

VolunteerConnector

2022

IN REVIEW



VolunteerConnector (Volunteer Centre of Calgary)

is a registered charity CRN 108 186 305 RR001

WWW.VOLUNTEERCONNECTOR.ORG

802 5920 MACLEOD TR SW, CALGARY AB | 403-265-5633

2022

OVERVIEW OF US



Our story

- We are a charity that has been on the forefront of community building for over 65 years. We are the Volunteer Centre of Calgary and have transformed into working with regional partners across Canada. Our commitment to providing digital solutions for volunteer engagement comes from our understanding that volunteers need to be engaged in a way that is consistent with the rest of their online lives.

We put volunteers at the center

- This platform is free for volunteers to get connected to their favourite causes so they can use their skills. It has been designed by volunteers for volunteers with the support of a volunteer centre that has decades of experience. If you are every wondering why the platform works the way it does, a volunteer made that choice!

We actively support grassroots and social justice movements

- Volunteerism has social justice and change for good in its heartbeat. This is why, in addition to supporting organizations, we encourage many grassroots initiatives to make use of this platform. We see positive societal change being rooted and activated in a whole new wave of formal and informal volunteering efforts. These efforts range from racial justice and anti-racism to environmental justice and education.

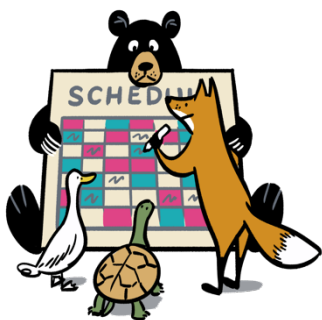
We care about community

- It is important to us to democratize volunteer engagement. This means providing access to simple, affordable solutions for volunteer engagement to grassroots, nonprofit and charitable groups everywhere. Typically, an organizing group uses either an excel spreadsheet or a complicated CRM to engage volunteers. In order to make the whole system of volunteering better we need everyone to have access to the same great tools and that is what the VolunteerConnector provides!

We acknowledge that Indigenous peoples are the traditional guardians of this land that we call Canada

- We believe that acknowledging the land we are fortunate to live and work on, and the people who came before us, is an important step toward reconciliation. We encourage everyone to educate themselves on land acknowledgments, Canada's history with Indigenous peoples and the 94 calls to action in the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Report. We remain committed to our ongoing anti-racism and decolonizing journey personally and in volunteerism.





2022

STRATEGY UPDATE

STRATEGY

SERVED

FUN FACTS

Putting the **volunteer at the center** of the system of volunteerism by leveraging an online platform that supports the existing framework of Promote-Connect-Strengthen-Lead

556,642
individuals

13,000,000+ hours of
volunteering

Volunteers seeking to volunteer
increased **18.114%**

Strengthening the system of volunteerism to grow the subscriber base of the VolunteerConnector to create organizational sustainability

4,853
organizations

15,792 individual capacity
building supports provided

Organizations calling for volunteers
decreased **22.852%**

Building community through volunteerism and partnership by nurturing a network of support for volunteers and volunteer organizations to enable volunteers, volunteer organizations and regional partners to better inform the future of volunteering through collecting, owning, and sharing data

57
partners

The most searched for causes on
the Connector are

Diversity/Anti-Racism
and
Environment/Advocacy

VOLUNTEER VOICE

"Volunteering has always been a big part of my life. I believe that giving back to the community and helping others is a fulfilling experience that can bring people together and build a strong community ... It gives us the opportunity to connect with people, make a positive impact in someone's life, and develop new skills and interests. I believe that by volunteering, we can create a sense of community and bring people together." – Panos Kalsos –

2022

KEY TRENDS



Why volunteer?

Volunteers continued to pour into the VolunteerConnector looking for new opportunities to connect with their neighbours. Top three reasons for volunteering as reported by volunteers include:

- Wanting to be connected to a larger cause and make an **IMPACT**.
- To meet to people a create new **CONNECTIONS**.
- To find a new or renewed sense of **BELONGING**.

Three key trends inform volunteerism right now:

Formal volunteer programs that rely on an aging volunteer base that is stepping back are struggling to adapt.

- This was happening prior to the pandemic and, anecdotally, we heard stories of baby boomers stepping back due to volunteer burnout as soon as pandemic began. This means this volunteer base is not returning the same way.

A highly engaged new generation of volunteer in Gen Z that is careful about how they spend their time.

- Important to this demographic is that their volunteer efforts be connected to social justice and/or climate action. If an organization can't clearly demonstrate their connection to these causes, then these volunteers are willing to look elsewhere for their opportunity to engage in their community.

Grassroots initiatives have been growing, possibly at the expense of formal volunteering in organizations that uphold the barriers to community engagement.

- There are many barriers that still exist related to volunteer engagement. Because of that, and the expectation that volunteers want to connect to their preferred cause (not organization), grassroots initiatives have been on the rise. (Barriers are covered in our report [An Anti-Racist Approach to Volunteering](#)).

PANDEMIC EFFECT

Our data, based on volunteer behaviour all over the nation is something we have been able to track throughout the pandemic. Briefly the pandemic story has been:

- A hastening of the above trends.
- A surge of volunteer interest at the beginning of the pandemic which we attribute to neighbours wanting to care for neighbours.
- Tiny hiccups of volunteer interest that coincided with the various levels of government putting out conflicting messages of “stay home and distance” and “get back to normal . . . maybe”. But even then, they were tiny dips that lasted only a week or two.



2022

BUILDING CAPACITY

WORKSHOPS

training virtual/in person, hosted/co-hosted in partnership

Re-Engaging Volunteers in a Pandemic

- Policy changes in light of current restrictions
- Risk management considerations for pandemic practices
- Understanding and identifying burn out

An Anti-Racist Approach to Volunteering

- Results of the report plus a deeper analysis of what volunteers are telling us
- Understanding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in a volunteerism perspective
- Removing barriers in place for volunteers to access volunteer programming

Recognition in Pandemic Times

- Adapting practices from in-person events to pandemic appropriate recognition activities

Volunteering Basics

- Platform review and intro when applicable
- Risk Management Practices
- Volunteer Policy Practices

Advocating for Volunteerism

- Using your data to ask for internal support
- Using your data to ask for funder support
- Using your data to measure the impact of volunteering in your organization
- Measuring your mission with volunteer involvement

Volunteer Data

- Understanding your data
- Advocacy based on your data in your region
- Sharing success stories from other regions

COACHING

sample of the topics

dismissing a volunteer – hiring diverse board members – diversity policy for board members – hiring a treasurer for the board – transitioning a recognition program from an in-person event once a year to an ongoing results-based celebration – dealing with absences due to illness – inclusive screening practices – creating flexibility in a program traditionally delivered in a more rigid manner – recruiting diverse volunteers – help with advocating for a budget for volunteer program

firing a board member – reducing the screening burden on volunteers – casino volunteering – creating equity in a volunteer program – skilled volunteers and the board – board support to hire new staff – policy development for volunteer programs – starting a volunteer program from scratch – managing volunteers in a one-person organization – rural volunteering – transitioning board meetings online during the pandemic – volunteer pronouns

VOLUNTEER VOICE

“Consider that a lot of non-profits function under tight budgets and face a lack of funding yet need to work in some respect as a business. These limitations may result in a lack of adequate staffing for the day-to-day work that needs to be done. The staff often wear many hats and that is where a volunteer that is committed and engaged can really make a difference in a non-typical way.” – Subibe Choudhury –



2022

BY THE NUMBERS

each **\$1** spent on the VolunteerConnector

=

a value of **\$476** in community impact

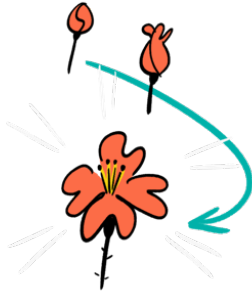
You can view our [2022 Audited Financial Statements](#), and you will note that we carried a deficit through 2022 that was a continuation of the 2021 pandemic challenge of growing earned revenue as well as an ongoing depressed funding environment.

Looking Forward: 2023 has a more promising outlook and includes a balanced budget approved by the board of directors. Recovery has been much slower than preferred but opportunities to invest in the ongoing development of the VolunteerConnector are up. This will have a positive impact on the day-to-day operations of the organization as it remains focused on the key strategies and removing barriers to volunteering for everyone. Furthermore, we begin 2023 with 8.8 months of cash on hand for operating costs and sustainability reserve.

THE PRIVILEGE OF FINDING PURPOSE

“Remembering that we volunteer out of a position of privilege is important. Not only do we volunteer out of our spare time, but we can also seek meaning, purpose, and community through these activities because we can meet our basic daily needs. Because we don’t lack the necessary support to help us meet certain responsibilities. Because we don’t live under the threat of famine and war. We must understand that it’s out of privilege that we can seek out and ponder the answers to these existential questions of self-fulfillment and growth.” – Nathan Ahamed –

Nathan Ahamed is a [regular contributor](#) on the Connector



Thanks to all our Supporters in 2022!

Alberta Culture, Community Engagement Branch

Anonymous Donor

City of Calgary, Calgary Neighbourhoods

Google

Government of Canada

Individual Supporters

Suncor Energy Foundation

The Calgary Foundation

QUESTIONS?

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