



How Participation Drives Our Work

ABNN is an open, voluntary network seeking to build a proactive, cohesive and responsive nonprofit sector in Alberta. As a network, we are built on a shared sense of reciprocity and responsibility. We rely on our stakeholders to choose where to put our focus and how to contribute to our success.

ABNN measures its success by looking at the *quality of the collaborative process*. Does the process feel authentic and fair? Do people feel like they have a voice?

Why The Gathering?

The Gathering is an essential opportunity to bring together diverse voices as we continue to grow and develop ABNN.

The Gathering

Summary and Survey Results

On June 10, 155 people from across the nonprofit sector came together in Fort McMurray, Lethbridge and Calgary to discuss and take action on strategic issues impacting the sector.

What people said about The Gathering:

- 1 The Gathering supported a **high-quality collaborative process**:
 - > Genuine effort to learn
 - > Openness to explore new ideas and approaches
 - > Open and frank conversation
 - > Genuine opportunity for different perspective to influence ABNN's work

That said, participants were unsure about whether there was sufficient diversity in the room.

- 2 There is a lot of **energy, interest and support for ABNN**:
 - > 75% felt confident ABNN will progress towards its mission
 - > 75% have a clear understanding of how ABNN can add value to the sector

- 3 Participants generally agreed that ABNN is **focusing on issues that fit its mandate**.

We asked, **"What is the best use of ABNN as a collaborative tool for the sector?"** You said:

- > Coordinate activity around priority areas and sector-wide challenges
- > Support government relations
- > Communicate with a collective voice
- > Create a data strategy
- > Support relationships and collaboration
- > Promote the sector's value and impact
- > Develop a workforce development strategy



The Key Issues

ABNN's priority areas were re-affirmed at The Gathering. It often came up that these issues are very much interconnected.



Sector Value and Impact

Committee Mandate: Assist the sector to be recognized as indispensable for resilient communities and leverage the sector to shape the future of civil society.

You told us... if we were successful at our mandate, the sector would:

- > Gain credibility
- > Tell its story in a consistent way
- > Have more funding
- > Have greater power and influence
- > Have a positive impact on our community
- > Create greater sector awareness and value
- > Increase collaboration in the sector

You asked...

- > Are consistent stories possible given our diversity?
- > Who are we communicating this to? To what end?
- > Who is included in the sector and what language should we use?
- > We might advocate for something that benefits some nonprofits but harms others - are we ok with that?
- > Do we already know our value? Is it about synchronizing and communicating the value more effectively?
- > How does the sector prove its value?
- > How do our messages reflect Cdn/Albertan values?
- > How does this connect with the government relations and data strategy work?

Data Strategy

Committee Mandate: Lead the creation and implementation of a strategy that builds a sector-level system to leverage data and technology.

You told us... these are the data-related capacities that require the most improvement:

- > Access to technology; staff skills to use it
- > Common standards and processes to collect, analyze and use data
- > Sector/system-level support: buy-in from individual agencies, breakdown of silos and alignment across the sector
- > Addressing legal and privacy challenges to sharing data

You told us... if we could only focus on one data priority to tell our story, we should:

- > Demonstrate the sector's **economic impact**
- > Focus on the impact that the sector has on **social issues** and **Albertans' quality of life**.
 - > How do we show that we strengthen all of society?
 - > How do we demonstrate that we address underlying issues/root causes?
 - > How do we tell stories about our impact on quality of life?

Workforce Development

Committee Mandate: Advocate for the conditions and actions required to support the sector's workforce and build a multi-year workforce development plan.

You told us... your vision for the Alberta nonprofit workforce includes:

- > Well-trained and educated workforce
- > Well-compensated workforce
- > Capacity to retain employees, less burnout, less turnover, long-term career paths, stability
- > More diversity, less bias; workforce reflective of the community they work in
- > More recognition for employees; be seen as professionals

To get there, we need to:

- > Have a shared vision
- > Share training and leverage resources; encourage professional development
- > Work collaboratively for wage increases and funding agreements; prioritize salary and benefits
- > Create employment stability
- > Advocate to funders; refuse to take too little funding to do too much work
- > Use our collective purchasing power; identify top 2-3 benefits we can get as a group
- > Help organizations adapt and be more creative

Government Relations

Committee Mandate: Foster strong relationships with government partners to address strategic priorities pertinent to Alberta's nonprofit sector.

You told us... a Government Relations Steering Committee could add the most value for the sector by:

- > Building relationships with bureaucrats and senior public officials
- > Advocating for legislation change, better funding practices and access to data at a provincial level and across ministries
- > Building the sector's capacity to represent themselves to the government and create tools that people can use

What's Next for ABNN?

Amplify the Momentum and Energy

We will spend the summer connecting with participants who indicated they want to be involved with ABNN.

Incorporate Feedback into Plans

We will digest and incorporate what we learned into the direction of the Steering Committees and Task Teams.