



# **An Alberta Community Prosperity Strategy: Discussion Paper**

**CALGARY CHAMBER OF VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS (CCVO)**

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*In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge the traditional territories in Alberta of the many First Nations and Métis, whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries.*

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# CREATING COMMUNITY PROSPERITY

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on all sectors, including the nonprofit sector in Alberta.<sup>1</sup> Despite their challenges, nonprofits and charities have worked together to support communities experiencing difficulties across the province. The pandemic has taught us that nonprofits and charities, governments, and businesses can respond quickly in times of emergency and provide support for our communities – and that we are more effective when we work in collaboration with one another.

This discussion paper provides context for building a Community Prosperity Strategy – a plan for a more resilient and equitable community – one where we reject a return to the status quo and emerge stronger and more robust. Beginning in Summer 2020, CCVO has drafted recommendations for the nonprofit sector, the provincial government, funders and other stakeholders, and the private sector to build a multi-sectoral Community Prosperity Strategy.\*

Communities must collaboratively negotiate the recovery process – future prosperity will be built through strategies that involve government, the nonprofit sector and the private sector. While Alberta has developed an Economic Recovery Plan, it relies heavily on capital investments in infrastructure to re-boot the economy. A Community Prosperity Strategy fills the gap in that plan; it recognizes that the nonprofit sector has been the backbone of the province in responding to the pandemic and in protecting the stability and health of our communities.

You can participate in giving us feedback on these draft recommendations at [this link](#). CCVO would like to hear from you:

1. Any additional recommendations?
2. Which elements of the strategy should be the focus?
3. How CCVO can successfully achieve outcomes?

\*Recommendations for the federal government can be found by Imagine Canada, which has been instrumental in advocating for the nonprofit and charitable sector across Canada since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## TIMELINE FOR BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY

<p><b>Release of CCVO Report: From Emergency to Opportunity: Building a Resilient Alberta Nonprofit Sector After COVID-19</b></p> <p>Draft recommendations for the nonprofit sector, the provincial government, funders and other stakeholders, and the private sector to build a multi-sectoral Community Prosperity Strategy</p>	July 2020
<p><b>Release of CCVO Guide: Emergency Planning for Nonprofits</b></p>	July 2020
<p><b>Release of CCVO Toolkit: Everyday Advocacy for Nonprofits</b></p>	August 2020
<p><b>#ABCCommunityAdvantage blog post series</b></p>	October to December 2020
<p><b>Engagement with all sectors involved including nonprofits, private sector, and the government</b></p>	February/March 2021
<p><b>Community Prosperity Strategy Launch</b></p>	June 2021

# AT A GLANCE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY

## Recommendations for the Nonprofit Sector

1. Nonprofits can take the lead on addressing inequities (e.g. by gender, income, race) as we hold considerable experience and expertise.
2. Be bold and advocate for what we need as a sector.
3. Show up as equals, as the essential part of a cohesive society that we are – and if we are not invited to show up at the table, we will make our own.
4. Make mental health a priority.
5. Invest in the next generation.

## Recommendations for the Government of Alberta

1. Create a Social Infrastructure Fund that will enable society to work effectively through the commitment of 3.5%, or \$350 million, of the total budgeted amount of \$10 billion allocated towards the [Alberta Recovery Plan](#). This fund will support community focused recovery that will create jobs and spur economic stimulus.
2. Committing to increasing internet connectivity and digital literacy for individuals and organizations.

## AT A GLANCE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

### **Recommendations for Funders and Other Stakeholders**

1. Provide targeted funding for operational costs, emergency planning, projects advancing equity within and external to the organization, and for organizations that are not providing COVID-19 related support services.
2. Provide support to help nonprofits innovate by thinking differently about the sector and provide funding for administrative costs, which are essential to maintain the organization's mission and maintain employment.
3. Coordinate and collaborate with other funders to reduce reporting and administrative burden.

### **Recommendations for the Private Sector**

1. Encourage and support an organizational culture of giving and volunteerism by providing more opportunities for employee involvement on nonprofit boards, making a commitment to support social issues in partnership with nonprofits, and continuing employee engagement with nonprofit organizations through innovation in this new environment.
2. Find and recognize ways to advance the prosperity of local communities through supporting the nonprofit sector with expertise and knowledge by supporting technology access, training, and maintenance; providing access to corporate training opportunities; and providing access to emergency planning professionals.
3. Leverage the nonprofit sector's contributions to the prosperity of our communities through robust and vibrant social infrastructure that benefits communities and supports business objectives, and more advocacy on how much nonprofits contribute to society.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NONPROFIT SECTOR IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY

## Recommendation 1:

**Nonprofits can take the lead on addressing inequities (e.g. by gender, income, race) as we hold considerable experience and expertise.**

Addressing inequities (e.g. by gender, income, race) is not the sole responsibility of the nonprofit sector, but it is an area where we hold considerable experience and expertise. All orders of government and the private sector look to us to lead on providing knowledge of first-hand experience, analysis of trends, and interpretation of the research on inequities. Nonprofits are well-positioned to make sense of the impacts on communities that have been created through unaddressed inequities.

To take action now, nonprofits can:

- make a formal commitment to **racial equity**, **collect data**, and **implement hiring practices to increase diversity**;
- understand and report on the gendered impacts of COVID-19; and
- advocate for a Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) of all **recovery strategies**.

## Recommendation 2:

**Be bold and advocate for what we need as a sector.**

A recovery that leverages the strengths of all Albertans is imperative. It is our responsibility as a sector to create space for marginalized Albertans to be heard, and to be a voice for marginalized people who cannot participate in advocating for an inclusive recovery. Now is not the time to shy away from advocating for what we need as a sector – to not only ensure that we can continue to operate in these difficult times, but so that we can make sure a post-COVID-19 era is one that is more inclusive, more just, and more equitable.

A **pervasive myth** of the nonprofit sector is that we can – and should – operate with limited administration costs or overhead. This myth is a detriment to our ability as a sector to deliver services as effectively as possible and advocate for individuals and communities that need us the most. Nonprofits must ask for funding that covers the actual cost needed to deliver great results. Being truly confident in the **full costs** allows nonprofits to articulate this point to funders and strategically decline program partnerships that would drain resources instead of uplifting programs.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NONPROFIT SECTOR IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## Recommendation 3:

**Show up as equals, as the essential part of a cohesive society that we are – and if we are not invited to show up at the table, we will make our own.**

The nonprofit sector – the people who work, volunteer, and access services – are an integral part of society. We are contributors to vibrant communities, vital services, and economic success. Too often, however, we downplay the experience, expertise, and knowledge that we hold. We must show up as equals, as the essential part of a cohesive society that we are – and if we are not invited to show up at the table, we will make our own.

## Recommendation 4:

**Make mental health a priority.**

In May 2020, Statistics Canada surveyed 46,000 Canadians, with 52% of participants indicating that their mental health was either “somewhat worse” or “much worse” since the beginning of physical distancing restrictions.<sup>2</sup> As we navigate the uncertainty, many nonprofit employees are likely to experience burnout, depression, and anxiety. While nonprofit employees are busy providing for many people in our communities, it is essential that their needs are also being met. The **mental health of nonprofit employees** is a priority that all organizations should recognize as necessary as they continue to provide quality service.<sup>3</sup>

Organizational impacts of the crisis include significant layoffs, contributing to a loss in human capital and competency, challenges with working remotely, a rise in demand for programs and services, and health and safety risks for individuals working on the frontline. Additionally, many nonprofits have had to face cancellations of fundraising events, which have impacted their finances and their ability to network and connect with other nonprofit organizations. The organizational impacts also trickle down to employees – including an increase in workload; job security due to organizational financial loss; and mental health and well-being of employees due to layoffs, remote work, social isolation, and COVID-19 related losses. To mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on the mental health of employees, nonprofits can:

### **a) Take organizational capacity into consideration during the **funding process**<sup>4</sup>**

The strength of programs and services requires organizational sustainability or they are bound to suffer.<sup>5</sup> Challenges, such as doing more with less, public expectations of accountability, and decrease in available funding – which have existed long before the pandemic – have hindered nonprofits more due to the crisis. Further, it has put additional strain on staff who are overworked due to the overwhelming social and economic impacts of the pandemic. Most recently, grantmakers have lifted restrictions on funding to include funding for programs and operations in response to the crisis.<sup>6</sup>



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NONPROFIT SECTOR IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## Recommendation 4 (Continued):

### Make mental health a priority.

#### b) Invest in disaster preparedness

Organizations that invest in workplace disaster preparedness are associated with better employee well-being.<sup>7</sup> More specifically, promotion such as social capital increase, prevention such as organizational disaster preparedness, and treatment of well-being issues such as employee assistance programs are beneficial for employees.

**Emergency preparedness** is flexible and nimble and meant to be catered to an organization's operations and programs. It provides nonprofits with tools to respond appropriately during times of uncertainty. Of the respondents to the [2020 Alberta Nonprofit Survey \(ANS\)](#):

- only 40% indicated they had an emergency plan for health emergencies or natural disasters before COVID-19;
- 14% indicated they developed a plan due to COVID-19; and
- 46% are creating a plan or still do not have a plan in place.

FIGURE 2

#### Nonprofits with an emergency response plan



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NONPROFIT SECTOR IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## Recommendation 4 (Continued):

### Make mental health a priority.

#### c) Lead by example

Since the onset of the pandemic, nonprofit leaders have had to make several difficult decisions quickly.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, leaders are faced with a great responsibility in responding to the demands placed on them. As a result of decisions that require urgent action, nonprofit leaders may not always engage their employees, which can consequently give rise to employees feeling disempowered due to the lack of information that may impact them.<sup>9</sup> Working from home has also played a significant role in further disengaging employees with their managers and other employees. Disengaged employees will be reluctant to communicate any concerns, including safety,<sup>10</sup> are more likely to leave the organization and are less productive.<sup>11</sup>

At this time, and post-COVID-19, staff will look to leadership to see how they are taking care of themselves, their organization, and their employees.<sup>12</sup> Organizations need to implement strategies<sup>13</sup> that increase employee satisfaction and motivation through clear and concise communication, recognition and rewards, and training and development opportunities.<sup>14</sup> During this time as we all work from home, leaders can begin by building a culture of communication through regular check-ins, offering work flexibility,<sup>15</sup> modelling behaviours for self-care, and being inclusive – all of which can help improve the mental health of employees.<sup>16</sup> Modifying policies and practices concerning the pandemic and measuring your staff's needs can also contribute to a mentally healthy workplace.<sup>17</sup>

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NONPROFIT SECTOR IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## Recommendation 5:

### Invest in the next generation.

Millennials (ages 24 to 39 in 2020) and Generation Z (ages 5 to 24 in 2020) are the largest living generation in Canada.<sup>18</sup> This pandemic has had a significant impact on many young people and young women in particular.<sup>19</sup> The youth unemployment rate in April 2020 was at 16.8%, which is recorded to be the highest in more than two decades.<sup>20</sup> With this in mind, there is much opportunity for nonprofit engagement with young people and mobilizing this generation in support of organizations. Engagement can be done in many ways but recognizing that the sector needs to prioritize this in the long term will be essential in recovery efforts.

Younger generations, like Millennials and Generation Z (Gen Z), have not been afraid to speak out on issues they care about – they are thoughtful and political. They stay up to date with current events and political issues that impact them and those around them, and are quick to make a difference. The younger generations are also tech-and media-savvy, which mobilizes them to reach out to several people at once, and are more likely to be on top of current issues. Nonprofits should be finding new ways and supporting strategies that will better connect them to these generations, and there are a variety of ways to do this. Nonprofits can engage younger generations by:

- Increasing their social media use and leveraging this to appeal to younger audience members.
- Being transparent and building trust. Young people care about the organizations they support and what they stand for, efforts to fulfill the organizations' mission, and the results of those efforts.<sup>21</sup>
- Embodying a culture of diversity and inclusion. This is important for all nonprofits regardless of their intent to engage the younger generation or not. Millennials and Gen-Zers expect this to be second nature to organizations.<sup>22</sup> Nonprofits should adopt this lens and have strategies in place, such as diversifying an organization's workforce, governance, culture; creating a safe space for conversations on anti-racism, diversity and inclusion; and understanding the complexity and intersectionality of identities and experiences.<sup>23</sup>

The sector needs to redefine and reinvigorate itself in order to attract the younger generations. These generations are the future and want to see a change in how the sector functions. Organizations can start small – but recognizing and prioritizing how we move forward with engaging younger generations will be an essential step towards recovery.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY

## Recommendation 1:

Create a Social Infrastructure Fund that will enable society to work effectively through the commitment of 3.5%, or \$350 million, of the total budgeted amount of \$10 billion allocated towards the **Alberta Recovery Plan**. This fund will support community focused recovery that will create jobs and spur economic stimulus.

A Social Infrastructure Fund will have clear and measurable economic benefits for Alberta, including economic growth and job increases. This investment will enable nonprofit organizations to create jobs for thousands of Albertans across the province, ensure front-line and community support services are available for all Albertans, stimulate the economy and increase Alberta's GDP, contribute to greater gender equality by reducing employment gaps, increase government efficiencies through investing in partners for the delivery of government services, and ensure a high quality of life for all Albertans. Social infrastructure refers to assets that accommodate social services such as community support, public spaces, education, and public safety. Government investment in social infrastructure is known to not only generate approximately twice as many jobs as investment in the construction sector and more specifically increase jobs for women, but it also enhances human capital, and increases productivity of labour that surges long-term economic growth.<sup>24</sup> The social benefits of social infrastructure include social capital, trust, sense of belonging/community, volunteerism, participation in community activities, safety, and wellbeing.<sup>25</sup>

No single economic recovery plan will be enough. Communities must collaboratively negotiate the recovery process – future prosperity will be built through strategies that involve government, the nonprofit sector, and the private sector. The nonprofit sector has been the backbone of the province in responding to the pandemic and in protecting the stability and health of our communities. The provincial government has an important opportunity to play a pivotal role in supporting community prosperity in the upcoming 2021 budget by committing to a **Social Infrastructure Fund**.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## Recommendation 1 (Continued):

Create a Social Infrastructure Fund that will enable society to work effectively through the commitment of 3.5%, or \$350 million, of the total budgeted amount of \$10 billion allocated towards the Alberta Recovery Plan. This fund will support community focused recovery that will create jobs and spur economic stimulus.

### The Case for Social Infrastructure Investment

Social infrastructure are networks, relationships, organizations, services, and facilities that allow communities to build capacity that goes beyond providing assets such as enhancing skills and knowledge and access to a range of appropriate services and responses.<sup>26</sup> They are in a range of social service sectors, policy areas, and activities that enable society to work effectively. It includes areas that help individuals, families, groups, and communities meet their social needs such as health and human development.<sup>27</sup> Not all social infrastructure is physical capital – it also includes human capital and public services.<sup>28</sup> A strong social infrastructure investment influences an areas livability when investment in cultural facilities, public art, parks, libraries, galleries, and museums brings in tourism revenue, makes businesses want to trade, and encourages investors to invest.<sup>29</sup> It improves the standard of living in a community by providing access to jobs through good transportation; public spaces such as cafes, sports facilities, and education buildings; and services and organizations that provide health, education, and training.

Government spending on physical infrastructure is often a form of investment that impacts GDP and increases jobs,<sup>30</sup> and literature shows that productivity returns to social infrastructure investment are comparable to those of capital investment in physical infrastructure.<sup>31</sup> Social infrastructure is known to generate positive and lasting broader impacts on the economy. For example, Quebec’s universal low-fee childcare programme was estimated to increase the number of women in the workforce by 3.8%, and Quebec’s GDP rose by about 1.7% (\$5 billion) as a result.<sup>32</sup> The **Women’s Budget Group** indicates that social infrastructure is much more labour intensive than physical infrastructure, and therefore, it will create more jobs in care work and elsewhere in the economy than a similar capital investment would in physical infrastructure, such as construction and other sectors.<sup>33</sup> In the long term, investments in social infrastructure also improve the employability, mobility, health, and well-being of the labour force, increase productivity in the economy, and increase overall output and GDP.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## The Case for Social Infrastructure Investment (Continued)

In a September 2020 poll by [ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc.](#), 39% of Albertans felt that the provincial government should be spending more to support nonprofits in Alberta, compared to just 15% who think the government should be spending less. One respondent indicated that “it is never a mistake to invest in our people. Now is not the time to be cutting back on social services and community supports.” Another indicated, “the government is there for the people. In these hard times, it should be helping its citizens as much as possible.” Further, 47% think that nonprofits deliver community-support services more efficiently than government, and only 15% think government delivers these services more efficiently.<sup>34</sup>

A Social Infrastructure Fund is vital to the recovery of our economy, the skills of those in the workforce, and those seeking to enter the workforce. When we invest in the nonprofit sector, we will be investing in organizations that are the essential job creators for many employees that can deliver services efficiently and effectively. Alberta nonprofits employ 450,000 people, totalling approximately \$18.4 billion on salaries and other compensation.<sup>35</sup> The nonprofit workforce is increasingly staffed by paid professionals holding specialized expertise and advanced education degrees.<sup>36</sup> Nonprofits are increasingly becoming more engaged in strategic planning, financial audits, quantitative program evaluation, and nonprofit management education.<sup>37</sup> An investment in job creators is an investment in the people, places, efficiency, and skills required to improve our economy.

## The Investment

A Social Infrastructure Fund drawn from a percentage of existing dollars dedicated to support capital infrastructure is recommended at 3.5% of the total allocation for the [Alberta Recovery Plan](#). This investment would allocate capital budgeted funds towards community-focused recovery that spurs economic stimulus through job creation. This investment could be distributed over three years through community partnerships and could be tied to a requirement of matching funds through donations and contributions from other orders of government.

## The Return

Social infrastructure is more labour intensive than physical infrastructure and will therefore create more jobs than a similarly sized capital investment in physical infrastructure will create in construction and other sectors.<sup>38</sup> An investment in social infrastructure alongside investments in physical infrastructure can boost employment and will contribute to greater gender equality by reducing employment gaps, improving working conditions, and increasing options for juggling paid and unpaid work.<sup>39</sup>

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## Recommendation 1 (Continued):

Create a Social Infrastructure Fund that will enable society to work effectively through the commitment of 3.5%, or \$350 million, of the total budgeted amount of \$10 billion allocated towards the Alberta Recovery Plan. This fund will support community focused recovery that will create jobs and spur economic stimulus.

### Impacts of a Social Infrastructure Fund

- **Create jobs for women and people of colour.**

The nonprofit sector workforce employs many women and people of colour.<sup>40</sup> An investment in this sector is an investment in efficiently delivered services and job creation for people who have been disproportionately impacted by the effects of COVID-19.<sup>41</sup>

The Alberta Recovery Plan invests \$10 billion in infrastructure funding – one of the largest infrastructure builds in the province's history,<sup>42</sup> and the largest in the country on a per capita basis.<sup>43</sup> The Recovery Plan is known to benefit sectors dominated by men and does not serve to benefit men and women equally, as it pays little attention to care work, including childhood education and care in female-dominated sectors facing large job losses.<sup>44</sup>

The 2016 study on Investing in the Care Economy by the Women's Budget Group<sup>45</sup> shows national input-output tables for the United States, in which: government investment in social infrastructure equivalent to 2 percent of GDP would raise employment rates by about 3.4 percentage points, compared to only 1.2 percentage points for a similar capital investment in physical infrastructure.

Other studies have shown positive results when governments invest in social infrastructure.<sup>46</sup>

- California: a benefit-cost ratio of \$2.60 for every \$1 invested in pre-kindergarten education programs. Benefits included savings to government in service support.
- United Kingdom: a benefit-cost ratio of £10 for every £1 invested in community networks and services. Benefits included reduced crime, health savings, and better employment outcomes.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## Impacts of a Social Infrastructure Fund (Continued)

- **Invest in local community efforts that are well-positioned as a unique tool for economic recovery.**

An economic pathway for rural Alberta and an investment in community economic development, such as tourism and arts and culture, will be an asset to local economic recovery. The [Rural Economic Development Action Plan](#) outlines a number of recommendations the provincial government can take to build on the economic development capacity of rural Alberta such as increasing tourism and culture-based business opportunities in rural communities. Providing opportunities to young entrepreneurs in rural Alberta will help bring in investment projects that will benefit current and future generations. Investing in local communities can also address the declining numbers in volunteerism and support voluntary initiatives that enable society to work effectively.

- **Strengthen social finance and social enterprise.**

The Premier's Council on Charities and Civil Society identified this area as a recovery opportunity for Alberta's nonprofits. The Government of Alberta can further this opportunity by creating a Social Infrastructure Fund that will allow organizations to invest in social innovators – people who can increase nonprofits' entrepreneurship and have particular insight into how the province may be best positioned to take advantage of the \$755 million [Investment Readiness Program and Social Finance Fund](#) locally.<sup>47</sup> Investing in the social finance sector is a big opportunity for the Government of Alberta to lead the way and leverage funding from the private sector and donations from citizens.<sup>48</sup>

With a relatively small investment through existing funding sources, there can be a big impact with a Social Infrastructure Fund. It will make Alberta communities more vibrant and prosperous places to live, encourage private investment and business activity, create jobs, increase efficiency in government service delivery, and lead to a higher standard of living that will enable economic productivity.



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## Recommendation 2:

### Committing to increasing internet connectivity and digital literacy for individuals and organizations.

The emergency measures put in place in March 2020 to limit the spread of the virus resulted in many in-person activities suddenly becoming virtual. Organizations, businesses, and schools quickly adapted to navigate new systems to complete their work, which was successful in several instances.<sup>49</sup> However, there is a rural/urban digital divide across Canada in terms of infrastructure, access, and use, which has been further exacerbated by the pandemic.<sup>50</sup> Many families and vulnerable populations have had a difficult time with this switch as high-quality internet connections are too expensive for some, or as a result of their geographical location.<sup>51</sup> In April, many rural schools in Alberta set up bins for students to drop off and pick up their school assignments due to unreliable and slow internet access – including those who lack access to computers and internet altogether.<sup>52</sup> Rural educators and school officials in Alberta say access to the internet and devices like laptops, computers, and phones is not universal in their areas.<sup>53</sup>

Getting access to internet-connected devices for many families is difficult and even more so for those families who cannot afford a device per child for their learning purposes. In 2016, before the pandemic, **ACORN Canada** indicated that low-income Canadians took out the money from their rent and food budgets to pay for an internet connection.<sup>54</sup> The pandemic has also furthered the digital divide for vulnerable communities, particularly recent immigrants and refugees,<sup>55</sup> and other populations who do not have digital literacy. Many activities that have turned digital, including meetings, interviews, online learning, and how we interact online, have resulted in increased levels of anxiety, stress, and isolation for newcomers.<sup>56</sup>

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## Recommendation 2 (Continued):

### Committing to increasing internet connectivity and digital literacy for individuals and organizations.

The 5 'A's of Technology Access provide a useful tool when implementing any digital divide recommendations.<sup>57</sup> The 5 'A's: Availability, Affordability, Awareness, Ability, and Agency, are "a simple heuristic and analytical device that guides participants through a structured five-stage reflection about potential barriers to inclusive technology access."<sup>58</sup> The 5 'A's highlight social and political factors that limit technology access:

- **Availability:** This is about the availability of connectivity such as geographical location and infrastructure to support digital access, quality and speed of connectivity, relevant content in different languages, and assistive technologies for people with disabilities (blind or visually impaired).<sup>59</sup> These inequalities present in digital exclusions are often replicating the "same systemic inequalities that we have in our physical realities."<sup>60</sup>
- **Affordability:** Not all individuals can afford access to technology and internet connectivity. As indicated earlier, the internet cost for some families is high in Canada, even though digital access is now a necessity.
- **Awareness:** The lack of use of some technologies, level of public awareness on digital services, lack of understanding about the functions and applications of the service, and how it impacts an individual's life are part of the digital divide.<sup>61</sup> The government will need to provide more access to populations that would not regularly know about a program or service available to them and the expertise to make use of the program.
- **Ability:** Often, governments and organizations wish to be inclusive of vulnerable populations, but effective use of technology may be limited due to digital literacy, skills, or knowledge.<sup>62</sup> This is particularly important to address the digital divide in the intersections present of class, gender, age, Indigenous culture, and race.
- **Agency:** This refers to the extent to which a person feels able to act in the world to bring about change or what a person can do in line with the conception of good.<sup>63</sup> Agency may remain a barrier due to socially constructed norms and values about gender, ethnicity, and class, which are often internalized and negatively impact people's sense of self-efficacy and agency for change.<sup>64</sup>

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## Recommendation 2 (Continued):

### Committing to increasing internet connectivity and digital literacy for individuals and organizations.

With the 5 'A's to guide the following recommendations, the Government of Alberta can help bridge the digital gap by:

#### **a) Committing to increasing internet connectivity for organizations and individuals in rural and remote communities.**

According to Service Alberta, only 12.7% of communities outside of Calgary and Edmonton have service options that meet Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunication's target speeds.<sup>65</sup> The divide is more significant in First Nations communities. Across Canada, 40.8% of rural households had access to high-speed internet in 2018, whereas First Nations households accounted for 31.3%.<sup>66</sup> The Government of Alberta does not have a broadband strategy in place to deliver internet to rural areas, and the provincial SuperNet program – which delivers broadband to hospitals, schools, and other community buildings in rural Alberta – still does not deliver high-speed Internet service to community members.

With the pandemic having exposed the importance of an up-to-date and strategic approach to connectivity for organizations and individuals, the Government of Alberta should follow the example of the Government of Ontario<sup>67</sup> and federal government<sup>68</sup> in investing funds aimed at bringing high-speed internet to rural and remote communities. Alberta's government will need to go beyond these plans as the gap will require more effort to bridge. This funding should be accompanied by a formal broadband strategy and an action plan.

A provincial broadband strategy and funding program should strive to consider the longstanding infrastructure gaps for First Nations communities, especially those in remote areas. This program may be in response to COVID-19 but would have a long-lasting impact on the communities it serves and increase organizations' sustainability in these areas.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## Recommendation 2 (Continued):

Committing to increasing internet connectivity and digital literacy for individuals and organizations.

### **b) Develop a Digital Literacy Taskforce to create an Alberta Digital Literacy Strategy to remove access and cost barriers for First Nations communities and other vulnerable populations.**

Access to internet-connected devices and high-speed internet is only one of the barriers in First Nations communities and vulnerable populations. Digital inequalities were already present before the pandemic where race, class, gender, age, and geographic location shape ones' access to internet and digital tools.<sup>69</sup> Digital literacy is defined as "more than technological know-how: it includes a wide variety of ethical, social and reflective practices that are embedded in work, learning, leisure and daily life. Globally, the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) frames its benchmarks for digital literacy around six standards: creativity and innovation; communication and collaboration; research and information fluency; critical thinking, problem-solving and decision making; digital citizenship; and technology operations and concepts."<sup>70</sup>

We recommend that the provincial government create a taskforce charged with developing a provincial strategy to ensure all Albertans have the necessary digital literacy skills.<sup>71</sup> The taskforce should include leaders from First Nations communities and local officials.<sup>72</sup> The taskforce should consider a Digital Literacy Strategy for K-12, post-secondary education, and individuals outside of the classroom.

Investing in digital skills and knowledge of Albertans is crucial to a functioning digital economy that will guarantee individuals have the skills to adapt to, engage with, innovate in a digital economy, and benefit from it.<sup>73</sup> Having a digital literacy strategy will help with the province's recovery and enable marginalized populations to be a part of Alberta's workforce.

The Government of Alberta will need to implement bold actions to help with the recovery of our economy and the nonprofit sector remains a ready and willing partner in these efforts.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY

## **Recommendation 1:**

**Provide targeted funding for operational costs, emergency planning, projects advancing equity within and external to the organization, and organizations that are not providing COVID-19 related support services.**

As leaders of foundations and other funders have realized, there was a critical need to innovate and provide community organizations and nonprofits with the support that they needed to respond to the impacts of COVID-19. Many funders implemented and committed to loosening restrictions and provided additional grants for emergency response. As we continue to see further implications of the pandemic, we have identified the following actions that funders can take to continue their support:

### **Fund core operational costs**

Funders historically favour lower overhead costs and reward more 'efficient' nonprofit organizations.<sup>74</sup> As a result, to gain a competitive advantage, nonprofit organizations decrease the ratio of overhead. This leads to donor pressure through increasingly unrealistic expectations,<sup>75</sup> which negatively impacts nonprofits and does not provide them with the administrative capacity needed to carry out their core work. In turn, this model has built "a level of impoverishment and fragility that has translated into a deficit model, whereby organizations must show desperate needs and a lack of funding in order to be considered worthy of support."<sup>76</sup> During emergencies or a crisis like the one we are facing, this kind of model becomes problematic for organizations when adapting and continuing their work as their funds are limited.

Restrictions put in place that inhibit organizations do not cover the full costs including staff payroll, rent for office space or facility, heat, and funds to adapt and innovate to emergencies or to build organizational capacity. Additionally, funds provided for projects cannot often be renewed.<sup>77</sup> Funders should be mindful when providing capital for projects that do not cover the full cost of an organization's ability to perform their work and better address their clients' urgent needs.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## Recommendation 1 (Continued):

**Provide targeted funding for operational costs, emergency planning, projects advancing equity within and external to the organization, and organizations that are not providing COVID-19 related support services.**

### Emergency planning and preparation for organizations

This spring, respondents to the [Alberta Nonprofit Survey \(ANS\)](#) indicated that only 40% had an emergency plan for health emergencies or natural disasters before COVID-19; and 46% are creating a plan or still did not have a plan in place.<sup>78</sup> Organizations in Fort McMurray were better prepared to deal with COVID-19 and its impacts, as organizations have in place business continuity plans due to the 2016 Fort McMurray wildfires.<sup>79</sup> These results are not surprising as many nonprofits do not have the capacity or resources to create emergency plans. Although we hope that many have created an [emergency plan](#) by now, it is important for funders to consider providing funds to organizations and making emergency planning a priority moving forward. Organizations that are prepared for a crisis can maintain their operations and avoid further disruptions in their services. Other sources of support for emergency preparation can include connecting organizations to the right networks and knowledge systems in order to build strategies that will better prepare them for the next crisis.

### Advance equity within and external to organizations

Foundations can lead and contribute to efforts that address and deepen our understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Senator Ratna Omidvar, who has been a strong voice for the nonprofit sector, recently suggested that funders should “ensure that they are not just funding racial-justice organizations, but they’re looking at the equity of outcomes in all of their granting mechanisms.”<sup>80</sup> There are a number of ways that funders can move forward in addressing the impact of COVID-19 on people who have been impacted the most – women, people of colour, Indigenous communities, and Black communities.<sup>81</sup> [Philanthropic Foundations Canada](#) identifies various ways that foundations can get started to incorporate diversity, inclusion, and equity, such as identifying and supporting mobilizers; tying diversity, inclusion, and equity to the foundation’s mission; diversifying the foundation’s donor base through the recruitment of population focused donations; and embracing and leveraging “moments” that are fueled by a crisis to build coalitions, engage collective funds, and lift the collective voice.<sup>82</sup>

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## **Advance equity within and external to organizations (Continued)**

Foundations can also build equity into organizations that are not the usual grantees by funding organizations led by Indigenous people, people of colour, and Black-led organizations.<sup>83</sup> Although data are not available in Canada to show revenues of organizations that are led by racialized groups, Indigenous people, and white-led organizations, a study in the United States by the **Bridgespan Group** indicates that organizations led by people of colour have fewer resources than their white-led counterparts.<sup>84</sup> Additionally, the study indicates that unrestricted funding of Black-led organizations is 76% smaller than their white-led counterparts.<sup>85</sup> Further research is required to see whether this is the case for Canada, but it does not weaken the case for funders to include diversity, equity, and inclusion policies to provide funds to where they are needed. Foundations can shift the power towards communities that are most impacted and provide a platform for them to articulate their vision for the support that they need.

A number of other initiatives can be taken to advance equity, including providing support to organizations on a range of issues that address the impacts of COVID-19, such as supporting technology, employment skills and job training, supportive services, and mental health services.

## **Provide localized support and fund organizations not providing COVID-19 related support services**

Investing in our local communities, especially during this time, has been a reminder that we rely on the strength and feeling of belonging to our local communities. Local investments into organizations that are small, support communities of colour, support women, and who are led by people of colour, Indigenous people, or are Black-led will strengthen local communities and reduce inequalities. Some of these local organizations are not providing front line COVID-19 related supports and therefore are not receiving related funding. However, it is important to recognize and understand that these organizations will also need to operate and maintain their programs and services within their communities. Empowering grassroots organizations that are not on the front lines will require foundations to shift some priorities. Funders should consider engaging more regularly with community organizations that are not the usual prospects, to understand the local impact of the pandemic.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## Recommendation 2:

Provide support to help nonprofits innovate by thinking differently about the sector and provide funding for administrative costs, which are essential to maintain the organization's mission and maintain employment.

### Support the capacity to innovate

Prior to the pandemic, many reports including the [Senate Recommendations for the Charitable Sector](#) and CCVO's [State of the Alberta Nonprofit Sector 2019](#) indicated the importance of the sector building technological capacity and the capacity to innovate. Now, the pandemic has made those recommendations even more urgent. Responding to the demand faced by nonprofits and the post-COVID-19 demand will require more technology, and more meaningful impact assessment and evaluation. Technological improvements will be needed to support organizations in delivering services efficiently, collaboration with other organizations and efficiency in their shared learnings, and human resource management. Funding streams that help support the technological capacity of organizations is strongly encouraged. Nonprofits will need fewer administrative hurdles and the support of funders to take more risks so that the sector can meet the demand for rapid shifts and the necessary innovation to spur those shifts.

### Fund administrative costs that support nonprofit talent

Nonprofits have had challenges with covering the real costs of services and as a result, often have few or no resources to support volunteers, pay staff a competitive wage, train and support board members, find and take opportunities for collaboration with other organizations, invest in technology, or to develop and implement more innovative services to their members and clients.<sup>86</sup> Nonprofits that employ staff have lower salaries and provide fewer benefits due to their limited financial resources. The Mowat Centre specifies, "though many organizations in the NFP sector are focused on providing employment services, alleviating poverty and promoting community health and well-being, little attention is paid to the sector's role as an employer in promoting these same goals."<sup>87</sup>

With an increase in demand for services,<sup>88</sup> nonprofits will need to be able to take care of their staff as they are supporting their clients. To assist organizations in finding creative ways to support their staff, funders should be engaged with these community organizations by listening to and understanding their needs.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

### Recommendation 3:

#### Coordinate and collaborate with other funders to reduce reporting and administrative burden

The funding system and the way that dollars flow to organizations leaves nonprofits at risk of running short of the full funds needed to support their operations. Many nonprofits and community organizations are obligated and legally required to comply with funder requirements regarding timelines, deliverables, and restrictions on use of funds. The process of seeking and managing grants is onerous for organizations, especially for smaller ones.<sup>89</sup> Recently, as a result of emergency funding required to support organizations on the front line, many funders removed grant restrictions and demonstrated flexibility for their use of funds, and eased timelines and reporting requirements. Canadian political scientist Janice Stein notes, “the failure of the sector to invest in systematic sharing across organizations of the lessons learned from the programming that they do. While other sectors are moving to build aggregators that diffuse knowledge, the philanthropic sector has no systematic way to aggregate knowledge, to compare across cases, and to share that knowledge. The failure to invest in strong analytics is the biggest obstacle in moving small successes to scale.”<sup>90</sup> Additionally, she indicates the need for knowledge aggregation will require a change in culture.

Foundations will need to collaborate and amalgamate knowledge and resources, enabling greater impact and developing stronger incentives for organizations to work together.<sup>91</sup> Additionally, Janice Stein recommends funding timelines should be lengthened, “so that organizations are not trapped in an endless cycle of grant-writing and grant-reporting that drains the energy and the creativity from the sector and stills the voices that are important to hear.”<sup>92</sup>

Funders should also share their learning and ideas with other community stakeholders, business leaders, and public sector leaders;<sup>93</sup> and improve coordination to develop innovative, integrated approaches and in planning funding schedules.<sup>94</sup> We also suggest the process that grant reporting should be made easier for organizations through coordination and collaboration of funder organizations. A central database or platform shared amongst funders and donors to eliminate the burden of applications and reporting requirements, which also stores organizations’ grant histories is suggested. Many small organizations also lack the capacity to apply for grants that have an extensive application process, as it consumes time and resources that they are not able to afford. Such a platform will ease this burden and provide nonprofits the ability to shift their time and resources towards the organization’s mission.

There are several ways that funders can help with a smooth recovery and build towards a Community Prosperity Strategy. Funders can support organizations by providing capital to support initiatives that target specific areas that will contribute to the sustainability of organizations, help innovate and provide more flexible funding, and collaborate with other funders to pool together knowledge and enable a stronger impact. Additionally, funders can be a voice for their grantees and the communities that they support by using their influence to advocate for sustainable organizations when another crisis arises.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY

## Recommendation 1:

**Encourage and support an organizational culture of giving and volunteerism by: providing more opportunities for employee involvement on nonprofit boards; making a commitment to support social issues in partnership with nonprofits; and continuing employee engagement with nonprofit organizations through innovation in this new environment.**

One of the most popular ways for the private sector to give back to their communities is through volunteering. Employees are often encouraged by their employers to volunteer with nonprofit organizations, and research shows that volunteering boosts morale and employee pride within a company.<sup>95</sup> Opportunities for employees to engage with nonprofits prove mutually beneficial to both the private and nonprofit sectors. Opportunities for employee engagement include:

- **Involvement on nonprofit boards, especially for small-to-medium-sized nonprofits that may find it challenging to attract skills-based experts – in areas such as marketing, finance, legal, HR and others – to participate at the governance level.**

Nonprofit board service is useful for employees to develop higher job performance skills.<sup>96</sup> The skills developed as a nonprofit board member include board governance, networking, communication, strategic planning, decision-making, critical thinking, and problem-solving.<sup>97</sup> Businesses are encouraged to embolden employees to serve on boards by providing their employees with services that train, prepare, and then match them with nonprofit boards based on their skills and expertise. When companies offer employees preparation and training opportunities to succeed as a board member, employees are more likely to seek board positions.<sup>98</sup> Companies can “integrate board service into the company’s corporate social responsibility strategy, and align it with diversity and inclusion, talent development, sustainability, and philanthropy.”<sup>99</sup> This will maximize their overall investment in the community and build companies’ corporate brand and reputation, develop the skill set of their workforce, and position their employees as community leaders.<sup>100</sup> Companies will benefit from encouraging board service from all employees and not solely senior executives.<sup>101</sup>

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## Recommendation 1 (Continued):

Encourage and support an organizational culture of giving and volunteerism by: providing more opportunities for employee involvement on nonprofit boards; making a commitment to support social issues in partnership with nonprofits; and continuing employee engagement with nonprofit organizations through innovation in this new environment.

- **Make a commitment to support social issues in partnership with nonprofits.**

Through cross-sectoral partnerships, several social issues can be improved when the right strategies are put into place. *Imagine Canada's Caring Company Certification* encourages companies to adopt a leadership role as investors of at least 1% of pre-tax profit into stronger communities. The percentage of pre-tax profit invested in the community is a common metric used by companies to determine annual budgets.<sup>102</sup> This type of partnership benefits both parties, producing a significant investment that can have long-term benefits for both the community and the company, and one that enables nonprofits to access skills and expertise, and extends the reach of their impact.<sup>103</sup> Companies do not have to sacrifice profits to give back to their communities; "when done right, the benefits to the business are clear."<sup>104</sup> Businesses that publicly show their commitment to social issues can improve their relationship with the community and cooperation with society in the long term. Additionally, employees are more likely to prefer working for companies involved in doing good within their community and are also more likely to intend to stay with their employer – and high employee engagement within the company is likely to lead to other positive results, such as productivity and profitability.<sup>105</sup>

Partnerships with the nonprofit sector are most successful when they achieve a high engagement level, frequent interaction, bidirectional exchange of interdependencies, and sharing of resources, risks, and benefits.<sup>106</sup> Such partnerships can spur innovation as different ideas and perspectives are brought together. They also reduce duplication and competition of businesses, increase organizational efficiency and effectiveness, and expand both parties' organizational capabilities.<sup>107</sup>

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## Recommendation 1 (Continued):

**Encourage and support an organizational culture of giving and volunteerism by: providing more opportunities for employee involvement on nonprofit boards; making a commitment to support social issues in partnership with nonprofits; and continuing employee engagement with nonprofit organizations through innovation in this new environment.**

- **Continued engagement with nonprofit organizations and being creative in employee engagement opportunities.**

According to Gallup, companies with high employee engagement levels saw a 16% increase in profitability in comparison to companies with employees who were not engaged; general productivity was 18% higher than other companies and customer loyalty was 12% higher.<sup>108</sup> Additionally, there is a known connection between engagement and volunteering – in Ireland, 87% of employees who volunteered with their companies reported an improved perception of their employer, and 82% felt more committed to their place of work.<sup>109</sup> Overall, engaging employees boosts employee morale and promotes a better working environment in comparison to companies that do not engage their employees.

Nonprofits and businesses will need to work together in new creative ways to tackle the challenges within their community. The private sector can encourage employee engagement by:

- Reaching out to nonprofits to understand their needs to provide them with the right support. One of the highest anticipated challenges for employee community engagement during the pandemic in Canada is finding virtual ways for employees to support nonprofits' needs while also being sensitive to employee needs and interests.<sup>110</sup>
- Encouraging more employee virtual volunteering and in-person volunteering when safe to do so. However, to keep employees engaged, internal policies and processes related to a company's engagement or volunteering program will need to shift with the dynamic environment of COVID-19. Additionally, individuals are often aware of their local nonprofits and smaller organizations and have extensive knowledge about the community they live and work in. It's best to let employees lead by asking what causes and issues they care about to boost locally driven nonprofits and smaller organizations. Listening to employees promotes trust between the company and the nonprofit organizations they want to support.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

- **Continued engagement with nonprofit organizations and being creative in employee engagement opportunities (Continued)**
  - Offering skills-based volunteering and pro bono virtual projects enable people to use their unique skills to help causes they care about, while also helping them develop skills that will further benefit them, as well as the company. Since the pandemic, some Canadian businesses have moved from company-organized to employee-initiated activities.<sup>111</sup> Businesses also anticipate skills-based volunteering and learning opportunities for employees on community issues and challenges facing the nonprofit sector.<sup>112</sup> Skills and expertise will vary between each employee and, therefore, will create unique opportunities for companies to leverage these skills to boost local nonprofits. Businesses can maximize social impact by combining employees' expertise with their products, services, or philanthropy. For example, providing support to local charities that help undeserved people find employment through mock interviews to prepare people for getting back to work.<sup>113</sup>
  - Encouraging giving through employee matching programs. For example, 3M, a large multinational corporation that employs thousands of people, donates money to eligible nonprofit organizations when a 3M employee or retiree volunteers 25 hours or more per calendar year.<sup>114</sup> These matching programs are intended to help employees support the organizations they are passionate about.
  - Employee recognition to motivate more employee engagement with nonprofits.

Customized plans that engage employees will build the capacity of local nonprofits. Offering employees the opportunity to donate their time to volunteer can build lasting relationships with local nonprofits. A more significant impact can be achieved when employees, organizations, communities, and community partners collaborate.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

## Recommendation 2:

**Find and recognize ways to advance the prosperity of local communities through supporting the nonprofit sector with expertise and knowledge by: supporting technology access, training, and maintenance; providing access to corporate training opportunities; and providing access to emergency planning professionals.**

The private sector will play a key role in the preparedness, early response, and longer-term recovery of nonprofits over the next few years. Business professionals can provide expertise to help with administration and technology, and offer nonprofits training opportunities to be more sustainable. The private sector can also provide access to emergency planning professionals to prepare organizations before another disaster or pandemic impacts communities.

- **Support technology access, training and maintenance.**

Businesses can do a great deal by supporting nonprofits with the help of technology to advance their impact and help attract and engage donors. Many nonprofits are constrained by their budgets and cannot invest in technology and upgrades to better serve their communities. As a result, many are using outdated platforms and collaboration tools. Additionally, there are now greater cyber risks that require greater cybersecurity.<sup>115</sup> Businesses can set up specific programs that strengthen small-to-medium-sized nonprofits in rebuilding and weathering economic downturns and improving or adapting their fundraising capabilities to virtual means. Additionally, the private sector can provide support and training opportunities for IT, website development, and other digital skills. The private sector can provide technology support and help nonprofits navigate the dynamic pandemic landscape.

- **Provide access to corporate training opportunities.**

The needs of large and small nonprofits are likely to differ from one another. Small-to-medium-sized nonprofits may not have the necessary training to fully meet their mission, as they do not always have established HR practices in place and may not have the resources or capacity to promote and provide professional development opportunities for their employees. In times of disaster or a pandemic, this can be counterproductive for the organization as they may not have the skills required to withstand the impacts. The private sector can improve nonprofits' resilience by providing critical skills through opportunities that help nonprofit employees. Programs can be set up for employees to offer their business skills and experience while also improving and developing leadership skills, interpersonal communication skills, and problem-solving skills. These programs can be set up for specific projects that will help the recovery of nonprofits.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

### Recommendation 2 (Continued):

Find and recognize ways to advance the prosperity of local communities through supporting the nonprofit sector with expertise and knowledge by: supporting technology access, training, and maintenance; providing access to corporate training opportunities; and providing access to emergency planning professionals.

- **Provide access to emergency planning professionals.**

The private sector is often prepared with strategies to respond to an emergency, whereas nonprofits are resource-constrained and may not have these critical plans in place. Therefore, nonprofits are more vulnerable to the impacts of an emergency, although they are also providing essential support during an emergency or disaster. Smaller nonprofits with minimal staff are less likely to have the resources and capacity to implement **emergency plans** and are also at a greater risk than others.<sup>116</sup> To address this issue and have organizations better respond and be sustainable, the private sector can provide access to emergency planning professionals who can better support nonprofits in their mitigation and preparedness plans.

### Recommendation 3:

Leverage the nonprofit sector's contributions to the prosperity of our communities through: robust and vibrant social infrastructure that benefits communities and supports business objectives; and more advocacy on how much nonprofits contribute to society.

We know that the pandemic has already had a tremendous impact, with the magnitude of the fallout still unknown. Nonprofits have been those closest to the prevailing issues and the communities that have been most at risk, and provide the kinds of community support that is needed by the private sector for a thriving environment that attracts investment and talent. As a result, it is crucial for the private sector to use its influence to support nonprofit advocacy through investment, promotion, and recognition.

- **Robust and vibrant social infrastructure benefits communities and supports business objectives.**

CCVO has made a case for the positive impact of government investment in **social infrastructure**. The same positive impacts for communities can be attributed to private investment in social infrastructure. Social infrastructure can be defined as networks, relationships, organizations, services, and facilities that allow communities to build capacity that goes beyond providing assets, such as enhancing skills and knowledge, and access to a range of appropriate services and responses.<sup>117</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROSPERITY STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

- **Robust and vibrant social infrastructure benefits communities and supports business objectives. (Continued)**

Social infrastructure is in a range of social service sectors, policy areas, and activities that enable society to work effectively and includes areas that help individuals, families, groups, and communities meet their social needs, such as health and human development.<sup>118</sup> This type of infrastructure is imperative for the economic growth and well-being of citizens,<sup>119</sup> and is supported by the Calgary Chamber of Commerce in their [Budget 2021 submission](#), which recommends that the Government of Alberta invest in social infrastructure to “yield the job creation we desperately need, and over the long-term, will reduce the social and economic challenges associated with individuals made vulnerable by economic systems and who are experiencing poverty and homelessness.”<sup>120</sup> We encourage the private sector to explore social infrastructure investments and implement policies that will continue to boost investment and innovation and, in turn, spur job growth.

- **More advocacy on how much nonprofits contribute to society.**

The private sector can play a significant role in driving social change by advocating for issues that align with or are important to their organizations. The nonprofit sector has been a champion in providing front line service during the pandemic, and organizations will require continued support to follow through with their mission. The private sector can help advocate for the vital work that nonprofits do. Companies can do this through storytelling initiatives and through raising awareness of the work and impact of nonprofits and the value of this work in advancing the shared goals of the private and nonprofit sector.



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