



2019-20 Strategic Directions

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS OF CALGARY FOUNDATION

To address the challenges facing Calgary in the context of the changing world in which we live, and to continue to meet its purpose – For Community, Forever, For Everyone, Calgary Foundation will:

Take a proactive leadership role in Building Community beyond grantmaking:

1. Research and develop a systems approach to Vital Priorities:

Recognizing that upstream of many community problems is public policy that can help or hinder the problem, the Foundation is building its *knowledge about public policy in the areas in which we work*, to seek to understand the relationships and implications. *“The problems we face in our communities today cannot be solved by a grant. It is only a change in the public will that can make a difference. We need to change people’s hearts and minds to care about their neighbor in their communities and in the world.” (Emmett Carson, former President and CEO, Silicon Valley Community Foundation).* We will explore our role as a community foundation in influencing the public will, seeking to move beyond grant maker to facilitator of change.

2. Gather, analyze and share data and knowledge about community:

Knowledge of community needs and the whole charitable sector are unique and distinguishing characteristics of the Foundation and represent the value it brings to the donor and the charitable sector.

Through *Vital Signs*, the Foundation engages citizens and community leaders in exploring the quality of life of our city, celebrate success and inspire action in areas of need so that this city remains the best city in which to live. The Foundation will continue to partner with other civic organizations to examine data and present a critical analysis of quality of life in our city.

The *Community Knowledge Centre*, a web-based site, makes the Foundation’s unique knowledge of community accessible to donors, agencies and citizens. Through this information engine, donors can find information about community needs and the charities serving these needs, and charities can discover who else is addressing a need, thus encouraging collaboration. Transparency and accountability are fostered.

3. *Co-create innovative solutions to address Vital Priorities:*

In collaboration with others who share our purpose, Calgary Foundation will develop and test innovative approaches to address persistent community needs that seem impervious to current approaches.

Engage Donors and Inspire Philanthropy:

1. *Maintain and grow our relationships with donors in service of their philanthropy:*

Guided by feedback from stakeholders, we will continuously evolve our processes to clearly communicate the relevance of Calgary Foundation, and we will meaningfully engage with existing and emerging generations for an experience that is personal, immediate and convenient.

2. *Deepen and broaden outreach to professional advisors:*

Professional advisors in many disciplines can play a key role as ambassadors of Calgary Foundation. We will grow the connection with advisors by demonstrating the benefit of having Calgary Foundation as a valued philanthropic partner in planning discussions involving families, businesses and philanthropy.

3. *Enrich engagement through our web-based tools and other resources:*

We will make available a wide variety of resources to support families in having conversations about bringing together shared values and charitable interests.

Build Public Confidence and Reputation:

1. *Grow profile of Foundation amongst new audiences (e.g. next gen, prospective donors, diverse cultures):*

We will seek new avenues to create awareness in new audiences of the value Calgary Foundation can bring to community. This will include placing key messages in new places using new vehicles. We will also seek to learn about the role philanthropy plays in other cultures to enhance our value for all communities.

2. *Encourage and elevate next gen engagement:*

Through our partnership with Strathcona Tweedsmuir School, the Chamber of Commerce and Youth in Philanthropy Initiative, we will continue to engage the next generation.

3. *Expand and leverage partnerships relevant to our role as a community leader:*

Sponsorships and partnerships are a key way to help build the capacity of the charitable sector and bring awareness to the Foundation. The Foundation will expand this program with a focus on initiatives that align with the Vital Priorities.

Protect and Grow the Assets:

1. *Achieve an optimal risk/return investment portfolio:*

The investments of the primary endowment fund are managed over the long term to achieve a *per annum* rate of return that is sufficient to retain the purchasing power of a donation, provide grants to recognized charitable organizations and cover the costs of administering the Foundation.

To aid in achieving this objective, management continues to move forward with the Foundation's investment strategy that allocates 30% of its endowed assets to alternative asset classes (infrastructure, private equity and real estate). Alternatives with their built-in inflation hedges and low correlations to traditional markets is expected to lower the Fund's volatility and generate returns and incomes that will improve the risk and return characteristics of the primary endowment portfolio ensuring it achieves its long-term investment objective.

Investment of the endowment portfolio will remain a major focus area as we strive to achieve the optimum investment return/risk balance and achieve portfolio results that build donor confidence and attain long-term performance objectives.

To better preserve capital, Calgary Foundation will continue to utilise the hybrid spending formula (Stanford formula) it adopted in 2014 to determine its spending policy. The hybrid spending formula will better protect the endowment from capital erosion, minimize year to year distribution volatility and help to ensure intergenerational equity is maintained over the long term.

2. *Grow the Impact Investing program beyond the initial fund:*

The Foundation believes its mission will be better served if a greater share of the assets were put towards mission-aligned work. Calgary Foundation's Impact Investment Program will actively seek more projects for investment, projects with measurable social and environmental impact alongside a financial return.

With two solid years of experience and \$20 million deployed in community in impact investing, we will seek more quality projects and invest more in community through this program. We will explore other social finance programs, such as social impact bonds, with appropriate partners, to innovate and deepen impact.

3. *Grow the Primary Endowment through stakeholder ambassadorship:*

Satisfied donors, advisors, and volunteers are our best vehicle to help broaden Calgary Foundation relationships. We will work to ensure utmost satisfaction in all stakeholders we serve, so that they in turn will advocate for the value Calgary Foundation can bring to philanthropy and community.

Excel in Organizational Effectiveness:

1. *Grow our innovation thinking muscles:*

To be a continuous improvement organization, focused on maximizing impact, we know innovation is essential. Through ongoing learning and practice, we will build our skills as an innovative grant maker and community builder.

2. *Continued internal cultural shift through our reconciliation journey that enhances our capacity to be informed by and integrate an Indigenous lens throughout the organization:*

We will build on our journey of reconciliation, with continued learning that result in shifts in behaviors, and informs changes in process throughout the organization. We will extend this value beyond internal staff, volunteers, board of directors to the community foundation movement in Canada as well as the local charitable sector. It is the process that we are realizing is just as important as the outcomes of this work. With this continued learning, attitudes will shift, the needle will be moved, and we will become part of a changing system whereby we are not complicit in the environments that create problems of inequity with Indigenous members of our community and society.

3. *Engage Equity-Seeking Groups to learn more about diverse approaches to philanthropy and strengthen our capacity to serve community.*

Foundations have access to forms of power (capital, networks, and influence) and as such it is important for us to be explicit in our commitment to equity. Equity is an approach whereby all people – including those who bear the burden of historic and contemporary forms of marginalization – have equal access to opportunities to define and achieve their role in philanthropy. By engaging with these groups, we hope to spark conversation about the role of philanthropy as a tool for change and keep our organization accountable to the whole community. We are proud of our history of addressing inequality but also recognize that there is more to do both in our organization and the community. The goal is to learn and celebrate the contributions that equity-seeking groups make to the philanthropic landscape, not just as recipients but as active contributors to the improvement of the community.