

Community Hubs: Our Past and Future





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As we reflected on 2021 to create this report, it was incredible to see how the pandemic changed how we connect and engage, as well as how Leagues provided thousands of hours of work to their community.

For an organization with a one-hundred-year history that has focused so much on building connections between people, the pandemic showed us that these connections are strong and the medium doesn't matter. We hope we're now through the worst of the pandemic. Going through it, we've learned new ways to connect: We've created virtual mentorship, community activation and Community Leagues 101 to reach people in new and more effective ways.

Our goal, as we begin work in 2022, is to remain focused on supporting Leagues with the basics to allow them to thrive. Doing this will allow Leagues to return to their historic place as the community hubs in their neighbourhoods.



EFCL By The Numbers

155 Number of Leagues EFCL engaged with in 2021

Average number of times EFCL supported each of these Leagues **6**

Volunteer hours Leagues provided to Edmonton in 2021 **253,847**

Value of this time at \$17.98 per hour (Canadian standard measure) **\$4.56M**

2,447 Number of programs run by Leagues in 2021

167,701 Number of Edmontonians served with these programs

Program partnerships between Leagues and community **622**

49,123 Number of Edmontonians served

\$569,000
EFCL operating budget
(unchanged since 2014)

The EFCL in 2021

Over this past year, the EFCL worked virtually with between two and three times more volunteers than in times before the pandemic.

While we did this, we managed to open our **Community League Plaza** at Hawrelak Park on time and budget, created the **Community Activator** position to better reach Leagues where they're at, created our **Mentorship program** to connect those with League experience to those starting out and continued the important work of our **Community Inclusion and Diversity** position. Lastly, we also oversaw the new, 10-year **Tripartite Agreement** and its broadened definition of recreation.

The pandemic also saw Leagues and EFCL act as connectors. Many festivals were unable to hold their events in 2021, and reached out to us. Festivals like the Edmonton International Street Performers Festival and Shakespeare in the Park used Community League halls and held parades in neighbourhoods to connect with people.

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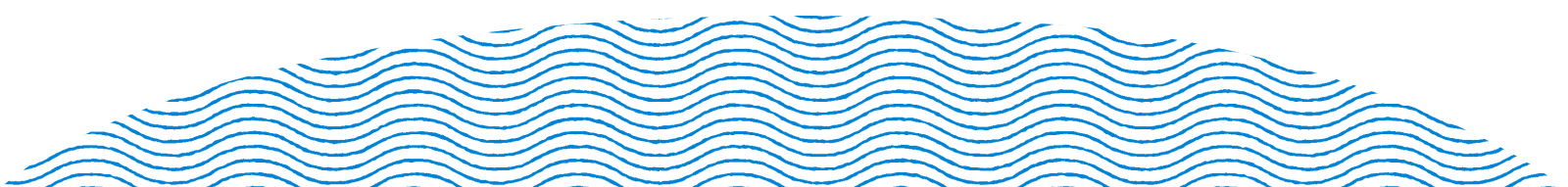
Sponsors



A New Agreement

In 2021, the EFCL consulted with Community Leagues and negotiated a new Tripartite Agreement for the next 10 years as the base agreement between Leagues, the EFCL and the City of Edmonton. One of the critical improvements was how it helps Leagues offer recreation more simply, including for-profit groups.

Before	Tripartite Agreement	After
	Childcare	
	Community Markets	
	Sport for the public offered by businesses	
	Arts and crafts for the public offered by businesses	
	COE commitment to maintain shared turf areas and accessible rinks	



Mentorship Stories

Our Mentorship program matches League volunteers with years of experience to new volunteers just starting out. We connected Kurt in Glenora with Kyle in Capilano and the results were promising.

“ Kyle and I had a great chat. We discussed which services seemed worth outsourcing and some ways that we might be able to opt in to benefits from economies of scale for services like bookkeeping, accounting, banking/investing, fundraising, etc. We will certainly need EFCL's assistance if we're going to execute these lofty empire-building plans.”

- Kurt, Glenora Community League

111 out of 162 Leagues registered in our mentorship program

302 volunteers participated

23 out of 38 “hard to reach” Leagues had board members register

12+ resources developed out of feedback within the Group Mentorship Cafes



Programming for Connection

Community Leagues 101 was created in 2021 to provide everyday Edmontonians and non-profit organizations an opportunity to learn about how Leagues function, how they're set up and their role in the community.

Community Leagues 101

Planning and Development

The approval of the City Plan at the end of 2020 saw Leagues identified as stakeholders in building 15-minute neighbourhoods.

In 2021, as district plans and zoning bylaw renewal work moved forward, the EFCL advocated for meaningful conversations and engagement with Leagues. We're excited to work with Leagues, districts and their residents to develop new ways of making decisions together, and to champion Leagues as hubs for inclusive and participatory neighborhood leadership.

The EFCL's work to support Leagues to build skills and tools for reaching different demographics in their neighbourhoods has been vital in 2021.

Community Inclusion and Diversity

With the creation of online training courses, we're providing Leagues with tools, language and opportunities for reflection as they think about how to bring all the voices in the neighbourhood into the League.

Green Leagues

Our Green Leagues program is making a measurable difference. To date, Community Leagues have installed 384,000 watts of solar photovoltaic systems, which produce roughly 478,800 kWh of renewable electricity every year.

What do these numbers mean? The average Alberta household uses 7,200 kWh each year. That means Community Leagues are producing the equivalent of 66 Alberta households' worth of electricity through solar panels. This is also roughly the equivalent of removing 73 gasoline-powered cars from the road every year.

Programming for Connection

In 2021, EFCL's two community activators connected with approximately 600 Community League volunteers through the board outreach project.

Community Activator

Collectively, our activators reached out to **123 of the 162 Community Leagues** across the city, with 39 Leagues for future outreach. Of those 123 contacted, the community activators presented to **86 boards** about supports EFCL offers and to hear directly from Leagues. The presentations focused on programming including the mentorship program and online courses. Many mentors and mentees were identified through these direct board interactions.

Direct League Support

The EFCL answers League volunteer questions daily. Between our staff, we usually know the answer; we are League experts after all. But so are our volunteers.

When our staff don't know the answer, we know one of our volunteers will. The Mentorship Cafes, piloted in 2021, have offered a front row seat to the incredible wealth of knowledge and expertise within the League movement. We've connected Leagues about hall builds and fundraising, rink safety, youth programming, special events, hiring staff and many other things.

EFCL's online Mentorship Cafes and Rink Conversations connected League volunteers across the city to share and problem-solve together each month. One tangible outcome of these gatherings is the Rink Poster template our team put together.

Rink Conversations

We heard from Leagues that there was a need for more standardized messaging. Many asked, "Why reinvent the wheel? What are other Leagues using?" Leagues brought templates from signs currently in use. EFCL staff connected with our insurance provider to ensure the contents of the sign covered all necessary messaging. The end result? A relevant and timely resource to support our volunteers.

Words from our Partners

The Edmonton SafeWalk pilot is a model of what positive collaboration should look like. Sisters Dialogue worked seamlessly with EFCL in an anti-oppressive, community-centered framework to create a program to meet the needs of safety and well-being for Muslim women in Northeast Edmonton. We are grateful to have partnered with an organization like EFCL, and look forward to future collaborations.

- **Wati Rahmat, founder/director, Sisters Dialogue**

It was so reassuring to connect with someone already established in the community within the same role, who could point me in the right direction as a new board volunteer. The mentor I was matched with was so friendly and insightful, it was very much appreciated.

- **Robin Kyler, communications director, Meadows Community League**

It has been a continued pleasure to work with EFCL on community events. The sense of true desire to share Indigenous culture, as well as enrich local Edmonton neighbourhoods, is at the forefront of their intention in their work with us and we look forward to future opportunities to continue in this way.

- **Bryn Herbert, communications, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society**

The Infill Development in Edmonton Association (IDEA) is proud to work with the EFCL. Community Leagues play an important role in Edmonton's neighbourhoods by creating places for communities to come together.

- **Mariah Samji, executive director, IDEA**

The Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues has been instrumental in connecting Free Play for Kids with communities across Edmonton through the Start to Play program. We've been able to provide free programming to more than 500 kids in more than 20 community Leagues.

- **Brandon Brock, Free Play for Kids**

We thank EFCL's leaders and organizers for gathering community members and facilitating a conversation about the future of urban reserves in Edmonton. Working together across Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities will be key to inclusive reconciliation for all Treaty Peoples.

- **Jordan Turko, Turko and Associates**

Zoom-in: Opportunities Fair

Over the past year, we organized a student opportunities fair to connect Community Leagues with post-secondary schools and school boards. The aim was for both to find ways for students to help Leagues expand their outreach and capacity.



“We’re happy students can learn about Community Leagues. It’s really important for students, specifically newcomers, to feel connected to the community and be aware of the support out there. Community Leagues are a low-barrier way to get involved in your community. It’s right where you live and there’s lots of ways to get involved.”

- Bree Dunn-Hucko, community service learning faculty developer at Norquest College.

Some of the projects that emerged from the program include a community ice rink booking app, a community mural and event partnerships. One participant also linked newcomers to Canada with Leagues through the program.

Dunn-Hucko’s Language Learners and Newcomer to Canada students worked with Calder Community League to plan its Halloween event. Students provided suggestions for food, activities and inclusive messaging for the League’s event.



Zoom-in: Reconciliation Partners

In 2021, the EFCL worked to create understanding. Take our virtual Ask Me Anything event with Enoch Cree Nation Chief Billy Morin, on urban reserves in Edmonton.

Kelly Cromwell, president of Lewis Estates Community League, attended the event. Lewis Estates is adjacent to the Enoch Cree Nation. Cromwell commuted daily past a sacred burial site for the Enoch Nation yet was unaware of its existence despite having been a resident of the neighbourhood for nearly 20 years. This land will be shifted into an urban reserve in coming years. Cromwell said his mind was changed thanks to the event.

It was a formative experience. I've lived in Lewis Estates for decades and remember when the River Cree casino was being built. There was definitely pushback from Lewis Estates residents concerned about the negative impact on property values. Now, to hear what the Enoch Nation has endured over the years, I've recontextualized everything.

- Kelly Cromwell, president of Lewis Estates Community League

When asked what is in store for the future, Cromwell said: "The event put a spotlight on the importance of acknowledging the truth in our history and forging new relationships within our communities. There is a lot of support from residents and on our board in advancing Truth and Reconciliation. We welcome suggestions and support that help us do that in an honest and respectful way."



Our Future as Community Hubs

The EFCL and Community Leagues are a place where Edmontonians of all backgrounds can come together and discuss issues that matter to their community, to their city, all within the spirit of neighbourliness, mindfulness and understanding. Not every conversation is an easy one, but we will dare to have it. We come together through recreational and social opportunities, and we create a sense of community and belonging that can last for generations.

Since its founding in 1921, the EFCL has worked to create inclusive Community Leagues, regardless of ethnicity, gender or political affiliation. The EFCL has also played a critical role to build a democratic and civil society, through the League system.

Edmontonians on Community League boards have built a network of buildings over 100 years that continue to bring people together. With the expanded definition of recreation, Leagues can now offer more things in their spaces to create community hubs for people to connect with new neighbours and create the neighbourhood they want to live in.

- Ryan Barber, EFCL Past President (2019-2022)

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