



**Collaborating
for Change**

C5 North East Community Hub Investment Impact 2019-2022

Prepared For : Edmonton City Council (Community and
Public Services Committee)

Spring 2022

WHO IS THE C5?



The C5 North East Community Hub mission is to provide integrated service at a culturally welcoming community hub for children, youth, families and individuals in the North East of Edmonton with a focus on not simply building community, but achieving a poverty-free community.

The C5 North East Community Hub is a partnership between Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, Boyle Street Community Services, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN), Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre, and Terra Centre for Teen Parents. The C5 Hub offers a range of social programs and services to community members and groups using an integrated service delivery model. It is also a community gathering space for ethno-cultural community groups and families. In addition to facilitating easy access to supports, the Hub also facilitates community connections and fosters social integration.

The work of the C5 Hub is guided by their North East Community Hub Operating Plan which is updated and reported on yearly to the City. The operating plan clearly lays out key goals, activities, targets, and outcomes that align with City of Edmonton priorities.

WHAT MAKES THE C5 UNIQUE?



The Hub is founded on social innovation and our operating model is unique, tailored to our collaborative and the distinct needs of the community we serve.

Across the C5 organizations we serve Indigenous individuals and families, teen parents, newcomers, immigrants and refugees, vulnerable kids, families, and some of the most economically, socially, and culturally marginalized children, youth, and families in Edmonton. While each organization individually specializes in serving a specific population, collectively they collaborate at the C5 North East Hub and Community Market to provide a "one stop shop" for vulnerable populations-those struggling with poverty, houselessness, mental health challenges, food security, lack of natural supports, isolation, and racialized minorities. Our goal is to provide them with a full spectrum of holistic programs and services to move people out of poverty, including: food security, mental health supports, employment supports, parenting supports, programming for vulnerable youth, access to affordable housing, and help navigating the social system to access government supports. The Hub model is based on wrap around supports-a holistic approach to supporting individuals and families. We work to address all the challenges people are facing in one place rather than referring elsewhere. This means that people who most need our help do not have to run all over the city telling their stories multiple times, to multiple organizations, just to get the help that they need.

Each C5 agency continues to support the collaborative by contributing specialized staff from their own agency that work out of the Hub, for example: EMCN provides employment staff specialized in career counselling for newcomers and refugees. This means that our clients not only get the career counselling they need but culturally appropriate advice that is unique to their circumstances. This highlights exactly what makes the C5 model so unique and important. We identify the intersections of identity that can create compounding difficulties for our clients and offer a centralized location for them to access as many services and supports as they may need. How does being both an immigrant and a new mother impact that persons ability to enter the workforce? C5 identifies that having language supports, culturally appropriate career advice, and free parenting programs with child minding would all be essential services and at the Hub, these can all be accessed in one location. By having a central location, C5's Hub reduces the duplication of social services around the city, making it easier for our clients and more cost effective for the City of Edmonton.



FOUR YEARS OF CITY OF EDMONTON FUNDING:



During the 2019-2022 budget deliberations, the C5 North East Community Hub was granted \$300,000 in operating funding per year, over four years, for a total of \$1.2 million. The funding offsets operating expenses including staffing and building costs, kitchen operator costs, and program and service delivery.

The operational funding provided by the City of Edmonton has been vitally impactful for the C5 Hub and its ability to support the most vulnerable residents in North East Edmonton in a comprehensive and meaningful way. This funding has enabled the C5 to expand to two additional service delivery sites and provided the capacity for the C5 to add many critical new programs and services.

The City's commitment to the C5 collaborative model also opens other avenues for funding. Through the City of Edmonton funding, C5 was able to leverage the \$300,000/year to access an additional \$775,000 in 2021 alone in other grants and financial supports from partners, donors, and other levels of government. Given the number of participants from 2021, the return on investment for the City's \$300,00/year works out to an investment of \$52.41/client served/year. In any other model, a \$300,000 investment would not be anywhere near as impactful or able to serve as many individuals with anywhere near the volume of services; however, the C5 is able to maximize the City's investment because of the multi-funded nature of each individual agency compounding the C5 Hub's own funding.

The City's invaluable investment in the C5 has enabled us to serve some of Edmonton's most vulnerable community members with unparalleled access to supports and services in a way that maximizes tax dollars. These operating dollars have enabled the C5 to create an innovative community space that numerous community partners have access to in order to support those most in need-in an area of the City that previously lacked these resources. This funding has also provided us the flexibility to respond to emerging community needs more quickly and effectively.



FUNDING IMPACT



Over the last four years, the C5 has vastly increased its reach and the number of services, programs, and supports that are available. The C5 collaborative continues to respond nimbly and effectively to emerging community needs, and to build further community partnerships to bring an ever-growing number of additional programs to the Hub. Integrated service delivery and wrap-around supports are central to the mission of the C5. Families rarely present with a single need; they are usually dealing with multiple challenges and barriers to success. The goal is to address the full range of social determinants of health, to effectively support people in moving out of poverty. The C5 North East Community Hub brings as many supports as possible into one place so that individuals and families get the support they need as quickly and effectively as possible.



The C5 serves a diverse population from a variety of ethno-cultural backgrounds. Serving such a large, diverse population of both Indigenous and newcomer community members has allowed us to shape our programs and services using these lenses. The staff we hire reflect the community members that they serve and are able to support many different linguistic and cultural needs. Some examples include providing inclusive Indigenous teachings and programs that are facilitated by Elders and knowledge keepers as well as Arabic language translation for programs and services. Our “Health for Two” program is now facilitated in both English and Arabic thanks to community demand. Our partnership with Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society and Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN) provides our community members with a wealth of specialized knowledge and resources. At the C5 Hub have staff who speak many different languages including Spanish, Arabic, French, Somali, Swahili, Kutchi, Urdu, Sindhi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Tigrinya, Amharic, Hindi and German to name a few.

We also work hard to build community partnerships outside of the formal C5 partnership to bridge any additional gaps, for example hearing impairments, etc. The Hub itself is designed to offer a place of understanding, inclusion, and a celebration of diversity by design of its physical space and culture.

987 immigrants, refugees,
Indigenous and other
newcomers to Edmonton
benefitted from the Hub in
2021




The C5 North East Community Hub also continues to be a key part of community building and collaboration more broadly in North East Edmonton. We have built partnerships with local schools, libraries, the local Edmonton Police Service detachments, and recreation facilities. All of these regularly refer vulnerable community members with whom they interact to the C5 Hub and our programs and services. Despite COVID-19 restrictions, the C5 North East Community Hub continued as a crucial community gathering space and drop-in facility for all ages, working to reduce social isolation and build community and belonging.

A key development for the C5 over the last four years is the addition of the Community Market. This new project was created in response to an overwhelming need from our community members that were going hungry at the beginning of the pandemic. While we initially responded by launching a city-wide food hamper program, we then transitioned to a less traditional, but more effective market model. **The C5 Community Market now serves approximately 800 families/month, allowing vulnerable populations to access everything from fresh produce to non-perishable items in a free, grocery store like model where participants can exercise voice and choice in the food they feed their families in a culturally sensitive manner.** This has been especially impactful for the large number of immigrants and refugees we serve who are able to pick out ingredients that they are comfortable and familiar cooking with to feed their families with dignity. We intend to expand the Market to also offer those in high need or crisis access to household and life essentials, such as bedsheets, blankets, towels, pots, dishware, diapers, tampons, toothpaste, schoolbags, etc. This expanded market would serve refugees, victims of fires and floods, and people transitioning out of homelessness with all the basics to set up a home. The Market is an expansion of the C5's original vision for the Hub, another key connection point for community members to access the continuum of services that the C5 and our partners organizations have to offer. Our Market staff are caseworkers able to support and connect families struggling with food security to a number of other resources while supporting families to reach their personal goals.

The C5 also began an innovative pilot partnership with the Clareview Recreation Centre to provide a wide range of programming to our participants. This partnership has been an amazing opportunity to reach even more individuals, youth, and families in North East Edmonton.

During the pandemic, the large open spaces made it safer to continue programming, and we were able to support the Rec Centre with an influx of community members struggling with crisis and housing instability. The C5 provides food, bus tickets, warming kits, and community referrals out of the Clareview Recreation Centre space. Families and youth also receive free or subsidized access to the gym, play space, and swimming pool which made a significant mental health impact for our community members who could not otherwise afford to access these facilities, particularly during the pandemic. The partnership has also been helpful for the Clareview Recreation Centre in dealing with complex community members and youth who typically fall outside the scope of facility staff's expertise.



2,202 people
accessed
programs or
services at the C5
Hub in 2021

Where previously, youth stealing services or engaging in destructive behaviours required the Rec Centre to call the police, staff are now able to call one of C5's youth caseworkers who then engage to re-direct that youth towards more productive endeavours and programming. In collaboration with the youth we serve C5 has developed a number of drop in programs located at the Clareview Recreation Centre that enhance and complement the Rec Centre's existing programs. Basketball league, girls' yoga, family swim night, tween Indigenous programming, and Movie Makers, where kids learn how to use video software to create content are just a few of many examples of programming now available to keep vulnerable kids and youth busy after school and on Saturdays.

Having embedded, specialized social supports at the Rec Centre has taken a significant amount of pressure off of City of Edmonton staff and helped to address the rising gang violence and critical incidents requiring police intervention in the facility. We are also very excited about a recent partnership with Skillcity Institute to open up a STEM lab in the C5 space at the Clareview Recreation Centre for youth. The lab is helping to build technology skills for youth in areas such as coding, robotics, and digital media design to better prepare them for future employment opportunities in the modern digital economy. The lab also features a 3D printer, and virtual reality headsets. Given the high number of immigrants, Indigenous, and economically challenged youth that are served out of the Recreation Centre, our hope is that this project will reduce barriers to entry for these individuals in industries where these demographics have typically been underrepresented.



The C5 North East Community Hub further expanded in 2020 when it became a successful proponent in the new provincial Family Resource Network (FRN). As an FRN Hub, the C5 North East Community Hub provides a range of early intervention and prevention services and supports that focus on strengthening parenting and caregiving knowledge, social supports, coping and problem-solving skills, access to community supports and resources, improving child and youth development, and building resiliency and fostering well-being. Supports range from universal, such as Stay and Play groups, to more intensive one-on-one youth casework, and home visitation. All these supports are aimed at building capacity and resiliency for kids and families to prevent involvement in more intensive systems such as the child intervention system or the justice system when families are in crisis.



3,522 individuals
accessed the
Community
Market in 2021

OUR STORIES

Glen walked into the Hub in February 2022. At the time he was homeless, had no ID, no income, and was unable to access many government programs because he had not filed his taxes in several years. Our team at the C5 Hub helped Glen get his ID, file his taxes, and get him set up in his first stable home in many years through our Successful Living program. Glen also received support through our employment hub and recently started a new job in the oil and gas industry.

Melissa has been involved with the C5 Hub for 3 years. She is a survivor of domestic violence with a young daughter. She has accessed a number of programs through our FRN to empower herself as a parent. She has gained housing through our Successful Living program in partnership with HomeEd and cites the ongoing moral support from our staff and educational teachings through our programs as the reason she is now able to manage her mental health, and anxiety, and safely parent her daughter. She will also be starting a job in August thanks to our employment hub.

Ali came to the C5 Hub as a newcomer from Africa in January 2022. He is a refugee claimant who had no work permit, and no income. Our staff supported Ali in applying for his work permit. In the meantime we have supported him with bus tickets and food from the C5 Community Market. He accessed several free safety tickets to get job ready, prior to being able to legally work in Canada through the employment hub and will now officially be starting his first job in Canada next week.

Carla has been attending our family programs with her kids for several years. Over the course of her involvement with the C5 Hub she has taken on a leadership role, mentoring other parents and families and co-facilitating programs. She has helped lead bannock making in our Little Chefs program and has guided the Parents R Us program participants on how to weave dream catchers while imparting traditional teachings. Carla recently received full custody of her children back after five years of CFS involvement and continues to access programs through the C5 Hub to keep herself and her children busy, supported, and connected to the community she has built.

Cassidy attended our first Food Works program and showed he was ready to work during the class with an infectious attitude and work ethic.

Our instructor, Cindy was able to connect Cassidy with an employment opportunity at Culina on the Lake after he completed the program and he has since started working weekends and will be working more hours in the summer when school is out which will allow him the ability to financially support his family..

Wada is part of the current Food Works program. Our team has supported him by providing him with bus tickets to travel from school to the C5 Hub to attend the program. He has an impressive work ethic and willingness to learn. He has come to every class and he will be interviewing for a job as a dishwasher soon. Our team will help him to write his resume and prepare for any interviews.

Sam has been involved with the C5 Hub for several years. She came to us concerned about her drug use and the impact it was having on her children. Our staff supported Sam in her goal of replacing drugs with smudging. She told us she made this change for the wellbeing of her children and our team has supported Sam in her journey by regularly providing smudge kits and teaching her how to utilize mediation and breath work techniques through our Circle of Calm program. Our staff have also supported her in being more mindful of her interactions with her children's father who she has a challenging relationship with. They have taught her how to utilize journaling and learnings from programs to better her own mental health. Sam's young children also attend a number of kids programs through the C5.

ALIGNMENT WITH CITY OF EDMONTON PRIORITIES:



Edmonton

The C5 supports are especially important to an area of the city that was previously a service desert, and given that recent crime data from the Edmonton Community Safety Map, shows that North East Edmonton has some of the highest incidents of crime outside of the downtown core, the C5 Hub and its supports are more important than ever before.

The C5 is uniquely well positioned to support the work of City Council in addressing the goals of the recently released **Community Safety and Well-Being Strategy**. The report cites that “By 2050 it is anticipated that, when Edmonton is predicted to have a population of two-million people, 50 per cent will be immigrants. This demographic change has highlighted the importance of finding ways to create spaces which are safe, accessible and inclusive within Edmonton”. The C5 Hub has worked hard to create a community space that is safe, accessible and inclusive in an area that has seen a high concentration of newcomers settle, and those numbers are reflected in the number of these individuals that are served by the C5. Given the capacity that the C5 North East Community Hub has created in conjunction with the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, supporting immigrants, and refugees, we are able and eager to provide the City with supports to the growing population of newcomers. The C5 is also already undertaking work that falls within the scope of the seven priority pillars that have been identified in the City's Strategy. Our work is particularly impactful as it relates to Pillar #3 - Safe and Inclusive Spaces, and Pillar #6 - Crime Prevention and Crisis Intervention. Our work also aligns with the City's Wellbeing Framework, and our youth programming at their Clareview Recreation Centre supports City Council's direction on youth/afterschool programming initiatives that will begin in Fall 2022.

FUTURE OF THE C5 HUB: OUR ASK



The increase in need for social supports that we see coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of rising inflation, and Edmonton's growing population means that the number of those accessing our services is increasing and will only continue to increase. Therefore, we request that City Council consider as part of their 2023-2026 budget deliberations an increase to the C5 North East Community Hub's funding to \$500,000 per year over four years for a total of \$2 million in **operating funding**. The funding will continue to offset operating expenses including staffing and building costs, kitchen operator costs, and program and service delivery for the original C5 Hub, as well as the additional C5 sites at the Community Market and the Clareview Recreation Centre. Given the proven success of the C5 pilot, we believe that funding for the C5 merits being embedded in an existing department going forward which would prevent a special ask to City Council every four years. We are confident that this investment from City Council would enable us to serve the growing number of vulnerable participants in need of support as well as enabling us to grow our staffing team to provide off-site programming across all of North Edmonton in partnership with other community agencies. Conversely, we are concerned that without this sustainable funding, we will be unable to continue to provide the quality and quantity of services that our growing client base requires.

We also request that City Council consider signing a formal partnership agreement with the C5 and the Clareview Recreation Centre which would allow the C5 to continue to operate out of the Rec Centre long term. Our partnership with Clareview Recreation Centre has been a pilot, and we are only guaranteed the space we utilize for programming until September 2022. Additional operational funding so C5 is able to financially contribute to this space and a longer-term commitment from the City would help the C5 to maintain its presence at Clareview Recreation Centre. Should the City determine that it is appropriate to do an open procurement for this space, C5 would be more than happy to go through the application process to enable us to work out of the Recreation Centre long term.

As part of this increase in funding, C5 would have the staff capacity to lend our experience and expertise to other community agencies and partners across the city that would like to set up a similar model to the C5 Hub in other areas of the city. **We believe that the holistic model that C5 uses to deliver social supports is the future of social services and that expanding this model to other areas of the city could play a significant role in actualizing our vision to end poverty in Edmonton.**

We are humbled by the support that the City of Edmonton has shown the C5 and the vulnerable residents in North East Edmonton and are deeply grateful for the opportunities we have been provided to serve the community thanks to the investment we received from City Council from 2019-2022. We look forward to many more years supporting Edmonton's most vulnerable in partnership with the City of Edmonton.