



Data Sharing Success Stories

Building A Knowledge-Driven Nonprofit Sector



Data sharing supports community agencies to collaborate together, and improve outcomes for shared clients. Nonprofits across Alberta have taken great strides in data-driven collaboration. [PolicyWise](#) and the [Alberta Nonprofit Network](#) brought together sector representatives and experts to further explore data initiatives. Representatives from the [Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies](#), [Catholic Social Services](#), [Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers](#), [Multicultural Health Brokers](#), [Islamic Family and Social Services Association](#), [M.A.P.S Alberta Capital Region](#), [the Social Enterprise Fund](#), and [TIES](#), led this work. The Alberta Nonprofit Data Strategy wants to share just a few of these success stories, which demonstrate how organizations can come together and share data. For more information on the Alberta Nonprofit Data Strategy read our [2019-2020 Final Report here](#).

Collaborative for Health & Home

The Collaborative for Health & Home (CHH) is a committee dedicated to improving health outcomes and housing supports through its innovative government and community partnership. The 26-partner collaborative is exploring how to improve information sharing between the health and housing care systems in Calgary. When they first began their work, the ethical dilemmas experienced at staff, agency, and sector levels became a barrier to developing shared processes. The CHH Steering Committee has since determined that the ethical considerations of sharing client information, and obtaining informed client consent to do so, required further research. An ethical framework for information sharing and training strategies for implementation are now under development.

Common Data Toolkit

PolicyWise has recently launched the Common Data Toolkit Project to develop a common data standard in partnership with Alberta nonprofit agencies. The Common Data Toolkit will be a question bank which includes a set of recommended questions and demographic data fields (identifiers, gender, Indigenous status, age, income, etc.) agencies can choose from in their design of intake and visit forms. This digital resource will be co-created with our nonprofit partners, and will include tools to support more robust and consistent collection of data such as a website, guidelines and associated knowledge mobilization guides.

[Common Outcomes Initiative](#)

The Common Outcomes Initiative (COI) is a provincial effort to simplify data collection and demonstrate the positive impact of community-based programs. In 2011, the [City of Edmonton Family and Community Support Services \(FCSS\)](#), [United Way of the Alberta Capital Region](#), and [Edmonton Region Children's Services](#) began working with their funded partners to develop a common reporting tool to reduce the administrative burden of nonprofit staff and organizations by having consistent data collected across programs. In turn, the COI publishes an annual Common Outcomes Report that highlights the work of participating programs and agencies. This initiative has evolved since its inception. In 2018, 116 nonprofit or voluntary agencies reported to COI, representing roughly 4% of all social service organizations in Alberta.¹

[Community Mental Health Action Plan](#)

The Community Mental Health Action Plan (CMHAP) is an Edmonton-area collective of community organizations and government stakeholders focused on the promotion of positive mental health and prevention of mental illness². One priority of the collective is to improve information sharing across systems and agencies, by supporting data sharing across service providers. Ultimately, a web-based resource will be created to allow service providers to better understand key pieces of legislation, accreditation guidelines, and the professional codes governing information sharing in Alberta.

[Inclusive Supports for Marginalized Populations](#)

The Inclusive Supports for Marginalized Populations (ISMaP) is an Edmonton-based collective impact initiative committed to “strengthening the system of care such that marginalized community members are supported, safe, respected, and empowered to achieve person-centred health and social goals”³.

The ISMaP Data Steering Committee, which launched in March 2020, will focus on the sharing of necessary client information and data with formal health and community-based supports, and ensuring ongoing strategic supports. More specifically, this Steering Committee will work at developing a common client consent form for sharing information across services, providing education on privacy and information sharing regulations.⁴

[Edmonton Newcomer Mapping Network](#)

This data sharing and data capacity building initiative was created to improve the understanding of the settlement patterns, lived experiences, and cultural diversity of newcomers in Edmonton. In 2014/15, the municipal-level data on settlement patterns and program use was considered out of date and did not reference program use. When [M.A.P.S. Alberta Region](#), an organization with the mandate to support capacity building in the nonprofit sector, began convening Edmonton service providers to gather current data, the breadth of data gaps and inconsistency in collection among the agencies became clear. The Edmonton Newcomer Mapping Network was born. Over the next year, this collaborative slowly developed a consistent approach to collecting data. The end result was a comprehensive series of maps providing relevant, neighbourhood-level information back to partnering agencies. By bringing the agencies together to share and develop information, the Edmonton newcomer sector better understands their population and gains valuable capacity.

¹ [Common Outcomes Report, 2018](#)

² [Community Mental Health Action Plan, 2016](#)

³ [ISMaP Common Agenda, 2019, p. 4](#)

⁴ [ISMaP Common Agenda, 2019](#)