



Alberta Nonprofits and Vaccination Policy Survey Results

September 2021

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Nonprofit Sector COVID Resource – Restrictions Exemption Program (REP)

In tandem with the state of public health emergency recently declared, the Government of Alberta has established an optional [Restrictions Exemption Program](#) (REP) for eligible “businesses/entities/organizers” across Alberta¹. Starting on September 20, 2021, businesses across Alberta are required to adhere to one of the following options:

1. Implement the Restrictions Exemption Program requiring proof of vaccination or negative test result, plus mandatory masking, to continue operating as usual
OR
2. Comply with all public health restrictions as outlined in Order 42-2021.

Nonprofits in Calgary should note that The City of Calgary passed a Vaccine Passport bylaw, which comes into effect on September 23rd, 2021, and it may have additional implications for operations. The details of that bylaw and its application can be found [here](#).

In partnership with the Calgary Chamber of Volunteer Organizations (CCVO), the Alberta Nonprofit Network (ABNN) sent out a quick survey to nonprofits in Alberta to determine their plans regarding their internal vaccination policies. 394 nonprofits from across the province responded. To support those organizations that have questions about the REP, how to implement vaccination policies, and/or to respond to an evolving situation in Alberta, we have created this resource to help nonprofits better understand the REP for their organization as well as plan their next steps in light of evolving public health restrictions. It includes the results of the quick survey, answers to frequently asked questions from the nonprofit sector specific to the REP, and additional resources for the sector.

¹ For nonprofits located in Calgary, the City of Calgary instituted a bylaw on September 23, 2021, which “requires many businesses and organizations to require proof of vaccination, recent negative COVID-19 test, or valid medical exemption letter to gain entry”. Click [here](#) for more information on this bylaw.

Vaccination Policy Survey Results

Below are the results of a survey conducted by the Alberta Nonprofit Network in partnership with CCVO, to better understand how nonprofits are proceeding with vaccination policies for their organizations. In total, 394 organizations responded to the survey, from a range of subsectors and across the province.

Survey results show that the majority of organizations who responded to the survey are actively exploring or already have policy in place requiring proof of vaccination among people who access their services, programs, and/or gatherings as well as for their staff and volunteers. The proportion of organizations exploring policies and with policies in place were similar across all three groups. Conversely, the proportion of organizations who responded that they are not actively exploring these policies ranged from 21-27% across the three groups.

	For people who access services, programs, and/or gatherings	For staff	For volunteers
Already exploring or have policy in place	71%	73%	68%
Are not actively exploring this policy	24%	27%	21%
Not applicable to the organization	5%	-	11%

Organizations responded that they are taking the following actions to inform policies and decisions, and to support communications on vaccinations for their organization:

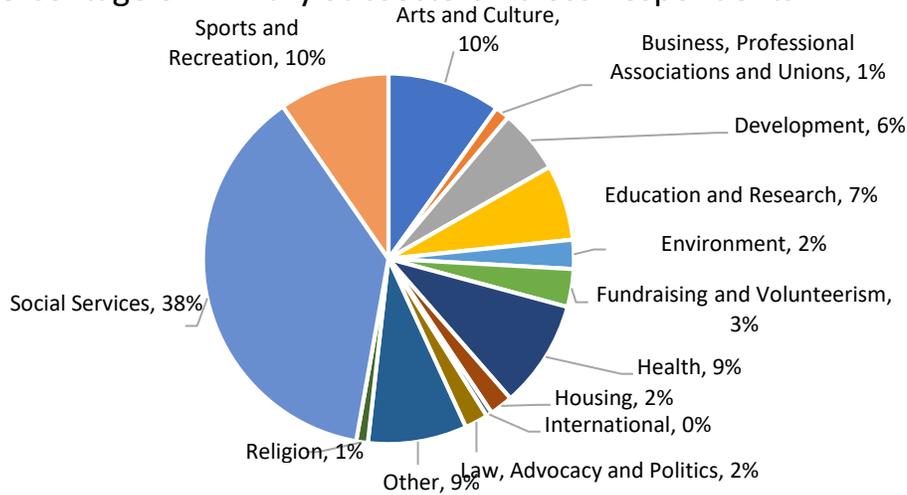
- Monitoring Government of Alberta websites and applicable municipal websites for health restrictions as well as Alberta Human Rights Commission
- Connecting with other organizations, networks, and unions to learn from their approach and policies
- Hiring Legal professionals and external consultants
- Consulting publicly available human resource websites
- Posting on media platforms such as websites and social media accounts

Many organizations responded that they are still unsure of what resources and supports are available.

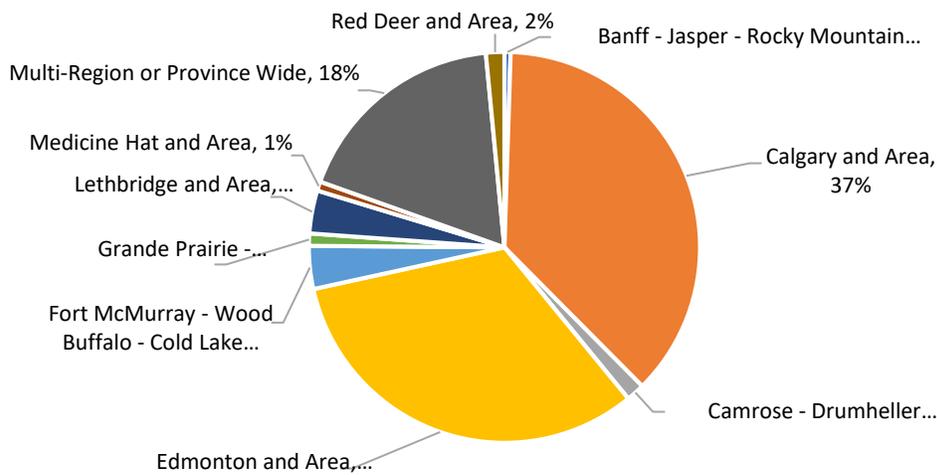
About the Survey Respondents

In addition to a range of subsectors, with the majority of response from Social Services at 38%, the survey was completed by organizations that serve areas across the province of Alberta. The majority of respondents were from the urban centres of Calgary and Area (37%) and Edmonton and Area (32%).

Percentage of Primary Subsectors Across Respondents



Percentage of Area Served Across Respondents



FAQs

This section provides responses to frequently asked questions specific to the nonprofit sector regarding the REP. These questions were crowdsourced directly from the nonprofit sector following the announcement of the REP.

Q: Are nonprofits eligible for the REP?

The REP program is less about the structure of the business and more around the service it provides. It is only open to discretionary businesses, including nonprofits. The program does not apply to:

- *Businesses or entities that need to be accessed by the public for daily living purposes, including all retail locations*
- *Employees, contractors, repair or delivery workers, volunteers or inspectors entering the space for work purposes*
- *Children under 12*

Organizations that are ineligible or choose not to participate must follow all public health restrictions as outlined in [Order 42-2021](#).

Q: How can nonprofits determine their eligibility for the REP?

The REP requirements outline what could make an organization eligible for the REP program. See page 7 on [this document](#) for a list of which operators are considered in-scope, or eligible, for the REP.

Q: Do organizations that are eligible need to apply for the REP?

Eligible organizations do not need to apply for the program, but must follow or exceed the [program requirements](#) at all times, including requiring all patrons/attendees aged 12 and over to provide one of the following:

- *Valid proof of vaccination*
- *Valid proof of a privately-paid negative rapid test result taken within 72 hours of service*
- *Valid documentation of a medical exemption*

Q: Is it mandatory to work-from home unless the employer has determined a physical presence is required for operational effectiveness, regardless of vaccination status?

The REP considers “Workers/employees in/on a worksite for the purposes of their employment” out of scope or ineligible for the program. As such, it is mandatory that all workers, employees, and volunteers, work from home unless there is an operational need to be in the office. Each organization must determine the organizational need to have staff in the office based on their operating requirements. Organizations that are ineligible for the REP should follow what they did previously (in December) when mandatory work from home orders were in effect.

Q: Is it legal for organizations to require staff to be vaccinated?

The Government of Alberta does not have an official statement on this question. According to the REP website, “The REP is not intended or required for employees or contractors attending workplace. Operators are strongly encouraged to promote COVID-19 vaccination to staff, volunteers, attendees and other eligible persons as part of their public health strategy, and any consideration of vaccine requirements for staff is an employer decision”. However, some organizations in the nonprofit sector have developed internal policies regarding COVID-19 vaccination for staff. We encourage you to reach out to your counterparts in the sector to discuss how they are approaching vaccination policies and seek out guidance to support your unique circumstances and risks.

Q: Do you have any recommendations or resources for organizations on proof of vaccination?

The REP requirements state that providing one of the following will be considered valid proof of vaccination:

- *A picture or paper record of a valid Alberta Health Services, MyHealth Records, pharmacy, First Nations, or physician immunization record prominently displaying the name, type of vaccine and date of administration*
- *Canadian armed forces immunization record, displaying the name, type of vaccine and date of administration*
- *An immunization record from another Canadian Province or Territory, displaying the name, type of vaccine and date of administration*
- *Valid Government of Alberta Vaccination QR code (when available)*

Q: Many clients don’t have MyHealth Records set up and it’s not easy to do so, especially for low-income and newcomer populations. Many agencies are considering mandating vaccine policies for staff but is it ethical to do so for vulnerable clients?

To participate in the REP, businesses must follow or exceed the [program requirements](#) at all times. This means organizations that choose, and are eligible, to participate in the REP must require all clients to comply. However, due to the challenges with accessing health records, some organizations may want to explore rapid testing options. There is a [Rapid Testing Program](#) through the Government of Alberta that helps employers and service providers provide free rapid test kits for use in their organization’s COVID-19 screening program. Outside of this program rapid testing under the REP is not paid for by the government and it will be the responsibility of each organization to cover the cost. Please be advised proof of vaccination records will be available via local registry offices, should this help reduce barriers for some clients in accessing their records.

Q: Are we able to host professional gatherings at facilities that are participating in the Restriction Exemption Program if vaccine status is provided?

The expectation is that organizations will do whatever they can to minimize the spread of the virus. This includes moving all non-essential gatherings online. If the gathering is essential for operations and cannot be moved online then it could take place in person and all safety precautions should be followed.

Resources

Below are various resources to support the nonprofit sector as they navigate these uncertain times.

- Click [here](#) to read more about the REP and current public health actions in Alberta
- Click [here](#) to learn more about the specific requirements that must be followed by organizations participating in the REP
- Click [here](#) to explore Government of Alberta workplace guidance and supports to help businesses and non-profits affected by COVID-19 operate safely and support their recovery including the Rapid Testing Program
- Click [here](#) to learn more about Alberta's mobile vaccination clinic will visit locations in Calgary and Edmonton September 20-25
- Click [here](#) to register for an information session titled "Everything you need to know about mandatory vaccines in the workplace" taking place on September 24
- Click [here](#) and [here](#) to read more about the potential implications of implementing vaccine mandates and passports in the workplace
- Click [here](#) to read more about human rights and vaccines from the Alberta Human Rights Commission
- Click [here](#) to explore the Align Association of Community Services Resource Directory on vaccine policy
- The Social Policy Collaborative, made up of several social service agencies in Calgary, is in the process of developing a mandatory vaccination policy for service delivery organizations in the nonprofit sector. To learn more or get involved in this conversation contact Meaghon Reid at meaghon@vibrantcalgary.com

If you have additional questions or require clarification, don't hesitate to reach out to us at info@albertanonprofits.ca

About this Survey and its Limitations

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues to dominate the well-being of Albertans, the challenges facing the nonprofit sector need to be identified in order to better understand what is needed most to support a strong and viable future for the sector. The Alberta Nonprofit Network (ABNN) distributed a survey to learn about current impact and needs of the sector regarding vaccine policies.

ABNN is sharing the results widely within the sector, as well as with government, funders and other stakeholders to help inform strategies to best support the sector during the pandemic and economic downturn.

This survey was administered electronically in September 2021. The invitation to participate was sent through ABNN's distribution list and social media channels. Leveraging the strengths of a network approach, the Network Stewards shared the survey through their organization's networks as well. Knowledge Mobilizers, who have access to networks of networks, were also asked to distribute the survey. Recipients were encouraged to circulate the survey link to others in the sector.

The data set includes a total of 394 responses. It is not intended to be statistically representative of the sector. Owing to the distribution strategy, it is not possible to know the total potential pool of respondents and a response rate cannot be calculated. Moreover, the organizations that responded to this survey are those most connected to ABNN. This skews the characteristics of the sample.

The “Do”s and “Don’t”s When Using the Data in this Report

ABNN conducted this survey as a way to get a snapshot of information within its network, during this time period. The data is not representative of the nonprofit sector and there are ways to use this data in helpful and unhelpful ways.

When using the data in this report:

- ✓ Do use this data to start conversations with your key stakeholders, to explore and understand how the trends identified in this report may or may not be relevant in your context.
- ✓ Do use this data to guide future investigations into trends.
- ✓ Do use this data, in conjunction with other data sources, to conduct further research on a subject area.
- ✓ Do remember that this data is based on responses from a set of respondents that are not representative of the broader sector.

- ✗ Don't interpret the data as being representative of the sector, a sub-sector or a region.
- ✗ Don't use statistics from this data without the broader context of how the data was collected and its limitations.

ABNN believes in the importance of sharing data freely and transparently. There is no need to duplicate our efforts to understand the sector. If you would like access to the raw data set, please email info@albertanonprofits.ca.

Please check <https://albertanonprofits.ca/covid-19> for additional resources.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all of the respondents who, despite challenges during these extraordinary circumstances, took the time to complete this survey. Thank you to ABNN members and partners for sharing this survey with their networks and encouraging others to participate. Thank you to CCVO for developing, collecting, and analyzing this survey.

About ABNN

Alberta has over 25,000 nonprofit organizations contributing to the quality of life of Albertans. The sector is a crucial part of Alberta's community fabric.

The Alberta Nonprofit Network (ABNN) is an independent network of nonprofits seeking to advance the cohesive, proactive, and resilient nonprofit sector in Alberta. ABNN network stewards help guide the work of ABNN, always driven by the priorities and voices of those in the sector.

The ABNN Network Stewards include representatives from:

- Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO)
- Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO)
- FuseSocial
- Impact8, Inc
- IntegralOrg
- PolicyWise for Children & Families
- Volunteer Alberta
- Volunteer Lethbridge

Through engagement and collaboration, ABNN catalyzes a provincial network to address issues and challenges. The network currently focuses on priority areas to sector identity and value, create a sector-level data strategy, enhance workforce development, and support government relations.