



REACH
EDMONTON
Council for Safe Communities

**20
24**

Business Plan

REPORT BACK



INTRODUCTION

REACH Edmonton is a highly-trusted organization with a proven history of bringing together community, service agencies and government to get things done, with the ultimate aim of preventing violence to create safer communities.

In 2024, REACH leveraged its extensive connections across the city, the province and the globe to get the right people to the table to collaboratively address complex problems. REACH was created by the City of Edmonton in 2010, to do this work in a nimble and efficient way. Issues that affect safety in Edmonton touch multiple sectors and systems. By facilitating partnerships with a wide variety of stakeholders, existing resources are leveraged to tackle safety issues in innovative and cost-effective ways.



VISION

A city we are proud of, in a region which is harmonious, where all people, including the first peoples on whose lands we reside, are included and are safe.

MISSION

To strengthen community safety in our city and region through innovative ideas, building relationships and inspiring action.

PRINCIPLES

- **Truth and Reconciliation**
- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging**
- **Community Safety and Well-Being**
- **Proactive, Preventative Approaches**
- **Sharing and Using Global Practices**
- **Enabling Community-Based Solutions**
- **Nimble and Responsive to Emergent Needs**

LOOKING BACK AT 2024

The 24/7 Crisis Diversion program saw a significant increase in capacity and numbers, posting its highest number of calls since the program's inception during a cold snap in January. The City of Halifax is developing a community crisis response program modeled after 24/7 Crisis Diversion, following a visit from REACH staff to share about the initiative.

The Alberta Centre to End Trafficking in Persons (The AC) marked a number of milestones in 2024 with the board and leadership team now in place, and the organization registered as a non-profit.

Along with other stakeholders, REACH continued to participate in the creation of the new Blueprint for Violence Prevention with the City of Edmonton. The focus will include short-term and long-term goals with an emphasis on community-driven solutions, while maintaining whole-of-systems and data-driven approaches to prevent violence in Edmonton.

The City of Edmonton also asked REACH to lead a new Youth Gang Prevention Table, demonstrating its strong reputation as a trusted organization capable of bringing community together productively.

On a macro level, great strides were made towards a new data and evaluation framework for REACH Edmonton, which will better capture the effect of the work being done across the city.

As REACH moves into its 15th year of working to make Edmonton a safer city, the organization continues to cultivate trusting relationships and explore opportunities to collaborate with community partners from around the city, region and globe.

REACH was also on the international scene more than ever in the last year including a knowledge exchange with Empire Fighting Chance to support the creation of an organization similar to REACH in Bristol, England; a speaking engagement at the Alliance for Peacebuilding PeaceCon 2024 in Washington, United States on behalf of Peace in Our Cities; and the United Nations' World Urban Forum in Cairo, Egypt. Nationally, the Canadian Centre for Safe Communities that REACH had a role in growing has evolved significantly. REACH executive director, Jan Fox completed her term as Co-Chair in 2024 and will remain as past chair.



2024 ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENTS

Building on the direction of past business plans, and with guidance from the strategic pillars set by its board of directors, REACH introduced new high-level priorities in 2024. Progress made towards these commitments is outlined below.

Increasing focus on primary prevention approaches.



- Plans are in progress to secure funding to expand Out of School Time (OST) Collaborative offerings that provide wrap-around services to youth. (See OST section for more information).
- Initial buy-in from partners has been attained to create a new youth-oriented boxing therapy program modelled after Empire Fighting Chance in Bristol, England.

Ramping up efforts to combat human trafficking by playing a leadership role in creating the new Alberta Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons (now called the Alberta Centre to End Trafficking in Persons, or the AC).



- The AC saw several big milestones this year. With leadership, board and key staff in place, REACH will continue to play a supporting role in 2025. (See AC section for more information).

Demonstrating organizational impact through added focus on data, research and evaluation.



- In 2024, REACH completed work on a new Impact Framework to guide how its work is evaluated. This included establishing measurable outcomes.
- Edmonton was selected as a pilot site to participate in a Community and Urban Safety Monitoring project led by the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities. This national project is funded by Public Safety Canada and aims to localize and Indigenize the United Nations Urban Safety Monitoring Framework.
- 24/7 Crisis Diversion worked with University of Alberta Evaluation Capacity Network students to review completed components of its evaluation and develop an updated logic model for the program in the fall 2024 term.

Creating a work culture that is best in class.



- The 50-30 Challenge offered by the Government of Canada was completed with a Community of Practice being actioned for Edmonton. The Challenge's purpose is to achieve gender parity (50%) on board and senior management, and increase representation (30%) from under-represented groups such as racialized persons, and folks who are gender or sexually diverse.
- REACH Edmonton was the proud recipient of Wellness Works Canada's Mentor certification. This designation recognizes REACH as an employer of choice, taking a leading role in employee health and well-being.



REACH Summer Fun Day 2024 Team Photo

Working toward becoming a leader in diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.



- In response to community needs, REACH started to move forward on several potential anti-racism initiatives and is working to secure funding. (See Anti-Racism section under Emerging Work for more information.)
- REACH created its first Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Belonging statement to guide its work.

Ensuring strong financial governance and risk management practices.



- In 2024 an IT security risk audit was completed and new policies put in place to increase data security across the organization.
- REACH contracted an IT provider to support improved data security practices.
- REACH and its board of directors continued to improve financial accounting and governance.

Enhancing external communications.



- REACH created and implemented an extensive communications plan. Milestones in 2024 included implementing a social media strategy and increasing social media presence, conducting preliminary engagement on branding, and launching a newsletter to keep stakeholders informed on REACH activities, trainings and events.



Examples of REACH Edmonton social media posts

Growing opportunities for learning, capacity-building and networking to support a strong social sector.



- REACH continued to offer capacity training for community members and partners, providing eight sessions in 2025. Additionally, a series of Mental Health First Aid sessions were offered to the extended Resource Connect network.
- The biennial Resource Connect, Edmonton’s largest not-for-profit resource fair, was held in October and saw its largest attendance ever at 1,000 people.
- A new event, Teatime Social, was held to promote social connection within the local not-for-profit community and will return in 2025.
- A new ‘pitch deck’ marketing tool opportunity was offered to more than 30 organizations through REACH’s partner, Road 55, free of charge.
- Quarterly Virtual Network Gatherings, which connected the Resource Connect community throughout the year, continued to bring local not-for-profit leaders together for discussion, learning and collaboration.
- Scholarship programs for not-for-profit leadership and human resources practitioners were developed in partnership with Dr. Stephen Murgatroyd and Wellness Works Canada, and will begin in early 2025.



“Basics of Harm Reduction” Workshop at the November 2024 Addictions Don’t Discriminate Exhibit

Strengthening our academic ties.



- Throughout the year, REACH worked with local post-secondary institutions, including MacEwan University and the University of Alberta.
- REACH engaged student support in data and evaluation projects, Resource Connect survey data collection and analysis, communications and community engagement.
- One Director of Community Initiatives, Kelly Husack, had two papers published in 2024 as a result of a research project she has been supporting since 2022. The lead researcher is from the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy at the University of Regina. The published papers include:

“How Municipal Actors Leverage Evidence to Support Urban Planning: Perspectives from the City of Regina”

“Barriers to integration of health and equity into urban design policies in Regina, Saskatchewan”

- Kelly Husack is also supporting a pan-Canadian project currently funded by the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation titled, **Understanding how municipalities work in partnership with local public health systems to enhance population health outcomes and reduce health inequities.**



REACH Edmonton Director Kelly Husack (middle) onstage as a panel speaker for “Exploring Innovative Models of Mental Health Crisis Response” during the 2024 Federal Canadian Municipalities Conference

INITIATIVE REPORTING

REACH continued to lead or support approximately 30 programs, partnerships and initiatives that contributed to safer communities across eight focus areas that were introduced in 2024:

Combatting Human Trafficking and Exploitation

Diverting Crisis

Prioritizing Anti-Racism, Indigenization and Lived Experience

Supporting Immigration and Refugees

Mitigating Addiction and Mental Health Problems

Building Safe and Inclusive Neighbourhoods

Preventing Violence

Promoting Family, Child and Youth Success



COMBATTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION

IMPACT STATEMENT

Heightened awareness and increased alignment for combatting human trafficking in Alberta occurs.

2024 AT A GLANCE

The AC is registered as a non-profit and key leadership roles have been filled.

Alberta Human Trafficking Network membership has grown considerably to 83.

ALBERTA HUMAN TRAFFICKING NETWORK

The Alberta Human Trafficking Network brings together agencies, government and law enforcement to address issues related to human trafficking. REACH is the coordinator, and co-chairs the Network with Not In My City.

- On behalf of the Network, REACH was the recipient of one of the Government of Alberta grants to combat human trafficking. The grant was used to help remove barriers for network members to attend meetings, to host in-person and virtual meetings, and evaluate the work being done.
- Following The AC's Indigenous engagement sessions and other networking, the Network membership has grown considerably to more than 83 agencies and organizations.

ALBERTA CENTRE TO END TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (THE AC)

The Alberta Centre to End Trafficking in Persons (The AC) is a not-for-profit organization that works in collaboration with community-based organizations and in partnership with the Government of Alberta's Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services to "ensure that there is a shared understanding that upon collaboration, universal principles, and protocols inform the manner in which prevention, assessment, and intervention occur, ensuring a unified, wraparound, province-wide, community response model on behalf of Human Trafficking Survivors, Victims, and those at risk." From *The Reading Stone: The Survivor's Lens to Human Trafficking*

- REACH, Not In My City and Native Counselling Services of Alberta worked in collaboration to establish the foundation of the AC as a new organization. This included developing organizational structures such as advisory committees, providing documentation required for establishing the board, and initial steps to begin hiring staff. As AC staff have been hired and the board has been established, REACH and the other tripartite partners have begun transitioning responsibilities to the AC as appropriate.

- Paul Brandt and Angela Adsit were appointed as co-chairs of The AC. The Board of Directors was established and met for the first time in June. A search for the CEO position was completed and the successful candidate was hired in October.
- Indigenous community engagement sessions and surveys on human trafficking were coordinated by the AC tripartite, led by Native Counselling Services of Alberta. These engagement sessions were held in communities across Alberta, with sessions in Peace River, Slave Lake, Edmonton, Calgary, St. Paul, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge and Fort McMurray. All First Nations, Métis Settlements, community organizations and agencies helping those communities were invited to engage in discussions on human trafficking.
- On February 22, the Government of Alberta's Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services announced \$3.5 million to bolster the efforts of 20 community agencies across the province. The AC provided support to the Ministry throughout the selection process. These funds were disbursed to selected agencies in the spring of 2024 for one-year projects.
- The AC is now a registered non-profit organization.



SAFER WAY OUT

The Safer Way Out project aims to develop a coordinated, community response that is driven by the needs of victims of human trafficking to ensure responses are appropriate to victims who require wrap-around services with safety as a priority. The project focuses on Northern Alberta, from Red Deer to the northern border.

- In April 2024, the Safety Network Coordinator Position transitioned to ALERT, where it will be sustainably funded by the Government of Alberta.
- Data was collected to create a customized version of the #NotInMyCity online education module about human trafficking for front-line shelter staff. Dr. Jacqui Linder developed trauma-informed content focusing on the human trafficking for the Intimate Partner Violence training curriculum, which was delivered for the first time in November 2024 to front-line shelter staff.
- Several members of the Survivor Advisory Circle have joined the Alberta Centre to End Trafficking in Persons (The AC) Survivor Advisory Circle. This is an opportunity to expand their knowledge and influence with a provincial entity, building on their experience with Safer Way Out.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION WORKING GROUP (SEWG)

SEWG brought together agencies, government and law enforcement to address issues related to sexual exploitation. REACH co-chaired this group along with the Centre to End All Sexual Exploitation (CEASE) and offered communications support.

- SEWG hosted the proclamation of Sexual Exploitation Week of Awareness at City Hall, with speakers including survivors, community advocates, and city councillors.
- The group has been paused since the summer to re-evaluate its purpose and avoid potential duplication. Members were invited to other now existing tables and networks to continue to encourage connection and collaboration. After 20 years, the working group has raised much awareness of sexual exploitation, and this mission will continue in other ways.



DIVERTING CRISIS

IMPACT STATEMENT

High-needs populations have pathways to safer circumstances.

2024 AT A GLANCE

30% INCREASE
in individual contacts
over previous year
to 65, 719

47% OF ALL
the calls received by
211 were calls for
24/7 Crisis Diversion.

Teams responded to **33,855** unique calls
for service in 2024, **up 34%** from 2023.

24/7 CRISIS DIVERSION

The 24/7 Crisis Diversion program helps people experiencing non-emergency crisis get to a safe place, freeing up police, fire rescue and emergency medical services to respond to more critical events. The 24/7 Crisis Diversion program contributes to the decriminalization of poverty, mental health and addiction by supporting people to connect with appropriate supports for individuals experiencing vulnerability.

- The program launched its new call consultation process on January 9 that now sees the Canadian Mental Health Association/211 making the majority of dispatch decisions without consultation with mobile teams. Initial results show that call lengths at 211 have decreased by 33% (intended planned outcome was 32%). Credit is given to the detailed planning process which involved front-line staff through every step.
- During the City's Extreme Weather activations in 2024, the program saw a significant increase in mobile team dispatches with the busiest day having 145 dispatched responses. This is the highest number the program has recorded since the program began. In addition, 211 answered 1,890 calls on the Crisis Diversion press 3 phone line during the activation. During that period, volumes were 96% higher than the 2023 average, with the peak being 241% higher on January 12.
- In 2024, accepted dispatches increased 49% over the previous year to 29,945 calls. Of these, 19,545 individual contacts were made. Throughout the year, 47% of all the calls received by 211 were calls for Crisis Diversion, up from 42% the previous year. Crisis Diversion Teams responded to 33,855 unique calls for service in 2024, up 34% from 2023. The total number of individual contacts made in 2024 came to 65,719, up 30% from the previous year.



- In July, the 24/7 Crisis Diversion program hosted the Interim City Manager and the Deputy City Manager for a first-hand learning experience. This, along with program data, allowed them a stronger understanding of how the program operates, challenges faced, and impact of the program on the community.
- The year one report of the three-year Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluation is complete. The preliminary estimated Social Return on Investment for the 24/7 Crisis Diversion program shows a \$5.20 return for every \$1.00 invested, with the greatest value relating to client experience, based on the year one forecast analysis.
- Also this year, the program partnered with MacEwan University's POLS 444 class, when students completed an assessment and produced recommendations for improving the cultural competency of the program. Students presented their findings to the steering committee in April and planning is underway in 2025 for engagement with service recipients to determine further recommendations for practice improvements.
- The 24/7 Crisis Diversion program was also invited to present on a panel at this year's Federation of Canadian Municipalities Conference in Calgary titled Exploring Innovative Models of Mental Health Crisis Response.
- At the request of Halifax Regional Municipality, REACH staff travelled to Halifax, NS on behalf of the 24/7 Crisis Diversion program to host a series of workshops for City staff, police, fire rescue and social service providers. Focus was on historical program development, program operations and governance, data and records management, and system partnerships and relationships. Members from Edmonton Police Service (EPS) and EPS Emergency Communications and Operations Management Branch also presented virtually on the partnership. This knowledge will support Halifax in developing their own community crisis response model.
- REACH was part of the committee overseeing planning for the 2024 Point-in-Time Count in Edmonton, that took place in October. The PiT Count takes place every two years under Canada's Homelessness Strategy: Reaching Home program and is a community-level measure of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness.



PRIORITIZING ANTI-RACISM, INDIGENIZATION AND LIVED EXPERIENCE

IMPACT STATEMENT

Equitable approaches enhance community capacity and feelings of safety across Edmonton.

2024 AT A GLANCE

4 events in new Indigenous speaking series

COALITIONS CREATING EQUITY (CCE)

Coalitions Creating Equity brings together regional community networks, organizations and individuals across Alberta to collaboratively address issues of discrimination, inequity and racism. This project aims to build capacity in areas of local community engagement, leadership support, and resource mobilization.

- REACH supported the launch efforts of the working group that established an online learning platform for its curriculum guide and module learning series, titled Understanding and Responding to Hate, Racism, and Discrimination on the Front Lines. This free educational tool is hosted on REACH Edmonton's Training page.
- REACH supported an event hosted by a CCE working group on June 12 titled, Redefining Narratives: Short Films for a Discrimination-Free Edmonton. This event was held at the Garneau Metro Cinema and included film screening of three impactful short documentaries by local organizations on countering discrimination in Edmonton. Admission was by donation to StopHateAB, which raised \$660 from 85 attendees.

ROTARY DISTRICT INDIGENOUS COMMITTEE

The Rotary District Indigenous Committee aims to create connections in the community by hosting an Indigenous Speaker Series.

- REACH received \$39,600 from the Government of Alberta for the Kiskinwahamâtowin (teaching one another) Speaker Series, which featured four events, kicking off on September 5.
- Because these events were well attended, the group is seeking funding for another speaker series in 2025.



SUPPORTING IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEES

IMPACT STATEMENT:

A system and navigation to support successful community integration and economic and social outcomes for newcomers is in place.

2024 AT A GLANCE

9 INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS
held for ethnocultural groups
through RIRI.

\$60,000+
worth of essential donated
items distributed to families.

Phase 1
of Immigrant Youth Leading
Change is completed.

IMMIGRANT YOUTH LEADING CHANGE

This project aims to create a curriculum that communities can use in training youth to facilitate discussions and lead when it comes to the topics of domestic violence within their respective communities.

- Maskan and the Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters’ gender-based violence training manual was completed and presented to the group in June.
- Phase 1 of the Immigrant Youth Leading Change project was completed. This included a curriculum audit, restructuring the material and a final run-through of the entire curriculum, as well as a number of training opportunities.
- Workshops for the Immigrant Youth Leading Change program began late September 2024 and are running through March 2025.
- World Café sessions were held to foster dialogue amongst community partners.

REACH IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE INITIATIVE (RIRI)

RIRI collaborates with newcomer, immigrant and refugee community leaders, settlement agencies and stakeholders to identify gaps in support and services to build healthy newcomer families. This work includes youth and families increasing their networks of social support, addressing family violence and developing capacity to engage communities to understand top-of-mind issues.

- RIRI held nine community information sessions throughout the year, on subjects tailored to the community based on information requested. Topics included safety and well-being, food security, internet safety and cyberbullying, Parenting in Two Cultures and programs for seniors. Additionally, three events were held to distribute essential donated items from United Way, Alberta Computers for Schools and Edmonton Recycling Association. Hundreds of families benefited from over \$60,000 worth of essential items including 385 backpacks with school supplies, 1,950 pairs of socks, 2,000 hygiene kits, 278 boxes of period products, 20 laptops, six tablets, warm winter clothing, and groceries.

- Two new community navigators were hired and began their roles April 1 to provide support within the community.
- A basic first aid training for newcomer youth was held at the Edmonton Intercultural Centre. The training was provided and facilitated by Summit Consulting and Training.
- A meeting was organized between the Edmonton Public School Board and ethnocultural community leaders to discuss the challenges facing special-needs students. There were three officials from the school board and 14 from the refugee and immigrant community.
- In December, REACH hosted a year-end get together for RIRI families and youth. There were 23 parents and 14 youth in attendance. The event was to say thank you to the parents and celebrate some of their achievements through the year.



REACH Staff Members Kelly Holland and Ali Mahdi ready to sort and distribute a large donation for newcomer families living in CIVIDA buildings



MITIGATING ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

IMPACT STATEMENT:

Stigma associated with addiction and mental health is reduced, and there is better awareness, education and person-centred approaches.

2024 AT A GLANCE

195 PEOPLE REACHED
through 3 Addictions Don't
Discriminate events

160 PEOPLE REACHED
through Substance Use
and Addictions Program
community engagement

ADDICTIONS DON'T DISCRIMINATE

Addictions Don't Discriminate is a travelling public information exhibit that humanizes a wide variety of Albertans' struggles with addiction while sharing stories of recovery and resilience.

- The Addictions Don't Discriminate exhibit was displayed and hosted by REACH for one day in Edmonton during National Addictions Awareness Week. Three training and presentation opportunities were offered to the social service sector. About 50 people attended the exhibit and about 30 people participated in the training and presentation. Training and presentation topics included Naloxone Kit training, Basics of Harm Reduction, and Creating Recovery-Informed Workplace with PEP Society.
- The exhibit was also shown in Wainwright in May, which saw 60 people attend. This was organized by Wainwright & District Family & Community Support Services.

SUBSTANCE USE AND ADDICTIONS PROGRAM

The Substance Use and Addiction Program is a project that aims to address the issue of drug poisonings in Edmonton. The goal is to make a positive impact on the lives of those who are at risk of drug poisonings and the communities they are a part of through community engagement, collaboration and supporting community driven ideas.

- Community engagements were held to support the development of an operational framework to address drug poisoning and recovery in Edmonton. This was led by REACH as part of a grant received by the Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation. The engagements reached 160 people with more than half having lived and/or living experience. This included seven focus group sessions and 41 street-level dialogues.
- Building off of the community engagement sessions in the spring, a summary document was produced that will inform the development of a framework outlining best practice for responding to drug poisonings. REACH continues to inform this work as it develops.



BUILDING SAFE AND INCLUSIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS

IMPACT STATEMENT:

Community leaders are supported and developed to advance safety for their communities.

2024 AT A GLANCE

YEG Ambassadors operations transitioned to REACH

New Food Windows project in Alberta Avenue

HEALTHY STREETS OPERATIONS CENTRE (HSOC)

The Healthy Streets Operations Centre was a specialized Edmonton Police Services outpost in Chinatown which focused on addressing safety issues in the area.

- The 24/7 Crisis Diversion program provided data throughout the year for HSOC Progress Reports. REACH continued to sit on the Outcomes and Performance Measures Working Group and HSOC Leadership (Joint Operations Committee and Governance Committee).
- HSOC ended and the centre was closed by the City in December of 2024.

NEIGHBOURHOOD ORGANIZING INITIATIVE (NOI)

Through the Neighbourhood Organizing Initiative, REACH supports the convening of community partners, encourages activation and collaboration, and facilitates dialogue around safety issues in several neighbourhoods and geographic communities in Edmonton. The initiative supports community-based, neighbourhood-led projects related to community safety and well-being focused on convening, engaging, designing and building capacity.

- The results of the survey presentation conducted in collaboration with Councillor Rutherford's office were shared at a community event with residents of Inglewood, Prince Charles, Dovercourt, Sherbrooke, and Woodcroft on January 15. Spurred by this event, REACH started supporting the Prince Charles community alongside the City of Edmonton Community Safety staff to have a coordinated approach for this community. The focus is to support positive, community-building approaches with the community.

- In Alberta Avenue, the Food Windows project was initiated at businesses and at the Crystal Kids Youth Centre. Residents have been engaged as volunteers, and the Business Association, along with a local organization called The Hive, collaborated on the beautification of the avenue and strengthening the social fabric of the community. The Neighbourhood Organizing Initiative also continued to sponsor resident and community-led projects including Coffee with a Cop and alley beautification in Alberta Avenue led by Arts on the Ave.
- The Chinatown Safety Council (CSC) including the Chinatown Transformation Collaborative, the Chinatown & Area Business Association, the Chinese Benevolent Association, and additional local organizations and individuals is convened monthly by REACH. The CSC has established an action plan of 'quick wins' to address safety concerns for the area, with work on a number of actions.
- The Chinatown Safety Council hosted a Peace Walk with Elder Lorette Goulet from Treaty 6 on June 7. The intention for this event was to bring the community together and build relationships to work towards a safer and more peaceful community. Activities during the event included an opening blessing, a Fire Ceremony where everyone was welcomed to make offerings of tobacco to the fire, a walk through Chinatown, drumming, Indigenous hoop dancing, Chinese lion dancing and sharing a meal with the community.
- Neighbourhood Organizing Initiative assisted in connecting and facilitating the organization of a multi-neighbourhood knife safety group from Alberta Avenue, Chinatown, McCauley and McDougall. The group (led by Christy Morin and Allan Bolstad) delegated to the City of Edmonton Urban Planning Committee on April 9 and again on September 16. The City of Edmonton later moved to ban knife sales in convenience stores in part due to the advocacy undertaken by this group.
- NOI has been asked by Youth Empowerment Support Services (YESS) and the City to support with facilitation for a group of residents of the Bonnie Doon community that YESS has been working with over the past several years. On November 13, REACH hosted a community safety meeting for this group and YESS. Next steps were identified and an organizing plan will be presented back to residents in January.

SOLOSS

Soloss is an eclectic community of folks – artists, musicians, poets, dancers, breathwork practitioners, tattooists, healers, and more – making space for grief and loss. The Soloss Network is supported by the City of Edmonton’s RECOVER Urban Wellbeing team, REACH Edmonton and social design shop InWithForward. Because grief and loss underpin so much pain, disconnection and unwellness, this partnership tests how to resource and grow a novel approach to community care.

- Soloss secured a donation from ATB to extend the capacity of Soloss to work with Indigenous peoples. A ceremony was held in September to kick off this work in a positive way.
- Soloss completed its evaluation with Losstenders, Circle of Support and a small number of Sharers.
- A Learning Day was successfully held on March 13 with more than 80 guests from multiple agencies, the City of Edmonton and Soloss Network.
- In 2025, Soloss will pilot the spread of this prototype through the development of a Soloss learning institute.
- Soloss presented at George Spady’s Palliative Care Symposium to share the model and learnings of community care-building work that Soloss creates with the community on August 15.

SUPPORTING HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING BUILDINGS

The Supporting Healthy and Safe Communities in Affordable Housing Buildings project at the Civida O-day’min Village focuses on creating greater sense of community and belonging for low-income residents in the 148-unit apartment building in Edmonton’s inner city.

This project has provided increased opportunities for residents to share skills and resources with each other, bridge external resources to residents, improve access to support services and build trust between neighbours to improve the well-being of residents.

Funding provided by the City of Edmonton Community Safety and Well-Being Grant in 2023 and 2024 has provided the ability for a Community Development Advisor to work with apartment residents to:

- Build social connections between residents,
- Support access to cultural resources,
- Link people to support services, and
- Help develop an environment that enhances safety and well-being.

Through the project, Natural Helpers are also developed and contribute to the community building effort provided by the project.

- A new food security collaboration with Leftovers has been established for priority deliveries and culinary demonstrations. This is led by the former head of the NAIT culinary school.
- A trauma-informed de-escalation workshop took place along with a successful meeting with Kopar Administration Ltd. to assist residents in securing employment opportunities.
- Through various partnerships, the Civida Housing project at O-day'min Village continues to explore service connections and offer onsite programs including tax clinics, counselling, and employment services, to name a few. Residents have begun self-organizing a weekly movie night with snacks that takes place in the lobby on Friday evenings. Easter Monday saw a children's and adult Easter Egg hunt take place in the building and on the nearby grounds that was proposed and organized by a resident. The event was accompanied by a resident-led and sponsored meal that fed about 60 residents.
- An evaluation focusing on tenant safety and well-being was completed in the fall. Findings were presented by REACH at the December 9 resident meeting and a two-page summary was produced and distributed to residents.
- Partnerships with Amity House and the Canadian Mental Health Association have been formed to create the new Peer Support for Independent Living program, funded by the City of Edmonton. This program assists vulnerable people with tasks of daily living. Two organizations, Project Adult Learning Society (PALS) and the Cultural Connections Institute, Learning Exchange (CCILEX) are preparing to offer English language services at O-day'min Village to support literacy development of residents in the building.

YEG AMBASSADORS

The YEG Ambassadors program connects businesses, individuals, and organizations to services and resources to build safe, vibrant and economically thriving communities in Edmonton.

- The last year was a year of transition and growth for YEG Ambassadors. In early 2024, the steering committee initiated strategic planning that helped orient and focus the Business Improvement Areas (BIAs).
- Following the strategic planning sessions, the YEG Ambassadors Steering Committee voted in March to transition the program to the oversight of REACH. REACH provided operations, finance and human resources support to the North Edge Business Association (NEBA) and the steering committee to successfully transition the program and its staff to REACH.
- YEG Ambassadors have supported BIAs through environmental scans, a literature review on graffiti, and supporting at various summer events and festivals such as Stony Plain Road’s Music in the Park and Chinatown’s Summer Festival. YEG Ambassadors also worked with Alberta Avenue to create an inventory and report of Avenue of Champions branded items on the Avenue.
- Crossroads BIA decided to leave the project due to administrative commitment at the steering committee level.



YEG Ambassadors staff Jasmine and Connor (second and third from the right) receiving the “Outstanding Businesses and Contributors Award” for 2024 from the Crossroads Business Association



PREVENTING VIOLENCE

IMPACT STATEMENT:

Enhanced comprehension, better recognition and implementation of effective interventions targeting risk factors to reduce violence is achieved.

2024 AT A GLANCE

New Hate Crime Project initiated by the Office for the Prevention of Violence

Peace in Our Cities highlighted REACH in their report, Lessons from Effective Violence Prevention Offices

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES (CCFSC)

Formerly the Canadian Municipal Network for Crime Prevention, REACH Edmonton co-chairs this national network of municipalities working to make cities safer.

- REACH staff attended the CCFSC's first immersive experience November 19 to 21, and was invited to speak on a panel that helped set the context for community safety and well-being work in Edmonton and promote dialogue on urban safety at the opening event.
- The CCFSC has grown considerably since its inception and REACH is proud to continue to support this work. REACH Executive Director, Jan Fox, completed her term as co-chair in 2024 and will remain as past chair over the next two years.



REACH Edmonton Program Director Kelly Husack (Middle Left), speaking on a panel at the inaugural Community Safety Immersive Experience hosted by Canadian Centre for Safer Communities

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE (CIAFV)

Through innovative strategies, CIAFV supports the creation of a collaborative, coordinated, diverse, community response to family violence, strengthening the community's capacity to take constructive action against family violence.

- Strategic planning for the next three years has been finalized.
- A letter regarding the closure of Domestic Abuse High Risk Team and its positive impact from Council members was sent to city councillors and the City of Edmonton.

COUNTERING HATE-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

The Organization for the Prevention of Violence (OPV) is an expert-led, non-government organization devoted to understanding and preventing hate crimes and hate-motivated violence. The OPV is emerging as a global leader in developing effective, evidence-based intervention strategies for all forms of targeted violence. The OPV has three main lines of effort: research, training and direct intervention.

- The OPV's intervention program, Evolve, maintains an active caseload between 70 and 80 individuals characterized as either involved in some form of targeted violence (57%) or individuals negatively impacted by violence (43%).
- Among involved individuals, there are two noteworthy trends. First, there has been the sustained growth of 'unstable' or 'mixed' ideologies. Second, the average age of participants has trended downward over time, with a notable decline in the last 12 months; many new participants in Evolve are under the age of 18. Both local trends reflect global developments; hate-motivated violence is evolving. It is becoming less ideologically rigid and more likely to draw in younger individuals looking for a framework to make sense of, and give meaning to, their grievances.
- In 2024, the OPV published research papers on a variety of topics including: an exploration of the overlap between service in the armed forces and involvement in extremism; a psycho-social intervention model for working with women and children returning from violent extremist contexts; and a survey-informed paper on youth exposure to extremist content on social media. Further, during this period the OPV conducted field research in support of two projects. First, an update to the OPV's two previous public threat reports and second, a project exploring the reemergence of the anti-authority movement in Canada. This research involved comprehensive interviews with law enforcement officers, community members and individuals involved in various hate or extremist groups.
- The OPV enhanced its specialized support for hate crime victims through investment in updated and more accessible victim support resources. Demand for this service is anticipated to grow through 2025.

- In May, the OPV initiated the Hate Crime Project (HCP) to assist community, government and police to enhance strategies, responses and management of hate crime and violent extremism. The project includes four initiatives: research and develop community education webinars and in-person workshops; research and develop enhanced police hate crime training; facilitate access to the OPV Evolve program for specialized multidisciplinary psychosocial support to hate crime survivors; and create a hub of hate crime expertise.
- As the HCP was in developmental stages, demand for OPV training accelerated. The OPV delivered training and education sessions between May and December for 415 people from 10 community, academic, government and police organizations. In addition to the training delivered as a part of the HCP, OPV staff delivered presentations to more than 1,300 people in 2024, including audiences at the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police National Security conference, a Strong Cities Network conference, the Eradicate Hate conference, and a conference jointly organized by the OPV and the province of British Columbia.

PEACE IN OUR CITIES (PIOC)

Peace in Our Cities is a global network of mayors, city leaders, civil society members, and representatives of international organizations and urban networks, working to reduce urban violence and build peaceful, just and inclusive communities. Edmonton, represented by REACH, is the first Canadian member city.

- In 2024, REACH continued convening local youth collaboration partners to explore a youth-focused project similar to Empire Fighting Chance, another PiOC member. Multiple stakeholders have indicated interest and have begun to explore funding and planning. This work has been ongoing since the Peace in Our Cities delegation visit in the fall of 2023.
- REACH's Executive Director traveled to Bristol to provide insight and support to Empire Fighting Chance as they work to create an organization modeled after REACH in their own city.
- Peace in Our Cities highlighted the work of REACH Edmonton in their research report, *Lessons from Effective Violence Prevention Offices* (pages 27-28).



PROMOTING FAMILY, CHILD AND YOUTH SUCCESS

IMPACT STATEMENT:

Families, children and youth have successful, healthy and safer futures.

2024 AT A GLANCE

1,775 YOUTH

accessed summer programming at spaces through the Joint Use Access Program.

WrapED supported

71 YOUTH

throughout the year.

ALLIES FOR YOUTH CONFERENCE

The Allies for Youth Conference is held every second year, with support from REACH Edmonton. This conference intends to elevate the shift in practice to relationship-based approaches while challenging participants to question, enhance, or reinforce the innovative practices they are using when engaging with youth facing significant barriers and high-risk situations.

- Planning for the 2025 conference continued, and save-the-date invitations were sent in December. The theme for the 2025 conference is Empowering Hope Through Authentic Connections. Keynote speakers will be Dr. Michael Ungar, Dr. Melanie Doucet, Ashley Rhodes-Courte and Leigh Sheldon (Cree name pihphichow).

CHILD AND YOUTH NEWCOMER SERVICE COORDINATION

This project aims to connect newcomer families with supports that will assist them in their settlement journeys.

- Unfortunately, as a result of loss in funding, there will be changes to the program in terms of meetings and the child and youth services map in 2025. REACH will continue to explore opportunities to support children and youth.
- The Youth Services Map has seen significant increase in use from the community, topping 1,000 page views in the month of August.
- The Youth Services Coordination Committee continued to meet to improve coordination, and is working to add representation from the Edmonton Police Service.



A screenshot of the Youth Services Map, available at <https://ostedmonton.ca/servicesmap/>

DON'T CLICK! YOUTH INITIATIVE

Don't Click! is a peer-to-peer training project that empowers young people to give training sessions to students on topics related to online radicalization, internet safety and related topics.

- The youth team has been organizing an event aimed at educating students and parents about digital safety and fostering informed decision-making online.
- In January, Don't Click! presented at two schools, reaching a total of 80 students. The feedback received from both teachers and students was highly favourable.
- The project received requests to extend presentations of this content to university students, as professors identify digital safety as an area lacking sufficient attention. Staff were invited to present and participate in the hate crimes panel at MacEwan University, providing further insights into the Don't Click! Project.
- REACH presented on Don't Click! to MacEwan University students in the education and social work faculties. Additionally, youth shared 10 presentations during July in summer schools.
- With funding through the City of Edmonton, REACH took steps to expand presentations and create a new way to collect data.
- Youth held an event where they shared the information they gathered about how online hate impacts mental health of youth with families, community members and teachers.
- The youth team reorganized and updated the material about digital safety in August, and fostered informed decision-making online. Additionally, they brainstormed strategies for supporting youth who have encountered online hostility, offering access to pertinent resources, which has been requested in program evaluation forms.

OUT OF SCHOOL TIME COLLABORATIVE (OST)

The OST Collaborative aims to improve the resiliency of children and youth through quality, widely accessible out-of-school-time programs.

- Due to budget constraints across the board, school boards are becoming more cautious around what they're willing to share such as internet and gym equipment.
- OST has also seen lower funding over the last couple of years. REACH is working to secure funding to expand OST. This would mean more money for summer programs, training, capacity building and evaluation.
- The 13th annual OST Conference took place in June, providing frontline training for youth-serving organizations.
- Over the summer, 16 groups were funded by the OST Grant. Joint Use spaces were offered to 18 groups at 33 school sites free of charge. This provided summer programming for 1,775 kids.
- REACH was invited to present at the National Afterschool Association conference in March 2025 in Nashville on the work of REACH and the OST Collaborative.



WrapED

WrapED aims to offer strength-based support, prevention and intervention to youth and their families to address root causes of social disorder, including supports for young people affected by high risk lifestyles, who want to begin a new, healthier life journey.

- Program funding has been secured through the Government of Alberta for the next four years.
- The program continued to receive a high volume of referrals. In order to get supports in place as soon as possible, the partners collaborated to refer youth to other programs while they were on the waitlist.
- The program steering committee explored opportunities to add a new agency to the partnership to increase capacity to keep up with demand. New staff were hired and are working to build relationships with youth on their caseload, as well as between partner organizations. Native Counselling Services of Alberta took on a number of youth who had been waitlisted.
- In 2024, the project supported 71 youth through normal referrals as well as seven drop-in youths.
- Relationships between partner organizations are well established; however, as a result of staff turnover this summer at several partner organizations, relationship building is underway with the newer frontline staff.



YOUTH GANG PREVENTION NETWORK COORDINATION

Edmonton's Youth Gang Prevention Table (YGP Table, the Table) is an initiative to support and augment youth gang prevention work in Edmonton. The Table uses a coordinated approach to support its partners to strengthen relationships and build their individual organizational and collective capacity to support at-risk youth.

- REACH supported the team in crafting the project terms of reference, memorandum of understandings, referral forms, etc., as well as informational Q&As and project theory of change to attract potential network members.
- Through engagement meetings and presentations, the team has initiated discussions with potential partners to invite participation in the developed table.
- The team has made connections with the Edmonton Police Service Youth Support Circle and identified the opportunity to amalgamate this group into the new gang focused table (while adding additional partners) to better support at-risk youth and support partner collaboration.
- Extensive stakeholder engagement was done to present potential organizations with a revamped project framework and incorporate feedback from initial conversations.
- Over the summer, the team transitioned project management, leading to an overhaul of the initial framework due to challenges in gaining buy-in and consistent feedback from stakeholders. Continued stakeholder engagement and further modifications are ongoing.
- Monthly youth caseload has been completed, along with the development of a feedback survey form. A dashboard for data analytics is still required.
- In 2024, REACH was a partner with the City of Edmonton's Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF) Situation Table. As a part of this work, a Coordinator was hired and onboarded. Research, document development, and partner recruitment began in February and REACH continues to work in partnership with the City of Edmonton on this.

- REACH Director of Community Initiatives sits on the City’s Building Safer Communities Fund Steering Committee and, as part of this role, is sitting on the assessment committee for the City of Edmonton’s BSCF grant to distribute prevention and intervention funding.

YOUTH HOUSING UPON RELEASE

This group meets to address the challenges of youth being released from custody into precarious or non-existent housing situations.

- The group has been meeting with the partners to discuss the youth who are high risk and high needs. Throughout this collaborative process, the involvement of various agencies has proven helpful in collectively identifying solutions for these individuals.
- During this process, the project was able to locate a youth that had been missing and another agency representative was able to confirm that the youth was still around.
- The total number of youth supported in 2024 was 36.
- It was noted by the group that housing has become harder to find for youth who are the most at risk.
- The white paper containing all the feedback from youth workers and mental health experts was sent to Alberta Health Services.



EMERGING WORK

Because REACH is dedicated to continuously responding to the emergent needs of the community, the work of the organization is always moving into new spaces. Below are some highlights from 2024.

ANTI-RACISM

- Work began on a project with the Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters and Maskan, a Canadian-Pakistani support group that operates a shelter in Calgary. The partnership is empowering immigrant youth to educate their communities about gender-based violence by creating a curriculum and providing training.
- REACH assisted various African communities with capacity building. This work will be evolving into a steering group.
- Work continued around equity, diversity and inclusion with Action for Healthy Communities with regards to a Youth Forum.

BEYOND THE STATUS QUO

- With the vision of engaged, healthy, inclusive, resilient, humane communities, Beyond the Status Quo is a collaboration of non-profits who are eager to be the ripple in the pond of systems change in Edmonton. Over the course of 2024, it was decided a new entity will be created under the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations to house the ongoing work of this group and help move it forward. Its focus will be the human services sector in Edmonton.
- A summit will be held April 9, 2025. This event will bring together the human services sector to create a foundation for new ways of working together, with a focus on preparing for a future city of 2 million people in 2050.

CAMPINO HOUSING CORPORATION

- Campino Housing Corporation from Saskatoon was hosted by REACH on August 28, 2024 for them to learn more about REACH's wraparound programming offered through WrapED. The Community Development Advisor working on the Civida project also presented on the Civida partnership program at O-day'min Village.

DISRUPTING INEQUITIES IN SETTLEMENT FOR BLACK NEWCOMER WOMEN - STEERING COMMITTEE

- This project was developed to address the increase in Black population in Canada, the shortcomings in the immigration system, and the need to drive meaningful change to enhance economic security for black newcomer women and girls. The first meeting of this committee was held in August. REACH currently sits on the steering committee.
- Review of the Terms of Reference and planning for the cohorts has taken place. Currently there are six cohorts participating.
- Settlement policies have been collected and compiled and will be reviewed to pinpoint gaps.

NATURAL SUPPORTS LEADERSHIP (NSL) GROUP: COMMUNITIES

- The Natural Supports Leadership Group is a working Group made of various groups from all over Alberta. They work on strategies to leverage existing resources to help people working on natural supports at a community level in Alberta. They meet monthly to share resources and assist in further developing these resources.
- In 2024, this group formed and began initial work including an update on programming in each organization/sector, and identifying opportunities for sharing resources, training and knowledge.
- NSL groups convened in Calgary in November to strategize about operations. Currently the group is looking at restructuring to better meet the needs of the community of practice.
- There was a Natural Supports webinar on December 2 as a resource for the community.

SOCIAL POLICY COLLABORATIVE - EDMONTON (SPC-E)

- The SPC-E is a group of local not-for-profits that formed over the last year to advocate on social policy. In 2024, REACH was one of 18 signatory organizations on a letter to several Alberta ministers through SPC-E regarding the provincial budget. The letter advocated additional investment in affordable housing, early childhood education, and AISH.

BLUEPRINT FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION

- Along with other stakeholders, REACH supported the City of Edmonton in the creation of this plan to prevent violence in the city. Following community consultations, the plan's focus will include short-term and long-term goals with an emphasis on community driven solutions, while maintaining whole-of-systems and data-driven approaches. The group is looking to create something that can be built upon and further developed, rather than offering prescriptive actions.
- The report will be finalized in January 2025 and will go to Committee in March 2025.

YOUTH SERVICE NEEDS CONVERSATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

- REACH hosted a conversation on July 25 between youth serving agencies and the Government of Alberta (Transformative Community Safety Unit) to discuss emerging needs of youth in Edmonton, and inform the development of funding priorities for an upcoming call for applications.




For more information about REACH Edmonton, please visit our website by scanning the QR code to the left, or go to:

reachedmonton.ca

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