



momentum

2021

ANNUAL REPORT



Welcome & Reflections



Oki! Tansi! Danit'ada! Aba-wath-tech! Hello!

It's no secret that 2021 was another challenging year for the world, but we know great things happened too – not only for us, but for our community. In many ways it was a tough year with strong results.

In this report, we're choosing to focus on silver linings. We are proud that we achieved some record program outcomes, such as our matched savings programs having their largest number of participants ever. We are also encouraged by progress toward our long-term commitments, including more Indigenous-focused programming. The launch of our Money Moccasins program is an example of our commitment to building new and better relationships with Indigenous community members.

I am proud of our work in achieving the results highlighted in this report, despite continuing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. We achieved them together, as staff, participants, and community partners, and we can all be encouraged by the silver linings of the past year – including the strongest employment results for our Trades Training graduates since 2013. A brighter future is on the horizon, and I want to thank all who are reading for being an encouraging and supportive member of our community.

- **Jeff Loomis (he/him)**
Executive Director, Momentum

2021 at a Glance

1,870 unique participants attended a program delivered by Momentum.

8,480 individuals reached through organizations supported by Momentum.

98% of participants were satisfied with their experience at Momentum.

Better Jobs. Brighter Futures.

In 2019 we launched Tech Plus, our first ever technology training program. After six cohorts, we've found there is strong desire for technology training and that it really works for people seeking stable careers in the industry. This demand and success continued in 2021 with 83% of participants employed in their field at their 90-day follow-up.

We also took another step into technology training this year with Compass. This program focuses on building foundational skills in youth who are not currently pursuing education, employment, or training. This training is tailored to the individual and includes life skills courses, one-on-one coaching, as well as training at SAIT to learn coding basics, 3-D Modeling and complete the CISCO IT Essentials course. All ten participants successfully completed the first program offering.

On top of building more capacity in technology training, we continue to operate our Trades Training programs. We know this body of work is still highly relevant and desirable, especially as participant employment results are the highest since 2013. We're proud to continue to empower Calgarians to find meaningful work in various fields or to pursue different career pathways in technology and trades.

78% of Tech and Trades participants were employed in their field after 90 days.

In 2021 we offered training in...



Carpentry



Plumbing & Pipefitting



Automotive & Heavy Duty Technician



Information Technology



Tech Plus was very holistic and well-rounded. I have the ability to look to the future of the industry and where I fit into it.

- Jessica Wiklendt (she/they)

Support Analyst at ATB Financial and Tech Plus Participant



Calling all Changemakers!

Not all learning can be done in the classroom, and that may be especially true for entrepreneurs. Our Local Economy Development programs have shifted away from a traditional classroom to a more inclusive, learning lab approach that was facilitated online last year.

We still introduce the essential building blocks of starting a business, which remain relevant for all learners, but now a human-centered design process is foundational to our approach. Since every business is different, we can't definitively say what's best for everyone, and instead participants are encouraged to go beyond the classroom to connect with potential customers early in the business development process. This learning-by-doing model helps participants gain a greater understanding of their business and allows them to test their business ideas earlier in the process.

We've also tied our programing more to our values as an organization and now encourage participants to consider the social and environmental impacts of their business. Traditional business models focus on the bottom line, but we now use the Flourishing Business Canvas, which helps businesses envision a way to provide social benefits, environmental impact, and financial returns. We're excited to see this change take place and encourage our participants to not only see themselves as entrepreneurs, but also as changemakers.

The Local Economy Development team supported **402** businesses including:


227
through regular programming.


66
Women in the Food and Beverage Industry.


59
Home Based Businesses.

22 jobs were created by the 8 COVID loans paid back in 2021.

Being Local

The Be Local network continued to grow in 2021. For example, the Be Local store, which launched at the start of the pandemic, now has 500 products available from 77 local vendors. The store remains a convenient way for local businesses to sell their goods – ranging from delicious treats to stylish apparel – and for Calgarians to keep their dollars in the community by buying local, with annual sales reaching nearly \$40,000 for the year.

400+ businesses in the Be Local network.


“It’s not always about ROI and bottom lines. As a person of privilege, being able to use my business to create opportunities for others without that privilege is important to me.”
- Christina Owczarek (she/her)
Founder of XhAle Brew Co. Inc., Be Local member and Design Your Business Participant

Savings & Stability



After taking Youth Fair Gains, Ira started budgeting and recorded what money is for vacation, school, clothes. I was really impressed! I had never done that in my life.

- Ella Sueño (she/her)
Ira's mother and Fair Gains Participant



When my mom took the Fair Gains program, I saw she was saving money. And now she's starting a business. I'm really proud of her!

- Ira Labongray (she/her)
Ella's daughter and Youth Fair Gains Participant

Financial Empowerment

Our Financial Empowerment programs are the perfect entryway to building a sustainable livelihood. In 2021 we welcomed 442 participants into our savings programs, including 227 in our app-based option called the Momentum Savings Challenge. Since the challenge began in late 2020, Momentum savers – all of whom live on lower incomes – collectively set aside over \$450,000 for their futures. We also saw participants in our Fair Gains program increase their average savings from \$20 to \$99!

While increasing savings is an important metric, we're also happy to see that 92% of participants increased their sense of hope and confidence. This is such a heartwarming number, as we know that confidence goes a long way in maintaining good savings habits and moving toward a sustainable livelihood.

\$197,654
in matched
savings cashed
out by participants

to pay for tools for work,
education, housing, and more.



Building a City of Savers

The Aspire Financial Empowerment Collaborative continues to improve the financial wellbeing of Calgarians living on low incomes by building the capacity of our partners and implementing Financial Empowerment strategies. Across the network, 304 participants enrolled in matched savings programs, collectively earning over \$122,000 in matched savings and purchasing 217 assets.

But Aspire's work went even further by holding more than 600 tax clinics, and hosting financial coaching sessions where 58% of the 677 participants reported reaching a financial goal after attending more than one session. Aspire partners also aided families in opening over 500 Registered Education Savings Program accounts, which, research shows, makes these children six times more likely to attend post-secondary education.

4,685 participants filed their taxes at free
tax clinics hosted by Aspire agencies
receiving over **\$3.4 million** in tax returns.

Moccasins for the Journey

As an organization with western roots, our Financial Empowerment programs have long approached money from a settler perspective. In our reconciliation journey as an organization, we've heard that money is a relatively new concept to the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities and that teaching finances through an Indigenous lens would be more culturally relevant and impactful.

Money Moccasins is Momentum's first Indigenous-specific program, developed and guided by an Indigenous Financial Empowerment Facilitator. Money Moccasins has enhanced opportunities for Indigenous communities to access Financial Empowerment in a culturally appropriate way. In a pilot launched in November, the program reached 30 participants engaged through Aboriginal Futures Calgary, Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary and Eden Valley, of the Îyâxe Nakoda Nation.

With such a strong start, we're excited to see Money Moccasins grow in 2022.



Money Moccasins helped me distinguish my needs from my wants so that I can save money and have more cash for my five children. Thank you for helping this little family of mine succeed and have a better quality of life.



- Heather Scout (she/her)

Registered member of The Blood Tribe Nation #148
and Money Moccasins Participant

Toward a Safer Space

Based on the results of our 2021 staff engagement and satisfaction survey, Momentum received a Great Places to Work certification. While we're excited to receive this recognition, we are learning that the journey toward a safer, more inclusive organization has no finish line. Acting on this insight, in 2021 we launched a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Circle.

Comprised of staff members across departments and seniority levels, the goal of the Circle is for Momentum to undertake a transformational process to deeply understand and incorporate DEI lenses into our programs, practices, and organizational culture. The group started by refining many of our policies to look beyond what we are legally required to accommodate, and more closely on how we can lay a path for an increasingly welcoming and functioning organization for all.

We know meaningful change is a journey - it doesn't happen in an instant. Still this effort is laying a strong foundation to create a space where everyone can belong and thrive.



In my first months at Momentum, I've frequently been surprised by the genuine culture of openness, acceptance, and respect that seems to permeate each part of the organization. Diversity, inclusion, equity and safety are clear priorities, and as a queer, trans, disabled person, working here has offered me my first professional experience in a safer workplace.



- Kay Donaldson (they/them)
Donor Communications Coordinator, Momentum

Livelihoods & Impact

Benefit Driven City Spending

Our Public Policy team is always hard at work to change the world for the better. As an example, advocacy for the City to increase the social impact of its spending started in 2017. The goal of this work was to have the City's purchasing decisions make positive contributions to the local economy and consider the social impact the purchases make.

The team's persistence paid off! In September, the Calgary City Council voted unanimously in favour of a new social procurement policy. This policy means all Requests for Proposals have a questionnaire attached, which awards bidding companies points for the social impact of their business practices.

These practices include paying a living wage, diversity of ownership and provision of opportunities for historically marginalized groups seeking employment that contribute to our local economy becoming more inclusive. Among other benefits, this policy means more City dollars are spent within the community, as well as progress toward a more inclusive workforce.

\$31 million in City contracts were awarded to companies with a social impact between March 2019 to June 2021.

Proof of Progress

Momentum works within a Sustainable Livelihoods model, which means we believe in reducing poverty by working with participants living on lower incomes to identify and build on their assets. This year, we were excited to be able to report on long-term follow ups with participants across programs and departments to measure the impact towards achieving a sustainable livelihood.

Close to 100 participants in longer-term programs tracked the change in their assets for two years from the start of their program. We were delighted to see that 68% of participants had moved closer to a sustainable livelihood.

We would be thrilled with this information any day, but to see such an impact on the lives of our participants within a pandemic was heartening. We're so appreciative to be a part of the stories of our participants as they move towards building sustainable livelihoods and contributing to their communities.

68% of Momentum participants moved toward a sustainable livelihood inside a pandemic.

Beyond Crisis – the Online Opportunity

After finding our footing while shifting to online programs near the beginning of the pandemic, we have scaled that work to bring all six of our money management courses into an easily accessible and free online format.

On Demand Money Management enables anyone in Calgary and beyond to access our programs – Assets, Budgeting, Banking, Credit, Consumerism and Education Savings – any time and anywhere that's convenient for them.

Momentum also made significant investments in online learning technology, and now offers quality hybrid experiences to participants across the organization. Nearly all Momentum participants participated in online programming, further reducing barriers for individuals seeking a sustainable livelihood.

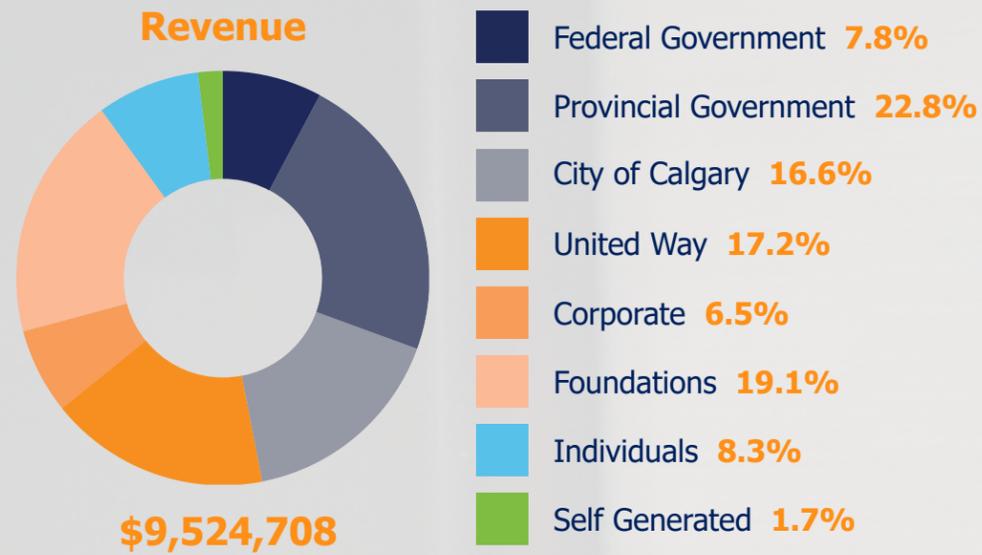
975 On-Demand Money Management Participants.



Thank You

We're proud to report that in a recent survey of Momentum funders, 100% are satisfied with their investment experience. Another strong indicator of community trust can be seen in the increase of donations given without restrictions on how they can be used, totaling \$1.08M. This number is important to us, because flexible money allows us to respond to shifting community needs and to maintain a healthy organization. Thank you, all of you, for your trust in us.

View our audited financial statements at momentum.org/publications/annual-reports/



When I give to Momentum, I can be confident it's a wise investment – with a measurable return. Seeing the impact made on Calgarians inspires me to give year after year.

- Brian Boulanger (he/him)

Chief Executive Officer and Director, ARC Financial Corp.
and Momentum Donor





Momentum is a changemaking organization that acts as a bridge – taking an economic approach to poverty reduction and adding a social perspective to economic development initiatives.

Our programs are holistic, covering everything from financial literacy, entrepreneurship and employment training, to developing communication skills, building self-confidence and establishing positive social networks.

We're not doing this alone!



Thank you to the generous donors who contribute to building a thriving community for all.
www.momentum.org/donorwall

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Our doors are open! All are welcome.

