



Stay Well, Stay Strong, Stay **Kind**

C A L G A R Y
DROP-IN
C E N T R E

2020-21 Report to Community

April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021

We are all Treaty people

In the spirit of respect, reciprocity and truth, we honour and acknowledge Moh'kinsstis, and the traditional Treaty 7 Territory and oral practices of the Blackfoot Confederacy: Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, as well as the Îyâxe Nakoda and Tsuut'ina Nations. We acknowledge that this Territory is home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3 within the historical Northwest Métis homeland. Finally, we acknowledge all Nations – Indigenous and non – who live, work and play on this land, and who honour and celebrate this territory.

This land is a sacred gathering place, which provides us with an opportunity to engage in and demonstrate leadership on reconciliation. Though we are early on in our journey, the DI is deeply committed to seeking truth and reconciliation with the Indigenous population.

Our Mantra

Stay Well

We promote, provide, and support holistic wellbeing.

Stay Strong

We are resilient, focused, and optimistic in our support of each other and our community.

Stay Kind

We accept each person's uniqueness with compassion and empathy.





This past fiscal year has been one of the most unique years of my career. It goes without saying that COVID-19 has presented immeasurable challenges for everyone, and the homeless-serving sector is no exception. With every challenge comes an opportunity and when I look back on this difficult year, what stands out are not the challenges themselves but the incredible accomplishments that the DI team was able to achieve while navigating curveball after curveball.

When we were required to limit our capacity for public health reasons, we immediately pivoted and found available spaces to host overflow shelter and contributed to supporting assisted isolation to those in need. Our community partners such as the Calgary TELUS Convention Centre and The Alex were essential in this process, and we are so grateful for the support they have provided. While ensuring that no person in need was turned away from our emergency shelter services, we were also able to house 402 individuals, enhance and expand our Free Goods Program, maintain a balanced budget, and expand our in-shelter health services.

The homeless serving sector has not previously collaborated to the extent it has this year. All shelter providers solved this problem together and continue to share learnings to ensure everyone who needs shelter has access to it. None of this could be possible without the unwavering support of our funding partners, donors, and all our community partners.

Throughout the last year, I have had the honour of learning just how resilient and agile our sector is. As an agency, the DI has developed new skills that we will apply to our future work serving Calgary's most vulnerable. The community at large, our Board, and our supporters have taught us valuable lessons and assisted us in our mission to end chronic homelessness. We plan to strengthen those relationships and deliver even better results next year, together.

- Sandra Clarkson, Executive Director



The role of the Board is to offer governance, guidance, and support to the DI's operations as they evolve and adjust to the everchanging needs of vulnerable Calgarians.

Being a part of the DI's Board of Directors as Chair has been a source of pride for two years now and this past fiscal year is one that has been particularly memorable.

This year required the development of a Board-level COVID-19 task force to ensure the maintenance of sustainable and safe operations. The DI Board also supported the development of an inspiring new strategic plan, to be executed between 2020 and 2023.

The Agency's capable staff has made our job of governance an enriching experience and I would like to congratulate each employee for their hard work. I would also like to congratulate the Board of Directors for their valuable contributions; each Director is a unique asset to the Agency. I personally value the opportunity to witness the Board and Agency's strategic work being brought to life within the community, making a difference every day.

- Graham Richardson, Board Chair

Our Mission

We welcome adults at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Working collaboratively, we provide access to a spectrum of care that supports each person's transition to the most independent living possible — including emergency shelter, programs and services, and affordable and supported housing.

Our Vision

A community where everyone can find their home.

Our Values

Kindness

We accept each person's uniqueness with compassion and empathy.

Community

Through collaborative partnerships, we work together to build inclusive teams.

Respect

Our actions honour the rights, differences, and dignity of others.

Wellness

We promote, provide and support holistic wellbeing.

Accountability

We operate with transparency and integrity in both our relationships and our commitments.



Strategic Priorities | 2020-2023

According to the last point-in-time count in 2018, there are roughly 2,911 Calgarians experiencing homelessness on any given night. During this last reporting period, the DI served 2,807 unique people at our emergency shelters – all of whom needed a place to rest, refuel, and access housing support, health services, and/or free goods. Ultimately, our goal is to help adults without a fixed address access a home that meets their needs. To accomplish this, we have eight guiding strategic priorities.

- #1** Coordinate a proactive homeless-serving sector **response plan**.
- #2 Case Management:** Expand assessment, triage, and integrate case management across programs within the agency and, where possible, across the homeless serving sector to help clients achieve the most independent living possible.
- #3 Housing Access:** Develop a strategy with other agencies (or our colleagues, partners) to house/find homes for those in the shelter continuing to experience chronic homelessness.
- #4 Health Services:** Working collaboratively, we will establish access to existing health and addictions services or develop and implement new services where no appropriate options exist.
- #5 Workplace Safety:** Create work practices and procedures that are actively monitored and managed to promote safety and wellness in the workplace for staff and volunteers.
- #6 Efficiency:** Establish best practice professional management capabilities to optimize the efficiency of our assets and resources.
- #7 Engagement:** Leverage data to demonstrate impact unique to each stakeholder group to build engagement and support for our vision and mission.
- #8** Extensible **data** collection, reporting, and analysis systems.

2020-2021 Board of Directors

Chair: Graham Richardson
Vice-Chair: Jackie McAtee
Past Chair: Ken Uzeloc
Treasurer: Jase Vanover
Secretary: Andrea Whyte

Fiona Clement
Catherine Hamill
Thomas Hansen
Mirela Hiti
Colan Kee
Vic Kirby
Chris Montgomery
Tom Whitehead



Celebrating
60
Years
of **Kindness**
1961-2021

Pivot: A word synonymous with change, rotate, and swivel

Written by Isabel R.F., Senior Manager, Training & Development who has served for 19 years at the DI

Pivot is a word that comes to mind when describing the 60-year evolution of the Calgary Drop-In Centre (the DI). It describes the changing, rotating, and swiveling of the agency's programs and services to meet the needs of those seeking shelter and services. Over the years, the DI has pivoted from focusing on basic needs to long-term solutions.

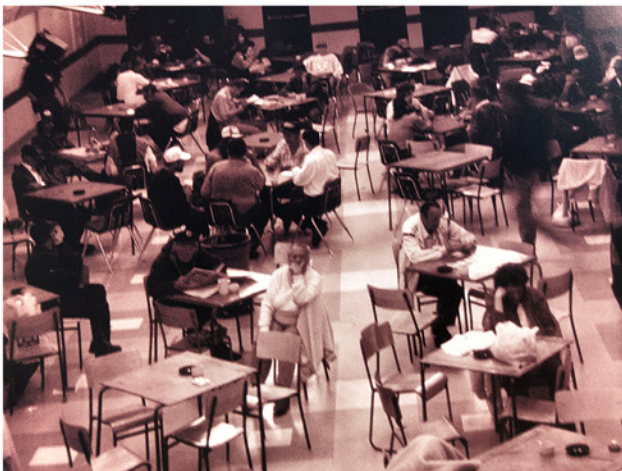
What started out as a night shelter, the DI expanded to a 24-hour shelter with meals, counselling, clothing, and an employment office. Services grew to include a diverse range of programs. The counselling department assisted in the acquisition of identification, securing income support, and finding health care providers. Eventually, the counsellor role also evolved to be the role of case manager.



In 2005, the DI expanded its operations and purchased the first of three apartment buildings specifically for housing people experiencing homelessness. The objective was to pilot a unique model of renting to market renters and low-income tenants within the same apartment building. It was a way of reducing stigma and fostering inclusion. Twelve years later, in 2017, the DI fully transformed into a housing-focused shelter. All staff were tasked with finding right-fit housing solutions for as many folks accessing shelter as possible.

Though it began long ago, our services are swiveling again to address health-related concerns. Around 2008, the DI launched the first provincial nurse-run clinic dedicated to giving health care to those in the shelter. Since, our on-site nurses and health specialists have provided care and guidance to many marginalized individuals.

The word pivot is also commonly spoken about when talking about COVID-19. This past year was witness to the amazing resiliency and strength of the DI's team as they pivoted to meet the new health guidelines and restrictions, while continuing to find housing and provide health care to the individuals who find safety and support within the DI's sturdy walls. We've learned that "to pivot" is "to evolve."





Stay Well

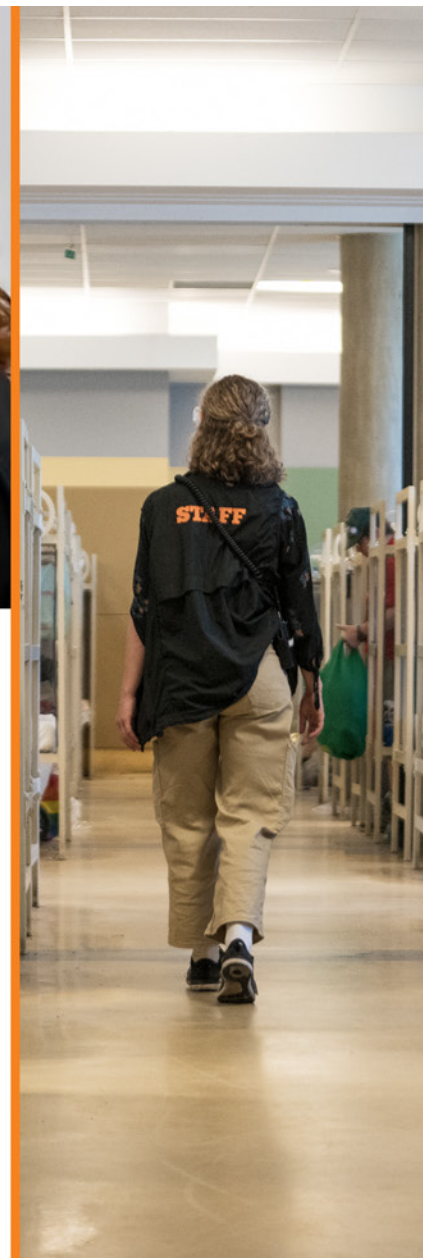
Drug poisoning, one of our greatest threats

Addiction is rooted in trauma, and COVID-19 has contributed to a spike in triggers, isolation, and pain. At the DI, some folks turned to pain killers such as opioids, which temporarily take away the deep and agonizing pain of their reality.

In the last fiscal year, frontline staff at the DI have responded to 394 drug poisonings. This number equates to more than one poisoning each day, and it's not uncommon for the same people to be poisoned repeatedly.

Frontline shelter workers have been consistently challenged to keep people alive on an ongoing basis. At the same time, people are struggling and have nowhere else to turn. In Calgary, there simply aren't enough accessible detox beds and appropriate treatment options available to address the growing need. We need sustainable solutions.

Read more at calgarydropin.ca/blog





On the front lines of COVID-19

In the early days of March 2020, we feared the worst. Would there be mass deaths among the vulnerable population and frontline staff? Would we have enough space for everyone needing shelter? Would we be able to keep stock of enough toilet paper and PPE? Would another organization with more experience in managing outbreaks step in and take over? Responding to several outbreaks and hundreds of COVID-19 cases, we are grateful that no clients lost their lives to COVID-19.

Our maximum capacity was reached only a handful of times, and our stock of supplies were plentiful (with great thanks to our concerned and compassionate community). Alongside our peers, system planners, governments, and community, we learned how to handle outbreaks as if we were experts in pandemic response all along.

Read more at calgarydropin.ca/blog



Beat the Burn

The pandemic amplified our already complex work environments across the homeless-serving sector. That's why the DI's own Colin Richardson invented a new method to show solidarity across the sector with his Beat the Burn initiative. He designed and offered Beat the Burn pins to anyone who was experiencing or overcoming the mental challenges COVID-19 posed. Those pins signified an openness to talk about the struggles employees were facing and a sign they were not in this fight alone.

Thank you, Colin, for prioritizing positive mental health and bringing frontline workers together.

Read more at letsbeattheburn.com



Our Impact

Always Evolving

As social and environmental issues become more complex, so does our work. With great thanks to our staff, funders, and supporters, our impact was considerable this year.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to be front of mind for us, as was providing access to shelter, health, and housing for our clients. Even after responding to multiple outbreaks and an increasingly dangerous drug crisis, we continue to excel at meeting the unique challenges our clients face daily.

Shelter

Average # of people sleeping in shelter per day
Total # of unique people accessing emergency services
Total # of meals served

Health

Total # of times we responded to drug poisoning²
Total # of visits to Health Services clinic

Housing

Total # of people we housed
Total # of seniors (55+) we housed³
Total # of people diverted from shelter and into their own home⁴

Free Goods Program

Total # of people/families who accessed furniture and other household items
Total # of visitors who received clothing and essentials
Total # of individuals impacted by receiving a computer
Total # of agencies with whom we shared our free goods

2018/19 2019/20 2020/21

767
8,484
2,000,000

725
5,914
1,039,787

423 ¹
3,417
592,384

2018/19 2019/20 2020/21

109
5,715

212
6,235

394
14,057

2018/19 2019/20 2020/21

307
145
N/A

292
138
97

402
147
92 *

2018/19 2019/20 2020/21

1,993

2,978

1,566 *

165,000
670
45

200,000
1,828
92

134,575 *
1,920 *
105

Resources

Total # of full-time staff
Total # of volunteers
Total # of meal sponsors
Total # of cash donors

2018/19 2019/20 2020/21

300+
26,400
236
2,181

255
14,073
460
2,225

429
291 *⁵
351 *
3,549

Notes:

* Impacted by program closures due to COVID-19

1. Due to COVID-19, our capacity decreased from 1,038 per night to a range of 300 – 500 per night.
2. To decrease stigma, we have shifted our language from “overdose” to “drug poisoning”.
3. We define “senior” as 55+ due to the increased health risks that folks experiencing homelessness face.
4. By “diverted” we mean that our Diversion Team housed new clients within 3-weeks of their time in shelter.
5. We have not yet been able to invite volunteers back into our main building. This has significantly impacted our operations this fiscal year, losing more than 194,000 volunteer hours this past fiscal year. This is the equivalent of losing 90 full-time staff!

Stay Strong



A focus on housing

The aim of a housing-focused shelter is to empower individuals to move out of emergency shelter and into safe, permanent housing as quickly as possible without sacrificing quality of life. This reduces the risk of complications associated with the cycle of homelessness, helps those who are trapped in the cycle (including those who are chronically homeless), and reduces the risk of contracting illness such as COVID-19 for people in congregate living.

Due to the risk of COVID-19 spreading throughout the shelter, individuals who were medically compromised or more susceptible to severe symptoms from the virus were prioritized for our pilot transitional housing programs. Occupying hotel suites, individuals worked with housing workers to find their own home. Even as the pandemic progressed, we were still able to house hundreds of people.





Photo credit: University of Calgary

Using research to understand homelessness

A large part of our housing-focused transformation has been making informed decisions based on the best data available.

Partnering with Dr. Geoff Messier, professor in electrical and software engineering, and his associates at the University of Calgary, we used internal data to better understand how individuals interact with the shelter system. This led to promising new research that has shown improved ways to offer high-impact support based on an individual's pattern of shelter stays. This research has the potential to save hundreds – and in some cases 1,000s – of days in shelter.

Quality of Life Surveys

In 2020, the DI started conducting surveys of our clients to determine their quality of life. Surveys are voluntary and conducted with clients three months after they have been housed, with the intention of assessing the changes in the quality of life of individuals who have recently obtained housing. Questions covered subjects such as the amount of sleep, stress levels, outlook on life, overall mental health and more.

Since November 2020, 80 people have participated in these surveys, and the outcomes have been very positive. Of the 80 people who completed the survey, 72% reported a decreased level of stress, 76% reported increased happiness, and 59% reported an increase in overall mental health. Aimed at being a long-term project, these surveys will be used to measure the positive outcomes of our Strategic Priority 3: Housing Access.





Something for Everyone

Proudly supported by the Calgary Homeless Foundation, our Free Goods Program provides lightly used goods, like furniture, kitchenware, clothing, computers, mobile phones, small appliances, books, and more, to low and no-income Calgarians who are building a life for themselves and their family.

The program offers a meaningful second life for lightly used goods. Not only does the program help those experiencing and exiting homelessness, it also prevents unnecessary waste of items that still have life in them! The program is truly a win-win.



Free Goods Program
by the Calgary Drop-In Centre

Proudly funded by
Calgary Homeless
FOUNDATION

Emergency Shelter

Meet with Housing Worker



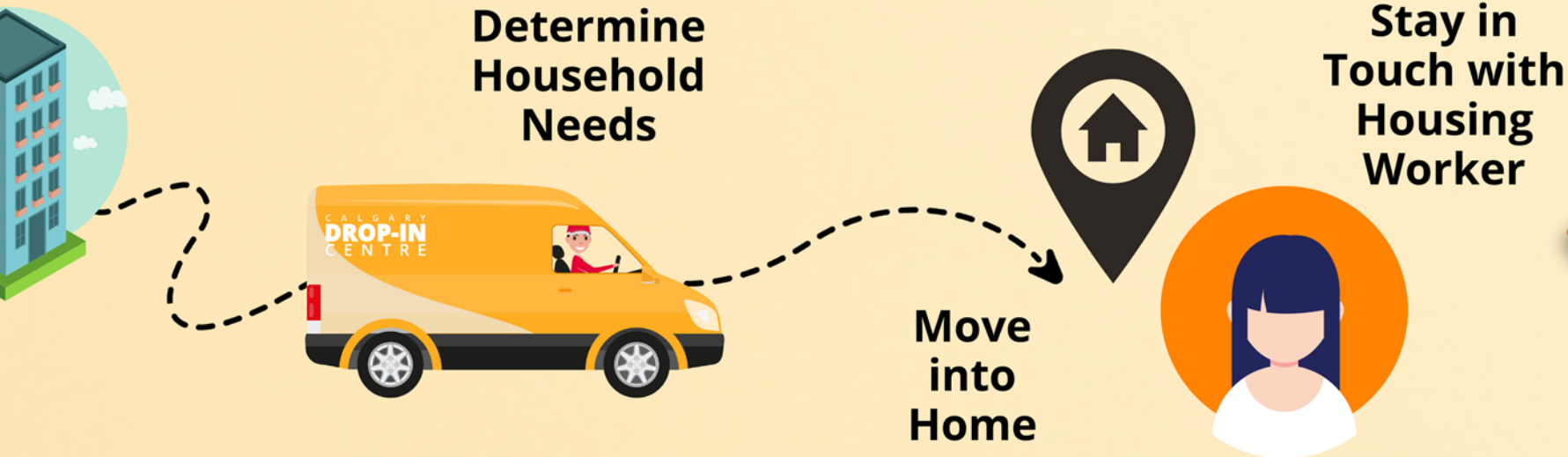
Work on Housing Plan



Free Goods Program

Clothing Room

Open to the public, our Clothing Room provides donated clothing, footwear, jackets, socks, undies, and other supplies to anyone who needs them.



Donation Centre



We provide furniture, household goods, clothing, computers and more, as well as moving support, to low- and no-income Calgarians.

We accept almost anything to help all Calgarians.

CLIC Program



Computers for Low-Income Calgarians (CLIC) provides refurbished computers to low- and no-income Calgarians and their families.

**All of our programs are
fueled by your donations**

To learn how to apply for the program, and how to donate your gently used items, visit calgarydropin.ca/free-goods

Stay Kind



Stone Creek Charitable Foundation

Thank you for your ongoing support and donation of the Silvertip Resort Golf Course each year for our charity golf tournament, the Kindness Open. Your support allows us to invite people far and wide to come and enjoy a beautiful day of golf to support Calgary's most vulnerable.

Thank you Calgary!

We cannot do the work we do alone, and the past year has cemented how critical our community is to every facet of what we do.

From donations of time and money to landlord support, we are grateful for our community every single day.

Helping Alberta

Helping Alberta donated vast amounts of PPE including latex gloves, hand sanitizer, face shields and masks. Your support provided our emergency shelter with the protection it required to continue helping Calgary's most vulnerable as safely as possible.

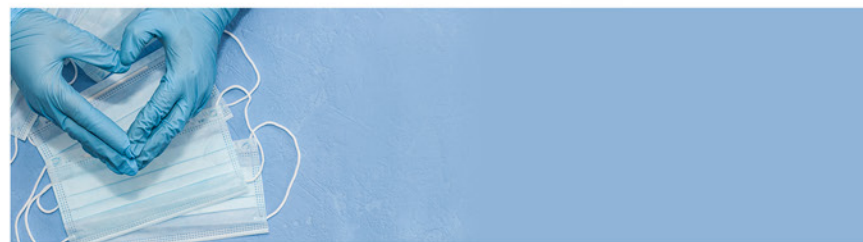




Bank of America Merrill Lynch

Bank of America Merrill Lynch

Bank of America Merrill Lynch supported our meal sponsorship program with a generous financial contribution. We are honoured to count you as a partner in our effort to ensure Calgarians have nutritious meals each day in shelter.



Daryl K. Seaman Foundation

The Daryl K. Seaman Foundation provided financial support towards our COVID-19 emergency response in shelter. Your donation ensured that people had the protection needed to perform their jobs safely.

Rogers Communication

Rogers Communication generously supported our COVID-19 Emergency Response. Your donation exemplifies the kindness and community spirit which ensures the DI can be more than emergency shelter.



Financial Summary

April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021

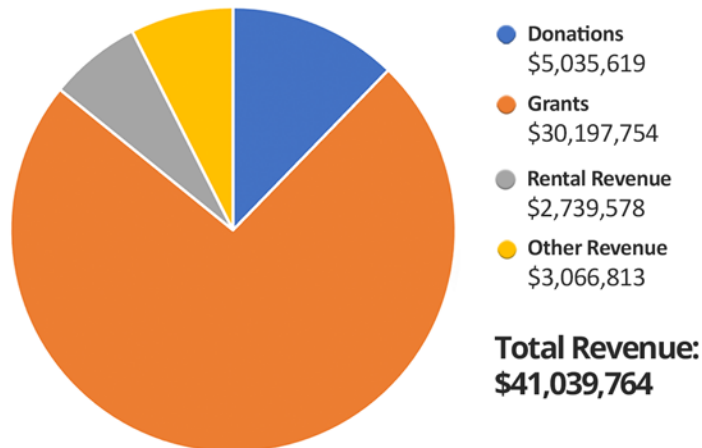


I joined the DI Board as Treasurer this past year and have also supported the Agency as Chair of the Finance and Facilities Committee. I've witnessed the DI's finance team make great strides to improve its efficiency and effectiveness and it has been rewarding to be a part of the process.

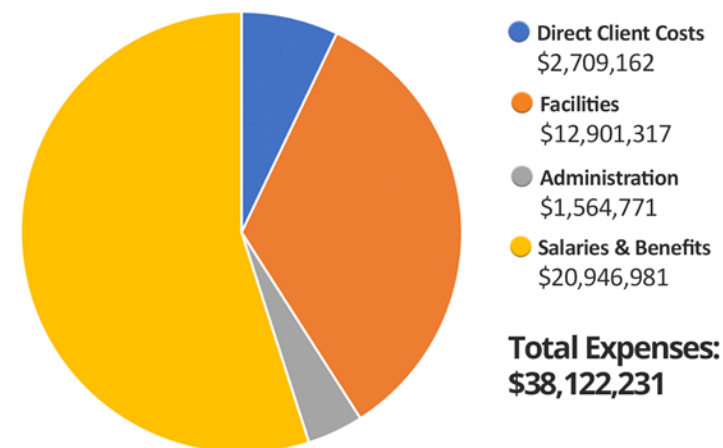
I would like to thank Jason Deliman, our previous Treasurer, for his 10 years of service in the position. I look forward to continuing the important work of ensuring a financially stable and successful future for the Calgary Drop-In Centre.

- Jase Vanover, Treasurer, Board of Directors

REVENUE



EXPENSES



To view a complete financial statement of the DI, visit calgarydropin.ca/financials

Charity Intelligence names Calgary Drop-In Centre Top 5 Impact Charity in Calgary

Charity Intelligence researches Canadian charities for donors. Charity Intelligence's reports and ratings help Canadians give confidently. With greater confidence, people say they gave 32% more in cash donations. Charity Intelligence reviews and rates over 800 Canadian charities and provides in-depth reports on philanthropic sectors like Canada's environment, cancer research, and homelessness.

Today, over 430,000 users come to Charity Intelligence's website (charityintelligence.ca) as a go-to trusted source for information on Canadian charities. Through rigorous and independent research, Charity Intelligence helps donors be informed and give intelligently. After extensive review, Charity Intelligence named the Calgary Drop-In Centre a Top 100 Rated Charity in Canada and a Top 5 Impact Charity in Calgary.



Thank you to our funding partners



Calgary Homeless
FOUNDATION

Canada



United Way
Calgary and Area



CALGARY
FOUNDATION
FOR COMMUNITY, FOREVER



Join the DI family!

How to get involved:

- ✓ **Donate** to areas of greatest need
- ✓ **Volunteer** your time and talent
- ✓ **Subscribe** to receive updates

Have a unique idea about how you can make an impact?

We'd love to hear from you! Email us at **community@thedi.ca**

calgarydropin.ca

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