ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES

Annual Report 2024 - 2025



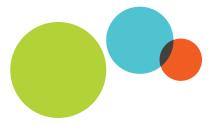


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ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Land Acknowledgement

In the spirit of truth and reconciliation, we acknowledge the many First Nations, Metis and Inuit Peoples who have nurtured these lands since time immemorial. AASAS and our member agencies are located on the ancestral, traditional and unceded lands and traveling routes of the Indigenous Peoples represented in Treaties 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 and the home of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government of the Métis Nation within Alberta, Districts 1 through 22. We are grateful to all Indigenous communities, including the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders of past and present for stewarding this land on which we live, work and visit. As guests on this land, we extend our gratitude, and commitment towards Reconciliation.

We also recognize that land acknowledgments are just one step toward Reconciliation. Ending sexual violence requires us to work together across communities, sectors, and systems. This includes recognizing our shared responsibility to address the ongoing impacts of colonialism and racism, which continue to create the conditions for violence. Through relationships rooted in respect, reciprocity, and accountability, we are committed to building trust and safety in the wake of these harms and working together towards safe communities free from sexual violence.

Who We Are and What We Do

As a provincial association, the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services (AASAS) brings together a network of specialized sexual violence and trauma specific services.

Together we are many voices working towards one shared purpose – safe communities free from sexual violence.

To achieve our shared purpose, AASAS focuses on:

Connecting Communities

by bringing together sexual assault services to represent and reflect the perspectives of people from across Alberta, urban and rural. We find common ground and unite on the biggest issues and opportunities within the sector.

Connecting Voices

by mobilizing and amplifying the voices of millions of Albertans who care deeply about this issue, which impacts nearly one in two of us. Together our many voices support survivors and the people who love them.

Connecting the Dots

around sexual violence by sharing insights from direct service providers, researchers and advocates to inform policy and funding decisions that build the capacity of the sector, and improve access to justice and support services that help keep Alberta communities healthy and safe.

Vision

An Alberta free from sexual violence.

Mission

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

Core Beliefs:

- Anyone can be a victim of sexual abuse and sexual assault.
- Anyone affected by sexual abuse and sexual assault has the right to access effective, affordable and timely services that are distinct and specialized.
- Everyone has the capacity and resiliency to recover from sexual abuse and sexual assault.
- Victims of sexual abuse and sexual assault are not to blame and perpetrators must be held accountable.
- Society minimizes the crime of sexual abuse and sexual assault on individuals and that minimization has devastating outcomes for survivors.
- 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.
- There is a need for increased recognition and support for existing and emerging sexual assault services in Alberta.
- Education and awareness inititiatives need to be targeted at everyone.
- 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.
- Treatment is a form of prevention because healthy individuals and healthy communities break the cycle of abuse.
- There is a need for treatment and greater access to treatment for perpetrators of sexual abuse and sexual assault.

AASAS MEMBERS

AASAS members are specialized sexual violence and trauma specific services with a primary mandate to respond to and prevent sexual violence. They provide a continuum of core services to Albertans of all ages and genders impacted by sexual violence including: crisis, support and information, system navigation, counselling therapy, public education, outreach, specialized police and court support, and coordination and collaboration.

Association of Communities Against Abuse (Stettler) acaahelps.ca

Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse calgarycasa.com

Chinook Sexual Assault Centre (Lethbridge) csacleth.ca

Dragonfly Counselling and Support Centre (Bonnyville) thedragonflycentre.com

Harmony Project - Sexual Violence Prevention & Response (Banff) harmonyproject.ca

Lethbridge Family Services Contact re: Sexual Violence Action Committee Ifsfamily.ca

Lloydminster Sexual Assault Services lloydminstersexualassault.com

Mamowichihitowin Community Wellness Program through the Hinton Friendship Centre 587.280.3395

Pace Community Support, Sexual Assault & Trauma Centre (Grande Prairie) pacecentre.com

Saffron Centre (Sherwood Park) saffroncentre.com

Sanare Centre (Medicine Hat) sanarecentre.ca

Sendero Centre (Red Deer) senderocentre.ca

Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton sace.ca

University of Alberta Sexual Assault Centre uab.ca/SACentre

Waypoints Sexual Assault Healing Centre (Ft. McMurray) waypointswb.ca





MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

This past year, AASAS embraced the art of connecting - bringing together voices, communities, and insights from across Alberta to advance our shared purpose: safe communities free from sexual violence.

As an anti-violence umbrella organization, AASAS recognizes that sustainable change begins with deep listening and collective action. Through initiatives such as coordinating Alberta's ONE LiNE for Sexual Violence, piloting Integrated Case Management, updating our membership model, and deepening prevention priorities, AASAS worked alongside sexual assault services, community partners, and stakeholders to enhance and advance sexual violence prevention and response in Alberta.

Each initiative was guided by the belief that survivors deserve timely, specialized, trauma-informed care and that communities are stronger when they stand together in solidarity against sexual violence.

Looking ahead, AASAS remains steadfast in its vision of an Alberta free from sexual violence. This means continuing to advocate for increased access to and awareness of specialized, distinct, and identifiable sexual assault services, influencing public policy to reflect the lived realities of survivors, and strengthening Albertans' capacity to respond with care and confidence.

With gratitude for the tireless work of sexual assault services, our staff, community collaborators, government and funding partners, and most importantly the survivors who continue to trust sexual assault services with their stories, AASAS reaffirms its commitment to this shared purpose. Together, we are many voices working toward a safe, healthy and thriving future without sexual violence.

Corinne Ofstie and Haley Scott

Board

John Ferguson, President Gabrielle Betts, Vice-President Kurt Marko, Treasurer Kim Armstrong, Secretary Brad Cunningham, Director Gabrielle Comtois, Director Kellie Cummings, Director

Staff

Corinne Ofstie, Co-Chief Executive Officer
Haley Scott, Co-Chief Executive Officer
Cheryl Wallach, Communications Specialist
Cyndi Jardine, Operations Coordinator
Heather Turner, Collaborative Community
Response Coordinator
Lisa Oracheski, Collaborative Community
Response Coordinator
Louiza Chak, Administrative Assistant
Peggy Mocarquer, Collaborative Community
Response Coordinator
Tiffany Goebel, Training Coordinator
Tina Kristiansen, Research and Evaluation Lead



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

By connecting sexual violence service providers across the province and working together to enhance access to services and support, AASAS ensures effective, impactful, and coordinated support for survivors of sexual violence. When communities work together, survivors are more likely to find the right help, at the right time, no matter where they live.

Connecting Sexual Violence Services in Alberta

Updating the AASAS Membership Model

Over the past 30 years, sexual violence prevention and response in Alberta has grown and evolved, as have the needs and interests of the AASAS network membership. In response to this growth and evolution, AASAS initiated a review of its membership model to ensure the association is positioned for sustainable growth and meaningful impact moving forward.

With support from external leadership and governance consultants, along with input from members and leadership, a revised membership model was developed and approved by the Board of Directors in December 2024. A governance review to align bylaws with the new model was conducted, with changes slated for approval at the September 2025 Annual General Meeting.

Facilitating Communities of Practice

To support service delivery excellence within our network, AASAS coordinates and chairs a number of different communities of practice. These communities focus on sharing best-practices and resources, identifying issues and trends, problem solving around service delivery challenges, and ensuring that members of the AASAS network maintain strong and collaborative relationships. They are comprised of representatives from AASAS member organizations working in specified core service areas.

Communities of Practice:

- Senior Leadership
- Clinical
- Specialized Police and Court Support
- Rural Response to Sexual Violence
- Education

100% Agree that participating in an AASAS Community of Practice supports them in their practice as a sexual violence service provider.

41 Community of Practice meetings were held this year with participation from all AASAS members.

Enhancing Access to Support Services

Coordinating Alberta's ONE LiNE for Sexual Violence

Alberta's ONE LiNE for Sexual Violence marked its five-year anniversary in May 2024. This free, confidential support service, available by talk, text, or chat, is open to anyone in Alberta and made possible through support from the Ministry of Children and Family Services. AASAS, in partnership with Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse (CCASA) and the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (SACE), with support from the Sendero Centre, collaboratively operate the line.

To help more people find and use the service, AASAS worked with designer DeAnne Bedier to refresh the ONE LiNE materials and align them with the new AASAS brand. The updated posters and wallet cards were translated into 11 different languages to help reduce language barriers for those seeking support.

This year alone, ONE LiNE responded to 2,547 calls, texts, and chats. Since launching in May 2019, it's been accessed more than 14,500 times by people from 109 communities across Alberta, connecting survivors and their support people to the help they need when they need it most.



"Feeling more grounded and supported, the caller said they were feeling much better. I invited them to call again if needed. They expressed deep gratitude for the support and expressed appreciation that such a service exists."



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

ONE LiNE has been accessed more than 14,500 times by people from 109 communities across Alberta.

ONELINE to call or text 1-866-403-8000







Piloting a New Core Service: Integrated Case Management

With support from the Ministry of Children and Family Services, AASAS launched a pilot program for a new core service called Integrated Case Management (ICM). The goal of ICM is to meet survivors' needs in two key ways: helping them navigate systems and access basic supports, and offering specialized trauma services focused on safety and stabilization - like grounding, emotional regulation, and psychoeducation.

The pilot began in June 2024, with six AASAS members taking part. So far, it's working well alongside existing services, supporting survivor wellbeing and capacity to heal and recover from sexual violence.

Increasing Options for Survivors

With funding from Women and Gender Equality Canada, AASAS is developing a secure online platform to give survivors of sexual violence greater access to information, resources, and support, as well as increased choice and control over how and when they share their stories.

The platform is being co-designed with input from survivors and key stakeholders, including sexual assault services, community agencies, law enforcement, and Crown representatives.

Over the past year, AASAS focused on stakeholder consultations, partnership development, platform content, and close collaboration with a software developer to ensure the platform truly reflects survivors' needs.

A core priority is ensuring the platform works for those who face the highest rates of sexual violence and the greatest barriers to support. This includes Indigenous Peoples, Black communities, newcomers, people with disabilities, older adults, survivors of human trafficking, and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. To guide this work, AASAS partnered with 13 community organizations across the province to inform the platform development and ensure alignment with the needs and experiences of the communities they serve.

CONNECTING VOICES

AASAS helps build a deeper, more accurate understanding of sexual violence by listening to diverse perspectives and creating space for people to speak up, learn, and take action. When more people know how to respond with care and confidence, survivors are more likely to be believed, supported, and connected to support services.

Enhancing Capacity Within Community to Recognize and Respond to Sexual Violence

First Responder to Sexual Assault and Abuse Training™

AASAS offers First Responder to Sexual Assault and Abuse Training (FRT) both online and in person over two full days. This year, 46 workshops were delivered, helping 634 participants build the skills and confidence to respond in supportive, trauma-informed ways when someone shares an experience of sexual violence.

AASAS currently has 39 certified facilitators who deliver FRT across the province. They stay connected through a community of practice that meets quarterly. This space ensures continued growth and connection among facilitators, and improves the already exemplary quality of the training.

For more than a decade, FRT has equipped thousands of Albertans to better respond to and prevent sexual violence. While the feedback from both participants and facilitators has been overwhelmingly positive, it is time for a refresh. Over the next two years AASAS will continue work on updating the curriculum to reflect current and emerging best practices.

AASAS contracted with an expert in adult education who has extensive experience in developing and implementing antisexual violence education and training. An Advisory Committee comprised of AASAS members and external stakeholders representing diverse lived experiences and social locations has been established. This collaborative effort will strengthen FRT's impact and accessibility moving forward.



Engagement Strategies Toward Ending Workplace Sexual Harassment

AASAS and licensed members offer a three-hour live webinar focused on understanding and addressing sexual harassment in the workplace. Over 12 sessions, 194 participants learned what sexual harassment is, and isn't, the impact it has on individuals and workplaces, and how everyone has a role to play in stopping it.

Four of the sessions were delivered by AASAS staff, and eight were led by facilitators from AASAS member organizations who are licensed to deliver this workshop.

100% of participants indicate a moderate to high understanding of how to stop workplace sexual harassment following the training.

Counselling Adult Survivors of Sexual Violence

Designed for counselors, therapists, and mental health practitioners looking to more deeply inform their counselling practice with survivors of sexual violence, this 12-week online course was delivered twice this year with 44 participants. These participants were from six different provinces and two international locations.

"I gained more in this 12-week course than I have from my Master's degree in Counselling" -Participant



CONNECTING THE DOTS

AASAS gathers and shares learnings from frontline evidence, researchers, and the professionals and advocates who walk alongside survivors every day to help decision-makers and the public understand how to respond to and prevent sexual violence. When policies, funding, and programs are grounded in real experiences, sexual violence services can remain responsive, and policymakers and funders are more likely to recognize the need for, and appropriately support, specialized, distinct, and identifiable services. This helps create safer, healthier communities across Alberta.

Informing Public Policy

Advocating for Increased Government Funding in Sexual Assault Services

In April 2024, the Government of Alberta through the Ministry of Children and Family Services, announced an increase in funding to sexual assault services by \$10 million over four years. AASAS participated in round tables, consultations and developed a funding formula for the distribution of funds.



At the end of January 2025, AASAS and its members were pleased to receive \$1.5 million of the promised funding, and an additional \$1.5 million was announced as part of the 2025-26 provincial budget.

AASAS will continue to work collaboratively with the government toward fulfilling the full \$10 million funding commitment to ensure sexual assault services across Alberta can meet the needs of survivors.

National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence

To inform Alberta's 10 Year Strategy to End Gender Based Violence, AASAS consulted with the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women, curated research, plans, policy and resource inputs, and facilitated a roundtable consultation with the AASAS Senior Leadership Committee.

Enhancing Access to Justice

Reviewing RCMP Sexual Assault Investigations

AASAS Chairs and coordinates the RCMP K Division's Sexual Assault Investigation Review Committee which is comprised of member leadership and staff. This group reviews how sexual assault cases are handled to help improve the justice system's response to survivors.

By working together, the committee promotes learning, sharing, and ongoing improvement, so survivors across Alberta have more equitable access to justice. This year, the committee held two file review sessions and trained three new reviewers to support this work.

Sexual Violence Police Advisory Committee

The Government of Alberta's Sexual Violence Police Advisory Committee (SVPAC) was formed to provide police, government, and partnering agencies with the opportunity to work together to identify service gaps in the system, improve supports for survivors, and develop a consistent law enforcement response for the province.

AASAS has been a member since 2017 and this year attended seven meetings, provided input on an update to the Sexual Violence Support Services Information Card, and worked with MNP and the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women on the Rural Sexual Assault Support Program.

Alberta Crown Prosecution Services

AASAS participated in quarterly meetings with Alberta Crown Prosecution Services to share and discuss the successes and challenges of criminal justice system activities, and inform development of policy and training initiatives for crown prosecutors across the province.

Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime

AASAS participated as an Advisory Circle member for the Office of the Federal Ombudsman of Victims of Crime's systemic investigation into the experiences of survivors of sexual violence with the criminal justice system. This work involved meetings, consultations, survey dissemination, and a written submission incorporating existing documentation and research from AASAS's 2017–2020 project on Improving and Enhancing the Criminal Justice Response to Adult Survivors of Sexual Assault.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Developing Sector Priorities: Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence

With support from the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women, AASAS took steps to better align sexual violence prevention work with the needs and lived experiences of Indigenous and equity-deserving groups.

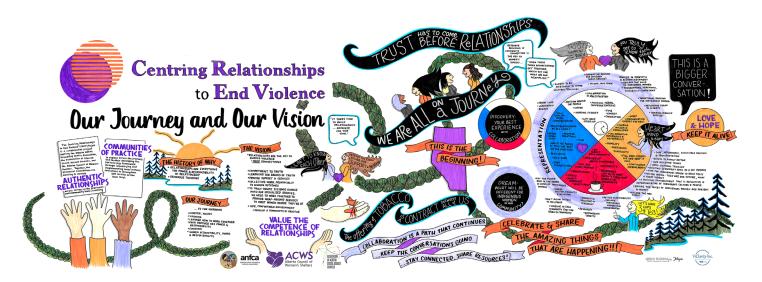
To lead this work, AASAS welcomed a Collaborative Community Response Coordinator focused on prevention. Their role concentrated on deepening AASAS' Sector Priorities for Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence through research, consultative interviews and focus groups with Indigenous and equity-deserving groups.

Through this outreach, AASAS engaged with 42 individuals and organizations from a wide range of sectors, bringing together diverse voices to help shape stronger, more community-informed approaches to preventing sexual violence.

Engaging Diverse Perspectives

Centring Relationships to End Violence Against Indigenous Women

AASAS, the Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association (ANFCA), and the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) are continuing to build stronger, more authentic relationships through the Centring Relationships to End Violence initiative.



Over the past year, 12 Communities of Practice Circles were held, bringing together 94 participants. Each circle was guided by an Elder and a trauma-informed facilitator, creating space for deep connection and learning.

In addition, community engagement meetings took place in 11 different communities to support anticolonial relationship building and explore ways to improve services. Insights from these gatherings will help shape future strategies.

Members of the AASAS network were also invited to attend a Cultural Safety Training facilitated by ANFCA. This training incorporated the differences in Cultural Sensitivity, Cultural Awareness, and Cultural Competency as learnings for implementing Cultural Safety and the best practices and approaches to take when working with Indigenous survivors of violence and their families.

In an effort to sustain this work into the future, the provincial association leaders developed a Business Plan. Completed in September 2024, the Business Plan outlines strategic goals for 2025–2028.

Strengthening Capacity to Support Newcomers

AASAS partnered with the Centre for Newcomers to develop a workshop series to increase the network's capacity in responding to sexual violence among newcomer communities.

A total of 143 representatives from AASAS and member organizations participated in this workshop series. Five sessions were hosted this year:

- In the Eyes of Newcomers
- Sexual Violence within African Communities: A Male Perspective
- How Immigration Status Could Impact Service Engagement
- Lessons Learned as a School Resource Officer
- Understanding Sexual Violence in the Sudanese Population

100% of participants strongly agree or agree that they have increased their understanding of sexual violence and its impact on diverse individuals, families, and/or communities.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Strengthening Capacity to Support Indigenous Peoples

Forty-eight representatives from AASAS and member organizations participated in a half day workshop with Dr. Natalie St Denis that explored her thesis, Sexual Violence and Abuse & Healing Approaches Within an Indigenous Context. Emphasizing resilience and recovery, the session highlighted trauma-informed approaches to support healing among Indigenous clients.

Developing a Meaningful Land Acknowledgement

A group of AASAS team members came together to reflect on the organization's ongoing journey toward Reconciliation. Drawing on guidance and teachings from Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, a Land Acknowledgement was created that honours what has been learned so far.

This acknowledgement will be shared on the AASAS website and used in many ways, such as in email signatures and to open meetings and workshops, so it becomes a meaningful part of how the team shows up every day.



Partnering with Provincial and National Initiatives

AASAS continued to build relationships and contribute specialized sexual violence knowledge and expertise within provincial and national joint initiatives.

211 Alberta - AASAS is part of a 211 Gender-Based Violence Advisory Committee made up of leaders and experts from the anti-violence sector. The committee is working to ensure Albertans impacted by sexual and gender-based violence are connected to specialized services and supports.

IMPACT - is a provincial collective impact initiative whose purpose is to advance the primary prevention of domestic and sexual violence in Alberta. AASAS is active on five IMPACT committees including Stewardship, Mobilizers, Enhancing Social Inclusion Campaign, Engaging Men and Boys Campaign, Joint Primary Prevention Framework Iterative Editorial Board and Policy Monitoring, and Activating Informal Supports Campaign.

Child and Youth Advocacy Centres – AASAS strengthened its relationship with Child and Youth Advocacy Centres (CYACs) across Alberta this year. While the work of sexual assault services and CYACs is connected, each play a unique role in supporting children who have been sexually abused.

A joint overview was created for the Ministry of Children and Family Services to help explain how the services complement each other and work together to better support survivors.

"The level of expertise and capacity AASAS brings to projects is invaluable. Its extensive network and ability to reach into multiple groups for expertise makes it a one-stop-shop for feedback and consultation on sexual violence related files."

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Launching a National Voice

Ending Sexual Violence Association of Canada (ESVAC) is a national non-profit organization whose main purpose is to lead and support coordinated, collective national action on sexual violence. In addition to being on their Board of Directors, AASAS contributes knowledge and expertise from Alberta to four ESVAC committees:

- National Sexual Violence Working Group
- RCMP Sexual Assault Investigation Review Committee National Check-in
- Gender Based Violence Worker Wellness National Advisory Committee
- Communications Committee

Previously known as Ending Violence Association of Canada, AASAS participated in the official launch of their new name and rebrand as the national voice on sexual violence in Canada.



THANK YOU



Funding from the Government of Alberta's Ministries of Children and Family Services and Mental Health and Addictions supports AASAS' provincial coordination and collaboration with sexual assault services. It also 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 specialized programs, supports, and services.

With funding from the Ministries of Children and Family Services and Arts, Culture and Status of Women, AASAS was also able to undertake the following special projects:

- · Alberta Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Priorities;
- · First Responder to Sexual Assault and Abuse Training (FRT) Enhancement and Redevelopment; and
- Alberta's ONE LiNE for Sexual Violence Awareness Campaign.



Women and Gender Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

With funding from the federal government Ministry, Women and Gender Equality (WAGE), AASAS is partnering with sexual assault services and law enforcement to develop a provincial online pathway to reporting platform for survivors of sexual violence.



Canadian Women's Foundation funding allows AASAS to support the Ending Sexual Violence Association of Canada, as fiscal agent for their project: Making visible the critical role of community-based sexual violence counselling services in Canada.

Audited financial statements for the year (April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025) are available by request from the office of the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services. mailbox@aasas.ca



In support of survivors and the people who love them.

ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA
SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES