

CALGARY
DROP-IN
CENTRE

2021 - 22 Report to Community

April 1, 2021 - March 31, 2022



Land Acknowledgement

The Calgary Drop-In Centre acknowledges that we are on Treaty 7 territory. Reconciliation is the responsibility for all.

We respect the oral practices and cultures of the people of the Blackfoot Confederacy of Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations, the Îyâxe Nakoda of Chiniki, Bears paw, and Wesley First Nations, the TsuuT'ina Nation and the people of Métis Nation Region 3, all of whom have been and continue to be strong stewards of these lands and efforts to enrich our communities.

We commit to being a learning organization in efforts of reconciliation and decolonization.



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

Respect

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

Community

Through collaborative partnerships, we work together as a team, building inclusive communities.

Kindness

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

Wellness

We promote, provide, and support holistic wellbeing.

Accountability

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

**Sandra
Clarkson**
Executive Director



I am honoured to have the opportunity to address the community as the DI celebrates our wins, acknowledges our challenges, and reflects on the work we have accomplished this past fiscal year.

The DI is truly blessed to have dedicated and compassionate staff that fuel our positive impact. The team at the DI has been busy delivering and improving our programs that serve the Calgary community. A continuous focus for the DI is our housing-focused shelter model. With the help of our community partners, our team was successful in housing 358 individuals this past fiscal year, with a return-to-shelter rate of 3.78%. This year we also focused on formalizing our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion journey at the DI, committing to making the DI a safer place for our employees and for those we serve.

In Calgary, we welcomed many new members of City Council, including Terry Wong, Councillor for Ward 7, and Mayor Jyoti Gondek, both of whom have hit the ground running and been valuable partners with the DI and other social services in Calgary.

This past year I was asked by the Province of Alberta to participate in the Coordinated Community Response to Homelessness Task Force. Thank you to the Government of Alberta and Minister Jason Luan for the opportunity to have a seat at a table with great thought leaders in our sector.

I'd like to thank our dedicated board of directors for their continued support and governance, as well as the volunteers and donors of all kinds, without whom we could not do the work that we do.

As the Calgary Drop-In Centre and the needs of our community evolve, we face new challenges head-on, with a research and evidence-based approach to solving some of our city's most complex issues. With our community, we approach next year with innovation, dedication, and, as always, kindness.

- Sandra Clarkson, Executive Director

**Graham
Richardson**
Board Chair



Fiscal year 2021-22 was an exciting first year of the DI's three-year strategic plan. The governance that the board provides helps ensure that the DI's programs and strategic decisions are aligned with this strategic plan. I am proud of the work that management has done towards the vision of a community where everyone can find their home.

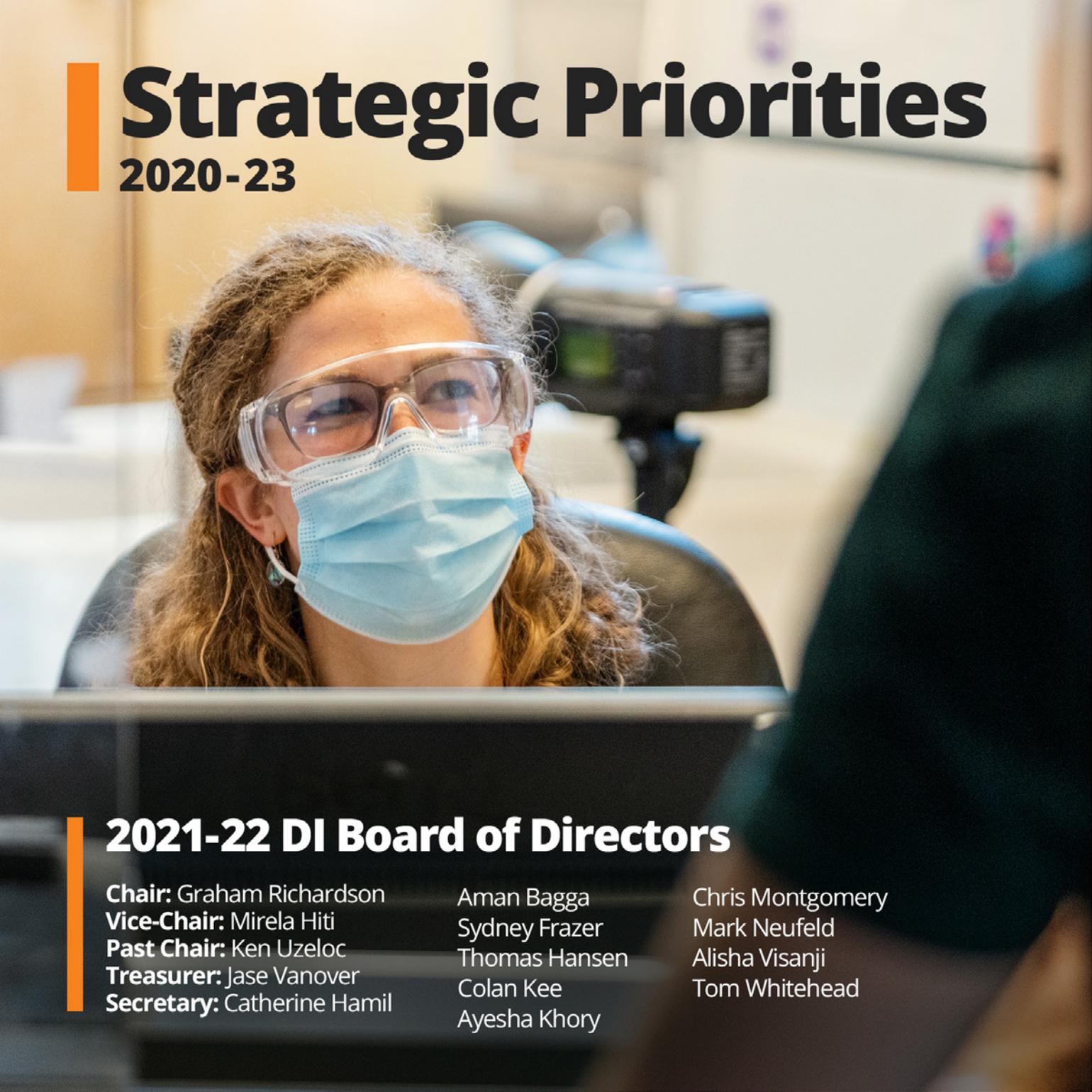
I'd like to acknowledge the contributions of board members whose terms ended this past year: our former Vice Chair, Jackie McAtee; our former Secretary, Andrea Whyte; as well as Fiona Clement and Vic Kirby. Though these individuals are no longer on the board, their contributions will continue to leave a positive legacy.

This year we welcomed five new board members, Aman Bagga, Sydney Frazer, Ayesha Khory, Mark Neufeld, and Alisha Visanji. The diverse skills of these individuals have already had a strong impact and provided new perspectives to the DI Board.

I'd like to thank all the board members for their countless hours of dedication to the DI. Importantly, I close by congratulating the staff of the DI, the leadership team, and the community at large on another year of positive impact in Calgary. I look forward to continuing the journey next year.

- Graham Richardson, Board Chair





Strategic Priorities

2020-23

2021-22 DI Board of Directors

Chair: Graham Richardson

Vice-Chair: Mirela Hiti

Past Chair: Ken Uzeloc

Treasurer: Jase Vanover

Secretary: Catherine Hamil

Aman Bagga

Sydney Frazer

Thomas Hansen

Colan Kee

Ayesha Khory

Chris Montgomery

Mark Neufeld

Alisha Visanji

Tom Whitehead

According to the last point-in-time count in 2021, there are roughly 1,935 people experiencing sheltered homelessness on any given night.

During this last reporting period, the DI served 4,416 unique individuals at our emergency shelters – all of whom needed a place to rest, refuel, 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 Response plan:** Maintain a low-barrier shelter and collaborate proactively with our peers in the homeless-serving sector.
- 2 Case Management:** Expand assessment, triage, and integrated 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 Data:** Continue to refine our extensible data collection, reporting, and analysis systems.

Shelter



of times a life was saved after a drug poisoning

209	383	1,025
2019-20	2020-21	2021-22



of doses of Naloxone

454	1,148	2,733
2019-20	2020-21	2021-22

Language Matters: "Drug Poisonings" vs. "Overdoses"

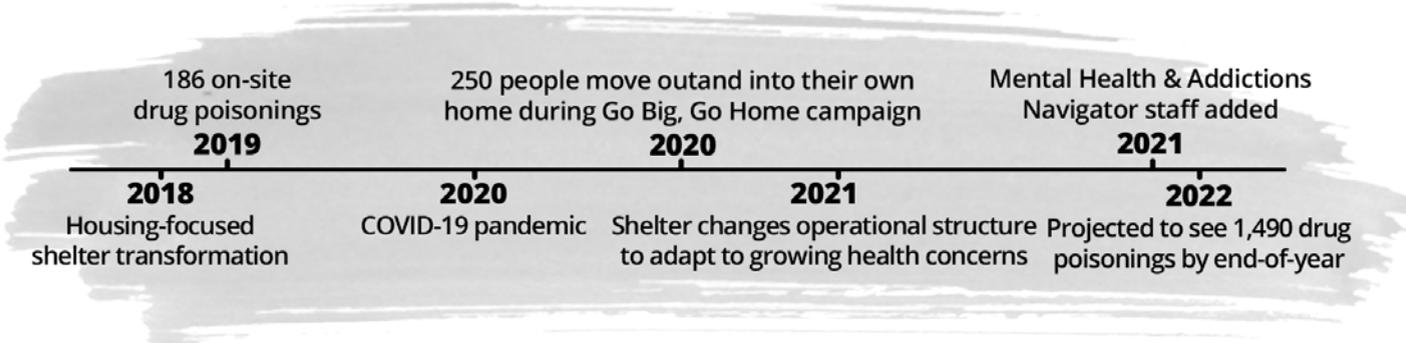
At the DI, we are actively trying to combat the stigma around drug use. We use the less-stigmatizing term drug poisoning instead of overdose. Medical professionals tell us that this stigma prevents people from seeking help, from using drugs in the presence of others, and from having Naloxone kits on hand.

How has emergency shelter evolved in the last five years?

Since our housing-focused transformation in 2017, we've seen hundreds of people move into their own homes. Those who still rely on our services for shelter often have complex health situations that require even more wraparound services than most available housing programs can offer.

Data analysis, combined with acknowledging the experiences of the front line, we recognized our need to adapt our services once again and began to provide even more specialized support, particularly around mental health and substance use disorders.

With increased specialization, new staff positions – like our new Mental Health and Addictions Navigator – and more specific staff training were required to prepare for the challenging realities of this new work environment.



of people sleeping in shelter per day

725 2019-20
423 2020-21
446 2021-22



of unique individuals who accessed shelter

5,914 2019-20
3,417 2020-21
4,416 2021-22



of meals served

1,039,787 2019-20
592,384 2020-21
512,236 2021-22



The DI follows these six foundational elements as a housing-focused emergency shelter:



Low barrier



Shelter is a process, not a destination



Person-centred care



Trauma-informed



Harm reduction principles



Housing First principles



of people housed

292	402	358
2019-20	2020-21	2021-22



of people who avoided homelessness by early intervention

97	92	121
2019-20	2020-21	2021-22



% rate of people returning to shelter

3.68%	2.99%	3.78%
2019-20	2020-21	2021-22

Housing



”
Lori did not want to leave the DI. She had been with us for more than a decade! Yet, during the pandemic, Lori said goodbye to several friends who found housing of their own.

Feeling lonely, she too decided it was time to move forward. After doing plenty of research, she found the perfect apartment close to the friends she made at the DI. Now, she's right where she deserves to be – at home.

Health Services

During COVID-19, our Health Services Clinic expanded to 24/7 operations going from four nurses to a robust department.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can designate your donation to our Health Services department.



How did we provide basic healthcare services while balancing ongoing epidemics?

While much of the world celebrated the introduction of the COVID-19 vaccines last year, we were mired in the reality that COVID-19 was not the biggest epidemic at our doorstep – the opioid crisis was. In 2019, we saw a record-breaking 186 drug poisonings. Yet, last year, we responded to 735 – a number that we project to double in the coming year.

On top of these crises, our newly expanded Health Services team still serviced 29,176 medical appointments, delivering prescriptions, administering COVID-19 vaccines, and bandaging wounds.

To further enhance our health services, we partnered with:



of appointments made at the Health Services clinic

6,235 **14,057** **29,176**
2019-20 2020-21 2021-22



average # of appointments per individual

14.97*
2021-22



of vaccines provided

971
2021-22

*Due to the new medical system put in place this year, there is no historical context for this data. We look forward to highlighting this next year.

What other barriers to housing are there, and what can we do to remove them?

The average cost to furnish a home is over \$10,000, so making “a house a home” is a big barrier for folks with low and no income. Yet, when we work together as a community, it’s also a simple problem to solve.

Calgarians ask us all the time, “What can I do to help?”

One of the easiest ways to help is to donate furniture, household goods, computers, clothing, and other gently used or new goods.

Working with 120+ agencies and outreach groups throughout the city, our Free Goods Program continues to provide furniture, appliances, clothing, technology, books, and other household items to those who need them. This year, thanks to the generous donations of the community, we helped 239% more Calgarians and their families overcome the barrier of furnishing their homes.



of people served by the Free Goods Program:

3,210	4,853	7,191
2019-20	2020-21	2021-22



of visits to our Clothing Room:

20,388	5,305	15,392
2019-20	2020-21	2021-22



of items distributed by the Free Goods Program:

144,807	72,625	191,091
2019-20	2020-21	2021-22



Free Goods Program



This past year, we increased distribution and recycling. We distributed clothing from multiple DI sites and shared our stock with other local and international non-profit organizations.

Operation East Side

During this past winter, an encampment close to the DI became a safety hazard. Sadly, it reached a point where it was an unsafe environment for DI staff, clients, community members, and residents. Encampments are a complex issue across Canada, born out of the lack of affordable and supportive housing across the country. Community issues require community responses, and we were glad to have played an active role in “Operation East Side” by making our housing-focused services accessible off-property.

Our work focused on connecting with the vulnerable people in the encampment who had been hesitant to access shelter. Through our conversations, we were able to empower 21 people to begin their journey home. A real highlight for us was reuniting two families across Canada as we helped folks get to BC and Ontario respectively. Knowing they're back with their loved ones was a rewarding feeling for all of us.

These housing successes were a testament to the power of collaboration. Operation East Side was a City of Calgary operation that was spearheaded by Calgary Police Services and Bylaw Services, and it garnered support from organizations like Calgary Fire Department, The Alex, Alpha House, and the Calgary Homeless Foundation.

As we say at the DI, it takes a community to build community. Together, there's no challenge we can't overcome.



36 people supported during
Housing and Resource Day



21 people connected to appropriate
housing supports



16 Health Services appointments
provided



7 individuals received assistance
with obtaining identification



It takes a community to **build** community

Being able to functionally end chronic homelessness is an issue that needs to be solved by all of us.

With the efforts of our community on display, there is no challenge we cannot overcome.



Focus on *Kindness*: Highlighting our community support

Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation of Canada

This passionate group has volunteered at the DI for years. They continued to volunteer at our Donation Centre when COVID-19 closed volunteer opportunities at shelter, but were still much needed for our overall operations. Not only did they give their time, but the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation of Canada also continued their support towards our meals programs, ensuring our clients received delicious and nutritious meals.



McLean & Partners
Wealth Management

The DI is very fortunate to have received such incredible support from CWB McLean & Partners over the years. They have supported and sponsored the Kindness Open – our single largest fundraising event of the year – on an annual basis, helping us raise the much-needed funds for our programs and services. They are advocates in the community and inspire others to support the work we do.



Mealshare
Buy one, give one.

People in the community know Mealshare as the buy-a-meal, give-a-meal program. But to the DI, the Mealshare Aid Foundation has meant even more. They supported us generously over the years by donating over \$446,000 to our meals program. Not only have they supported us through monetary donations, but their team has contributed over 800 volunteer hours in shelter. We thank Mealshare for their continued contribution to both nutrition and smiles over the years.

Dr. Chirag Shah

Dr. Chirag Shah has been a dedicated source of support for the DI since moving to Canada in 2005. After becoming familiar with the DI at first from serving lunch, he has become a valued community pillar, and just last year donated \$10,000 to further our Health Services Clinic during the pandemic. When asked about the reasons why he is so dedicated to philanthropic actions, he credits his family with inspiring a strong foundation towards a culture of kindness, something that he both exemplifies and is grateful for here in Calgary. We are grateful to Dr. Shah for strengthening our culture of kindness and helping spread our shared values.

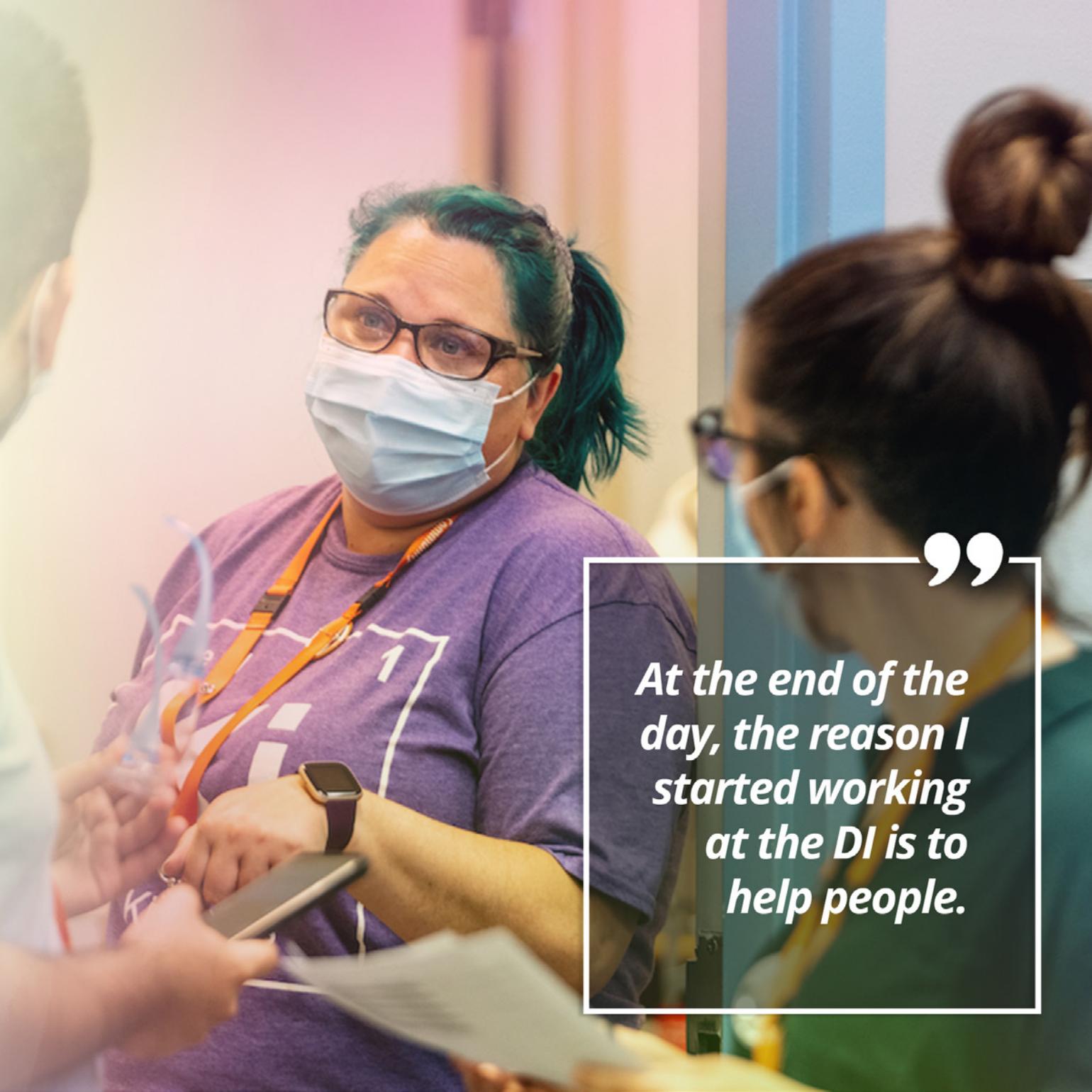
Focus on *Kindness*: Highlighting the stories of DI staff

Reflecting on the last year, truth be told it was difficult at times.

Not having that face-to-face contact was a challenge, because it is hard to connect through a mask, and the daily risk of drug poisonings also added to the difficulty we experienced daily. That being said, there were unique opportunities that COVID-19 provided. As we tried to minimize the spread of the virus within shelter, it meant that as frontline staff, we spent much more time with a specific group of people rather than being on-call for the entire shelter. As a result, we could use that time to deepen that connection which could lead to learning about their housing needs, assisting with filling out forms, and better responding to what was brought up.

Being able to make the most of these opportunities applied to the opioid crisis as well. Even though we had a historic number of drug poisonings in shelter, the trauma of those situations can create a bond through gratitude or persevering together. This is not always the case, but when it happens, it opens any prior barriers of communication because of what we go through together. At the end of the day, the reason I started working at the DI is to help people. Even if it is just the little things, we are here because we have a community to care for and serve. I am proud to be part of this community.

Melissa, Adult Care Worker

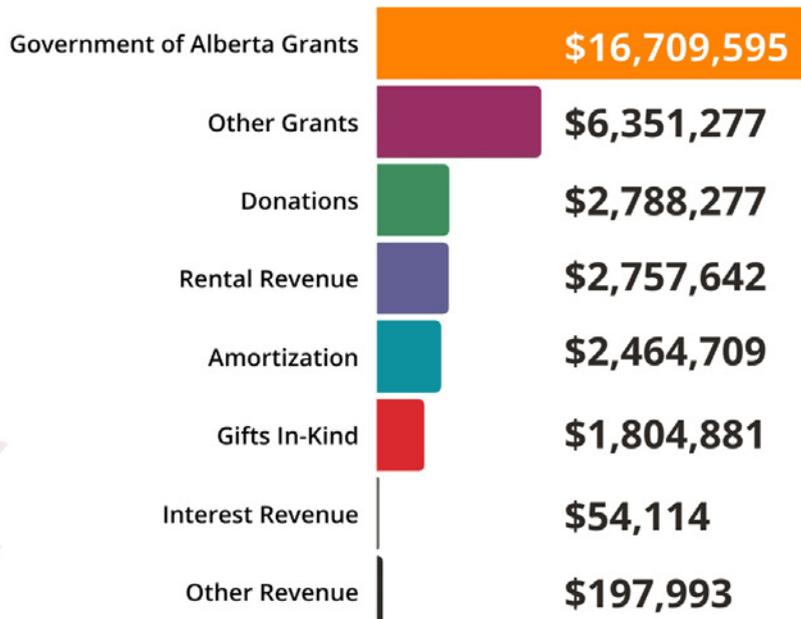


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Financial Summary

Total Revenue: \$33,128,488



April 1, 2021 - March 31, 2022

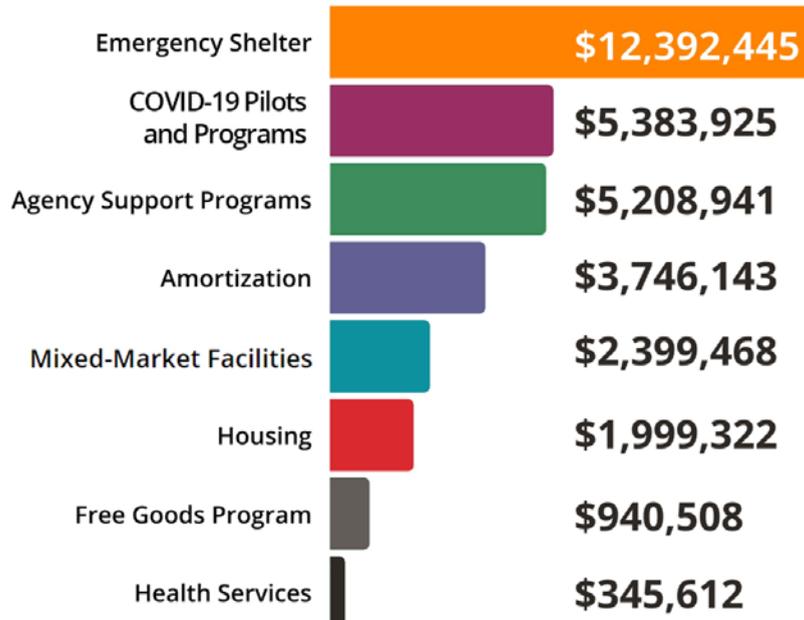


This past year was my second year as the Treasurer of the Board and as Chair of the Finance, Facilities, and Risk Committee. Highlights of the FFR Committee's work this year include the DI's formalization of risk management and asset/facilities management, alongside customary financial governance. The DI's internal finance team has done an impressive job managing the organization's assets and I am confident in the financial stability of the DI.

I would like to thank each member of the FFR Committee as well as the board in general for their commitment to the work of the DI this past year. We are set up for another year of hard but necessary work, which could not be done without the donations and support of the community.

- Jase Vanover, Treasurer, Board of Directors

Total Expenses: \$32,416,364



Join the DI community!

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



Spread some **kindness** online @calgarydropin

calgarydropin.ca

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