

### **ALBERTA'S NONPROFIT SECTOR:**

24 ON OUT TO ORGANIZATIONS

1000,000 = EMPLOYEES

SIODE ANNUAL REVENUE

Alberta's nonprofit workforce is comprised of individuals with diverse backgrounds, skills and abilities.

This mix of talents, perspectives and experiences helps the sector to be effective and dynamic. Aboriginal peoples, mature workers, immigrants, and people with disabilities all experience rewarding careers in our sector but they are often in the minority among our employees.

Now more than ever, Alberta's nonprofit organizations must take intentional steps to attract, develop and retain employees from these currently underrepresented groups.

#### Why

Our population is aging. Baby boomers are retiring. Fewer younger workers are available. The skill shortages the nonprofit sector experienced in the mid 2000s were cyclical in nature. The labour shortage resulting from the demographic shift will be deeper and longer lasting. Historically, nonprofit organizations have been slow to undertake succession planning or to implement innovative recruitment and retention strategies to attract individuals from distinct population groups.

#### What

Although Alberta had the highest annual growth rate of employment in 2012 and the province's unemployment rate is among the lowest in Canada, the next few years will bring fierce competition for staff in all industry sectors.

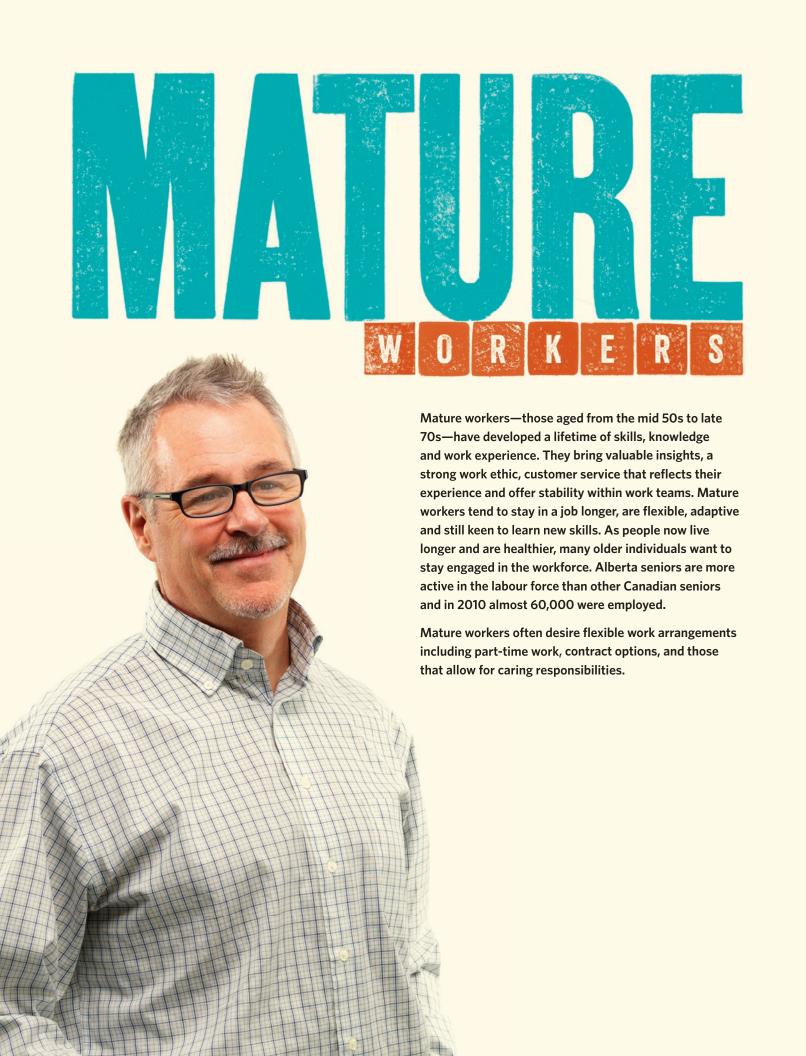
#### Who

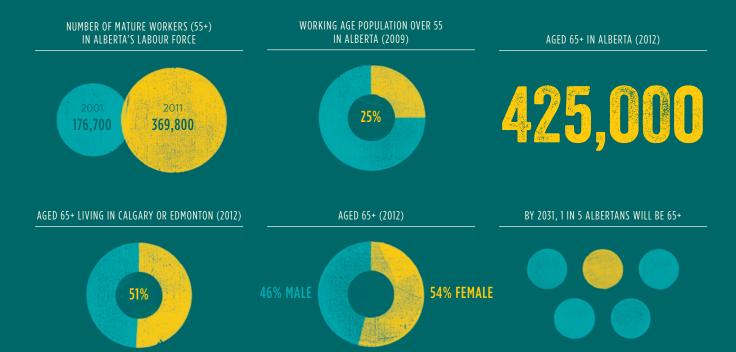
To overcome the looming employee supply challenge the nonprofit sector must better access the (largely) untapped pools of potential employees from underemployed or unemployed groups including immigrants, persons with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples and mature workers. These individuals are educated, skilled and they reflect the diversity of the community members our sector serves and collaborates with. Their contributions bring unique viewpoints, creativity and innovation. Their participation in our workforce can help us reduce recruitment costs and turnover rates—and improve our sustainability.

#### How

Learn from the experiences and impact of the individuals profiled in this publication and from nonprofit organizations who are successfully building diverse and inclusive workplaces. Read more about the looming labour supply shortage and innovative ways to attract and retain employees from underrepresented groups. Look to workforceconnect.ca for ideas, resources, tools and links. Together we can enhance the employee mix that makes our sector better, now—and for the future.

# BY 2021 ALBERTA IS EXPECTED TO HAVE A LABOUR SHORTAGE OF UP TO 114,000 WORKERS





Bruce Randall, 55, joined Alberta's nonprofit sector 10 years ago. A business lawyer, he had a mid-career epiphany and wanted to return to an underlying passion of his—community development. He took a year's sabbatical from practising law, reflected on his next steps, continued to coach minor sports and even completed a suite of business courses. More importantly, he had coffee with whomever he could to learn more about the nonprofit world.

Bruce expanded his leadership development, mentoring and team building skills. Consulting contracts soon led to several managerial positions with an athletics-anchored, private school.

"My age was no barrier to entering the nonprofit workforce," says Bruce. "In fact, for me, I was the right age to contribute. I felt I finally had some transferable skills, lots of business experience and high energy. The organization had a philosophy that mirrored mine and I immersed myself in a culture of education and the development of young leaders."

Since 2010, as Executive Director of Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council, Bruce has expanded those competencies, furthered his commitment to servant leadership—and now helps internationally-trained professionals advance their careers in Canada through various mentoring and career path strategies.

Bruce has no doubts about the positive impact older employees can make in the nonprofit sector. "To start: connect your own 'Why' story with that of your organization—the societal question or cause that draws you to the sector. Then, know that all your skills can be of great value. Perhaps that's finance, executive leadership, IT, communications or HR. Know that you can apply your depth of experience to current issues and make that difference."

Bruce works with colleagues of all ages and says staying abreast of new technologies and understanding both the values and the vocabulary of the next generations aid team cohesion.

"The nonprofit sector can be a place of great rejuvenation. Business and the practice of law helped prepare me for this next phase in my life. I combine that training with the support of my family and realize that participating in this sector is merely a natural extension of who I am. I tell other mature folks who might be interested in learning more about this environment: you'll be well challenged, use your core skills, develop others—and you'll be involved in impacting the human dynamics of community building. It's been and remains tremendously rewarding for me. I still choose to work long hours—but, it doesn't feel like work at all."









#### 48 FIRST NATIONS 136 RESERVES 3 TREATY AREAS

#### Christy Morgan has worked in Alberta's nonprofit sector

**for 13 years.** Student practicum placements during her social work education were her entry point. Following graduation she was hired by the Calgary Urban Aboriginal Initiative (CUAI), a community collaborative she has been instrumental in developing. Now, eleven years later, Christy leads the organization.

A member of the Bonaparte Band from British Columbia's Shushap Nation, Christy moved with her family to Calgary when she was seven. "Both my parents work in the corporate sector but I knew I would always be involved in work to assist others," says Christy, who experienced struggles in her childhood and has empathy for the challenges faced by Aboriginal youth.

"I know, from experience, the nonprofit sector can be a great place of employment for Aboriginal Canadians," says Christy. "Traditionally our people value community and a sense of giving back. And, I see the sector as one that is open, positive, like-minded and inclusive ... believing we are all here as human beings to help each other."

Christy increasingly sees Aboriginal colleagues in supervisory and management roles which is a positive example to others. "Certainly our people may be hired by agencies that have programs for Aboriginal clients and that makes sense. However, Aboriginal people actually bring many backgrounds and skills to the sector and work in a variety of areas."

At CUAI, the initiative has newly launched a mentorship program for Aboriginal post secondary students. Designed to help with the transition from the structure of education to the dynamic work environment, students are paired with mentors from both the corporate and nonprofit sectors. "It's an opportunity to explore what comes next, learn about the Calgary workplace and build connections," says Christy.

"If your heart pulls you to nonprofit, there are many ways to explore the variety of work in the sector," Christy tells others. "Whether a practicum placement while you are in school, an internship or even starting as a volunteer for a first experience and a way to meet potential employers."

Christy has seen progress in the make-up of the sector during the last ten years. "Many organizations now have formalized recruitment strategies to expand diversity in their team because they see the value of many viewpoints and backgrounds," says Christy. "More and more the sector is reflecting the true mix of people living and working in Canada, including Aboriginal people."

#### DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

To provide a remarkable level of service delivery at Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary (BGCC) the organization believes its employees and volunteers must reflect the diversity of their clients which includes immigrants, new Canadians, Aboriginal people, and those of all ages and abilities.

"This creates community," says Nikki Bade, Human Resources Manager at BGCC. "It provides a sense of belonging and safety which is important to the children, youth and adults we serve. Many clients who are new to Canada struggle to find their feet. When they see their ethnicity reflected back to them it creates inclusion; there is shared understanding."

It's not just front line workers at BGCC who represent the mix of Calgary's population. The organization includes diversity and inclusion in its core values and this is embodied throughout. The Board of Directors, leadership and the business team at BGCC, including HR, finance, fund development, and communications, include individuals originally from many different countries.

The team has evolved organically. "When we hire we don't intentionally recruit for diversity," says Nikki. "We always want the best candidate to fill the role and we don't exclude anyone, for any reason."

BGCC is committed to a workplace that is authentic and adaptable. This includes removing barriers to help wheelchair users navigate the office or by creating culturally-appropriate spaces including a sweat lodge in Kananaskis and an Aboriginal Smudge ceremony room that can be used with employees and clients.

Recently the HR team participated in a self directed Aboriginal Human Resource Council program to explore creating workplaces-of-choice for Aboriginal talent. "It was a robust experience that deepened our understanding of Aboriginal history and the Aboriginal experience and how that affects the employment experience of Aboriginal staff," says Nikki. The learning also helped BGCC to create a more culturally relevant pre-employment experience for Aboriginal candidates going through the recruitment process, so as to remove barriers.

"We explore all new learning and will continue to grow the ways we are fully accessible, diverse and inclusive in our workforce. Understanding more about others' experiences, unique approaches or needs—and ways of working is key. We know the blend of unique individuals and talents makes our organization stronger."

Left to right: Andy Tse, Tim Fox, Rebecca Huynh, Gunel Sharif, Essam Wasily Atta



## ARE STRONG AND RESILENT

At YMCA Calgary a culture of diversity and inclusion is inherent. The charitable organization's principles include equal access and participation by all people in an environment where they are welcomed, respected—and represented. This means YMCA staff and volunteer teams mirror the mosaic of Calgary's population including those from multiple ethnic and cultural backgrounds, ages, beliefs and abilities.

Since 2001 the organization has been more intentional in its commitment. It formed a diversity committee and through appreciative enquiry techniques explored how this core promise might be enhanced to fully resonate with staff, volunteers, members and visitors. The commitment to diversity and inclusion continues to evolve with support from the Board of Directors and Senior Management; it is reflected in the strategic plan and seen in policies, planning and practices.

The YMCA does not have formal HR recruitment strategies to attract distinct individuals from underrepresented groups to the workforce. "It's more that potential employees and volunteers see themselves reflected in our YMCA community," says Joann Hook, General Manager, Training and Development, YMCA Calgary.

Internal teams include an Aboriginal department comprised of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees. Immigrants and individuals with disabilities are also reflected among the staff and volunteers. "We are truly a mosaic of people," says Joann. "We are open and we attract and appreciate different backgrounds, styles, beliefs and competencies. It's about individuals bringing their skills and feeling a fit and a sense of belonging here. This helps our organization deliver on its mission and it maximizes the positive experiences of everyone involved with us."

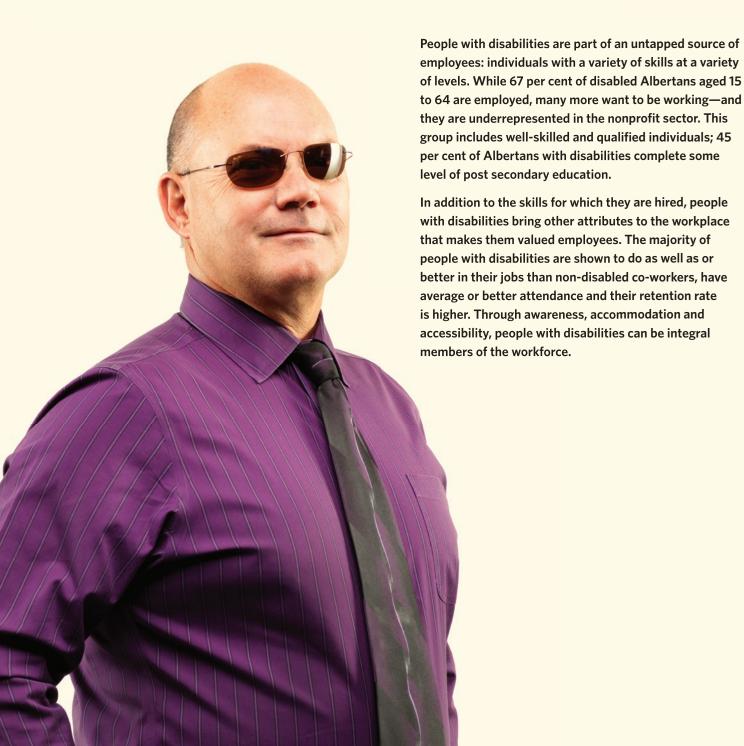
Joann believes this is an ongoing responsibility for all employers that is never 'done'. "An effective organization must always strive to become diverse and inclusive and if needed, seek out those organizations that do it well—and professional guidance to help them grow in this area," says Joann.

"At YMCA Calgary differences are welcomed and celebrated. The culture of diversity and inclusion has become embedded into the fabric of all we say and do—we live it."

Left to right: Fahim Khan, Fan Wu, Geoff Starling, Lucille Cowan







410,000+





Kelly Nadeau has worked in the nonprofit sector for 14 years. From the age of three he experienced vision loss that continued to develop and at age 34, Kelly was registered legally blind.

Kelly's disability has not stopped him from establishing a rewarding career. Following his post-secondary business studies in BC, Kelly was recruited to his first nonprofit role as part-time local facilitator for a national employment program for people who face barriers due to a variety of disabilities. "Since that first role in nonprofit, I have never looked back," says Kelly. "I think the opportunity to make a difference in people's lives—the human piece—is really important to me."

In 2003 Kelly moved to Alberta, and for the past ten years has held similar career development roles with agencies supporting people with various physical and intellectual disabilities to find work and build careers. As a professional career developer, Kelly is a member of the Career Development Association of Alberta (CDAA).

Most recently Kelly helped CNIB (The Canadian National Institute for the Blind) to develop an internship program for blind and partially sighted post-secondary students. For the students it is an opportunity to explore integration into the workforce. "It also provides employers the opportunity to experience how blind or partially sighted employees can adapt and fit within the work setting," says Kelly.

Kelly has experienced firsthand the under-tapped human resource pool of people with disabilities who are educated, have skills and abilities, and who are committed and eager to work. "People with disabilities bring creativity to their work and the ability to overcome barriers, because they

have been developing strategies all their lives to work with a society that is based on no, or few, barriers," says Kelly.

He's also coached many employers who feel uncertain or fear the implications or costs of hiring individuals with distinct employment or workplace needs such as unique furniture, or adaptive technology to aid them in their work. "There is assistance available through the Alberta Government Human Services' Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES) which helps both employees and employers to initiate successful work engagements," says Kelly. "They help ensure it is not an undue hardship for an organization to hire an employee with a disability. It may just be the need for a sit stand stool, or adjustable desk—or, as in my case, a larger computer monitor and specialty software that magnifies programs and reads to me."

Once attitudinal barriers or lack of information is mitigated —Kelly feels all employers including nonprofits can be more open to people with disabilities. "In the nonprofit sector, due to limited resources, we are often multitaskers," says Kelly. "So it may be a situation where we take time to consider how a process can be accomplished differently so that individuals of differing abilities can still participate and be a valuable part of the team."

"I feel the nonprofit sector has an opportunity to innovate in their marketing to reach and attract people with disabilities," says Kelly. "There is an opportunity to better build the trust, to take a chance on people with disabilities and to really walk-the-talk of a diverse and inclusive workforce."

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#### IMMIGRANTS COMING TO ALBERTA AGED 25-44

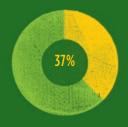
#### IMMIGRANTS WITHIN ALBERTA'S WORKING AGE POPULATION (2011)





NEW IMMIGRANTS COMING TO ALBERTA WITH A UNIVERSITY DEGREE (2010)

IMMIGRANTS ARRIVING IN CANADA EACH YEAR



230,000 - 280,000 -

Beba Svigir immigrated to Canada in 1996. Originally from the former Yugoslavia she is a high school teacher by profession. Hoping to teach in Calgary she experienced barriers faced by many newly arriving immigrant professionals: the challenge to get her credentials recognized, the reality she would have to go back to university; and, even when seeking unskilled part-time work employers wanted her to have Canadian experience.

Beba, who has been the Executive Director of the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association since 2006, initially entered the nonprofit sector by accident. The role was part-time out-of-school care assistant with the YMCA—but the fit within nonprofit made sense for her then, and now. "I believe to be happy and successful in your work it must align with your values," says Beba. "You must not settle but rather strive for employment equity where your role is in line with your education and skills." She advanced with the YMCA to a role in International Development Education, where she fully utilized her education and her passion for teaching others about global issues.

Now, as she helps support new Canadians to find employment, Beba recognizes the particular mandate of a

nonprofit organization can be a draw to immigrants; just as her ED role is a natural fit for her as she works to serve other immigrant women. "However, I also tell immigrants that many professions and backgrounds can find career opportunities in nonprofit including: education, human services, social services and accounting."

Beba notes the nonprofit sector has made (and continues to make) improvements to salary levels, benefits and recognition opportunities that also make the sector an attractive choice for immigrants, regardless of their education or specific background. "The nonprofit sector continues to progress in its commitment to be competitive as an employer looking to attract, retain and compensate the best talent. This includes ensuring immigrants have the opportunity to bring all their education and skills to the workplace and maximize their potential."

As Beba holds a leadership role in an agency serving immigrants, diversity is inherent within their organization: "Of our 160 employees, 95 per cent are first or second generation immigrants."

Building diverse and inclusive workplaces is essential to the sustainability of Alberta's nonprofit sector.

We are facing a looming labour shortage. Nonprofits in Alberta will increasingly compete with all other sectors to attract and retain talented employees. Strategically recruiting from currently underrepresented groups in our workforce opens the door to an expanded pool of candidates with diverse skills, education, experiences and perspectives. Organizations with diverse and inclusive workplaces have less turnover and experience better decision-making, creativity and innovation.

#### Take action:

#### **MEASURE AND ASSESS**

your current diversity and culture of inclusion

#### **HONESTLY ADDRESS**

perceptions and biases

## ENGAGE

outside expertise where necessary

## IMPLEMENT

diversity / cultural sensitivity training

## DEVELOP

targeted distinct recruitment strategies

## PROVIDE

leadership education widely

## SUPPORT

flexible work arrangements

## SPONSOR

employee mentoring programs

#### AUTHENTICALLY

reflect diversity and inclusion in policies, practices and language

#### RECRUIT+PROMOTE

from diverse pools of candidates

## These resources informed this publication and are linked on our website:

Alberta Labour Force Profiles-Immigrants 2011, Government of Alberta

Engaging the Mature Worker-An Action Plan for Alberta, Government of Alberta

2012 Annual Alberta Labour Market Review, Government of Alberta, 2013

Workforce Inclusion Plan, Viable Calgary, 2011

Beyond the Boomers: A Guidebook for Building an Immigrant Workforce in the Nonprofit Sector, Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, 2011

Labour Supply in Canada, the US, the UK, and Ireland, RDA Global, 2012

Aboriginal Relations Annual Report 2010-2011, Government of Alberta, 2011

Connecting the Dots: Aboriginal Workforce and Economic Development in Alberta, Government of Alberta, 2010

Alberta Career and Industry Outlook—Economic and other trends affecting the world of work to 2015, Government of Alberta, 2012

Alberta Immigration Progress Report 2011, Government of Alberta

Quick Facts & Statistics—Seniors in Alberta and Albertans with Disabilities, Government of Alberta

The road to inclusion. Integrating people with disabilities into the workplace, Deloitte White paper, 2010

Canada—Alberta Labour Market & Labour Market Development Agreements 2012/2013 Annual Plan, Government of Alberta

Chart 1.5 Urban Aboriginal population, Statistics Canada, 2006

## WORKFORGEGONNEGT.GA

Visit our website for tools and links to help you build (or join) a diverse and inclusive workplace.



The Alberta Nonprofit Workforce Council coordinates a province-wide cross-sectoral implementation of A Workforce Strategy for Alberta's Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector.

To learn more, visit WorkforceConnect.ca



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