



19 / 20

ANNUAL REPORT

ALBERTA RURAL DEVELOPMENT
NETWORK



(Page intentionally left blank)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Board Chair	4
Message from the Executive Director	6
Sustainable Housing Initiative	8
Psychology of Aesthetics	9
Reaching Home	10
Rural Homelessness Estimation Project	12
Rural Immigration	14
Substance Use Awareness	16
New Horizons for Seniors	17
Agriculture and Food Council and ARDN Amalgamation	18
Cares Mentor Program	18
CRRHH Symposium	19
Alberta Rural Coalition on Housing and Homelessness (ARCH2)	20
Canadian Association on Rural and Remote Housing and Homelessness (CARRHH)	21
Operational Changes Due to Covid-19	22
Finance	23
ARDN Staff	24
ARDN Board of Directors	26

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

'I've been shown time and again that the team is responsive, dedicated, and resilient.'

I have been on the board for a while, starting out as its Treasurer. My first year as the Interim Chair was a good one. The team is extremely professional, and the team provides excellent briefings on the different projects and initiatives that staff pursue. Our board reached consensus on the strategic direction for the organization, which will culminate in late 2020 with new branding as a national organization; we had strong support to expand Alberta Rural Development Network's reach and scope.

When COVID-19 hit, we lost some revenue sources, including our annual conference. Despite the hurdle, the team stepped up to the challenge: reducing hours and making the shift to working from home. Thankfully, we were able to give the team that flexibility. With this shift, we were able to rethink the way we viewed

standard work weeks. Staff were able to work from home on schedules that worked for them and their personal lives. This also had the unintended (but certainly welcome) effect of reducing overhead costs as staff began alternating between the office and their homes.

Another challenge the organization faced this year was losing board members. However, we have a smaller but committed group sitting on the board, giving us good attendance and input at meetings. Dee Ann, our executive director, was quick to respond when we had some turnover, with many of us acting interim for the year. The pandemic brought its fair share of chaotic moments, as did member turnover, but we have managed to prosper. Despite all the chaos, the ARDN has continued to attain outstanding achievements.

I learn more about ARDN every year. This year, my learnings were around the importance of taking the work we do outside Alberta's borders. There has been increased interest in what we do from other provinces, highlighting that social issues such as affordable housing and homelessness aren't confined to clear-cut

borders. I've been shown time and again that the team is responsive, dedicated, and resilient.

The team has been working tirelessly to rebrand the organization. Expanding our brand will allow us to work with organizations outside the province. This rebrand can help us serve rural communities and meet them where they're at. I'm proud to take the work we do even further under the Rural Development Network. This familiar name will provide continuity for those we've worked with over the years.

Historically, the organization was tied to the work of the province's post-secondary institutions. However, working with groups and individuals that live and work in rural communities has connected us with broader issues outside the post-secondary sector. Our work in affordable housing and homelessness has opened up doors and conversations to the struggles of having limited services in smaller communities. We are pursuing important new initiatives on immigration, seniors, and food security, with the merger with the Agriculture and Food Council. We focus on

a holistic approach to community wellness in rural revitalization. We have many irons in the fire and are always on the lookout for new opportunities around food security, housing, and other pressing issues.

I want to applaud our team for their resilience in the face of many hurdles. The team continues to demonstrate outstanding leadership and growth every day. We have a creative, vibrant, and dynamic staff. While we cannot always offer the most generous salaries as a small organization, we make up for that by allowing people to pursue their passions. We intend to be an innovative organization, so allowing people to explore their interests is one way to encourage innovation. Our year-end changes created extra work and challenges, but the team stepped up and said, "We can fix this problem." As they grow, I'm looking forward to witnessing how they grow the organization. Despite the difficulties this year, ARDN continues to flourish. We will keep facing challenges together.

-Nancy Broadbent





MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

‘At ARDN, we have proven our ability to be resilient, innovative and flexible to change as we fulfill our mandate and purpose. This year was no exception.’

This year, we completed our merger with the Agriculture & Food Council (AFC), and expanded our exceptional team. We acquired one new permanent staff member from AFC and hired three more permanent staff members. We also welcomed back Sandra Di Cesare as Finance Manager, after being away for almost a year. With our new and existing staff, several enthusiastic interns, and work practicum students, we had a robust team ready to tackle and pursue the myriad projects and plans ARDN is involved in.

Our keystone programs — the Sustainable Housing Initiative (SHI), Reaching Home, and Rural Homelessness Estimations

—have continued to grow and expand. Indeed, the latter previously accomplished the largest ever coordinated effort to quantify homelessness in rural Alberta; completed a comprehensive provincial report on homelessness; and is planning an even larger follow-up study for the fall of 2020.

With each passing year, SHI's dedication to bringing affordable housing to more communities continues to reach new heights. The latest have resulted in new partnerships in rural Ontario. This year, we were pleased to announce our first significant pre-development project in Hawkesbury, ON, which has one of the highest per capita number of renters in Canada.

Staff members are highly driven and self-motivated, and we saw some exciting results from ARDN's 80/20 rule, where staff can spend up to 20 percent of their work time on passion projects. As long as they align with ARDN's mandate, staff members are encouraged to pursue potential projects that are dear to their hearts.

One such project started as a burgeoning spark that quickly evolved into a full-fledged program when Jayde Roche

started looking for resources designed to facilitate integration and provide support to newcomers in rural communities and came up short. After analysing the needs and networking with people in city programs, she prepared a proposal and was able to get funding and support from the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies. The program has continued to grow and generate a great deal of interest.

An additional three new such passion projects will activate later in 2020: Farm Ed, Making Olds Age-Friendly, and the Rural Community Revitalization Initiative. Like SHI, Farm Ed is an example of a volunteer-led passion project that successfully converted into a paid position. Stay tuned in the coming months to find out more.

Of course, just as things seemed to be going well, along came an unforeseen challenge: the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on life as we knew it.

I am proud to say that ARDN was able to respond at lightning speed: partly by leveraging existing technologies that allowed us

to work remotely, but mostly by having a flexible team that is always ready to run with whatever life throws at us.

We shuttered the office and began working from home, we switched our workshops to online delivery, and we cancelled our annual conference - that was hard! We quickly adapted to the changes. Though things were (and continue to be) okay for us, they have not necessarily been good for our rural communities, partners and clients. Fortunately, the Government of Canada's Reaching Home program responded by establishing COVID-19 Emergency Funding, which ARDN has been delivering in earnest to rural and remote communities across Alberta.

I end this message by thanking the ARDN staff, interns and volunteers for their hard work, flexibility and dedication. You are a great team that makes me proud every day. To the Board of Directors and our post-secondary partners who have supported us for the past 11 years, you have my deepest gratitude. Your encouragement and guidance bolsters us all.

- Dee Ann Benard

SUSTAINABLE HOUSING INITIATIVE

SHI is a division within the ARDN that is redefining how affordable housing is viewed and built in rural communities.

The SHI provides rural communities with affordable services tailored to their unique needs, helping them with the preliminary development work needed to successfully fund and develop affordable housing.

This includes: developing affordable housing strategies, facilitating community consultations, conducting needs assessments, writing business cases, creating financial feasibility analyses, developing preliminary design work, and preparing funding applications.

SHI believes the success of affordable housing projects is dependent on continuous stakeholder and community engagement from the project's start to its finish. The SHI continues to expand its reach and improve its approaches and processes year after year.

This year, the SHI supported the efforts of 15 communities across Alberta & Ontario and received interest from communities in BC and the Atlantic region to develop affordable housing. Some communities the SHI team worked with this year are:

Alberta

- Samson Cree Nation
- Taber
- Rocky Mountain House
- Conklin
- Strathcona County
- Peace River
- M.D. of Opportunity #17
- Fort Saskatchewan
- Airdrie
- Crowsnest Pass
- Nanton
- Lloydminster
- Peavine Métis Settlement

Ontario

- Hawkesbury
- Hornepayne
- Terra Cotta Housing Co-op, Mississauga
- Habitat for Humanity, Greater Toronto Area

In 2020, SHI received funding through the National Housing Strategy's Demonstrations Initiative (via CMHC) to conduct multiple workshops across cities in Canada on the Step-By-Step Guide to Developing Affordable

Housing, a comprehensive guide created by SHI to walk people through the affordable housing development process from the day they envision a project until operations and maintenance commence.

This year, to further our efforts to redefine affordable housing, SHI is exploring opportunities to work with co-ops and Indigenous communities. To this end, SHI began to actively pursue funding opportunities to conduct research to investigate better and more efficient ways to operate co-ops across Canada.

PSYCHOLOGY OF AESTHETICS

Exploring real-world applications in an attempt to positively influence residents' mental health.

The psychology of aesthetics examines various design evidence in the lab, and explores real-world applications in an attempt to positively influence residents' mental health.

Studies have shown that our lived environment can have an impact on human

physiology. Students have had improved test scores in certain coloured rooms, and even surgical patients have significantly shorter recovery times if they are resting in a room with a window view.

Since Canadians spend 80 to 90 percent of their time indoors, the ARDN (with significant support from the Alberta Real Estate Foundation) wanted to understand how cost-effective features and improvements can help the mental well-being of those living in affordable housing.

We collected peer-reviewed, scientific literature to create a guide that was illustrated and accessible to all readers. Psychology of Aesthetics makes recommendations ranked according to cost-effectiveness and the weight of evidence behind the recommendations. Not only will the recommendations increase the well-being of tenants, but they may also reduce operating costs of the building as a result, and help garner community support.

This is the first project of its kind to focus on affordable housing, and as such, we are seeking opportunities to implement the guide's recommendations in real-world spaces.



REACHING HOME

Despite these challenges, community responses to homelessness in rural Alberta have remained strong.

This past year, the Reaching Home program replaced the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy, as the new federal community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness across Canada. With the purpose and intention of supporting those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, the Reaching Home program committed just under \$5 million to Alberta's rural and remote stream for the next five years. ARDN continues to administer this federal grant to rural communities across the province, and we are always advocating for increased funding.

During the transitional funding period (April 2019 - September 2019), 11 projects that were previously funded under

the Homelessness Partnering Strategy received Reaching Home funding to extend their projects another six months. These projects wrapped up in September 2019.

ARDN successfully coordinated and launched a Call for Proposals in Spring 2019, which was overseen by the Regional Advisory Board (RAB). The RAB deliberated throughout the summer months and approved 13 new projects to receive multi-year funding over the next 4.5 years. Thirty-three highly competitive applications were received, resulting in difficult decisions for the RAB. Most new projects subsequently launched in Fall 2019 to address and prevent homelessness in their communities. Leftover project funding from 2019-2020 was reallocated to support projects with heightened needs due to COVID-19, and to support ARDN's rural homelessness estimation project that is taking place in Fall 2020.

Separate from the \$5 Million in Reaching Home base funding, ARDN received an additional \$796,692 in Reaching Home funding through Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, to support rural & remote

communities in Alberta over the 2020-2021 period. A large majority of the funds were allocated after the first intake, as ARDN received approximately 60 applications from municipalities, not-for-profits, First Nations and Métis communities in the short span of one week. This funding directly supports frontline service providers with immediate needs during the pandemic. Outcomes of this funding include the hiring of additional outreach workers and shelter staff, the provision of temporary accommodations for clients in need of shelter and/or self-isolation, as well as the purchase of cleaning supplies, PPE and basic needs.

The additional Reaching Home COVID-19 funding has also supported the recent establishment of a mat program in Rocky Mountain House, and the continued operation of shelters and mat programs in Siksika Nation, Camrose, Lac La Biche, Strathmore and Peace River.

This year in particular has been filled with new partnerships, opportunities, growth and uncertainty for projects, as issues facing rural communities

related to housing and homelessness have been exacerbated by the global COVID-19 pandemic, yet our communities and community based organizations continue to work tirelessly to support their most vulnerable citizens. Despite these challenges and limited resources, community responses to homelessness in rural Alberta have remained strong.

Overall ARDN has been successful in supporting 50+ projects and counting through the increased Reaching Home funding this past year. ARDN has dedicated significant time to building strong relationships with Reaching Home projects, organizations, Alberta's Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Government of Canada, and continues to focus on bringing awareness to the challenges rural communities are facing with regards to homelessness.

RURAL HOMELESSNESS ESTIMATION PROJECT

1,771 surveys conducted revealed 2,997 people without housing, or at-risk of losing their housing across rural Alberta.

In April 2020, the ARDN published the provincial report to cap off the 2018 Rural Homelessness Estimation Project. This report contains the findings of the to-date largest co-ordinated count of homelessness and housing instability ever completed in rural Alberta – carried out through a partnership with the Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta (FCSSAA).

The 40-page report presents data collected across 20 communities with a total population of 291,531 (StatsCan 2016). A total of 1,771 individuals were surveyed on location at 185 service providers across 20 communities. 1,098 individuals who completed the surveys indicated that

they and their dependents did not have stable housing and/or they were at-risk of losing their housing. Counting dependents, the total number of individuals rose to 2,997.

After the data was collected in Fall 2018, it was determined that a follow-up project should be conducted in 2 years. At first, the initial lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic created some uncertainty regarding the project's feasibility.

However after consultation with community groups, we understood that there was a great need to understand how vulnerable individuals were being effected by the pandemic. After developing tools for survey delivery that would allow local staff to stay safe and reach those effected, the ARDN released a Call for Proposals. This CfP was intended to gauge the interest and capacity of groups for a large-scale estimation project during this unprecedented time.

Initially, we had expected to fund 10-15 communities' participation through Reaching Home. However, as more and more groups signed on and relayed the dire need for information

specific to their communities, we were able to apply for more funding to increase the total number of groups.

At the time of the AGM, surveys are being offered in over 200 locations in 28 communities across the province. This year's estimation project will be critical for filling the the need for tangible data. In addition to collecting baseline data for groups that have none, the project will measure the impact that the pandemic has had on housing and service gaps and how well the community was able to respond. This will contribute to our understanding of these gaps not just in rural areas, but across the country as a whole.

In addition to these large-scale collaborative projects, ARDN has also conducted customized approaches to collecting homelessness data in smaller communities that may not have any existing service agencies from which surveys can be delivered. This data is then used in conjunction with publicly-available housing data to help communities understand the issues. An example of this customized approach would be the work that was conducted in the Municipal

District of Opportunity No. 17 as well as the hamlet of Conklin. Homelessness estimations were conducted in both communities and were used to create pre-development housing materials that advised on the state of housing and homelessness within the community.

The entire process is captured in ARDN's Step-by-Step Guide to Estimating Rural Homelessness. It was designed to act as a tool to support communities' efforts to take their data into their own hands if they have the capacity to do so themselves. And because advocacy is best done when groups are able to come together and work outside their silos, ARDN has developed a national database that allows groups to join and publish the housing and service needs of the people within their community. With good data, small communities can begin to bring attention to the reality that homelessness isn't only an issue found in larger centers.



RURAL IMMIGRATION

Looking for the right opportunities to seed new projects to support newcomers in rural communities.

The Rural Immigration Initiative was launched in 2019 in response to the emerging needs of rural communities; it is also the result of new programs that have cropped up to attract and retain skilled immigrants in rural communities. Our initiative takes a holistic approach to support a wide range of stakeholders, including community-based organizations, service providers and individuals.

In November 2019, ARDN partnered with the Multicultural Health Brokers (MCHB), a community-based organization in Edmonton, to develop and deliver two in-person workshops in Lethbridge and Red Deer, in addition

to a self-paced online course. The workshops and course focused on developing cultural competencies for small centre agencies within Alberta's Settlement and Integration Sector, and was funded by the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA).

ARDN, in partnership with ActionDignity, received funding from AAISA to develop and deliver an anti-discrimination course for service providers in both urban and rural communities in Alberta. Four in-person workshops were planned; however, due to COVID-19, the project was rapidly reformatted to deliver the course online and offer a series of webinars on anti-discrimination topics. The webinars focused on current issues of discrimination and racism during the pandemic.

Initially, the webinars were planned for an Alberta audience; however, ARDN partnered with the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA) to reach a wider audience, ultimately presenting four webinars to more than 800 individuals from across Canada. The online facilitated course was successfully delivered to

two cohorts from settlement agencies across Alberta.

This year we attended events to spread awareness of our new Rural Immigration Initiative, which carries on despite the pandemic. We presented at the AAISA Settlement and Integration conference and attended the Global Talent Conference.

Under the Rural Immigration Initiative, ARDN is focused on building relationships with different immigrant-serving organizations to expand our reach, services, and experiences. Global Village, Medicine Hat College and CanPR are additional examples of the partnerships we have built, and we are looking for the right opportunities to seed new projects to support newcomers in rural communities. ARDN also signed on to the WrapCap program as a partner, a five year initiative led by The Centre for Newcomers that seeks to standardize and coordinate service delivery for newcomer youth.



SUBSTANCE USE AWARENESS

While the timeline has been disrupted, there is excitement for when the exhibit can visit rural Alberta and provide harm-reduction information to youth.

Funded through Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions program, the Rural Cannabis Outreach Program (RCOP) extends ARDN's Substance Use initiative. The goal of RCOP is to educate rural youth (grades 10-12) about the health risks associated with cannabis use and consumption during adolescence and young adulthood. Three focus groups were held and 25 rural youth provided feedback on the educational mobile exhibit concept. The information received from these participants was instrumental in preparing the

design and content of the mobile exhibit.

The educational mobile exhibit can be likened to a traveling art exhibit, one that is interactive and engaging for youth. The designer, Bailey Acres, has created a visually appealing exhibit with bright colours and characters. Youth are encouraged to take pictures, share information on social media and practice skills like breathing activities for stress. Information contained within the exhibit was gathered by RCOP's Research Assistant and Program Manager.

Partnerships have been key in the development of the exhibit. Information from Weed out the Risk, the University of Calgary, RCMP School Resource Officers, and the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction have been incredibly valuable. In addition, a literary scan was conducted by a Research Assistant and a Psychiatric Nurse volunteered to assist with focus groups and provide their experience and expertise.

The Program Manager attended Strathcona's Symposium on Social Isolation and Loneliness in December 2019 and the

Alberta Rural Education Symposium in March 2020. Both events provided many opportunities to share information about the RCOP project and network with interested communities and schools.

COVID-19 has altered the course of the project, and the soft launch in April and May 2020 in Cochrane and Manning has been postponed. While the timeline has been disrupted, there is excitement for when the exhibit can travel rural Alberta and provide harm-reduction information to youth.

NEW HORIZONS FOR SENIORS

A project that will be a model for other rural communities that are interested in becoming age-friendly.

An exciting start to the new year was the successful New Horizons for Seniors application for the project: Making Olds a Model Age Friendly Community.

The goal of this project is to continue the good work

already done by the Olds Community Lifestyles/ Age-Friendly committee, in order to make the idea of turning Olds into an age-friendly community a reality.

It is our hope that this model will be used by other rural communities that are interested in becoming age-friendly. To this end, ARDN will use the survey responses previously collected, combined with secondary research and stakeholder consultations, to complete an age friendly assessment for Olds and develop a set of recommendations.

The project is currently underway with data being analyzed. Consultations are planned for the next year. The ARDN looks forward to our continued partnership with the Olds Age Friendly Committee.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD COUNCIL AND ARDN AMALGAMATION

This amalgamation has offered new opportunities and a new lens through which to explore supporting rural communities within the agri-food sector.

The Agriculture and Food Council (AFC) and ARDN have developed a collaborative relationship over the past few years, sharing office space, resources and exploring ways to work together on projects. Seeing opportunities for further collaboration and integration of initiatives, efficiencies, and resource sharing, ARDN and AFC jointly proposed an amalgamation which began in November 2019 and was finalized in March 2020.

This amalgamation has offered new opportunities and a new lens through which to explore supporting rural communities within the agri-food sector, and

we are excited to grow this initiative in the coming year. This initiative will focus on capacity building for agri-food entrepreneurs and small to medium producers, food security, agriculture education, and more.

CARES MENTOR PROGRAM

Mentors volunteered their time, to share knowledge they've gained through their careers and support new entrepreneurs in moving their business forward.

The Business Mentor Program was brought over through the amalgamation of ARDN with the Agriculture and Food Council. The program, funded through the Community and Regional Economic Support Program, paired start-up agri-food entrepreneurs with business mentors for a four-month mentoring experience.

The goal of the program was to allow entrepreneurs to practice working with mentors, receive guidance and direction, understand the importance of building a

network, and receive support on specific challenges. The mentors volunteered their time, sharing the knowledge they have gained through their careers and supporting new entrepreneurs in moving their businesses forward.

A pitch competition was held in November 2019 and five mentors and five mentees were paired during a round of speed networking. The second round began in February 2020 which also had five mentors and five mentees. Due to COVID-19, this pitch was held completely virtually.

CRRHH SYMPOSIUM

The only national symposium of its kind dedicated to rural issues.

ARDN partnered with the Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) to host the second Canadian Rural and Remote Housing and Homelessness (CRRHH) Symposium in Guelph ON, originally planned for May 2020.


The annual symposium provides rural Canadian communities with tools, training, and the expertise

needed to address the unique and complex issues surrounding homelessness and housing in rural and remote Canada. It focuses on providing actionable tools and best practices that allow communities to make positive impacts, and is the only national symposium of its kind dedicated to addressing rural and remote homelessness and housing issues.

Throughout the year, ARDN and ROI recruited and organized presenters, keynote speakers, sponsors, and venue arrangements in preparation for this event. However, due to safety considerations during the pandemic, travel restrictions, and large gathering restrictions, the symposium had to be postponed.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, homelessness and housing are bigger issues than ever in both urban and rural & remote Canada. We expect to host the next CRRHH Symposium, either in-person or virtually, in May of 2021. Stay tuned!





ALBERTA RURAL COALITION ON HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS (ARCH2)

Bringing together organizations and individuals interested in collaborating on housing and homelessness issues since 2016.

The Alberta Rural Coalition on Housing and Homelessness (ARCH2) has been bringing together frontline service providers, not-for-profit organizations, housing management bodies and anyone else who is interested in collaborating on housing and homelessness issues since 2016.

Working together,
stories are heard
and knowledge
is shared
between

organizations collaborating towards a more systemic approach to addressing housing and homelessness issues in rural and remote Alberta.

Quarterly meetings were held online and an in-person meeting occurred in February 2020. ARCH2 meetings began happening more frequently due to the global pandemic and provided valuable insights for the COVID-19 Reaching Home team.

There are many benefits to joining the network, including being the first to know about conference updates and funding opportunities.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION ON RURAL AND REMOTE HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS (CARRHH)

The network is a platform for collaborative exchanges of information, resources and ideas.

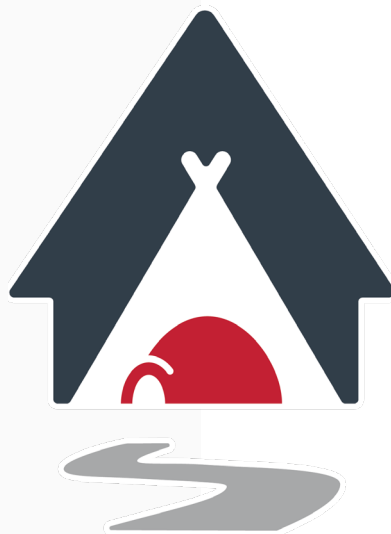
This year we celebrated the one year anniversary of the Canadian Association on Rural & Remote Housing & Homelessness (CARRHH). Similar to the ARCH2, the CARRHH aims to highlight issues that are unique to our communities, encourage and facilitate resource and information sharing, and advocate for appropriate funding and resources at a national level. As a collective of diverse members, we work to create and enhance valuable connections across Canada. Through knowledge sharing, community mobilization and public policy advocacy, the network is a platform for collaborative exchanges of information, resources, and ideas.

One of the most exciting results from the CARRHH was the Federal Election Toolkit on rural affordable housing and homelessness that was shared across the country. The toolkit provided information and questions to ask candidates, to better understand their position and knowledge on these issues.

With some CARRHH members visiting Edmonton for a conference in November, an informal gathering was held at the

ARDN office. The CARRHH members who attended were able to meet each other and ARDN staff and have lively chats over snacks and drinks.

Now that the network has a full year under its belt, we will use the knowledge gained and the engagement session to clearly set goals, increase membership and work towards affordable housing solutions in rural and remote communities across Canada.





OPERATIONAL CHANGES DUE TO COVID-19

The pandemic led to a world-wide shift to rethink work-life balance, and ARDN embraced the changes.

COVID-19 sparked many changes in ARDN's operations. In mid-March, all staff began working exclusively from home. In response to the uncertainty, staff moved to a 35-hour work week, with a corresponding decrease in pay. ARDN had already developed work-from-home policies, most staff possessed portable laptops, and we were already using various programs for internal communications, so we were able to use these tools to smoothly transition to fully remote work.

We updated and established new policies and processes to maintain consistent communication across and between our teams, facilitate collaboration, and ensure accountability. Staff began creating daily work plans and progress reports, and implemented

sign-in and sign-out procedures. We also hosted occasional social hours for virtual team building and to foster non-work interactions. Staff members were provided with whatever office equipment they required to set up comfortable and effective home office spaces.

In mid-June, after consulting with staff and reviewing public health recommendations regarding re-opening the office, we adopted some new measures that we expect to maintain long-term. While working from home, employee satisfaction and productivity were high, so we adopted a mixed work from home and work from the office arrangement. Moving forward, we expect that the majority of staff will work mostly from home and occasionally from the office, in an effort to reduce physical contact while still allowing some in-person interactions. We will also maintain a 35 hour work week.

Prior to COVID-19, ARDN implemented flex time and a compressed work week option, which has proven so popular due to the pandemic that the ARDN office is now closed every second Friday. Those who choose a regular work week work from home when the office is closed.

FINANCE

Our Operations and Finance team is a small but mighty one.

Since the pandemic began, ARDN has been able to leverage several funding opportunities related to the support and economic recovery from COVID-19, as well as implement internal cost-saving measures, allowing us to keep all staff employed and mitigate financial risk.

The operations and finance team regularly updates and maintains ARDN's systems and policies, ensuring the staff and organization is well looked-after. ARDN has many initiatives and manages full-time, part-time, and temporary staff, as well as volunteers.

Truly a dynamic organization, much work goes into ensuring that the structure of the organization is sustainable and effective. We at ARDN are proud of our financial achievements this year and we look forward to continued growth.

\$1.9M

Provided by sponsors and grantors.

\$2.1M

Spent on projects and initiatives.

\$3.6M

Paid by members and clients.

18

Staff positions.

2019/2020 ARDN STAFF

Dee Ann Benard

Executive Director

Asad Bhatti

Manager, Capital Funding

Azam Khattak

Analyst, Research & Programs

Cassandra Rasko

Project Manager, Substance Use Awareness

Elnaz Aliasl

Project Coordinator, Rural Immigration

Jayde Roche

Program Manager, Rural Immigration

Jonn Kmech

(until March 2020)
Director, Homelessness Initiatives

Julia Juco

Manager, Communications

Kelly Petraschuk

Executive Assistant/Office Manager

Lisa Bélanger

Director, Operations

Sandra Di Cesare

Finance Manager

Scott Travis

Director, Research & Programs

Shadi Merhej

Senior Analyst, Policy & Research

Sydney Stenekes

Manager, Homelessness Initiatives

Zain Abedin

Director, Community Development

INTERNS/ VOLUNTEERS

Martin Kreiner

Francophone Community Development Coordinator

Rosemary Nnabude

(until December 2019)
Research Assistant,
Substance Use Awareness

Shelby Rowein

Project Manager, Agri-Food Initiatives

ARDN BOARD

Trent Keough
Keyano College
 (until February 2020)
 Chair

Nancy Broadbent
Portage College
 Interim Chair

Kevin Shufflebotham
Medicine Hat College
 Vice Chair

Ann Everatt
Northern Lakes College
 (until March 2020)
 Treasurer

Gilbert Perras
Athabasca University
 Interim Treasurer

Shirley Pasioka
Grande Prairie Regional College
 (until March 2020)
 Secretary

Erasmus Okine
University of Lethbridge
 (until February 2020)
 Director

Baljit Singh
University of Calgary
 Director

Ed Pajor
University of Calgary
 Alternate Director









Alberta
Rural
Development
Network

2020

INFO@ARDN.CA | 780-964-2736
11443 - 143 STREET NW
EDMONTON, AB