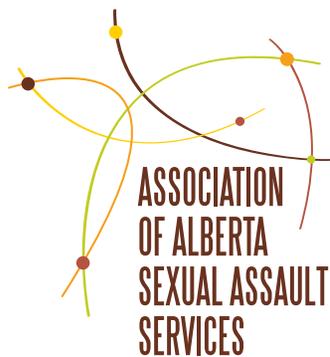


Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services

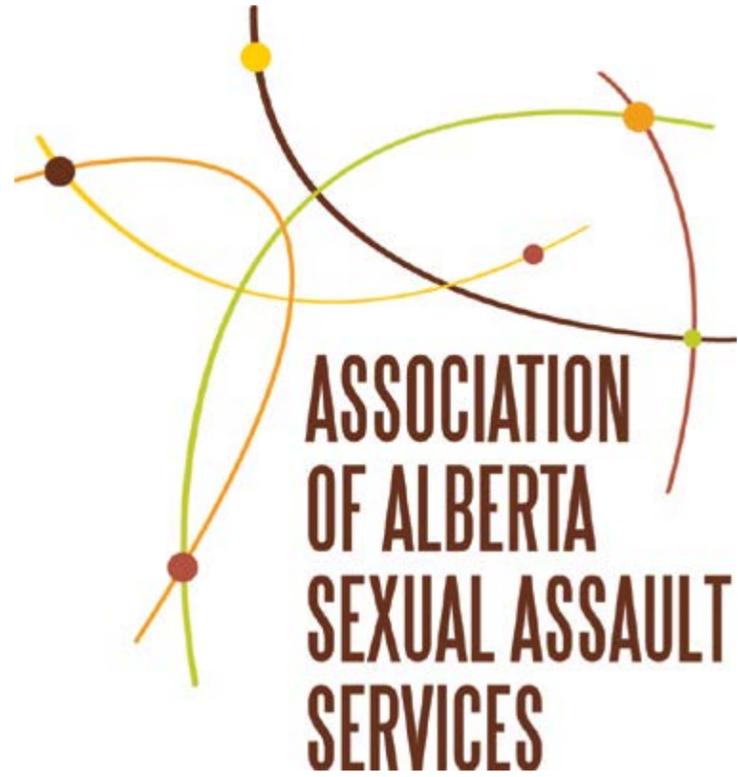
Annual Report 2019-2020

45% of Albertans have experienced at least one incident of sexual abuse in their lifetime.

That's almost one in two....



Working Together for an Alberta
Free From Sexual Violence



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Providing leadership, coordination, collaboration and a unified voice on issues of sexual abuse and sexual assault.



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Organization Overview

The Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services (AASAS) is a non-profit, registered charitable organization that began operations in 1993. As a provincial umbrella organization, AASAS provides leadership, coordination and a unified voice on issues of sexual assault and sexual abuse while increasing recognition, support for and access to sexual assault services in Alberta.

Land Acknowledgement

In the spirit of respect and truth, AASAS would like to take a step towards reconciliation by acknowledging the land on which we do our work. Not as a token, or a box to check, but out of a genuine desire to acknowledge the traditional territories and travelling corridors of the people of the Treaty 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 regions and Metis regions 1 through 6 in Alberta.

We would also like to acknowledge the pervasive, and intergenerational effects of colonization; colonization, that included sexual violence as a way to harm Indigenous peoples, a weapon that is still used here on Turtle Island to harm others. Violence did exist before the arrival of settlers, but not in the ways that it is present in today's society. AASAS' commitment to reconciliation includes education, increased access to services, and truth telling.

Our Vision

An Alberta free from sexual violence.

Our Mission

To provide leadership, coordination, collaboration and a unified voice on issues of sexual abuse and sexual assault.

The Role of AASAS

The AASAS Member Agencies/Services are responsible for day-to-day, front line delivery of services within their local communities and regional areas. As a provincial support organization, AASAS focuses its efforts in these key areas:

AWARENESS: AASAS works to increase public and government awareness of issues involving sexual abuse and sexual assault and the impacts they have on all Albertans.

ACCESS: AASAS strives to ensure that all Albertans affected by sexual abuse and sexual assault have access to healing and recovery programs, services and supports.

AASAS Core Beliefs

- We believe anyone can be a victim of sexual abuse and sexual assault.
- We believe anyone affected by sexual abuse and sexual assault has the right to access effective, affordable and timely services that are distinct and specialized.
- We believe everyone has the capacity and resiliency to recover from sexual abuse and sexual assault.
- We believe victims of sexual abuse and sexual assault are not to blame and perpetrators must be held accountable.
- We believe society minimizes the crime of sexual abuse and sexual assault on individuals and that minimization has devastating outcomes for survivors.
- We believe services addressing sexual abuse and sexual assault need to be delivered in an inclusive, respectful and equitable manner regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation or ability.
- We believe there is a need for increased recognition and support for existing and emerging sexual assault services in Alberta.
- We believe education and awareness initiatives need to be targeted at everyone.
- We believe the prevention initiatives are not to be targeted to survivors or potential survivors but towards perpetrators and potential perpetrators as well as those who can intervene.
- We believe that treatment is a form of prevention because healthy individuals and healthy communities break the cycle of abuse.
- We believe in the need for treatment and greater access to treatment for perpetrators of sexual abuse and sexual assault.

PACE Community Support, Sexual Assault & Trauma Centre (Grande Prairie)
 Support & Intake: 780.539.6692
 pacecentre.com

Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (SACE)
 Support & Info (9am-9pm daily): 780.423.4121
 Business: 780.423.4102
 sace.ca

University of Alberta Sexual Assault Centre
 780.492.9771
 uab.ca/SACentre

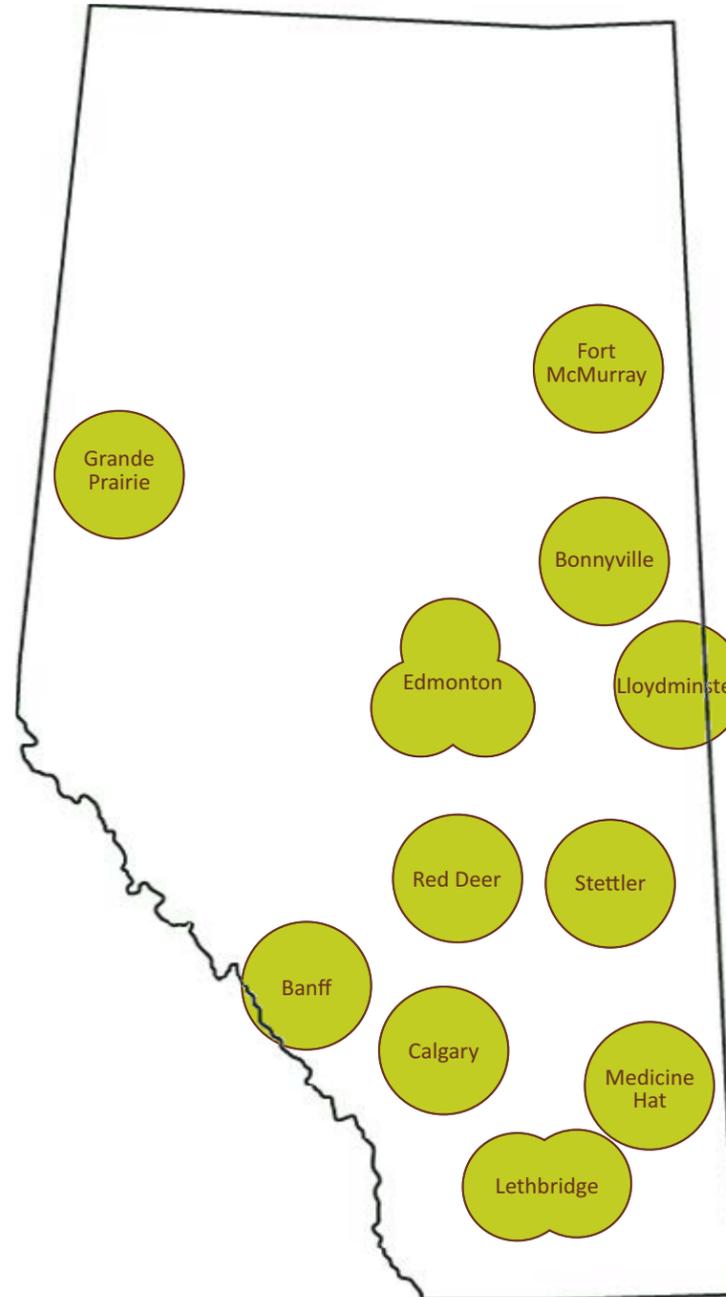
Saffron Centre Ltd. (Sherwood Park)
 780.449.0900
 saffroncentre.com

Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support Centre (Red Deer)
 Toll Free: 1.866.956.1099
 24-Hour Text: 1.866.956.1099
 Business: 403.340.1124
 Web Chat: casasc.ca

Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse
 Toll Free: 1.877.237.5888
 Business: 403.237.6905
 calgarycasa.com

Harmony Project - Sexual Violence Prevention & Response (Banff)
 403.760.3200
 ywcanbanff.ca/programs-services/bow-valley-harmony-project/

AASAS Member Agencies/Services



Waypoints Sexual Assault Healing Centre (Ft. McMurray)
 Crisis Line: 780.791.6708
 Business: 780.743.4691 Ext. 232
 waypointswb.ca

Dragonfly Counselling & Support Centre: Sexual Assault Services (Bonnyville)
 780.812.3174
 thedragonflycentre.com

Lloydminster Sexual Assault Services
 Business: 306.825.8255
 lsas.com

Association of Communities Against Abuse (ACAA) (Stettler)
 Toll Free: 1.866.807.3558
 Business: 403.742.3558
 acaahelps.ca

Southeastern Alberta Sexual Assault Response Committee (Medicine Hat)
 Toll Free: 1.866.403.8000
 Business: 403.548.2717
 mhsarc.com

Sexual Violence Action Committee (Lethbridge)
 YWCA Harbour House Crisis Line: 403.320.1881
 Toll Free: 1.866.296.0447
 Business: 403.327.5724
 svaclethbridge.com

Chinook Sexual Assault Centre (Lethbridge)
 Toll Free: 1.844.576.2512
 Business: 403.694.1094
 csacleth.ca

Message from the Leadership

As many Albertans already know, AASAS strives to fulfil two aims targeted at increasing access to:

- Specialized Services to help Albertans heal and recover from the effects of sexual violence, and
- Evidence-based information so all Albertans can work effectively towards ending sexual violence in our province.

This year, AASAS really “walked our talk” because we fulfilled both of our aims and in a very big way!

Thanks to support from the Government of Alberta and the active participation of four of our sexual assault centres in Alberta, AASAS kicked off Sexual Violence Awareness Month in May 2019 with Alberta’s One Line for Sexual Violence, a critical province-wide talk, text and chat service providing specialized sexual violence support and information accessible from anywhere in our province.

In January 2020, again with the support of our provincial government partners along with representatives from our sexual assault centres, AASAS released the findings from the Sexual Assault and Abuse in Alberta Prevalence Study. For the first time in 36 years, since the Badgely (1984) study on child sexual abuse, we now have detailed, accurate, up to date and reliable information about how and to what degree sexual violence affects the lives of Albertans.

Both of these tools will contribute significantly towards AASAS meeting our overall goal – a goal that seeks to benefit every Albertan – a province; a home; a school; a place of worship; a community; free from sexual violence!

Staff

Deb Tomlinson, Chief Executive Officer
 Cheryl Wallach, Communications Specialist
 Corinne Ofstie, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator
 Cynthia Jardine, First Responder Training Admin Assistant
 Haley Scott, Collaborative Community Response Coordinator
 Katie Robertson, Continuing Education Coordinator
 Lisa Oracheski, Criminal Justice Response Coordinator
 Tiffany Goebel, Community Development Associate

Board of Directors

Brenda Murdoch, President
 Bill Walker, Vice-President
 Diane MacIntyre, Treasurer
 Bill Kaye, Secretary
 Brad Cunningham, Director
 John Ferguson, Director
 Linda McCracken, Director

Highlights of 2019-2020

Regional Service Expansion

There still remain large parts of Alberta in which people struggle to access specialized sexual violence supports and services. Some must travel great distances to get the services they need, some rely on non-specialized supports, and some, unfortunately, go without supports entirely. In April 2018, AASAS received funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services for regional service expansion. As a result, AASAS member organizations have been working diligently with a number of key stakeholders in underserved areas towards the establishment of a coordinated response to sexual violence across the province.

This targeted funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services made it possible for five AASAS sexual assault centres to reach out and serve 91 rural communities across the province. This year, the outreach efforts at Waypoints (Fort McMurray), PACE (Grande Prairie), Dragonfly Centre (Bonnyville), Harmony Project (Banff), and Chinook Sexual Assault Centre (Lethbridge) have decreased barriers and increased access to services for 524 previously underserved clients. These five sexual assault centres also facilitated 209 workshops and/or information sessions, raising awareness about sexual violence among 6,305 community members.

In addition, AASAS contracted with a community development consultant to map resources, services, needs and gaps in the Central West Region of Alberta (Hinton, Jasper and Edson) and in February 2020, AASAS held initial stakeholder meetings in these communities. All three communities are interested in continued engagement regarding the possible establishment of a specialized collaborative and coordinated response to sexual violence in the region.

Regions where AASAS is focusing on service expansion include:

- North West – High Level, High Prairie (Peavine), Rainbow Lake, Fort Vermillion
- North East – Fort Chipewyan, Fort McKay, Janvier
- North Central – Wabasca, Slave Lake, Athabasca
- Central West – Hinton, Jasper, Edson
- Central East – Bonnyville, Cold Lake, St. Paul, Lac La Biche
- Bow Valley – Canmore, Banff, Lake Louise
- South West – Lethbridge, Cardston, Taber, Pincher Creek

Outreach efforts increased access to services for 524 previously underserved clients.

Specialized Police and Court Support

Only five per cent of people who are sexually assaulted in Canada report to the police (Rotenberg, 2017). Individuals choose not to report because they are afraid they won't be believed; will be blamed or held responsible for the crime that was committed against them; and/or they are reluctant to commit to an up to three- to four-year criminal justice process that most often does not result in a conviction.

That's one of the reasons why it is so important that individuals who choose to report to police receive specialized and consistent support from the time of reporting the crime through to and after the conclusion of the case. This specialized support can result in a better experience of the system for individuals as they manage this difficult process, and helps them to maintain their investment in the process until completion.

Thanks to support from the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Victims of Crime Fund, the sexual assault centres in Alberta provide this type of support for people who have been sexually assaulted and want to access their right to justice. This free service is available to people who have experienced both recent and historical sexual violence and covers the entire spectrum of engagement from the initial decision about whether the individual wants to report to police, accompaniment to the hospital, police or court proceedings, and follow-up after the conclusion of any legal proceedings. The process is led by the individual affected, and program staff work to support the individual throughout what can be a complicated, emotionally challenging and lengthy endeavor.

In 2019-2020, 2,693 Albertans received support from Specialized Police and Court Support programming . This represents more than a doubling of support offered over the estimated 1,022 Albertans who were supported last year.

2,693 Albertans received support from Specialized Police and Court Support programming.

Specialized police and court support workers delivered 24,506 sessions/contacts; conducted 9,619 hours of direct service work; and 6,056 hours of consultation, case management, and advocacy work.

Specialized Police and Court Support workers delivered 24,506 sessions/contacts with clients.

Collaborative Justice Response

While the Specialized Police and Court Support program assists individuals to access justice, this project aims to improve the criminal justice response to sexual assault at a systemic level. With the support of the federal Ministry of Women and Gender Equality starting in March 2017, AASAS established the Collaborative Justice Response to Sexual Assault Committee (CJSAC), co-chaired by AASAS and Alberta Crown Prosecution Service. This special project produced a literature review and provincial needs assessment and from these two documents, in June 2018, the committee was able to identify 7 priority areas for collaborative action.

Currently, the Ministry of Justice's Sexual Violence Police Advisory Committee, of which AASAS is a member, is focusing their work on 2 of the 7 special project areas identified:

- Increasing access to Sexual Assault Evidence Kits (SAEKs) in Alberta, and
- Training and Education to improve and enhance the criminal justice response to survivors of sexual assault.

Allying with Indigenous Communities

As part of our ongoing journey towards truth and reconciliation, AASAS recruited a Masters in Public Health and Social Policy student from the University of Victoria to draft tangible service delivery recommendations for sexual assault centres in Alberta aimed at better meeting the needs of Indigenous individuals who have experienced sexual violence. Each recommendation proposed found its roots in the following major social policy documents: the National Inquiry in Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, Calls to Action, and Summary, and the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples.

AASAS also contracted with Natalie St-Denis, Indigenous Social Work Instructor - Researcher & Facilitator from University of Calgary - attending her online training session and requesting input from an Indigenous perspective for First Responder Training. The AASAS staff team continue to work through Stepping into the Circle, a training opportunity developed by Alberta Council of Women's Shelters to learn more about building relationships with and providing support to Indigenous people.



Media Reporting on Sexual Violence

Sexual violence has been shrouded in secrecy and shame for decades. Thanks to #IBelieveYou and #MeToo, more people are talking about sexual violence, and the media is reporting on the issue more than ever before. In order to build on this momentum, AASAS invited a group of media leaders to join a conversation about the role of media in reporting sexual assault.

Chelan Skulski, Host, Alberta Primetime, CTV Two; Rick Castiglione, Filmmaker, Journalist, Educator and Monica Zurowski, Deputy Editor, the Calgary Herald, joined AASAS CEO Deb Tomlinson to discuss how journalists might manage their new role as arbiters of public opinion, whether they have to be more cautious in how they report on these issues, and how this issue is impacted by social media.



The complete video is available for viewing on the AASAS YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/5I2dDWmeWtQ>

Hope and Healing: Sexual Assault Counselling in Alberta

This year, Alberta's sexual assault services supported 4,231 new counselling clients. Further analysis into counselling outputs show that new counselling clients in rural Alberta are steadily increasing while new client intakes at large urban centres have reached capacity with counselling waitlists in the province ranging from two to eight months.

AASAS member agencies provided 33,809 counselling sessions - including individual and group sessions. Seventy-five percent of individuals served were adults, and 25% children. While the majority of counselling clients were women; 14% were men, 1% identified as transgender and .5% as non-binary.

AASAS member agencies provided 33,809 counselling sessions

First Responder to Sexual Assault and Abuse Training™

As in previous years, the demand for AASAS First Responder to Sexual Assault and Abuse Training (FRT) in Alberta continues to increase. This year, 727 professionals and paraprofessionals were trained as first responders. AASAS oversaw the work of 58 certified facilitators, and partnered with 10 post-secondary institutions to provide on-campus training to students, staff and faculty.

The AASAS network provided 50 First Responder Trainings for a total of 700 hours of training to people in the communities of: Lethbridge, Edmonton, Water Valley, Calgary, Lacombe, Camrose, Maskwacis, Fort McMurray, Red Deer, Lloydminster, High Level, Bonnyville, Stettler, Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie, Lac La Biche, Peace River, Saskatoon, Peterborough and Ottawa, Ontario.

A week-long Train the Trainer was completed in Alberta in June 2019. This increased the facilitator pool with 18 new facilitators-in-training, and two new post-secondary institution partners. A week-long Train the Trainer was also held in Saskatchewan in February 2020 where 22 individuals, half of whom were from Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, were trained to deliver the two-day FRT workshop in that province.

AASAS also completed a curriculum update in 2019, including new research, videos and the latest statistics.

AASAS is approved to offer social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program. Social workers completing this course receive 13 Category A continuing education credits. To register go to www.aasas.ca.

Learning to Counsel Survivors Healing from Trauma of Sexualized Violence

Counselling Adult Survivors of Sexual Violence is a 12-week online integrative course that is designed for counselors, therapists, and other mental health practitioners who may wish to work with survivors of sexual violence, or who may be already working with survivors and would like to more deeply inform their counselling practice.

AASAS held two 12-week Counselling courses, training a total of 46 counselling professionals. The Counselling Adult Survivors of Sexual Violence course is now accredited with the Alberta College of Social Workers (ACE), for 20 Category A continuing education credits. To register, go to www.aasas.ca.

727 professionals and paraprofessionals were trained as First Responders

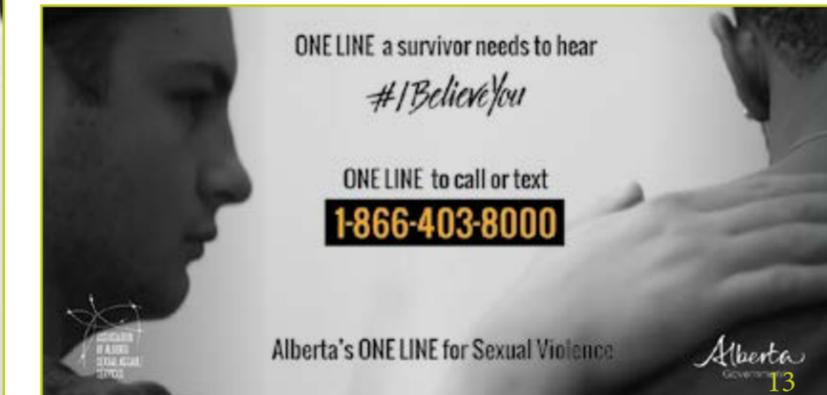
One Line Launched During Sexual Violence Awareness Month

In May 2019, with the support of the Alberta Ministries of Community and Social Services, Health, and Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women, AASAS kicked off Sexual Violence Awareness Month by launching a critical talk-text-and-chat service called Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence. Alberta's #IBelieveYou campaign and the #MeToo movement significantly increased demand for sexual assault services in Alberta - in some centres demand more than doubled. One Line is a specialized response to that growing demand.

One Line is available to anyone anywhere in the province and provides specialized and private sexual assault support and information. If callers wish, they are referred to services in their local communities for additional support. This year, from the launch of One Line in May, 1,645 individuals accessed the service through talk, text or chat.

Alberta's One Line is staffed by trained, specialized responders, both paid and volunteer. Support is available 9:00 am to 9:00 pm seven days a week with access to interpretation services in over 200 languages, including Cree. To access One Line talk or text, dial 1-866-403-8000; for chat, go to www.aasas.ca

1,645 individuals accessed Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence through talk/text/chat.



Sexual Assault and Abuse in Alberta Prevalence Study

Partnering with the Government of Alberta and the research firm of R.A. Malatest and Associates, AASAS undertook research modelled on the most recent study of child sexual abuse in Canada (Badgely 1984). Thanks to this research, we now know more about sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse in Alberta than we have in 36 years.

Over 1,500 people were surveyed from all areas of Alberta. To administer the survey, the research team procured a general population sample which included landlines, cell phones and random digit dialing. Measures were taken to protect the safety of all respondents and those who wanted additional support were referred directly to Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence.

In order to protect children, we only spoke to adults over the age of 18. But we asked them about experiences of sexual assault before the age of 18, over the age of 18 and identified those Albertans who experienced sexual abuse from childhood right through to adulthood.

We learned that forty-five percent of adult Albertans have experienced some type of sexual abuse or violence in their lifetime.

That's almost one in every two.

45% of adult Albertans have experienced some type of sexual abuse or violence in their lifetime

Like Badgely, we asked Albertans about eight different types of sexual abuse. Of all types of sexual abuse surveyed, 92% reached the threshold of a crime when perpetrated against adults. 100% reached the threshold of a crime when perpetrated against children.

We learned that women are twice as likely to experience sexual assault as men and that Indigenous peoples; gender and sexually diverse folks; and people with disabilities experience sexual assault at a higher rate as compared to all Albertans.

Much more detailed information was unearthed through this research and AASAS will use this information to improve service delivery to Albertans who have experienced sexual abuse. To reference more in-depth study findings, go to www.aasas.ca.

Of all types of sexual abuse surveyed, 92% reached the threshold of a crime when perpetrated against adults. 100% reached the threshold of a crime when perpetrated against children.

Thank You



The funding from the Government of Alberta supports AASAS efforts to increase awareness of issues of sexual abuse and assault, and to ensure all Albertans affected by sexual violence have access to programs, supports and services.



Women and Gender Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada



The funding AASAS received from Women and Gender Equality Canada supports a three-year project working to improve and enhance the criminal justice response to adult survivors of sexual assault in the province of Alberta.

AASAS is very appreciative of the support of Women and Gender Equality Canada on this very important initiative.



Department of Justice Canada

Ministère de la Justice Canada

In March 2020, AASAS was thrilled to hear that we were awarded funding from the federal Department of Justice to develop and launch a four year province wide public awareness campaign and training curriculum to address sexual harassment in the workplace. AASAS will begin work immediately in collaboration with the 14 sexual assault centres to shift our culture away from sexual harassment and towards safe and healthy workplaces for every Albertan.

Audited financial statements for the year (April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020) are available by request from the office of the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services.

mailbox@aasas.ca

CALL OR
TEXT

Alberta's ONE LINE
for Sexual Violence
1-866-403-8000

This is really hard to
talk about...

I'm here...
Take your time.

#IBelieveYou

OR CHAT
www.aasas.ca



Alberta
Government