



Sector Snapshot

The Voluntary Sector in Calgary

How many voluntary sector organizations are there in Calgary? What do they do? These seemingly simple questions have been surprisingly difficult to answer, and widely different estimates have been used. This inaugural *Sector Snapshot* takes the first steps towards answering these questions. Developing it has allowed us to see what we know and what we still need to find out about the sector in Calgary.

The term “voluntary sector” refers to a wide range of organizations including registered charities, incorporated nonprofits and unincorporated and unregistered groups.

A number of factors have made it difficult to develop an accurate picture of the sector in Calgary: data collection and tracking is in its infancy; statistics fluctuate as organizations emerge, evolve and fold; universities, colleges, hospitals and other quasi-governmental organizations may or may not be included in definitions of the sector; groups may be legally registered in one city but function in others; and statistics on unincorporated groups are not available. Furthermore, while there has been an increase in recent years of the data gathered on the sector, it is often not specific to the community level.

The statistics in this document were obtained by cross-referencing provincial data on incorporated nonprofits provided to CCVO by Service Alberta¹ with federal data on registered charities available from the Canada Revenue Agency².

This snapshot will help establish benchmarks to monitor growth and change in an ever-evolving and challenging environment.

We encourage you to share this information with your staff and supporters, other nonprofits, the public, business and government.

TYPES OF VOLUNTARY SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

1. Registered Charities

- Charities are registered federally with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) in compliance with the *Income Tax Act (Canada)*. As a condition of registration, organizations must prove that they provide benefit to the general community or to an appreciably significant segment of the community through the advancement of education or religion, helping the poor, and other purposes “beneficial to the community”.
- Charities are exempt from the payment of income taxes and may issue receipts that allow donors to obtain a tax credit from donations.
- There are three types of federally registered charities: charitable organizations, private foundations, and public foundations.
- The CRA codes charities by sub-sector and the chart on the next page provides a breakdown of Calgary charities based on this coding. By far the largest proportion of charities is defined as those with religious purposes, at 36%.

STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS (as of July, 2007)

Type of organization (see main text for details on types)	Number of organizations in Calgary	Number of organizations in Alberta
1. Registered Charities (includes universities, colleges, hospitals and other health-related charities).	1,952 (22% of Alberta's total)	8,745
2. Incorporated Nonprofits	4,182 (22% of Alberta's total)	18,751
3. Distinct groups – registered charities and incorporated nonprofits (accounts for the 981 groups that are both registered charities and incorporated nonprofits)	5,153 distinct groups (1,952 registered charities, plus 4,182 incorporated nonprofits, minus 981 duplicates)	unavailable
4. Unincorporated groups – neither registered nor incorporated.	unavailable	unavailable

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IN BRIEF

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- Groups that promote and organize youth sports and recreation only qualify for charitable status if their activities are a means of achieving a charitable mission, such as poverty relief.

2. Incorporated Nonprofits

- In Alberta, nonprofits are legally incorporated with the Corporate Registry Office under the Societies Act, the Religious Societies' Land Act or the Companies Act.

There are five types of incorporated nonprofits: societies, nonprofit public companies, nonprofit private companies, recreation public companies, and recreation private companies.

- Unlike the Canada Revenue Agency, Service Alberta does not track nonprofit work areas or sub-sectors. However, the National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations (NSNVO) reports that in 2003, sports and recreation comprised the largest group of nonprofits in Alberta³.
- The "not-for-profit" or "non profit" sector also includes organizations developed to benefit their own members, rather than the broader community (e.g. professional organizations and labour unions).

3. Distinct Groups – registered charities and incorporated nonprofits

- Some organizations are both registered charities and incorporated nonprofits. Cross-referencing the federal and

provincial data shows that 981 groups fit this category. This results in a total of 5,153 distinct, legally constituted voluntary sector organizations in Calgary.

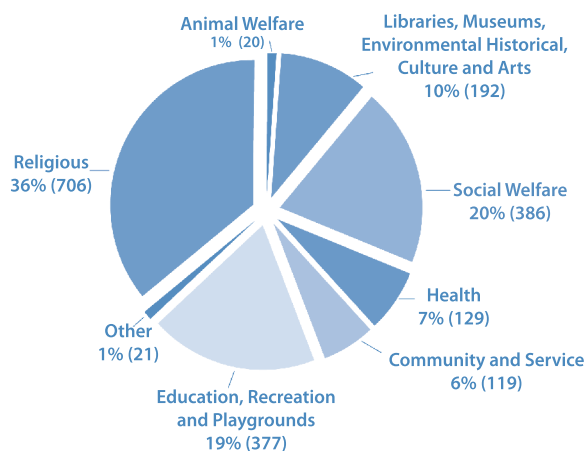
4. Unincorporated Groups – neither registered nor incorporated

- Although there is speculation that organizations and initiatives that are not registered or incorporated are numerous, forming the base of a 'sector iceberg', there is currently no mechanism for counting or tracking these organizations.

- Unincorporated groups include coalitions, seasonal event committees, neighbourhood arts troupes, environmental initiatives and sport groups, among others. This is a fluid sub-sector, with some groups dissolving, others remaining informally structured and still others becoming more formalized by applying for registered charity or incorporated nonprofit status.

- Understanding the nature of these groups is important, as many emerge in response to pressing community needs and compelling community desires. They often act as incubators of programs, organizations and movements and are evidence of a healthy, engaged community and active democratic civil society.

Registered Charities in Calgary by CRA-identified Sub-sector
July 2007²



* The number in parenthesis indicates how many individual organizations there are in each category.
** The religious category includes congregations and the promotion of faith and religion.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Ministry of Service Alberta: Charities, Societies & Non-Profit Organizations
www.servicealberta.gov.ab.ca/index.cfm?fuseaction=section:charities
- Canada Revenue Agency: Charities and Giving.
www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/charities/menu-e.html

Sources

- Service Alberta. 2006. Government of Alberta.
- Canada Revenue Agency. 2007. Canadian registered charities.
www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/charities/online_listings/charity_listings-e.html
- Statistics Canada. 2004. National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations (NSNVO). <http://nonprofitscan.imaginecanada.ca/en/nsnvo>

This In Brief is provided for general information only. While we have done our best to research its content, we cannot guarantee accuracy.

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