when organizations are equipped with the right tools, and when communities are trusted to lead.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this journey: our dedicated staff, trusted partners, passionate volunteers, and generous funding partners. Your belief in our mission continues to move us forward. Together, we are creating a future where every community can welcome, engage, and thrive through volunteerism.

**Milton A. Ortega**  
Executive Director

**Marla Kailly**  
Chair, Board of Directors

# 2024 Year Highlights

## Strengthening Volunteerism

Our one-on-one coaching, targeted training, and platform tools helped hundreds of organizations strengthen their ability to recruit, engage, and retain volunteers. In 2024:

- **6,352 organizations** accessed volunteer engagement support in 2024
- **478 organizations** accessed direct capacity-building support
- **280 organizations** received individualized coaching
- **420 organizations** reported improved understanding of volunteer engagement and governance

## Building Communities

VolunteerConnector served as a platform not only for matching people to opportunities but for shaping a broader culture of inclusion and belonging. Through our partnerships and regional engagement efforts, we:

- Reached **293 communities** across Canada, many previously without formal volunteer supports
- Partnered with **65 regional organizations**, **38** of which fully integrated VolunteerConnector into their operations
- Amplified equity-based approaches to volunteerism through dialogue, resources, and sector convenings



# 2024 Year Highlights

## Organizational Sustainability

This year, we made key investments in the people, technology, and partnerships that sustain our work:

- We launched the VolunteerConnector Widget, allowing communities to embed a customizable volunteer engagement tool directly into their websites
- We improved user experience through new platform features, including updated profiles and better matching algorithms
- We advanced our data infrastructure to lay the foundation for real-time analytics and equity-driven insight

## Volunteers Leading

We continued to centre the volunteer experience by making our tools more accessible, flexible, and empowering.

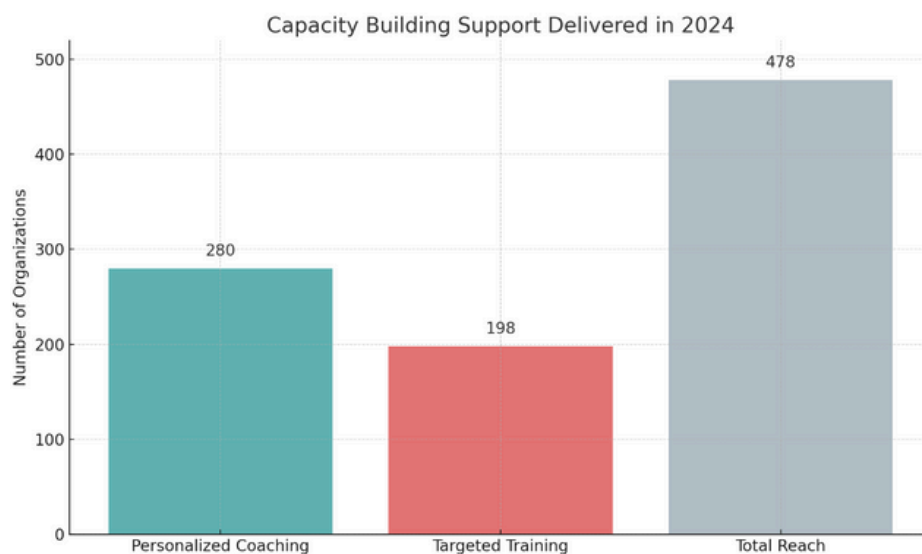
- **587,594 volunteers** connected to meaningful volunteer opportunities
- **1.6 M+ views** of the volunteer opportunities posted on the platform
- **155,098 volunteers** applied for positions in advanced nonprofit missions
- Volunteers from over **1,000 communities** across Canada used the platform to find meaningful ways to support their local communities

# Impact in Action

## Capacity Building

Our reach and impact in delivering capacity-building support continued to grow throughout 2024, with **478 organizations** benefiting from our virtual, staff-led programs and services. Engagement remained strong, with **280 organizations** receiving personalized coaching, our most in-demand service, enabling transformative organizational change. An additional **198 organizations** enhanced their capabilities through targeted training programs. This balanced delivery approach has allowed us to maximize our reach while maintaining a high standard of quality and responsiveness.

Our expansion across Canada reflects a growing demand for capacity-building support in communities of all sizes. This organic growth highlights the effectiveness of our program model in meeting organizations where they are and reinforces the sector's need for flexible, responsive support. The geographic diversity of our member base has broadened our understanding of regional needs, further strengthening the relevance of our offerings.



# Impact in Action

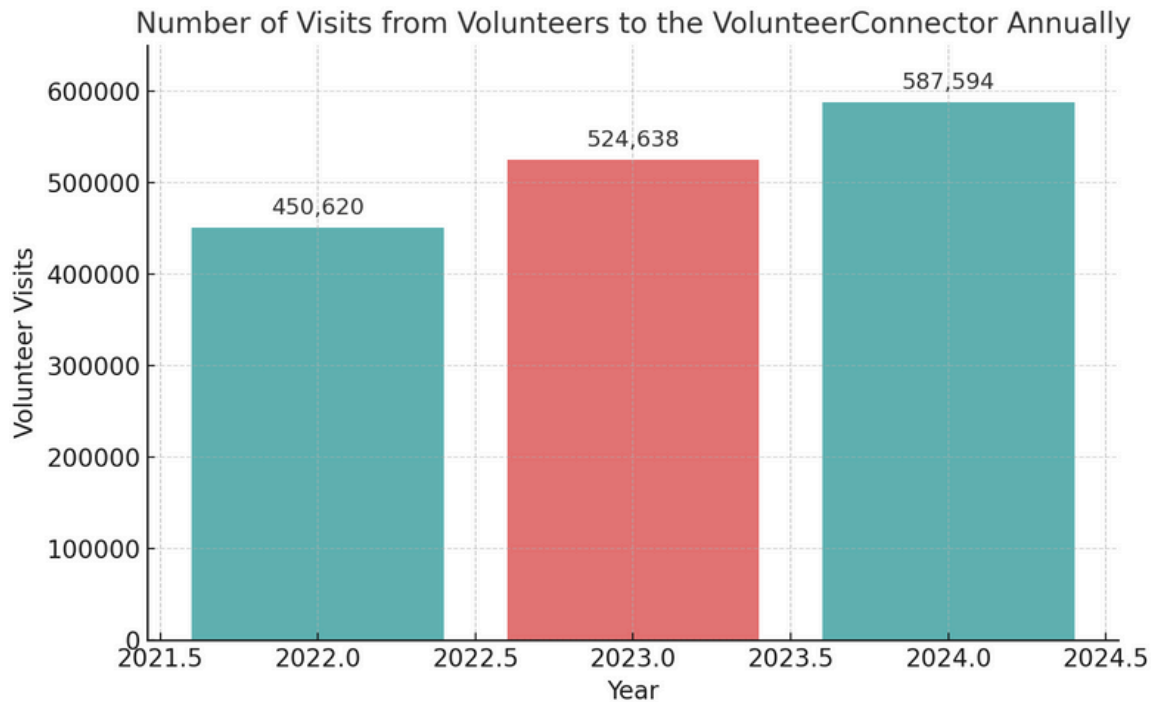
## Volunteer Engagement, Board Leadership, and Measurement

In 2024, **420 organizations** reported increased knowledge and confidence in volunteer engagement, board leadership, and outcome measurement. This confirms the sector's ongoing need for specialized support in adapting to rapid change. As demographic shifts and post-pandemic realities continue to reshape the volunteer landscape, organizations face growing complexity in attracting and retaining volunteers. Through our coaching and training, organizations are developing the adaptive capacity necessary to remain resilient and responsive to changing environments.

## The most trusted Civic Infrastructure

The VolunteerConnector platform remains a vital link between community needs and volunteer action. In 2024, we connected **587,594 volunteers** through the platform, a **12% increase** from 2023. Volunteer opportunity postings received more than **1.6 million views**, positioning the platform as Canada's leading "marketplace for community involvement." Volunteers placed through our system support a wide range of initiatives, from frontline services and advocacy efforts to board governance, helping organizations fulfill their missions with greater impact.

# Impact in Action



## Supporting Sectoral Governance and Sustainability

Our strategic focus on volunteer matching is especially evident in our ability to connect individuals to leadership roles. In 2024, **155,098 volunteers** were placed in positions that directly contribute to organizational strategy and governance. Whether serving on boards, delivering essential services, or advancing environmental or housing initiatives, these volunteers amplify sector capacity and leadership from the ground up.

# Impact in Action

## Active Regional Partners

VolunteerConnector's growth into a national platform is supported by a network of **65 regional partners**, each equipped with real-time measurement tools that support data-informed decision-making at the local level. Among these, **38 partners** have fully integrated the platform into their operations, while **27 serve as active champions**, embedding VolunteerConnector into their community engagement strategies.

We now serve **293 unique communities** across Canada, including many previously underserved by traditional volunteer centres. This digital-first model has removed geographic barriers to participation, creating more equitable access to volunteer support and infrastructure, regardless of location or organizational size.

Each regional partnership acts as a multiplier, extending our reach and enabling locally relevant solutions to thrive. The data generated through these relationships deepens our understanding of engagement patterns and informs future investments in community resilience.



**VOLUNTEER CONNECTOR**

# Impact in Action

## Stewarding Capacity-Building

Our collaborative model continues to prove effective, with **95% of our regional partners (62 organizations)** reporting successful stewardship of capacity-building initiatives in their communities. This high success rate confirms the effectiveness of our partnership-based approach, where national infrastructure and local expertise collaborate to create sustainable, community-level impact.

While we've maintained strong momentum in Alberta and British Columbia, our expansion in Ontario reflects the adaptability of our approach.

## Upgrading Our Civic Infrastructure

We remain committed to continually improving our technology and user experience. Last year, we introduced upgrades, including a new widget and enhanced volunteer profiles, which have made the platform more intuitive and engaging while improving matching between volunteer skills and organizational needs.

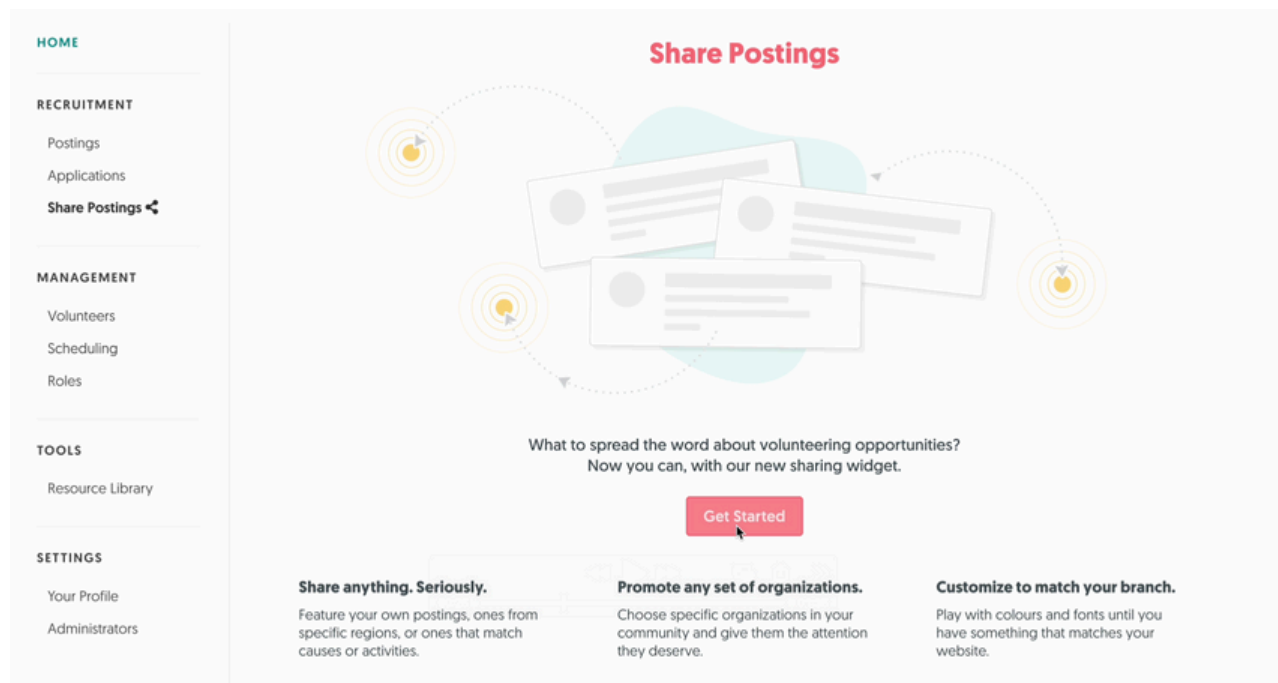
We also made significant strides in strengthening our data infrastructure. These enhancements were driven by user feedback and sector trends, resulting in a more responsive platform that supports the evolving needs of nonprofits, partners, and volunteers alike.

# Impact in Action

## Expanding Local Capacity Through the Widget

The introduction of the **Widget** has offered a localized, user-friendly solution for volunteer engagement, especially in rural and underserved areas.

In general, a widget is a small, self-contained component within the VolunteerConnector that provides specific functionality or information and can be easily embedded within a larger interface, like a website or app. In addition to this the widget updates dynamically based on data or user interaction and improves user experience by offering quick, targeted tools or content without requiring a full app or page load. The widget provides complete control over postings, branding, and content, eliminating the need to build a custom platform. The widget offers hyper-local access to volunteer opportunities, enabling individuals to discover opportunities that align with their interests, passions, and schedules. This approach facilitates organizations to tailor volunteer opportunities to local needs, thus increasing participation and strengthening community engagement efforts.





# Impact in Action

## Our Role in the NonProfit Ecosystem

Our continued growth reflects the sector's trust in VolunteerConnector as a core component of nonprofit infrastructure. In 2024, **6,352 unique organizations** accessed our services, representing a 600-organization increase from the previous year. Of those, **5,450** maintained active profiles, with an **86% engagement retention rate**, a strong indicator that VolunteerConnector is deeply embedded in the day-to-day operations of nonprofits.





# Volunteer Story Highlight

## Empowered by Connection: A New Path Through Volunteering

### Volunteer Motivation & Background

#### ***What initially inspired you to start volunteering?***

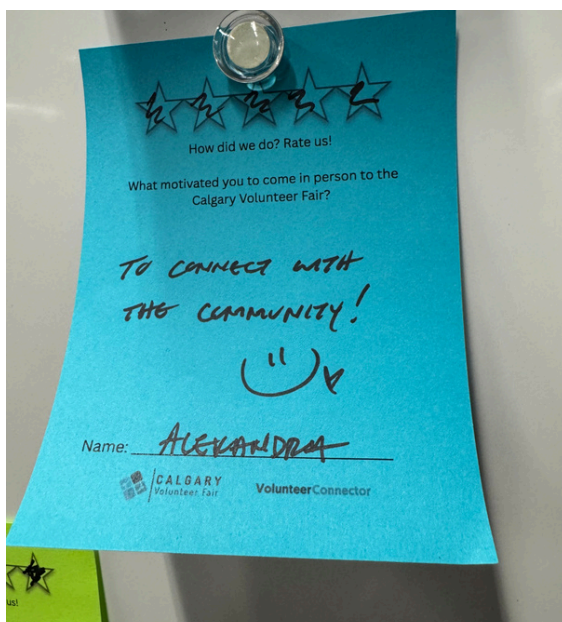
*As an international student in Canada, I was eager to build connections, gain Canadian experience, and contribute to my new community. I saw volunteering as a way to open doors to future employment opportunities and immerse myself in a sector where I had no prior experience. The desire to learn, adapt, and give back to the community that welcomed me inspired me to begin volunteering."*

- Andrea

#### ***What causes or issues are most important to you, and why?***

*"I am passionate about supporting newcomers and promoting inclusive workplaces. Having navigated the challenges of settling in a new country, I value organizations that help others integrate, develop professionally, and feel a sense of belonging. Human resources, with its focus on people and organizational culture, aligns closely with my values and interests."*

- Andrea



# Volunteer Story Highlight

## Organizational Outcomes

*"My experience using the supports from Volunteer Connector have been wonderful. Their professional development resources are very helpful in a time where it can be hard to come by quality learning in the volunteer sector, they have also helped us find quality volunteers who are passionate about our organizations mission. The best part about Volunteer Connector is the access to community and the chance to get to know folks in our volunteer sector to bounce ideas around, or even just for conversation and validation about some of the challenges we face as volunteer professionals. It's made me feel connected (pun intended) to volunteer resources, peers, and veterans in volunteerism."*

**-Turlough Myers, Francis Winspear Centre for Music Edmonton Symphony Orchestra**

*"Like so many other nonprofits, Lasagna Love is always in search of new volunteer platforms to help recruit additional volunteers. I found VolunteerConnector and was guided by Sheena in the early stages. Since placing posts on the site in November of 2023, we have 216 new volunteers who found Lasagna Love through VolunteerConnector. The recruitment process is easy and effective, and we are delighted with this sign up success."*

**- Lynn Hirsch, Lasagne Love**

*"Volunteer Connector has been instrumental in helping us find volunteers to drive our mission forward. In fact, up to 80% of our volunteers have found us through this service. Canada Confesses is 100% volunteer-run and youth-led, so Volunteer Connector has been crucial in sustaining our projects, activities, and vision by connecting us with talented and diverse volunteers across Canada."*

**-Priscilla, Canada Confesses**

# Volunteer Story Highlight

## Organizational Outcomes

*"This is a great, great platform. We get all our fantastic volunteers from VolunteerConnector and they are the lifeblood of our organization"*

**-Karen, Autism Today**

*"Volunteer Connector has been an invaluable resource, connecting to meaningful opportunities to give back to the community. Their platform is user-friendly and their team is incredibly supportive. Additionally, their impactful work in addressing anti-racism within the sector adds immense value to their mission."*

**- Alison Besecker, Volunteer Alberta**

*"There are so many people wanting to connect with their community but don't know where to start. Volunteer Connector should be your first step on that journey."*

**- Scott Lundell, Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations**

*"Volunteer Connector has been an essential site for our organization to be able to recruit, connect and engage passionate volunteers in our community. As our organization evolves and grows, so do our opportunities! Volunteer Connector has been a reliable place where we can post our volunteer opportunities and feel confident that it will reach the right people in a timely manner. They have also created a widget that you can add to your website to make opportunities available. Our team has yet to dive into that but knowing it is an option is an extra perk."*

**-Alina Emery, Vantage Point**

# Funders & Donors

Our impact can only be achieved with the support of our funding partners and engaged donors. These partners have demonstrated a commitment to innovation, inclusion, and community resilience. Their support has enabled us to strengthen volunteerism across Canada.



**Suncor Energy Foundation**



**Government of Alberta**



**An Anonymous Donor that HRJ Consulting consults for**



**The Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC)**



**The Calgary Foundation**



**Volunteer Halton**



**Government of Canada**

**The Government of Canada**

We are also grateful to individual donors who give personally to help us build communities where volunteerism is inclusive, accessible, and meaningful for all. Every contribution, regardless of its size, allows us to innovate and respond to emerging sector needs.

# Looking Foward

As VolunteerConnector looks to the future, we do it as a civic catalyst, an organization committed to building the infrastructure that communities need to thrive. The work ahead is about deepening relevance, aligning around a shared purpose, and earning trust at every level within our team, with our partners, and across the sector.

We are witnessing a new era of civic participation, one that is evolving community needs while continuing to uphold issues of inclusion and accountability. In response, VolunteerConnector is positioning itself as the most sophisticated and widely used civic infrastructure hub, locally rooted, strategically connected, and nationally relevant. We are committed to building a future in which technology serves people, where volunteers are at the centre of community resilience, and where organizations of every size and structure have access to the tools, insights, and relationships they need to engage with intention and equity.

Looking ahead, VolunteerConnector will focus on scaling inclusive infrastructure, deepening partnerships, and strengthening internal culture. We will invest in our platform to make it more responsive, accessible, and relevant to our users. We will continue to embed equity as a guiding lens across governance, operations, and community engagement. And we will lead with humility, integrity, and a commitment to collective impact. Our approach to leadership is rooted in strategic clarity, empathy, and operational discipline. And our commitment remains to grow a national presence while staying grounded in local realities; to honour our legacy while shaping the future. The next chapter for VolunteerConnector is not only about what we deliver, but how we lead, how we listen, and how we help communities become better equipped to thrive.

# Acknowledgements

We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who has contributed to VolunteerConnector.

To **our regional partners** across Canada, thank you for helping us bring this vision to life in communities of all sizes and for being part of the collective impact at the national level.

To **our nonprofit partners**, thank you for your trust, your insight, and your commitment to collective impact.

To **our funding partners and donors**, thank you for investing in innovation, inclusion, and long-term systems change.

To **our volunteers**, thank you for your generosity, commitment, and belief in our community and the critical work we undertake.

To **our board**, thank you for your strategic leadership, vision and care. Your work behind the scenes ensures that our organization remains relevant, values-aligned, and ready for the future.

To **our staff**, thank you for your dedication, resilience and heart you bring to this work every day. Your efforts have shaped a year of renewal and progress, strengthening our organization and deepening our impact across the communities we serve.

To **all of you**, we are deeply honoured to be working with you.

# Get Involved

## Stay Connected

To stay up to date on the latest news, resources, and opportunities, we invite organizations to follow **VolunteerConnector** on our social media platforms:

- **LinkedIn:** @VolunteerConnector
- **Facebook:** @VolunteerConnector
- **TikTok:** @volunteerconnector

Join the conversation and see how we're amplifying the voice of volunteerism across communities.

## Donate

Your support helps build thriving communities. Every dollar you donate creates **\$574 in community impact**, empowering volunteers and the organizations they support.

By donating, you help:

- Connect **2.5+ million volunteers** to meaningful opportunities
- Strengthen **5,000+ grassroots organizations** across Canada
- Advance equity in volunteer engagement, including **anti-racist** and **decolonizing practices**
- Improve and grow the VolunteerConnector platform

We run our main fundraising campaign each March, but donations are welcome year-round.

Your contribution directly supports the ongoing development and operations of VolunteerConnector.

*A charitable tax receipt will be issued at the end of the month.*