

Thank you for participating in our January 21, 2019 (Edmonton) and January 30, 2019 (Calgary) nonprofit and voluntary sector policy workshops. We had over 50 participants representing 49 organizations between the two sessions.

The purpose of the workshops was to identify the types of policy advancements that would help our sector do its best work. Input from the sessions was used to develop the Alberta Nonprofit Network’s (ABNN’s) 2019 Policy Agenda, a summary of actions that we would like the Government of Alberta to adopt, with our involvement, to support our sector to do its best work.

ABNN’s 2019 Policy Agenda will:

- Be distributed to the leader of each of Alberta’s political parties
- Be shared with members of ABNN to help inform opportunities that you have to advocate for the collective interests of our sector leading up to the 2019 Provincial General Election and beyond
- Reside on the [ABNN website](#) and supplement the growing set of sector-focused [election resources](#) to help you engage in pre- and post-election advocacy and relationship building

Your input into nonprofit policy:

As part of the workshops, you engaged in conversations with your colleagues about what is working well within the nonprofit sector, what could be improved, and, with provincial policy as a focal point, what would help the sector as a whole. You told us:

What is working well	What could be improved	What would help the sector as a whole
<p>Commitment to build healthier societies, protect ‘the commons,’ and foster civil society</p> <p>Ability to fill the gaps in society</p> <p>Employees and volunteers that care about the people they serve</p> <p>Independence from market and political forces; capacity to be bold</p> <p>Freedom from the concern for profit</p> <p>Capacity for innovation, flexibility, agility, and ability to prototype</p>	<p>Recognition of who we are as a sector, and an ability to tell our collective story and illustrate the impact that we are having in Alberta</p> <p>Clarity in how we can work more collaboratively with the Government of Alberta</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Define our interdependencies and vision for our sector ○ Develop a clear strategy or framework to effectively mobilize our sector ○ Aggregate all of the legislation, regulations, standards, and other oversight documents that affect nonprofit operations 	<p>Implementation of a nonprofit pension plan to support recruitment, retention, and a sustainable workforce</p> <p>A government strategy for our sector, which emphasizes the interdependencies between government and the sector, shares goals, how the government and sector work together, and sustainable funding models</p> <p>Better communication, coordination, and working relationships with the government, including the</p>

What is working well	What could be improved	What would help the sector as a whole
<p>Connection to people’s lived experiences and ability to give voice</p> <p>Trust, credibility, and expertise, which all contribute to the professionalism of the sector</p> <p>Out of necessity and shared interests, collaboration within the sector</p> <p>Growing recognition, by the sector as a whole, government, and public, of the sector’s combined social and economic contributions</p> <p>Organization-level data collection and evidence-informed decisions, practices, advocacy, and communication with government, the public, stakeholders, and clients</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarify how government departments are aligned to interface with and support our sector and activities ○ Review existing legislation through a “public benefit” lens to determine how specific acts and regulations place limitations on the value-add potential of nonprofits ○ Advocate for the opportunity to offer input, as a credible, trusted, and expert voice, into provincial policy and program developments and changes ○ Advocate for clarity and stability in funding models, including funding that takes a holistic view of interventions, accounts for the true cost of doing business (e.g., rent, administration), and supports ongoing service delivery (i.e., rather than grants or project-based funding) ○ Advocating for less red tape related to how we can use our funds, and more flexibility in the reporting requirements <p>The collection of data, and how it is used to tell our story, identify trends, gaps, and opportunities, and align the sector’s efforts to desired social, economic, and environmental goals</p> <p>Labour force improvements that emphasize recruitment, retention (e.g., benefits, pensions, training and professional development), health, safety, and wellness, and building a province-wide culture of philanthropy and volunteerism</p> <p>Policy stability that protects the advancements that our sector has made, and our investments in Alberta communities and people</p>	<p>development of a framework that outlines the government’s approach to contracting services from nonprofits and involvement in policy and program development and changes</p> <p>Government-led or government-nonprofit collaboration on the collection and use of data to better understand and identify sector-focused solutions</p>

Other important insights:

In addition to sharing ideas about how the Government of Alberta and provincial policy can support the work of the nonprofit sector, you also talked about how the nonprofit sector can be better organized and working together to raise its profile, gain momentum and influence as a network, and more effectively advocate for its needs.

Your insights emphasized:

- The need to better define the nonprofit and voluntary sector, including differentiating between:
 - Organizations that focus on public benefit vs. member organizations
 - Organizations that deliver services on behalf of, or on contract with, the Government of Alberta and those that do not
 - Organizations funded entirely through government-service contracts and those funded through a combination of public funding (e.g., service contract, grants), revenue generating activities, donations, and in-kind supports
- The need for the sector to be its own advocate first and work together to help others, with an emphasis on the public, to recognize the value that it creates for Alberta every day; this prompted discussion about the possibility of a sector-funded public advertising campaign
- The need for the sector to help the government recognize it as a strategic partner in delivering the government's mandate, and the role that the nonprofit sector plays in filling gaps, meeting Albertans' priority needs, mobilizing quickly to meet emergent needs, and generally supporting the government's mandate of enhancing Albertans' quality of life
- The sheer amount of trust, credibility, and expertise that resides within the nonprofit sector, and the importance of taking every opportunity to remind people in other sectors (i.e., public and private) to make use of it and involve the nonprofit sector in innovation, program and policy development and changes, and exploring how to advance Alberta's interests
- The importance of an entity, like ABNN, working to define the collective interests of the sector and then harness the energy, passion, knowledge, credibility, and reach of the larger network to advance them
- The importance of taking time to connect as a nonprofit network and have conversations about shared interests and opportunities

Call to action:

Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the [ABNN 2019 Policy Agenda](#) and:

- Share it with other nonprofit and voluntary sector organizations in your network, with an invitation to join ABNN
- Promote it, with an emphasis on the priority actions, as part of your organization's pre- and post-election advocacy efforts
- Share any ideas that you have on how to further advance our sector's policy interests by contacting Blythe Butler at blythe@shaw.ca.

If you are looking for information on how to effectively prepare for and engage in pre- and post-election advocacy on behalf of our sector or your organizations, visit the [News & Resources section](#) of the ABNN website and sign up to the [ABNN mailing list](#).