

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

Prepared By :

LETICIA RIBEIRO
(Executive Assistant)



 www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca


 10050 112 Street NW, suite 206,
Edmonton, AB T5K2J1



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The photos featured in this report were generously provided by ESPC staff, volunteers, and friends!



ABOUT US

The Edmonton Social Planning Council is an independent, non-profit, and non-partisan organization dedicated to social research with its registered charitable status.

Supported by individuals and organizations passionate about social welfare, ESPC's multifaceted approach encompasses research, data analysis, report generation, recommendations, public education, and collaborative efforts with fellow social agencies, all geared towards effecting positive change.

OUR MISSION

Through rigorous research, detailed analysis, and community engagement, we deepen community understanding of social planning issues, influence policy, and spark collaborative actions that lead to positive social change.

OUR VISION

A community in which all people are full and valued participants.




Chair's Message

Vanessa Zembal (Board Chair)

As we reflect on the past year, it is with a profound sense of gratitude and humility that I hope to convey in this message. I have had the pleasure of working with and getting to know the other Board Members and getting to know the staff and some of the projects they are contributing to more fully over the past year. By fostering a culture of transparency, mutual respect, and collaboration, we can strengthen our board and position the organisation for long-term success. As we continue this journey, we are also committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion and incorporating policies and strategic thinking that reflect this commitment.

Despite a smaller group of Board of Directors in the latter half of 2023, I am inspired by the resilience and dedication of the board members. With their effort, we have made significant changes to the board application forms and process to foster a culture of inclusivity and collaboration. And we have new board candidates seeking membership approval who responded to our call! This process was undertaken with a focus on encouraging engaged citizens and reducing barriers to entry - we are hoping to expand the board with diverse voices and hope to accommodate the needs of members if possible to encourage members to bring their experience and expertise to the board table.

We also spent most of the last few months of the year reflecting on the current strategic plan and reviewing past (even archival) ESPC strategic plans to assess our position and the progress that has been made



throughout the history of the organisation. Somewhat surprisingly (or not), issues identified in the early 2000s are still challenges we are facing today. This realisation underscores the critical importance of our work and enduring relevance of our mission. It is the presence of the ESPC in the past involved with incubating organisations across the city and being in the room when decisions are made or discussed that has led to our unwavering recognition among many organisations in and around Edmonton. Edmontonians rely on the data provided in various reports and publications to help develop their own advocacy plans, grant applications, or increase their awareness and knowledge about some of the issues facing our community. We are approaching strategic planning and strategic thinking with these perspectives in mind and focusing our energy and conversations on how we can maintain our relevance while enduring the challenges of today and being prepared for the future.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank the current and previous Edmonton Social Planning staff for their continued commitment to the organisation and helping us continue to be relevant and adapt to changes within and beyond the organisation. This team continues to collaborate with various organisations across Edmonton and Alberta providing research services and data to help them reach their goals and continues to meet these challenges and grow the relationships within the non-profit community. Over the past year, the Board has had the opportunity to hear from the ESPC team on a number of occasions and projects they are working on or reports they are publishing and we are grateful for these opportunities to be informed and take these details into the community. As you'll see later in this report, the work highlighted illustrates the variety of topics covered and advocacy opportunities by this group.

I also want to thank our volunteers who selflessly give their time, energy, and talents to advance our mission in various roles within the organisation. Writing research reports and blogs, supporting the fundraisers, and sitting

on the Board as a Director or Committee member - your influence is helping to advocate for change within our community. Thank you for your dedication and unwavering commitment to the lives of equity-seeking individuals.

And finally, I want to recognize our funders and partners. Whether through long-term or one-time financial contributions or strategic partnerships, your investment in the ESPC empowers us to expand our reach, address emerging issues head-on, and amplify our impact. We rely on funders and donors to allow us to continue providing the research and highlight timely issues that are impacting our community.

As we continue on this journey of strategic planning, board development, and advancing equity, diversity and inclusion within our organization and the work we do, we stay committed under a shared mission and unwavering in our determination to create a community where everyone feels a sense of belonging and fulfillment.

Thank you for your attention to our report and for your commitment to our shared goals. I hope you can reflect on the work of the ESPC and acknowledge the impact of this work on the community as well as your own life. Together, we can continue to advance our mission and create meaningful change in our communities.



Executive Director's Reflection: A Year of Impact and Resilience

As the Executive Director, I am privileged to share with our readers the remarkable projects and accomplishments that our dedicated staff team undertakes each year. Once again, I have the honor of highlighting the outstanding work carried out by Edmonton Social Planning Council in 2023, demonstrating our impact on the community..

Research Reports and Projects

Our staff diligently researched and prepared the Living Wage Report for Edmonton. This critical analysis sheds light on the economic realities faced by our community members and underscores the importance of fair wages. Collaborating with Public Interest Alberta, we contributed to the Alberta Child Poverty Report. Through rigorous research and data analysis, we highlighted the challenges faced by children and families in our province. In addition, our team delved into the intricacies of food security by analyzing data from the Edmonton Food Bank client surveys. These insights inform our ongoing efforts to address hunger and promote well-being.

Vital Signs Report: Navigating Food Security

In 2023, our staff researched and prepared yet another Vital Signs Report, revisiting the critical issue of food security in Edmonton. Remarkably, the inaugural Vital Signs Report a decade earlier also centered on food security. Our goal was to assess progress and determine if conditions had improved. Unfortunately, we found that food security remains a complex challenge, with many individuals still relying on programs like the Edmonton Food Bank.



Community Matters: Unveiling Poverty's Intersectionality

Our quarterly newsletter, Community Matters, embarked on a year-long exploration of poverty through an equity-seeking lens. Our volunteers, staff, and community partners fearlessly tackled topics such as gaps in the social safety net, food security, justice, and literacy. These discussions shed light on the multifaceted nature of poverty and its impact on vulnerable populations.

Social Well-Being Tracker: Empowering Data-Driven Decisions

Continuing our tradition, the social well-being tracker tool received regular updates throughout the year. Social agencies, City of Edmonton staff, students, and the public accessed this valuable resource. Informed decisions were made, policies shaped, and community well-being advanced—all thanks to the data-driven insights provided by our tracker.

Lunch and Learns: Fostering Knowledge Exchange

Our staff remained exceptionally active in 2023, hosting virtual and occasional in-person lunch and learn events. These sessions were open to all, fostering dialogue and knowledge exchange. Topics ranged from services for vulnerable youth in Albertans to the challenges faced by women re-entering society after incarceration. We also explored root causes and interventions related to sexual violence.

The rich tapestry of our work at the Edmonton Social Planning Council (ESPC) extends far beyond what we've touched upon here. I invite our readers to explore further and discover the myriad projects, initiatives, and impactful activities that shape our commitment to the community.

Indeed, the unwavering commitment of our team during times of transition is truly commendable. As we relocated our offices and welcomed new staff while bidding farewell to others, the Edmonton Social Planning Council (ESPC) continued to uphold its reputation for rigorous research and valuable contributions to the community. Our collective efforts, like the sturdy shoulders of a ship's crew, keep the ESPC afloat and moving forward. The challenges we face are met with resilience, and our dedication remains steadfast. As we navigate the currents of change, I am confident that our work will continue to drive positive change for the people of Edmonton.

A heartfelt thank you to our dedicated volunteer and students who tirelessly wrote blog posts, enriched our newsletter, and actively participated in our lunch and learn sessions and focus groups. Their remarkable commitment, totaling over 800 hours, may very well set a record for volunteer contributions. Their passion fuels our mission.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our esteemed board of directors. Their unwavering dedication provides the essential governance and support that keeps our ship steady. It truly takes the collective hearts and minds of many to navigate the waters of community impact.

Finally, our work would not be possible without the continued financial support from our funders and the Edmonton Social Planning Council membership. Your belief in our mission sustains us. Together, we remain a beacon of knowledge and advocacy, illuminating the path toward a stronger, more equitable community. As we move forward, I am confident that our unwavering dedication will continue to drive positive change for Edmontonians. Thank you for being part of our journey.

Sincerely

Susan Morrissey, Executive Director

Outcomes We Seek to Achieve



Our Guiding Principles



MEET OUR TEAM



Susan Morrissey
Executive Director

Susan Morrissey (she/her) has been with ESPC for over 16 years. As Executive Director, Susan works collaboratively with others in Edmonton's non-profit sector toward moving the needle on the bigger social issues facing the community. Recently she was instrumental in establishing the Alberta Living Wage Network, along with colleagues from other parts of Alberta.



Leticia Rodrigues Ribeiro
Executive Assistant

Leticia Ribeiro holds a diploma in Human Resources and a Bachelor's degree in Teaching Spanish as a Second Language. She has over eight years of experience working for the Brazilian government in the Management field, primarily focusing on Human Resources, Customer Service and Procurement.



Sydney Sheloff
Strategic Research Coordinator

Sydney graduated from the University of Alberta and she has a master's degree in Sociology. Her thesis explored what it meant for youth experiencing homelessness to pursue a successful future in a social, economic, and Political landscape that marginalized them and limited their opportunities.



Brett Lambert
Research Officer

Brett has a Diploma in Journalism from Grant MacEwan as well as a Bachelor of Arts and Master's degree in Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta. He has worked in a number of communications roles at the University of Alberta as well as non-profit organizations.



Janell Uden

Research Services and Capacity Building Coordinator

Janell Uden graduated from the University of Alberta with a Bachelor of Arts, double majoring in Psychology and Sociology and a Certificate in Applied Social Science Research. Her previous research experience has investigated neighbourhood revitalization, the effects of COVID-19 on people with disabilities and inequities experienced in accessing healthcare amongst African, Caribbean and Black 2SLGBTQ+ people.



Susanne Urbina

Capacity support assistant

Susanne brings a management background and non-profit experience to the organization as a Literacy Program Manager, responsible for a Volunteer Tutor Program and overseeing an English Language Teaching Program. She holds a Practitioner Certificate from Norquest in Intercultural Communication and has completed courses in Mental Health First Aid, Trauma Informed Care, Parenting After Violence, and the U of A's Indigenous Studies Course.

Our Board of Directors

ESPC is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Board of Directors guides the organization through writing policies, developing the strategic plan, and ensuring the organization remains sustainable and relevant. We are currently recruiting Board members to a 2-year term.

In 2023, these were the members of our board:

Vanessa Zembal
Board President

Charlotte Bennie
Board Treasurer

William Howe
Board Director

Archana Chaudhary
Board Director

Katherine Weaver
Governance Committee Chairperson

We are recruiting new board members!

If you are interested in joining us, please fill in the [application form](#) available on our website..

Volunteers and Students Contributions in 2023



More than
70
volunteers



More than
800_{hr}
worked

Events we've participated in!

NAIT Volunteer Fair

St. Alberta Fair

Virtual Meet & Greet





This is what people are saying about us...

“The best part of volunteering is getting to connect with people who care for the community through research and information.” (Alma Canton, a volunteer)

“As a learning environment, ESPC was welcoming and supportive, providing me with continuous opportunities for learning and development.” (Olivia Neufeldt, a practicum student)

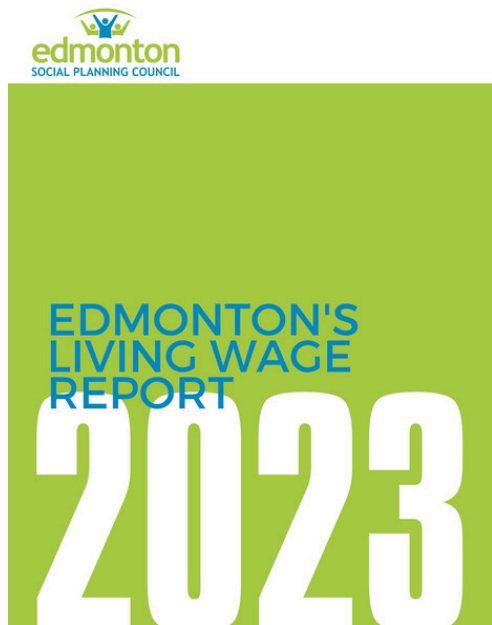
“I've learned that there are so many different issues that the organization focusses on. I am surprised about the number of articles published and the content. I love that there is such a variety-it allows some creativity and a change of pace to those contributing” (Bell Watt, a volunteer)

“ESPC is an ideal practicum partner, because Human Ecology students bring a shared purpose: to enhance everyday life. ESPC staff offer time, expertise, and care as co-educators for students placed within ESPC.” (Rhonda Breikereuz and Sherry Ann Chapman from the University of Alberta)

“ESPC has over 83 years of experience as a social research/analysis, community engagement and advocacy organization. We have found it to be a true source of knowledge and expertise on social issues. It is deeply dedicated to encouraging the adoption of equitable social policy, supporting the work of other organizations striving to improve the lives of Edmontonians, and educating the public regarding the social issues that impact them daily.” (Yvonne Chiu, Executive Director - Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative)

“ESPC's services in our community helps create strong and vibrant community and long-term impact within our sector and community through building capacity for agencies and helps individual social impact organizations thrive. They are a source of knowledge and expertise on social issues within our community. And they are accountable to organizations, and our sector as a whole, on delivering services that allows us to thrive.” (Liz O'Neill, Executive Director - Boys & Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton & Area)

ESPC PROJECTS



EDMONTON LIVING WAGE

The research reports published by the Edmonton Social Planning Council (ESPC) fulfill several critical needs related to poverty and social well-being, including Edmonton's Living Wage Report, which defines and calculates the living wage for Edmonton. It provides insights into the hourly wage necessary for individuals and families to live with dignity and participate in their community. The report highlights the gap between the minimum and living wages, emphasizing the need for fair compensation.

ALBERTA CHILD POVERTY REPORT

The Annual Alberta Child Poverty Report prepared in partnership with Public Interest Alberta, serves as a crucial publication, shedding light on the lived experiences of children and youth who lack the necessary resources for optimal growth and well-being. This comprehensive report not only examines child poverty rates but also delves into various interconnected domains impacted by poverty, including health, housing, childcare, and food security. Furthermore, it underscores the profound effects of living in poverty on children and offers policy recommendations aimed at mitigating these pressing challenges.



ESPC PROJECTS

Community Matters

Incoming Changes and Current Issues in the Non-Profit Sector



March 2024

Spring Edition

Edmonton Social Planning Council



COMMUNITY MATTERS

Community Matters aims to inform the community about social issues that impact the public and connect the dots between social issues, evidence, and policy. We aim to use this space to give local agencies, ESPC volunteer writers, and staff members a voice.

Each edition will spotlight a specific social issue and demonstrate the intersectional nature and impact on equality. Our goal is to use evidence as we continue to inform on the issues affecting individuals and families.

SOCIAL WELL-BEING TRACKER

The Social Well Being Tracker is a one-of-a-kind resource for the Edmonton area. It serves as a valuable resource, offering timely and accurate information specifically centered around Edmonton and its surrounding region. This platform enables individuals to access a diverse array of data related to Edmonton, providing a comprehensive overview of social well-being. By meticulously tracking various social and economic indicators over time, the Edmonton Social Planning Council (ESPC) distills this data into an accessible format, ensuring that it can be understood by a wide audience.



BLOG POSTS



In 2023, 31 blog posts were created by ESPC staff and volunteers. Presented below are the top five most-read articles in this year.

1

Special Series — A History of Indigenous Resistance | Edmonton Social Planning Council
By: Sydney Sherloff

2

Mental Health Struggles as a Newcomer to Canada: Finding a Sense of Belonging.
By: Alejandra Hasbun

3

Homeless Encampments in Edmonton: An Individualized Symptom of Systemic Homelessness
By: Jordan Clark Marcichiw

4

A Critical Look at Edmonton's Gentrification Problem
By: Jayme Wong

5

Health Care Costs in Alberta: A Brief Overview
By: Sung Min Jo

LUNCH & LEARN

ESPC's Lunch & Learn events are a series of engaging lunchtime talks about social issues and organizations that have an impact in our community. We hosted 08 events over the year, both online and in person.



January

Kickstand Connect:
Integrated Youth
Services for Young
Albertans




March

Women's Re-entry
Post-incarceration:
Challenges and
Successes in Transitions




April

The Gift of Time:
Discovering Your
Passion, Making a
Difference



May

Social determinants and
inequities of Black
Canadians and their
effects on mental health



June

What Happens When A
Survivor Reports a Hate
Crime or Incident to and
Organization in
Edmonton?




July

Sexual Violence: An
Exploration of
Root Causes and
Intervention



October

Community Gardens:
Growing Food and
Building Community



November

Nourishing Edmontonians:
Empowering Individuals
with Barriers to Nutritious
Food

ESPC in the news



1 Interviews

Interviews for Global News, 630 CHED, and Nouvelle Radio Cite about the Living Wage, and more



2 Articles

An article on Food Security based on Vital Signs published on CBC Edmonton, and

an article about the UNICEF Child Poverty Report published on St. Albert Gazette.



3 Op-ed

An op-ed to discuss the inclusion toolkit ESPC and Age Friendly Edmonton put together, ran in the Alberta Prime Times, and

an op-ed ran in the Edmonton Journal weighing in on the City of Edmonton's Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative and what impact it might have on affordable housing.

Presentations and events

ESPC participated in numerous events last year. Here, we present some highlights of these unforgettable moments.



Vital Signs Launch Event



United Way Bake Sale

Citations

Our work has achieved an excellent reputation. See below where our work has resonated over the past year.



Exploring the COVID-19 Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAPs) in the Black Community: a Scoping Review

Written by Fiqir Worku, Falan Bennett, Sarah Wheeler, Arjumand Siddiqi, Janet Papadacos

Practicing ecological citizenship through community supported agriculture: Opportunities, challenges, and social justice concerns

Written by Manoj Misra

Assessing Queer Needs in Peterborough-Nogojiwanong

Written by Romy Hansen

A Call for Evidence-Based Research in ADR

Written by Methura Sinnadurai, Benjamin Vanderwindt, Patricia McMahon, Trevor C.W. Farrow

Principle Turnover and Retention in Urban Alberta

Written by Andrea Cooper

Policing the Overdose Crisis

Written by Sandra M. Bucerius, Harvey Krahn, Kevin D. Haggerty, Luca Berardi & Rebekah McNeilly

Fair in Unfair Circumstances: Police Officers' Perceptions of Homeless Encampments

Written by Celine Beaulieu

African single mothers and their children in Canada: transnational experiences and sources of support

Mary Olukutun, Alleson Mason, Christa Fouche, Solina Richter, Lindiwe Sibeko, Sheri Adekola, Bukola Salami



COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP

ESPC collaborates on many levels with different agencies and organizations within the sector.

Committees we got involved with

- Alberta Living Wage Network (ALWN) Council
- Campaign 2000 Steering Committee
- Campaign 2000 report card writers
- CBRCanada Community of Practice
- ECVO (Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations)
- Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homelessness (ECOHH)
- End Poverty Edmonton Stewardship Roundtable
- Edmonton State of Immigration and Settlement
- Edmonton Social Services Community Knowledge to Action Group
- Homeward Trust Research Committee
- Race-Based Data Table
- Vital Signs advisory and steering committees
- United Way Funded Partner Network

Our Partners

- Public Interest Alberta (PIA)
- Alberta Living Wage Network (ALWN)
- Edmonton Food Bank
- E4C
- Jasper Place Wellness Centre

Funders

- United Way of the Alberta Capital Region
- Edmonton Community Foundation
- AGLC (Alberta Gaming Liquor Commission)
- FCSS (Family Community Support Services)
- Muttart Foundation



Contact Us



(780) 423-2031



10050 112 St NW Suite 206,
Edmonton, AB T5K 2J1



www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca



@edmontonspc

Donate!

The fund supports the research and analysis work of the Edmonton Social Planning Council.

Become a member

By getting involved with the ESPC, you add your voice to our message of positive social development and policy change.

*Financial Statements Financial Statements can be provided upon request.