

EDMONTON SOCIAL
PLANNING COUNCIL

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ANNUAL REPORT



edmonton
SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL

The Edmonton Social Planning Council respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 Land, a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous Peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community.

The First People's connection to the land teaches us about our inherent responsibility to protect and respect Mother Earth. With this acknowledgment, we honour the ancestors and children who have been buried here, missing and murdered Indigenous women and men, and the process of ongoing collective healing for all human beings. We are reminded that we are all treaty people and of the responsibility we have to one another.

The Edmonton Social Planning Council recognizes that we are settlers on this land and have a responsibility to contribute to reconciliation as an organization through learning, continuing conversations, and helping amplify Indigenous voices. Indigenous Peoples experiences of poverty, homelessness and food insecurity are directly tied to colonization, we understand the work we do connected to these should reflect their experiences.





The Edmonton Social Planning Council (ESPC) is an independent, non-profit, and non-partisan charity dedicated to advancing social well-being through research and collaboration.

ESPC's work includes conducting in-depth research, analyzing data, producing insightful reports, and offering practical recommendations. Through public education and partnerships with other social agencies, ESPC strives to create meaningful, positive change in the community.

We are grateful to our members, supporters, and funders for their invaluable contributions to advancing social well-being in our community. Your support enables us to conduct meaningful research, share data-driven insights, and collaborate with other social agencies to drive positive change and promote informed decision-making.

For questions or comments about anything you see or any of our programming, please reach out to us at info@edmontonsocialplanning.ca and we will connect you to the right person for your question.

www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca

Messages from our Board Chair & Interim ED

Dear Friends, Partners, and Supporters,

As we reflect on 2024, the Edmonton Social Planning Council (ESPC) has once again had the privilege of serving our community in advocating for social equity, justice, and systemic change. This year has brought both challenges and opportunities as we continue our important work in shaping a more inclusive and equitable Edmonton.

We begin this report with a thank you to our former Executive Director, Susan Morrissey. During her tenure, Susan was involved in many projects and initiatives aimed at advancing the ESPC's mission, including co-founding the Alberta Living Wage Network and securing crucial funding for Research support services from the City of Edmonton's FCSS program. Susan also ensured that data and research were central in conversations about social policy through serving on the Stewardship Table for End Poverty Edmonton Stewardship Team and the Advisory Council for the State of Immigration and Settlement Reports in Edmonton. We thank them for their leadership and commitment for the past 18 years and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

In the time since Susan's departure, our Board of Directors has worked closely with the ESPC team and our community to ensure a smooth transition. This process required a level of attention and collaboration beyond a typical board placement and we're grateful for the Board's commitment to navigating this transition thoughtfully. By coming together as a board, we were able to have difficult conversations, make informed decisions, and consider a range of options to ensure the continued impact of the ESPC in our community.

We would also like to thank the ESPC team for their patience throughout this transition and their extra effort completing tasks that were previously out of their scope. Transition always comes with a degree of challenge and we are grateful for the resilience and dedication of our ESPC team as they continue to push forward in the face of transition.

2024 has seen significant changes in social policy and an ongoing evolution of how the province and city address key issues. While there has been progress in some areas, we remain committed to advocating for policies that reflect the evolving needs of our community. We continue to monitor issues such as affordable housing, social supports, newcomer challenges, and employment issues. We believe it is critical to hold decision makers accountable and ensure that policies align with data and have a positive impact on the situation of Edmontonians.

The following are a few highlights from the past year and what we are looking forward to in the future. One of the cornerstones of our work is **Edmonton's Poverty Profile**, our biannual report that provides essential data and analysis on the state of poverty in Edmonton. In 2024, we continued this important publication, which serves as a critical tool for advocating for change and holds a mirror up to the reality of economic disparities in our community. In this edition, we explored the situation of those on the cusp of poverty, such as the neighbor who works full-time but spends more than 30% of their income on rent or the individual who wants to go back to school but can't afford to take the income hit. Through bringing together the data and statistics around poverty levels, local expenses, government benefits, and others, we can begin to understand the impact of programming and certain policy decisions on the people who are most vulnerable to these decisions and anyone can reference the relevant data and statistics quickly without having to navigate statistics, the latest research, or policy documents.



Publications, like the **Poverty Profile and Factsheets**, work to remove the barriers to data and research and bring the key statistics to the public, policymakers, and advocates to highlight the impacts of programming or policy decisions and help these groups make actionable changes to address systemic inequalities - something that we try to incorporate into all of our publications, research, and reports.

The Decline of Edmonton's Living Wage

In a year of rising inflation, we were surprised to see a decrease of \$1.40 in Edmonton's living wage bringing it to \$20.85/hour. This decrease is likely a reflection of changes in spending patterns and benefit allocations—such as lower clothing and footwear costs and the introduction of the \$10/day childcare benefit – *but the wage still highlights the disconnect between the province's minimum wage and what it truly costs to live in dignity*. In 2024, Alberta tied with Saskatchewan for having the lowest minimum wage in Canada at \$15/hour, a rate that has remained unchanged since 2018. This discrepancy leaves many people working full-time at minimum wage struggling to meet their basic needs. The Alberta Living Wage Network (ALWN) remains committed to advocating for a living wage and supporting businesses and policymakers in understanding the value of fair pay. As a founding member of the ALWN, income inequality is an important focus for the ESPC. To help promote the need for better incomes, we hosted two Lunch & Learns in 2024 exploring this topic: one with Karl Widerquist about the concept of Universal Basic Income; and another with Ryan Lanciano about the benefits of providing a living wage and the Alberta Living Wage changes in 2024.

Community Collaborations

After our collaboration with Edmonton Community Foundation to publish the Vital Signs report on Food Security, ESPC remained actively involved in addressing affordable and accessible food. In 2024, we joined the Food Justice Food Security Ecosystem in Edmonton project led by John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights and Multicultural Health Brokers. These organizations have been at the forefront of improving food access and addressing ethnocultural food needs in Edmonton for years. In partnership with other community organizations, this project will explore and apply innovative solutions and advocate for changes to food policy that ensure no one in Edmonton goes without the nourishment they need to thrive.

Challenges and Looking Ahead

As we look forward to our 85th anniversary, we are reflecting on our past and embracing the changes ahead. Politically, 2025 will be a significant year with both federal and municipal elections and the ESPC is committed to provide accessible, timely data that will help inform conversations across the city – from the dinner table conversations, neighbourhood door knocking, community forums, and everything in between. The social services sector has faced significant challenges in 2024, with rising demand for services, increased pressure on government resources, and a shifting political landscape. As always, we remain focused on building stronger partnerships and collaborations within our sector to ensure that our work is impactful, relevant, and sustainable.

Despite these challenges, we remain optimistic and steadfast in our commitment to social justice. Our mission is more important than ever and, as we move into 2025, we are excited about the potential to work with our community, partners, and supporters to build a more equitable Edmonton.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in the work we do. Together, we will keep pushing toward a city where every individual can thrive, regardless of their circumstances.

Ramona Blacklock & Vanessa Zembal

ESPC's Core Commitments

At the core of everything we do is a clear purpose, a shared vision, and values that unite us. These statements drive our culture and shape our impact.

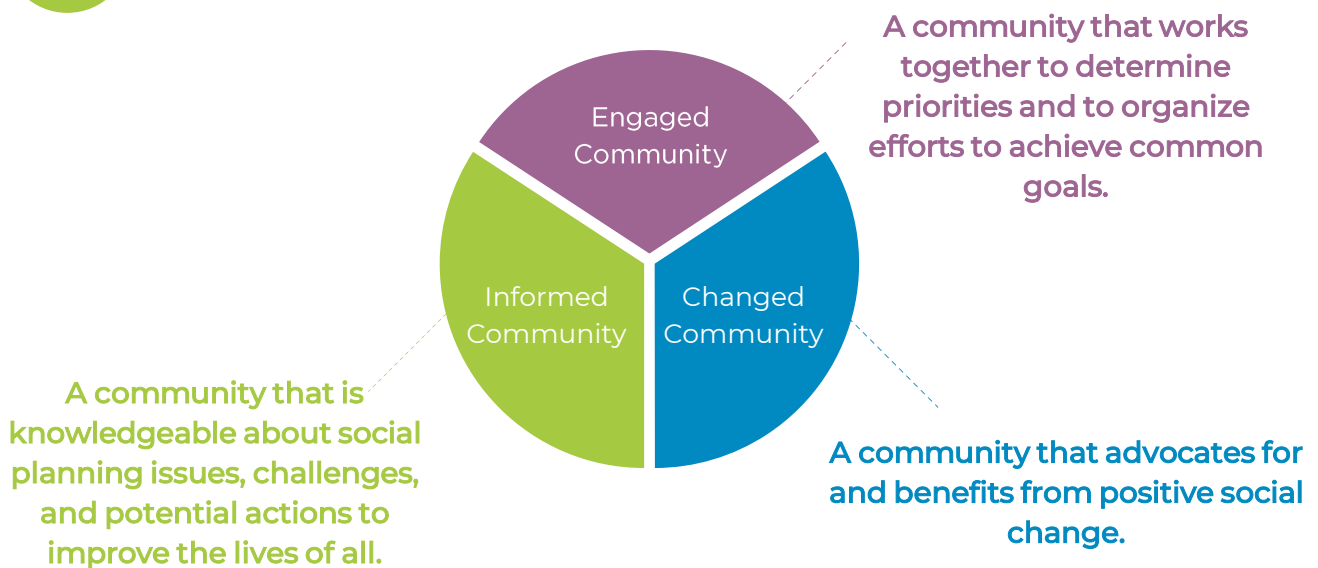
Our Vision

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

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.

Guiding Framework



Guiding Values



2024 ESPC Team



Susan Morrissey
Executive Director

Susan Morrissey has been ESPC's ED since 2005. During her time, she has contributed to various community collaborations including EPE's Stewardship Table, City of Edmonton's SIS reports and campaign, and positioned the ESPC as a founding member of the Alberta Living Wage Network.



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.



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.



Janell Uden
Research Services & 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.

Board of Directors

Ramona Blacklock

Board Chair

Christopher Batdorf

Treasurer/Secretary

Finance Committee Chairperson

Chari Bennie

Board Director

William Howe

Board Director

Archana Chaudhary

Board Director

Karen Kuprys

Board Director

Sydney Peskett

Board Director

Ali Taleb

Board Director (May-December)

Roberta Zapelini

Board Director (until October)

Vanessa Zembal

Board Director (until December)

Students & Volunteers

Gurshaminder Brar Singh

Norquest College - Settlement Studies Practicum Student

Sophia Rosichuk

Summer Student - Social Research Assistant

MacEwan University Service Marketing 412 Class: Fall 2024

C. Gomes, C. Cantera, S. Bringas, A. Tesfay, L. Savka

2024 Volunteers

Our volunteers are essential to the ESPC's engagement and advocacy efforts.

The following is a list of our volunteers who contributed their time in 2024.

K. Abdolmaleki	J. Horning	L. Murcia	N. Sobus-Jensen
LM. Arnaez	A. Irwin	B. Neufeld	H. Suzuta
J. Bateman	D. Lang	M. Orekogbe	T. Tran
T. Beaulac	A. Jo	S. Pasula	D. Trautman
D. Berger	S. Kassam	N. Pontikes	N. Urbina
M. Cleverley	V. Kher	S. Rashiq	L. Wade
M. Corpuz	H. Khinda	D. Samagamski	X. Wade
A. Curry	N. Klimo	R. Saraya	S. Watson
C. Cyre	S. Ladouceur	J. Shannon	B. Watt
D. Dennis	M. Liew	A. Siddiqui	J. Wishewan
K. Del Rio	D. Medeiros	L. Simmons	S. Wright
R. Galang	A. Molzahn	J. Smith	F. Yallou
S. Geberegziabher	D. Meggison	A. Soares	A. Zapisocky

Committees & Collaborations



Publications

- ALBERTA'S CHILD POVERTY REPORT 2023
- 2024: A PROFILE OF POVERTY IN EDMONTON
- EDMONTON'S LIVING WAGE REPORT
- A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF GOOD NEIGHBOUR PLANS IN EDMONTON

6

FACT SHEETS ON TOPICS COVERING:

- Alberta's Provincial Budget
- The True Impact of Immigration on Housing and Employment
- Canadian Dental Care plan
- Revisiting the Minimum Wage
- Encampments in Edmonton
- Changes to Capital gains

3

EDITIONS OF COMMUNITY MATTERS:

SPRING: INCOMING CHANGES AND CURRENT ISSUES IN THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR
SUMMER: 2SLGBTQ+ AND THE COMMUNITY
Fall: Disability & a Look at Inclusive Communities

Media Highlights

Over the course of 2024, the Edmonton Social Planning Council had 16 media interviews, mentions, and releases

11

PRINT INTERVIEWS & MENTIONS

5

LIVE RADIO OR TV INTERVIEWS

Hot topic!

Alberta Living Wage was featured in 7 Media Highlights

Lunch & Learns

9

ESPC's Lunch & Learn events are a series of engaging lunchtime talks about social issues and organizations that have an impact in our community.

● JANUARY

Multicultural Health Brokers:
*Quality Matters: Why Dignified
Food Access is Important*

● AUGUST

Lives in Transition:
*Empowering Women & Sexual
Exploitation*

● FEBRUARY

Landon Turlock: City of Edmonton
*A New tool for understanding and
responding to Hate, Discrimination, and
Racism on the Frontlines*

● SEPTEMBER

Catholic Social Services:
*Understanding Fetal Alcohol Disorder &
Fetal Alcohol Disorder Awareness Month*

● MARCH

Campaign 2000 & ESPC Staff:
*Child Poverty Report Release and
Key Statistics for 2024*

● OCTOBER

Edmonton Food Bank:
*Moving to Food Security: Why long-term
strategies are needed*

● APRIL

Leftovers Foundation:
*Reducing Food Waste and Feeding the
Community*

● DECEMBER

Alberta Living Wage Network:
*The Living Wage in Alberta: What is it
and why does it matter*

● MAY

Karl Widerquist -
Georgetown University
*Understanding Basic Income:
Essential Knowledge*

● DECEMBER

Enhancing Impact within Alberta's
Mental Health & Addictions Care
Systems

Citations



EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS FOR RACIALIZED IMMIGRANTS: A
REVIEW OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION SUPPORT
AND GAPS IN EDMONTON, AB

Doriane Intungane, Jennifer Long, Hellen Gateri, & Rita Dhungel

TOWARD MULTI-SECTORAL ACTION TO IMPROVE CHILD AND
YOUTH HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Victoria Wright, et al (U of C: School of Public Policy)

A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH REPORT ON FOOD SECURITY
WITHIN THE SENIOR SECTOR

Rebecca Reid

SEEING IN COLOUR: A BLACK HOUSING EQUITY FRAMEWORK TO
ADDRESS ANTI-BLACK RACISM IN HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Marie Cecile Esclanda & Mbadugha Kotyk

THE IMPACT OF SOCIOECONOMIC INEQUALITY ON ACCESS TO
HEALTH CARE FOR PATIENTS WITH ADVANCED CANCER: A
QUALITATIVE STUDY

Anna Santos Salas, et al.

EDMONTON'S RACE-BASED DATA TABLE: A MUNICIPAL APPROACH
TO ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC RACISM THROUGH THE COLLECTION AND
USE OF DISAGGREGATED, RACE-BASED DATA

Uchechi Shirley Anaduaka, Alexa Ferdinands, Janelle Knoop, Sarah
Barber & Maria J. Mayan

EDUCATING YOUNG CITIZENS ABOUT PREVENTATIVE HEALTH CARE

Alain Bonnin, Nathalie Rives, & Yves Levi



Volunteers

Volunteer support is critical for our advocacy efforts. In 2024, our volunteers wrote articles for Community Matters, wrote 18 blog posts on various topics throughout the year, and participated in events and presentations organised by the ESPC and our partners throughout the year.

Our volunteer coordinator, Susanne Urbina, organized our first Volunteer Symposium featuring local politicians and community based researchers talking about timely issues and how community voices can influence policy decisions and decision making processes and the importance of advocacy for community wellbeing.

We also want to recognize the volunteers who contributed their time to our casino in June 2024.

To all of our new and returning volunteers, we want to extend our deepest gratitude for your support to our organisation. Community support is essential to our existence and we rely on community to inform our work and ensure our work can help others advocate for our most vulnerable community members.



Capacity Building efforts

Presentations and Events

Edmonton Capacity Building Organization's Network (ECBON)

Fall presentations to community members about the network's shared mission and vision supporting the non-profit community

Canadian Open Data Summit

ESPC presented "Putting it all together in one place: Edmonton's Social Wellbeing Tracker Tool"

Parkland Institute Annual Conference

tabling held at University of Alberta campus

REACH YEG Resource Connect

met with over 40 community members

State of Immigration & Settlement: Year 3

produced by ESPC and Edmonton Community Foundation in partnership.



Outreach

When ESPC team connects with our community in a few different ways:

- We support others through providing research information, consultation, and support to other agencies, organizations and individuals.
- We ask others for advice, input, and to listen to some of their stories to inform our work and research.
- We volunteer for others and support their causes

The following is a list of who we connected with over the course of 2024.

Alberta Living Wage Network
Africa Centre
BCCBiggs
Canadian Club
Centre for Family Literacy
Data for Good - Calgary
ECOH (Edmonton Coalition for Housing & Homelessness)
Edmonton Public Library Guest Picks
Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations
Edmonton Journal
Edmonton Local Immigration Partnership (ELIP)
Family Futures
Homeward Trust - Point in Time Count
Kidsport Edmonton
Jasper Place Wellness Centre
MacEwan University
Adult Literacy Society (P.A.L.S.)
Public Interest Alberta
Statistics Canada
United Way - Tools for School
University of Alberta practicum programs



Thanks to our supporters!!

ESPC Funders

FCSS
Family & Community
Support Services



Employment and
Social Development Canada

Emploi et
Développement social Canada

Special thanks to the following for supporting our programming:

Edmonton Public Library

UAlberta's Education & Research Archive

Canva for Non-Profits

PayPal Giving Fund Canada



ESPC Members

Our dedicated membership has supported us for the past 85 years with many long term members. In 2024, we began providing membership with early access to reports and amplifying the projects, events, and research of our organisational members.

Individual and Organisational memberships are available throughout the year. Visit our website to become a member: www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca

Donations

As a registered charity, all donations to the ESPC are eligible for a charitable tax credit. 2024 was unprecedented for individuals contributing as monthly donors. We accept donations through our website, we are registered with CanadaHelps, ATBCares, and Paypal Giving Fund, and we accept cheque donations mailed or delivered to our office. Tax receipts are available for all donations. Your donation supports our community-based research and social advocacy efforts in and around Edmonton.

ESPC's Endowment Fund

To ensure long term sustainability and illustrate our commitment to our community, ESPC established an endowment fund in 2017 at the Edmonton Community Foundation (www.ecfoundation.org). This fund grows through surplus revenue generated from fee-for-service projects and from endowment directed donations.

To conclude the 2024 annual report, we wanted to take a minute and reflect on our history. Many of the challenges that led to ESPC's founding remain relevant today—community resilience, equitable access to essential services, and the need for data-driven advocacy.

As we mark our 85th anniversary, we are reminded that our strength lies not only in our history but in our ongoing commitment to evolving alongside the needs of our community. We are grateful to be part of a community that celebrates collaboration, embraces innovation, and leads with compassion. If we have not connected with you or your community, please consider reaching out to connect with our work, follow our work on social media, or join our mailing list to learn about our work throughout the year.



edmonton
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