

# Building Safer Communities Fund: Project Deliverables Summary Report

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**Re: Building Safer Communities Fund**

Dear Building Safer Communities Fund Project Team,

pipikwan p ht kwan is pleased to submit our findings from our literature review, ecosystem map and engagement consultations completed between April 2023 to June 2023. The information collected led to the development of a Literature Review, Ecosystem Map Summary, and Engagement Report. These three documents informed this Project Deliverables Summary Report, which covers the recommendations and key findings for the Building Safer Communities Fund Steering committee. We appreciated the thoughtful input from the Steering Committee in the review of the reports, and have provided updated versions here as our submission.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this work!

The contact person for this report is:

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Our team looks forward to the opportunity to answer any questions about the provided report. Thank you!

Sincerely,



Matt Ward

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# Building Safer Communities Fund: Project Deliverables Summary Report

Prepared for the City of Edmonton



## Project Overview

The City of Edmonton was successful in acquiring funds from Public Safety Canada's Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF). This \$250 million fund is designed to help municipalities and Indigenous communities prevent gun and gang violence by tackling its root causes.

pipikwan pêhtâkwan was contracted by the City of Edmonton to provide our services in the completion of a Literature Review, Ecosystem Scan, Data Analysis and the provision of recommendations for the Development Phase of the City's Building Safer Communities Fund project. The specific deliverables summarized in this report include a Literature Review, Ecosystem Map, and an Engagement Summary Report. The Project Deliverables Summary Report serves as the 'Data Analysis' component of the project, outlining the recommendations from the overall research and engagement.

The fund parameters set by Public Safety Canada that will guide how the funds can be used for implementation in Phase 2 of this work stipulates that eligible municipalities, like Edmonton, may further distribute funds to organizations to

- Develop local and community-based strategies and initiatives
- Build capacity to better understand the nature, scope and impacts of the types of prevention and intervention initiatives implemented
- Enhance evidence-based and targeted prevention and intervention activities
- Advance knowledge and evidence of what works, and develop a data collection strategy and system

Funds cannot be allocated to replace or displace existing federal or provincial funding. They also cannot be used to fund ongoing core activities, which include costs already supported through existing police service agreements. Existing initiatives cannot be funded, however, the expansion or diversification of an initiative may be eligible.

## About pipikwan pêhtâkwan

pipikwan pêhtâkwan (pee-pee-gwan pee-tah-gwan) is an Indigenous-owned, led and majority-staffed public relations, communications, and engagement agency focused on elevating Indigenous voices, projects and issues. We primarily serve Indigenous businesses, organizations and communities to bring their voices to the mainstream media and general public, while ensuring Indigenous Peoples maintain ownership of their initiatives and stories. We are investing in youth to build capacity in their communities. Whether they stay with us or move on – it is of great benefit and helps us lift up Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island. We are building with seven generations in mind.

The pipikwan pêhtâkwan team prides ourselves as helpers who understand the barriers and know the language that resonates with our Peoples. We collaborate with our partners to build communications and engagement strategies that work for Indigenous communities.

## About the Team

### ELLIOTT YOUNG

Elliott Young is a member of Ermineskin Cree Nation, which is one of the four First Nations that make up Maskwacis. His father is from Ermineskin and he has family from Louis Bull Tribe and Samson Cree Nation. His mother is from Tsuut'ina Nation, which is located just west of Calgary. Tsuut'ina is a Dene nation and Elliott is related to the Starlight family.

Elliott has 12 years of experience in Indigenous relations, community engagement, and policy development within government, non-profit and education. He is passionate about ensuring marginalized voices are heard by policymakers and leaders. He has been successful in facilitating conversations between community members, frontline services providers, First Nation leaders, and government officials.

### KATHRYN GWUN-YEEN 君妍 LENNON

Kathryn Gwun-Yeen 君妍 Lennon (she/her/hers) was born and raised in Edmonton / amiskwaciwâskahikan, with mixed Hong-Kong Cantonese and Irish ancestry. She has over 10 years of experience at the intersections of engagement, planning, research and communications, with an eye to equity, diversity and inclusion. Kathryn has worked with and for a diversity of organizations and audiences, on projects ranging from food systems planning, to intercultural planning, to community engagement and urban planning. Kathryn has experience in the public sector, private sector, and nonprofit sector, and has worked with arts, advocacy, multicultural, Indigenous, and grassroots organizations. She holds a MA in Planning from UBC and a Bachelor of Environment from the University of Waterloo.

### MARISA FINLEY

Marisa Finley was born and raised in Alberta and calls Amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton) home. She has both Métis and settler ancestry.

Marisa is a queer, Métis grassroots activist, multi-disciplinary artist, community organizer and a published writer. She divides her time between her artistic pursuits in creative writing, and her education and justice initiatives that impact her local community. Marisa's work has been published in the Huffington Post, Guts Feminist Magazine, and The Edmonton Women's Initiative among others. She is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Communications program at MacEwan University.

Marisa is passionate about reciprocal, future-oriented, land-based relationships. She is dedicated to a decolonized future that honours the ancestral knowledge of the peoples of Turtle Island.

### MATT WARD

Matt Ward (he/they) is a queer mixed nehiyaw person and member of Driftpile Cree Nation in Treaty 8 territory. They grew up on the shores of Lesser Slave Lake but have lived in amiskwaciwâskahikan collectively for over 10 years. Matt has a degree in Critical Indigenous Studies and Political Science from the University of British Columbia and has supported planning and engagement efforts in Edmonton's housing and homelessness sector for over seven years. In 2021, he received Alberta's Top 30 Under 30 Award and in 2022 he received Edmonton's Top 40 Under 40 Award.

Matt is the Engagement Manager at pipikwan pêhtâkwan, and leads a team of staff on community engagement, facilitation, and workshop training from Indigenous perspectives.

## **TRAVIS KLEMP**

Travis Klemm is a Métis writer and journalist from Treaty 7 territory in Southern Alberta. He has a bachelor's degree in History and Sociology from MacEwan University and over 6 years of experience in engagement. He has contributed to various publications across the country including Windspeaker, Toronto Star, Avenue Magazine Calgary and CJWE. In 2019 he was awarded the Emerging Writer award from the Alberta Magazine Publishers Association. Throughout 2021 he spent time as the editor of the Indigenous Peoples portfolio for The Canadian Encyclopedia.

Travis is a cyclist, runner, golfer and outdoor enthusiast. He is a proud member of the Métis Nation of Alberta and has a passion for sharing and elevating Indigenous stories, people, and communities.

## **Deliverables Overview**

- Literature Review
  - Review and find relevant publications in scholarly journals and grey literature, with a focus on findings and recommendations on new and innovative community-based prevention and intervention strategies with the biggest impact on reducing gun and gang violence.
- Ecosystem Mapping
  - Conduct an environmental scan that will summarize the number of programs specific to community-based prevention and intervention strategies on reducing gang and gun violence in the City of Edmonton. This will be shared and validated through visiting with the community.
- What We Heard Report
  - A 'stakeholder analysis' (since reframed as community engagement) to determine people that would be beneficial to ask questions about their sector experience, including lived experience, scholars, and leading experts. These would be determined in conversation with the City of Edmonton, and multiple focus groups would be conducted.
- Recommendations (Data Analysis)
  - A public report outlining the qualifications of the project team, a summary of the Literature Review, Ecosystem Mapping and Data Analysis, gaps in service that exist in Edmonton, and evidence-based recommendations for funding that will make the biggest impacts on reductions of gangs and gun violence within Edmonton.

## **Limitations**

This research has limitations due to the time constraints of the project and capacity issues in engagement with community partners. Many social service organizations and cultural community leaders are experiencing engagement fatigue and are unable to respond or give as much information as may have been necessary for a deeper understanding of the services offered.

Lived Experience voices were not included in the engagement due to limited time. The team felt that although lived experience voices are central to this work, the relationship building, ongoing

accountability and the resources to approach these conversations with a trauma-informed lens were not possible to do safely and meaningfully with the timelines. Recommendations on how to better support this are included in Appendix C: in the Engagement Summary Report and in the recommendations in this document.

While demonstrated as a clear need in the outcomes of the engagement with immigrant, refugee, and racialized communities, there was little research looking at the impacts, interventions, and unique considerations for these communities in Edmonton and the prairies more broadly. This gap was noted in the Literature Review, and should be a consideration for future investment, with the desire for that work to be community-led based on the engagement.

## **keeoukaywin - 'The Visiting Way'**

keeoukaywin is a nehiyaw (Cree) word that translates to 'the visiting way'. This term was a gift to Indigenous scholar Dr. Janice Cindy Gaudet when conducting research with the Omushkego people living in Moose Cree First Nation. The foundation of this methodology is built on relationality—work explored by Shawn Wilson in *Research is Ceremony* (2009). "The Visiting Way" emphasizes the importance of interconnectedness between people and the act of research. It connects people through the sharing of knowledge and solutions. Building on relationality, Dr. Gaudet shares that "with relationality at its core, keeoukaywin recentres Métis and Cree ways of being, and presents a practical and meaningful methodology that fosters miyo pimatisiwin, 'living and being well in relation.'"

Using visiting as an approach for engagement is more complex than typical Western understandings of the term, with a focus on fostering co-creation. "The Visiting Way" prioritizes relationships, then progresses to matters that impact governance, education, land, kinship, and community needs. The goal of this engagement will be to support the development and/or sustainability of these relationships by working transparently, in a good way, and centring these relationships beyond the life of any one project.

This approach has had different impacts on each deliverable of the project, which will be expanded upon in their relevant sections.

## **Literature Review**

This review looked at 16 sources both grey and academic surrounding gang involvement, prevention, intervention and youth. The focus of the research was approached with an Edmonton and Alberta context but also with an understanding that there is a limitation to the amount of academic research in this area.

Four major themes emerged from the literature that was reviewed: federal, provincial and municipal strategies and/or toolkits, prevention and intervention for youth, effects of colonization, and gang desistance.

### **Federal, Provincial, Municipal and Enforcement Approaches**

- Research conducted by the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC) suggests that educational programming, like *Changes in Knowledge*, was effective for more than half of participants (57-66%).

- Length of time within these educational programs saw a significant decrease in the desirability to join a gang, with a 42% decline in acceptance of gangs by participants.
- Projects that successfully increase protective factors and reduce risk factors in significant ways contributed the most to the prevention of youth involvement in gang activity.
- Wraparound Prevention Models yielded the most positive change in participants' behaviours and attitudes.
- Many existing models are U.S.-based and do not reflect the Canadian context. Any programming would need to consider the specific needs of the City of Edmonton to be successful.
- Aspects of the NCPCC have been implemented in Edmonton and Calgary at varying levels, with a noted lack of investment and prioritization of prevention-based strategies.
- In Calgary Police Service's (CPS) Calgary Gang Strategy, many activities categorized as 'prevention' actually focus on intervention, while many activities under 'intervention' focus more on suppression activities.
- In Edmonton Police Service's (EPS) 2023-2025 Guns and Gang Strategy, the four pillars (Partnerships, Awareness, Intelligence, and Integration) represent a comprehensive approach supported by research. However, prioritized areas of focus to address these pillars (focused deterrence, investigative excellence, and young people intervention) may not address the specific needs identified in the broader community engagement in prevention areas for youth not yet involved in gangs.
- Areas identified as preventative look at root causes such as poverty, inequality, racism, mental illness, social isolation, substance abuse, extremist ideologies, access to affordable housing, education and health, exposure to violence, trauma, lack of positive community influence and peer pressure. Programming that addresses root causes is best handled by social programs and community led initiatives. Because the EPS role often begins when an individual engages in criminal activity, prevention, as defined in this literature review, does not apply to the EPS Strategy.
- Systems have expectations of each other in terms of role in the prevention and intervention space, which may be better understood by community partners and systems themselves through better coordination of their efforts.
- It should be noted that although the Edmonton Police Service provides essential educational resources on gangs which are necessary to preventative work, their roles begin at the point of intervention, or, once criminal activity is already underway and therefore are not included in the prevention services according to the definitions given in the literature review.

## Prevention and Intervention

- Models in Alberta, like the Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force in 2007, were identified as past approaches to prevention that are evidence-based.
- Elements necessary for effective prevention include:
  - A permanent responsibility centre: "The research calls for national, provincial, and municipal level responsibility centres, which would receive sustained funding (National Crime Prevention Council, 1996) and rely on leadership by a central figure. For example, in the case of a national centre, this would be someone who oversees the entire crime prevention strategy in Canada, where in the case of municipalities; this might be someone in an existing regional leadership role, such as the mayor."
  - Mobilization and coordination of many sectors and partners.
  - Safety diagnosis of problems.

- Development of an action plan.
  - Implementing an action plan.
  - Monitoring and evaluating the action plan.
- Evidence suggests that parental support, law-abiding friends, community activities, and positive relationships with teachers coupled with educated decision-making can help a young person resist gang membership.
  - This same research also suggests that quantity of protective factors like those outlined above may not need to outnumber risks to avoid gang membership.
  - This research also found the quality of protective factors may be equally important.
- Wraparound services appear to strengthen many of the protective factors of participants, and may lower the likelihood of youth engaging in gang activities. These services were seen to be more impactful than Intensive Support and Supervision Programs (ISSPs).

### **Indigenous Gang Involvement and Colonization**

- Any analysis of gun and gang violence would be incomplete without specific consideration of Indigenous Peoples' experiences, and the contributing factors of colonization more broadly that contribute to the on-going marginalization of several diverse communities, including Indigenous, immigrant, refugee, and racialized communities more broadly.
- Individual-focused theories of trauma, attachment, and hope must be centred over constrictive ideas of 'gangs' in Canada.
- While there is limited research on Indigenous gang activity in Western Canada, the research shows growth in Indigenous gang involvement across the prairies, and there is consensus amongst scholars that this growth is directly connected to the inequity, racism, dislocation, marginalization, and cultural and spiritual alienation that Indigenous people face.
- While increased awareness in both public and political contexts is needed, this needs to be approached sensitively acknowledging the lived realities of Indigenous people, the complexities of these challenges, the derogatory caricatures often used against Indigenous communities, and the ongoing experiences of colonialism.

### **Gang Desistance and Disengagement**

- While popular understandings of desistance or cessation from gang activities occur from violent or traumatic events, a vast majority often occur in passive manners. The limited research in this space acknowledges these are very personal and complex processes, that widely differ from person to person.
- Contributing factors that influence what desistance looks like include varying levels of involvement and roles within gangs, criminal records, employment, social capital, and racism.
- Research on Indigenous gangs identified unique elements of desistance due to Indigenous Peoples experience of social barriers and systemic racism. Gangs were sometimes formed to create community because members were considered outsiders to society. Some members saw successful desistance from crime without members having to leave their gang. This speaks to the need for a community in which Indigenous Peoples see themselves, are safe and provide supports that are culturally informed.

## Key Findings

Academic research overwhelmingly suggests that prevention efforts surrounding gang involvement and violence need to address root causes. Wraparound services that take into account supports for mental health, housing, employment opportunities, addictions, family dynamics, and education are proven to have the greatest positive impact on reducing youth involvement in gangs. Additionally, culturally specific supports need to be incorporated into programming.

A root cause approach also applies to gang desistance and disengagement. There are intervention efforts that have proven to be effective in this field as well but the majority of studies reviewed pointed to the fact that the challenges youth face when turning to gang involvement are very similar to those faced by gang members looking to exit and de-identify from the gang. Desistance research also points to the extremely complex, individualized nature of leaving gangs. Programming needs to be flexible and able to meet people where they are in the process and understand the nonlinear nature of leaving gangs.

Strategies developed by Calgary and Edmonton police services have implemented measures that, while titled as prevention, are much closer to suppression and intervention. Research shows that while there is a need for an enforcement arm of gang prevention, it is imperative that it be paired with or led by the thorough, real prevention programming mentioned above.

Overall, programming focused on preventing gang involvement both at initial entry and at exit, is extremely complex. It involves strategic cooperation from all social service areas if it is to make a significant impact. It must be sustainable and focused on relationality and understanding of root causes.

## Ecosystem Mapping

Through an environmental scan of gang prevention and intervention programs in Edmonton, as well as interviews conducted with community and systems stakeholders, an ecomap of existing programming, was developed to provide a high-level overview of current services and to identify gaps in programming that exist that may be considered as priorities in the funding of community-based solutions. The following themes and recommendations were identified:

- Prevention-based supports are not easily accessible to many at-risk individuals.
- There are few intervention or prevention programs, and no specific funded programs for genders other than men, while other groups like immigrant and refugee communities do not have the resources or capacity to support specific programming for people who are at-risk or involved in gangs.
- There are not enough low-barrier housing programs available for high-risk gang-involved people.
- There is no gang-specific programming outside of the downtown core. Most preventative services exist downtown as well.
- No housing programming with a specific mandate to house folks looking to leave gangs.
- No gang-specific programming for women or other marginalized gender groups.
- No training or educational tools to support schools in the city to know how to deal with youth in gangs.
- Only one community-led program run by folks with lived experience exists in Edmonton and as of report submissions, is not funded.

## Recommendations

- Programs that are led by and centre the needs of Black, immigrant, refugee and racialized communities who are overrepresented in gang activity and have unique cultural and community needs. These programs should be created by and for the communities they serve, and have funded evaluation components to address the gap in research in these areas in Western Canada.
- Community-based spaces spread out evenly across the city with the ability to access most or all services in-house.
- Programs that cater to the needs of women and other genders involved in gang activity are a necessary element of reducing gang activity. There is a need for safe spaces where people can go to get away from dangerous living situations.
- More low-barrier housing programs and spaces that cater to the needs of those who struggle with mental health, addiction, gang violence or incarceration issues.
- Address the underfunding of critical services like housing programs, mental health and addictions programs so that basic needs can be addressed in real-time.
- More community-led, neighbourhood-specific programming that addresses the needs of the immediate community surrounding it. Supports should focus on relationship and trust-building, not criminalization.

## Community Engagement

Engagement was conducted in May and June of 2023. With support from the City of Edmonton and the Building Safer Communities Fund Steering Committee, the pipikwan pêhtâkwan team engaged with 33 people from 26 organizations through multiple facilitated group conversations (focus groups) and interviews. These included perspectives from the sector in leadership positions, frontline service providers, and community leaders.

This engagement was conducted with the purpose of listening meaningfully to community perspectives on issues of gun and gang violence, with the intention of informing the recommendations for community-based prevention and intervention strategies that will have the biggest impact on the community.

### Engagement Questions

The following questions were used to better understand existing services in the community as part of the Ecosystem Mapping, and to inform recommendations on future community-based services.

- What initiatives are communities utilizing to prevent and intervene in gun and gang violence?
- What impacts are gun and gang activities having on communities and the city?
- How might future BSCF funding be used?
- How might we develop solutions, and who needs to be part of creating those solutions?

### Engagement Participants

With support from the BSCF Steering Committee and the City of Edmonton, the community partners who participated were identified. Due to limitations of time, relationships, and trust, most of the engagement that was conducted was done at the working level of the service providers.

## Key Findings

- **Develop trust and relationships**
  - Invest in diverse community organizations with flexible approaches to funding allocations. Build upon existing work and support formal and informal capacities. Trust and work with community and faith leaders.
- **Increase funding and capacity**
  - Build upon existing funding options to expand connections and collaborations between partners in systems and community. Support community-based research within Edmonton. Create opportunities for funding community organizations where funding may go further and be more impactful.
- **Centre community-driven solutions**
  - Many existing efforts are police-led or partnered, and there was a gap in community-led programming. EPS is a crucial partner in that work. Centre the voice of those most impacted, including youth, Indigenous people and communities of African descent. Explore decision-making/informing models for phase 2.
- **Expand partnerships with schools**
  - Repeatedly named as integral partners from systems and community organizations, schools have an important role in supporting youth and connecting to programs. Despite this need, there are no clear ways for community agencies to go into schools and provide support. Previous SRO connections have not been replaced.
- **Build prevention awareness tools**
  - There is a need for educational and awareness-building resources for a broad range of community and systems stakeholders in Edmonton. These should be designed by community-based organizations and reflect the community's perspectives and lived experiences. Organizations, schools, and families feel unprepared for these conversations and are seeking these resources. This may include a toolkit that could be provided to schools and youth-serving organizations with resources, training, tools, and presentations on gang prevention.
- **Focus on root causes**
  - Focusing efforts on preventing crime itself. This could also look like education for justice workers, EPS, front line workers, on understanding the barriers for vulnerable people. Other examples provided from the engagement included meaningful investment in how newcomers settle and integration supports to have their basic needs met.

## Recommendations

Based on the combined findings and recommendations from the Literature Review, Ecomapping, and Community Engagement, the following reflections and recommendations have been developed by the team for the Building Safer Communities Fund to consider.

## Fund Robust Prevention Programming

- **Gang Prevention Specific Mandates are needed in programming:** A significant gap in gang prevention-specific programming is identified in Edmonton and shows demonstrable impacts in other communities. Without adequate preventative measures, the inflow into gang activity will not slow. The best way to slow gang activity is to prevent it in the first place.
- **Educational and Awareness Campaigns needed for communities, systems partners:** Efforts like education and awareness campaigns for systems partners, community agencies, and families from impacted communities were identified as specific interventions that there is demand for and significant means of creating impact.
- **Educational and Awareness Campaigns needed for schools:** Awareness and education programs for schools is an essential part of prevention. Teachers, students and families need to understand what tools they have at their disposal to prevent or intervene with students involved in gang activity.

## Fund Community-Based Programming

- **Fund Specific Programming for Overrepresented Communities:** Black, Indigenous, racialized, refugee and immigrant communities are overrepresented in gang activity in Edmonton and lack specific culturally-led solutions with appropriate resourcing to address those needs. With little research and evaluation identifying solutions for these specific communities in a Western Canadian context, addressing this programming gap is essential.
- **Access to Community-Based Programming Spaces are Needed:** Neighborhoods with heavy gang activity need spaces for people to go. Currently, safe spaces are limited and distributed unevenly throughout the city, leaving gaps for people, especially without access to transportation. Ensure these services are diverse, appropriate to their neighborhood demographics and distributed throughout the city so they remain accessible.
- **More Wraparound Services with Gang-Specific Programming Needed:** Wraparound services demonstrated the most significant impact in the research and were identified as a clear need from the engagement. Any successful programming will consider wraparound services as an integral component of the work.
- **Low Barrier Supportive Housing is Needed:** Easily accessible safe housing spaces are needed for people who may be labeled as dangerous due to mental health, addiction, incarceration or gang affiliation issues. People need their basic needs met before they're able to leave gang communities which may be keeping them off the streets.
- **Access to Addiction and Mental Health Services are Needed:** Root causes of gang involvement often stem from addiction issues, trauma and mental health issues. Current access to these services is limited and difficult to access.

## Establish and Strengthen Community Networks

- **Trust and Relationship-Building Are Key Factors in Successful Programming:** in both preventative and intervention based programming. This requires meaningful connection with the intention of understanding one another's needs and perspectives.
- **Expand programming to Fill Gaps in Edmonton:** This includes programs with specific mandates for youth, Indigenous Peoples, immigrants and refugees.

- **Account for the Time Needed to Build Solid Relationships:** Relationships take time to build the trust needed between community partners who are often at odds competing for funding.
- **Account for the Cyclical Nature of Gang-Exiting:** Relationships between communities, at-risk youth or individuals looking for programming also take time to strengthen. Keeping in mind that it often takes individuals multiple attempts to leave a gang, this work should emphasize the importance of the process of relationality and the cyclical nature of healing, rather than focusing on time-bound, quantifiable outcomes.
- **Spend More Time and Resources Strengthening Partner Relationships:** Strengthening Networks includes relationship building between community partners, agencies and services that are already doing social service work to address the root causes of gang involvement. It is recommended that partners find a way to coordinate more efficiently. This may look like creating monthly standing meetings between agency partners to work on finding common ground and solutions. It will also require ways for system partners, like government, police, schools to connect into work cohesively.

## Lived Experience Engagement is Needed

- **Build Trust by Building in Time, Flexibility, and Transparency:** It is important to note that with such a sensitive, difficult topic, it is especially challenging to build trust, and to find individuals, who are close to it, who are also willing to share their experiences and perspectives.
- **Work with Community Groups Doing this Work and Contacts Established in Phase 1:** Think of them as partners and collaborators, and ask for their help to reach out further to community and faith leaders, to youth and families. Take an approach of identifying communities most impacted.
- **Partner with larger organizations who can act as brokers:** While there are limitations to existing programming in Edmonton, there are agency partners doing important work who have interest and existing networks to build off of if they had the appropriate resources in their respective communities. Some agencies mentioned through the engagement included REACH Edmonton, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Multicultural Healthbrokers, and the Africa Centre.
- **Take a relational approach:** Begin with people and organizations you already have relationships with. Ask for their advice on how to connect with others in their community or networks, or ask for a warm introduction. Often, for individuals who may have some unfamiliarity or mistrust of big systems, it is helpful to ask for help with brokering relationships. For example, working with the City of Edmonton's Multicultural Relations team or Indigenous Relations Office, or working with staff from one organization to further reach out to individuals with which they work.
- **Be Flexible and Meet People Where They Are At:** Participants might prefer to participate in 1-on-1 interviews for confidentiality, others might feel more comfortable in pairs, or having someone join the conversation who is a broker. Others may prefer to participate with a group of people they feel comfortable with. Meet people in the spaces they feel comfortable: community settings, community centres, parks, public spaces, organizational offices, places of worship.
- **Have Supports in Place:** Take into account things such as counseling and support services - for both participants and facilitators, support from a cultural or faith community leader (as appropriate), honouraria provided, and travel, childcare, and food provided to remove barriers to access.