



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

## Annual General Meeting-Report ending March 31,2024



[www.theopendoors.ca](http://www.theopendoors.ca)

# 2024

## INTRODUCTION

Dear Staff, Board of Directors, Partners, and Stakeholders,

It is with a deep sense of gratitude and privilege that I present this year's Executive Director's report for The Open Doors. The past year has been a time of significant change and transition for our organization, marked by both challenges and opportunities. From navigating shifting operational landscapes to responding to unprecedented demands on our services, our journey has been anything but easy.

Despite these hurdles, our dedicated team, board, volunteers, and community partners have come together with remarkable resilience and innovation. We have adapted to new realities, restructured key areas of our operations, and found creative solutions to ensure we continue advancing our mission to "Opening Doors to a Brighter Future." Through collective effort and unwavering commitment, we have not only maintained the essential services our community relies on, but we have also laid the groundwork for future growth and sustainability.

As we reflect on this period, I am deeply thankful for the extraordinary contributions of everyone involved and look forward to sharing the highlights of our achievements, the lessons learned, and the optimistic future that lies ahead.

## ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Over the past year, The Open Doors has undergone significant evolution as we adapted to shifting community needs and operational challenges. Despite these changes, our core mission remains unwavering: to provide vital support and services to youth, adults, and families not only in Camrose but across East Central Alberta.

In response to these challenges, we implemented several key transitions, including leadership changes, streamlining program priorities, launching new initiatives, and making structural adjustments. These changes have positioned us to better serve our community and strengthen our impact.

This year, we welcomed new staff and introduced innovative programs, allowing us to expand our services and address emerging needs across East Central Alberta. The unwavering commitment of our staff and community partners has been instrumental in helping us overcome obstacles and continue providing high-quality, accessible services to those who need them most.

As we look ahead, we are excited about the strong foundation we've built and remain focused on driving meaningful, lasting change within our community.

### Staffing :

- Number of staffs : 16
- New staff and roles: First ever Human Resources Officer

### Significant Organizational Milestones:

- Leadership change at Executive Level
- Removal of Remote Positions
- Cessation of Nunavut Operations
- Moving Operations from Gateway to Maurer's Hall (Housing)
- Loss of several grants – CFSA, Reaching home, Youth Suicide Prevention

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OVERVIEW:

### Please refer to Appendix A

Over the past year, The Open Doors has continued to deliver a broad range of impactful programs and services aimed at supporting youth, adults, and families across East Central Alberta. Our focus has been on responding to the evolving needs of the community while ensuring that our programs remain accessible and effective. Through innovation and collaboration, we have improved service delivery, and made a tangible difference in the lives of those we serve.

- **Program Highlights:**
  - Total # of client interactions recorded : 8484
  - Total Number of Helpline Calls : 550
  - Total # of HR Supplies dispensed : 1640
  - Total # of Transportation assistance: 826
  - Total # of Outreach Clients: 303
  - Total # of Navigation Clients: 351

- Top 5 Programs accessed by clients:

- ❖ Adult Navigation
- ❖ Youth Employment Services
- ❖ Crime Prevention Program
- ❖ Youth Navigation
- ❖ Youth Suicide Prevention

- Top 5 services accessed by clients:

- ❖ HR Supplies
- ❖ Employment Training
- ❖ Transportation
- ❖ Food
- ❖ Criminal Court Support

- **Client Impact:**

- Total clients served: 869
- Demographics:
  - ❖ By Gender : 43% Male  
: 45% Female  
:10% Not Specified  
: 2% lgbtqia2s+
  - ❖ By Age : 10-19 y/o :14%  
:20-29 y/o:25%  
:30-39 y/o: 16%  
:40-49 y/o: 9%  
:50-59 y/o: 7%

\*\*Note 7 clients have been recorded to be between the ages of 0-3 y/o; 15 clients between the ages of 60-69 and 5 clients to be 70 y/o and up.

- ❖ By Ethnicity : Indigenous: 53%  
: Caucasian : 23%  
: Not Specified : 19%

- **Success stories/testimonials**

*"Before finding The Open Doors, my life was a mess. I had no direction, no idea where I was going, and felt completely lost. I didn't know what I was going to do until I met the team there. They helped me realize I could be a better person, and that's exactly what happened.*

*What made The Open Doors stand out was that they were close to home, and I had already heard from my brothers and friends that they were the real deal. People said they always go above and beyond, and that's*

*exactly what they did for me. Once I reached out, I knew it was the right fit. I wanted to change, and they supported me every step of the way.*

*Now, life is starting to look good. With the support I've received and my after-care plan in place, I'm excited for the future. I'm even graduating from treatment! If I were to recommend The Open Doors to anyone, I'd say they're an incredible support system. They give you great ideas, and they really help you along the way, just like they did for me. From where I was to where I am now, it's a complete turnaround, thanks to their amazing services.*

*Honestly, I don't have much feedback for improvement. The staff is amazing, even though I know they're always busy. If anything, just keep doing what you're doing – it's making a difference."*\*

-The Open Doors' client since Jan 2023

*\*"Before I found The Open Doors, I was completely homeless and hopeless. I had nowhere to go and no idea how to turn my life around. But thanks to their services, especially through the Hub, they kept me off the streets and helped me find a treatment center that was a perfect fit. That led me to sobriety, and now I have my own home and a stable, sober life.*

*What made The Open Doors stand out from other support services is that they were the only service around Wetaskiwin that truly seemed to care. The workers went above and beyond to help me and everyone else they support, and it was clear they were dedicated to making a real difference.*

*Now, life is amazing. I'm enrolled in school for Community Service and Addictions, and I can't wait for the day when I can help others who are struggling with addiction and homelessness like I once did.*

*I've already recommended The Open Doors to so many people. I always tell them how friendly and supportive the workers are and how they were there for me at my lowest. I wouldn't be where I am today without them.*

*My only feedback is to keep up the great work. We need you, and I can't thank you enough for all that you've done for me and everyone else you help."*\*

-The Open Doors' client December 6, 2020-January 12, 2024

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

### Please Refer to Financial Statement

- **Overview:**

The Open Doors has experienced a challenging fiscal year (April 2023 - March 2024), reflecting significant fluctuations in both income and expenses. Total income for the year was **\$1,605,929.19**, a substantial decrease from **\$2,212,198.35** in the previous fiscal year. This decline can be attributed to a reduction in government grants and other funding sources.

- **Income Analysis:**

- **Government Grants** totaled **\$1,316,469.46**, representing the bulk of our income, but this was significantly lower than the previous year's total of **\$1,833,964.53**.
- **Other Contributions** and **Donations** also decreased, with total contributions dropping from **\$97,648.74** last year to **\$60,436.24** this year. Fundraising efforts yielded minimal returns, contributing only **\$45.00** compared to the previous year's modest contributions.
- **Rental Income** remained stable, totaling **\$148,147.00**, yet it also reflected a decline from the previous year.

- **Expenses Overview:**

Total expenses increased to **\$1,833,676.64**, up from **\$2,180,168.40** in the prior year. The main areas of expenditure included:

- **Program Staffing Costs**, which comprised a significant portion of the budget at **\$1,047,798.96**.
- **Administrative Costs** and **Facility Expenditures** also consumed considerable resources, reflecting the organization's ongoing operational needs.

- **Net Profit/Loss:**

The organization reported a net loss of **\$227,747.45** for the fiscal year, a sharp decline from the profit of **\$32,029.95** recorded in the previous year. This loss highlights the pressing need for increased funding and cost management strategies to stabilize the financial health of The Open Doors.

- **Balance Sheet Insights:**

As of March 31, 2024, total assets, primarily in cash and cash equivalents, amounted to **\$470,315.44**, a decrease from **\$855,193.34** in the previous year. The significant drop in cash reserves reflects the financial challenges faced during the year and the need for strategic planning moving forward.

- **Conclusion:**

In summary, while The Open Doors continues to provide vital services to the community, the organization must address the decline in funding and increase efforts to stabilize its financial position. Future strategies will need to focus on enhancing revenue streams, optimizing operational efficiencies, and reinforcing community partnerships to sustain and grow our programs and services.

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## KEY PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

### Government of Canada

The Government of Canada has been instrumental in funding our Youth Employment Services program, enabling us to provide vital employment support and training for youth in East Central Alberta. This partnership has significantly enhanced our capacity to empower young individuals, helping them gain essential skills and access meaningful job opportunities.

### Government of Alberta

The Government of Alberta, through its various ministries, has also provided critical funding for several key initiatives, including the Alberta Crime Prevention and Restorative Justice program, Youth and Adult Navigation

services, and the Youth Suicide Prevention program. Their support has been essential in allowing us to implement these programs effectively, addressing local community challenges and fostering safer environments for our youth and families.

### **Alberta Health Services**

Funding from Alberta Health Services for our Community Helpers Program has been pivotal in promoting mental health awareness and providing peer support within the community. This partnership has strengthened our efforts to support individuals facing mental health challenges and has enhanced community resilience.

### **Battle River Community Foundation**

The Battle River Community Foundation has been a vital supporter of our helpline services, providing essential funding that ensures community members have access to immediate support and resources. Their commitment to local initiatives significantly contributes to our ability to respond to crises and provide assistance to individuals in need.

### **Private Companies and Donors**

Private companies like Cargill, along with anonymous and private donors, have further enriched our efforts by providing additional funding and resources. Their generosity has allowed us to expand our programs, ensuring that we can meet the evolving needs of our community.

### **Community Partners and Stakeholders**

We are proud to collaborate with various social service agencies across different municipalities.

Together, these partnerships are essential to our ongoing success in East Central Alberta, creating a network of support that empowers individuals and fosters community growth.

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## **CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED**

### **Challenges Faced:**

1. **Declining Revenue:**
  - The organization experienced a significant decrease in total income from \$2,212,198.35 in the previous fiscal year to \$1,605,929.19. This decline was primarily due to reduced government grants and funding contributions, impacting overall program delivery.
2. **Increased Staffing Costs:**
  - Staffing costs increased in several areas, notably with a rise in salaries and benefits for various roles. This put additional strain on the budget, especially given the reduction in income.
3. **Rising Operational Costs:**
  - Operating expenses, particularly in program costs and administrative costs, saw an increase. For instance, facility expenditures rose, placing further financial pressure on the organization.
4. **Cash Flow Constraints:**
  - The organization faced challenges with cash flow, leading to lower available liquid assets, dropping from \$855,193.34 to \$470,315.44. This made it difficult to manage day-to-day operations effectively and fund immediate program needs.

## 5. **Dependence on Grants:**

- Heavy reliance on government grants made the organization vulnerable to fluctuations in funding availability and changes in grant policies, creating uncertainty in financial planning.
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## **Lessons Learned:**

### 1. **Diversification of Funding Sources:**

- The necessity of diversifying income sources has become evident. Exploring new funding avenues, including corporate sponsorships and individual donations, could mitigate the impact of declining government grants.

### 2. **Enhanced Financial Management:**

- Strengthening financial management practices, including better forecasting and budget control, is crucial. Implementing more rigorous financial oversight can help ensure the organization remains solvent despite fluctuations in income.

### 3. **Program Evaluation and Adjustment:**

- Conducting regular evaluations of program effectiveness and adjusting services based on community needs can enhance funding proposals and align expenditures more closely with income.

### 4. **Building Reserves:**

- Establishing a reserve fund is essential for better cash flow management. Having a safety net will allow the organization to navigate unforeseen financial challenges without jeopardizing service delivery.

### 5. **Engagement with Stakeholders:**

- Increased engagement with community stakeholders and partners is vital for creating a supportive network. By collaborating more effectively, the organization can leverage additional resources and support.

### 6. **Investment in Staff Development:**

- Investing in staff training and development can enhance service delivery and program effectiveness, which may attract more funding and improve employee retention, thereby mitigating rising staffing costs.

### 7. **Clear Communication of Financial Status:**

- Transparency regarding the financial situation with stakeholders, including staff, board members, and funders, is crucial for fostering trust and ensuring collective problem-solving efforts.
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## **LOOKING AHEAD:STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

### 1. **Diversification of Funding Sources:**

- **Goal:** Increase revenue by 20% through expanded funding sources.
  - **Action Items:**
    - Develop a comprehensive fundraising strategy that includes corporate sponsorships, individual donations, and community events.
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- Explore grant opportunities from new foundations and government programs to reduce reliance on existing funding.

## 2. Financial Sustainability:

- **Goal:** Achieve a balanced budget by the end of the fiscal year.
- **Action Items:**
  - Implement stricter budget controls and financial management practices to monitor expenditures closely.
  - Establish a reserve fund to ensure financial stability and improve cash flow management.

## 3. Program Evaluation and Enhancement:

- **Goal:** Improve program effectiveness and alignment with community needs.
- **Action Items:**
  - Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of current programs to assess their impact and effectiveness.
  - Utilize feedback from clients and stakeholders to refine and adjust programs accordingly.

## 4. Capacity Building and Staff Development:

- **Goal:** Enhance staff skills and capacity to deliver high-quality services.
- **Action Items:**
  - Invest in professional development opportunities for staff, including training sessions and workshops.
  - Foster a supportive work environment that encourages staff retention and growth.

## 5. Community Engagement and Partnerships:

- **Goal:** Strengthen relationships with community stakeholders and partners.
- **Action Items:**
  - Increase outreach efforts to engage with local organizations, schools, and community groups.
  - Collaborate with partners on joint initiatives and programs to maximize resources and impact.

## 6. Advocacy and Public Awareness:

- **Goal:** Raise awareness about the organization's mission and services.
- **Action Items:**
  - Launch a marketing campaign to promote the organization's programs and successes in the community.
  - Engage in advocacy efforts to influence policies that support the organization's mission and the communities served.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As we reflect on our journey and the achievements we've made together, we want to take a moment to express our heartfelt thanks to those who have stayed with us as we navigated change over the last year.

- **Board of Directors**

We extend our deepest gratitude to our Board of Directors for their leadership, strategic guidance, and unwavering commitment to our mission. Your insights and dedication have paved the way for our growth and impact in the community.

- **Staff & Volunteers**

To our incredible staff and volunteers, thank you for your relentless dedication and hard work. Your passion and tireless efforts in serving our community make a profound difference every day. We are truly grateful for your contributions and the compassion you bring to our organization.

- **Community Support**

We would also like to acknowledge and thank our community partners, funders, and stakeholders for their invaluable support. Your belief in our vision and commitment to collaboration has been instrumental in helping us achieve our goals. Together, we can continue to make a positive impact in our community.

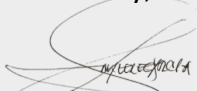
Thank you all for being a vital part of our journey. We look forward to continuing our work together to create meaningful change.

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## Conclusion

In closing, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has been part of this journey over the past year. Together, we have made a significant impact, and I remain optimistic about the future of The Open Doors. Let us continue to collaborate and serve our community with compassion, dedication, and a shared commitment to making a difference. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Mylene Garcia

Executive Director, The Open Doors

September 30, 2024