

Alberta Election 2019:

Political Party Platform Analysis for the Nonprofit Sector

CCVO Advocacy Efforts Reflected in Party Platforms

Upon reviewing the recently released platforms from the major political parties in Alberta, we are pleased to see that many of the areas for which we have been advocating are reflected in various party commitments. We invite you to consider the commitments of each party, along with their overall vision and view of the fundamental relationship between government and the nonprofit sector.

Voting in the upcoming provincial election is one of the most important ways we can make our voices heard and help shape the future of our communities and province. CCVO has devoted considerable energy to the [#nonprofitsvote campaign](#) – a nonpartisan effort to encourage nonprofits to vote. This platform analysis, while not comprehensive, is one way to help inform voters about where the parties stand on issues of importance to the nonprofit sector.

While the act of voting is a cornerstone of civic engagement, we know that effective policy advocacy on the part of nonprofit organizations must occur well in advance of an election. To that end, we researched and developed a [policy agenda](#) and engaged with the government about our policy priorities for the nonprofit sector in the months ahead of the election. Through various avenues, we articulated the broad needs of the sector and will continue to do so after the election.

Visions for the Nonprofit Sector

The Alberta New Democratic Party (NDP) has woven elements related to the nonprofit sector throughout its platform document, while the United Conservative Party (UCP) has included two pages focused on their plans for nonprofits or ‘civil society’. The formats are distinct and lend themselves to different understandings of what role the nonprofit sector plays and its relationship to government and public services.

For the NDP, continued investment in social expenditures are an essential part of a well functioning economy. The NDP platform puts a focus on the importance of governments’

delivery of social services, while continuing to support the work of nonprofits. As such, the NDP pledges to keep funding for government services in line with population growth and highlights several initiatives and spending areas that the government will continue to support, if re-elected.

The UCP recognizes the tremendous work that nonprofits do in communities and outlines a number of initiatives that are meant to facilitate this work. The UCP anticipates partnerships with the nonprofit sector to deliver government programming and services whenever possible. At the core of the UCP platform is the notion that nonprofits are more efficient than government when it comes to preventing and reducing social problems. The UCP is committed to implementing policies to that end. Should the UCP form government, we will look forward to details on implementation of these policies and will be working to ensure that we mitigate unintended consequences for some of the most vulnerable segments of our society.

Approaches to Economic Growth and Job Creation

The NDP and UCP parties have both provided a high-level breakdown of total revenues and operating expenses over the next few years. The NDP has committed to a balanced budget by 2023, while the UCP has committed to balance by 2022. Both have committed to continue fighting to build pipelines, yet their overall vision and approaches to growing the economy are starkly different. The NDP focuses on economic diversification and transitioning the economy, and the UCP remains tied to oil as the essential driver of the economy. For the UCP, corporate tax cuts, from 12% to 8%, will be the driver of job growth. The NDP on the other hand promises a first of its kind program that will bring \$25-a-day childcare to every childcare space across the province. The NDP says that the program will not only pay for itself, but will help parents, especially women, return to work, and ultimately increase economic activity.

Political Party Platform Highlights

ALBERTA NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY COMMITMENTS

- **Review and modernize grants to community groups and nonprofits.** This measure is meant to consider multi-year, sustainable funding arrangements, reductions in the time between funding decisions and the release of funding, and flexible forms of funding to allow a broader range of organizations to be eligible. We are pleased to see commitments that align with [our priority areas](#) related to increased long-term, flexible and sustainable funding for the sector.
- **Incorporate Community Benefit Agreement (CBAs) plans into larger government infrastructure projects.** CBAs act as safeguards to ensure that residents share in the benefits of major development projects. This is an important development for the movement towards achieving community benefits in land-use planning. This will be important for community groups wishing to have their voices heard in shaping projects and to press for community benefits tailored to their unique needs.
- **Expansion of \$25-a-day childcare.** The NDP's affordable childcare program is meant to improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of childcare in the province. This is an expansion of the government's \$25-a-day childcare flagship program that will cost approximately 1.5 billion over 5 years. This is the NDP's most expensive commitment with a promise of creating 13,000 new childcare spaces across the province. The plan also includes an online portal for families to find child care providers in their communities. The party expects that the childcare plan will add as much as \$6 billion to the GDP each year through workforce participation.
- **Increase funding for Family and Community Support Services (FCSS).** The NDP will increase funding for FCSS by \$15 million over 5 years.
- **Modernize charitable gaming rules.** The new rules will work to remove barriers for multicultural groups accessing casino and bingo revenue.
- **Increase education and health spending.** The NDP will continue to spend on education to keep up with population growth and will increase healthcare spending to maintain services for a growing population. This is an important measure to consider as further investment in health and education often implies less resource strains on the nonprofit sector.



View the full NDP platform [here](#).

View recent communication from the NDP addressing the nonprofit sector [here](#).

UNITED CONSERVATIVE PARTY COMMITMENTS

- **Creation of a Premier's Charities Council.** The Council is meant to advise the government on how best to assist the efforts of civil society groups. This pledge and direct line of communication to the Premier is welcomed as we seek clear lines of accountability and attention to the most important issues impacting the sector. This commitment is the result of the culmination of work that took place months prior to the writ drop and is aligned with the recommendation in our [policy brief](#) and through our [State of the Nonprofit Sector](#) research.
- **Creation of \$20 million Civil Society Fund.** The fund would be supported by the Alberta Lotteries Fund and is meant to support innovative cost-shared programs delivered by community groups.
- **Application of The Freedom to Care Act.** This measure is intended to release nonprofits from the application of regulations that restrict nonprofits from acting quickly to provide solutions. The UCP provides an example of the Harvest Healing Centre Church that could not house homeless individuals in the community due to safety regulations related to the installation of sprinkler systems.
- **Support for faith-based charities.** Faith-based charities and nonprofits to have equal access to government grants and contributions.
- **Reduce bureaucratic burdens.** This measure is meant to reduce funding renewal obligations for organizations that deliver results and includes the potential of moving to five-year funding agreements if and where possible. This is another area the sector has been advocating for and we welcome the party's commitment to exploring options that will increase long-term, flexible and sustainable funding.
- **Maintain the charitable tax credit.** This is an important assertion considering historical threats to the status of the charitable tax credit.



View the full UCP platform [here](#).

**We have become aware that recent edits have been made to the UCP platform since it was initially released on March 30, 2019. We will be looking to see if any of the edits effect the analysis conducted and will update in the coming days.*

ALBERTA PARTY COMMITMENTS:

- **Attract corporate head offices to Alberta.** A corporation relocating its head office from another jurisdiction to Alberta will receive a corporate tax holiday for two years. This measure is meant to increase employment, stimulate the growth of small businesses, help establish clusters of industrial activity, and contribute to local communities through charitable donations, partnerships with nonprofits and other corporate social responsibility efforts.
- **More licensed, safe, affordable, high-quality childcare.** A comprehensive review of Alberta's childcare legislation will be undertaken along with a major expansion of direct financial support to lower and middle-income families to cover the costs of licensed daycare and out-of-school care programs. The cost to families earning less than \$29,999 in combined income would be \$0 per day and will continue to scale up to \$30 per day for families earning more than \$90,000 in combined income. The plan will include a caregiver tax credit, and the creation of more affordable, high-quality child care spaces across the province.
- **Healthcare coverage for children's dental check-ups.** Coverage under the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan will expand to include an annual dental check-up, up to and including age 12 and two dental x-rays at age 10. The program is expected to cost approximately \$48 million per year and will help improve the health of 650,000 Albertan children under the age of 12 and reduce the stress of paying for dental fees.
- **New digital government identification app.** The Alberta Party will introduce one provincial picture ID card for government services. This proposal is different from other parties because of the commitment to ultimately launch a digital government identification app with a portal to allow Albertans more flexibility when presenting ID. This would be an important measure for vulnerable individuals in communities who struggle with obtaining and retaining their government-issued identification needed to access various services.



View the Alberta Party platform statements [here](#).

ALBERTA LIBERAL PARTY COMMITMENTS:

- **Adopting a basic income.** This is a social assistance program with the aim of eliminating poverty, improving healthcare and education outcomes and stimulating economic growth. The plan would start with consultations with Albertans and experts, followed by a pilot program and ultimately, province-wide adoption.
- **Introducing an 8% sales tax.** The Liberal Party is the only party to introduce a sales tax, noting that it would bring \$1 billion in new revenue from out-of-province visitors. The plan would also include largely eliminating income taxes for two-thirds of Albertans and lower income tax for the rest. The revenue from the sales tax would be used to provide stable funding for Health and Education spending.
- **Maintain funding for Family and Community Support Services (FCSS).**
- **Universally subsidized childcare.** This program would be means tested so that Albertans who need it the most, will pay the least. Families earning \$40,000 and under will pay \$0 a day, scaling up to \$45 a day for high-income families. The plan will also include an income-tested Refundable Child Care Tax Credit for low-and-middle-income families who have a stay-at-home parent or pursue other childcare options. Lastly, the program will create new childcare spaces to address space shortages.
- **Measures to ensure gender equity.** The Alberta Liberals will implement Pay Equity Legislation that will require companies to prove that they are paying men and women equally and fine those who are not. The Party would also enact budgets that have a focus on examining and assessing their impacts on women and minorities, to ensure policies, programs, initiatives, and funding support the goal of equality for all.
- **Funding medical procedures for transgender Albertans.** The Liberal Party is committed to funding medical procedures for transgender Albertans and this includes eliminating gate-keeping and fully funding hormone treatments for trans women.
- **Review of the Alberta Human Rights Act.** The Liberal Party would like to modernize this piece of legislation to include the prevention of discrimination on the grounds of: pregnancy, social condition, Indigenous heritage, political belief, language, addiction, HIV-positive status and physical size or weight. They will also guarantee non-discrimination through financial and administrative support for those bringing complaints.

ALBERTA LIBERAL PARTY COMMITMENTS CONTINUED

- **Increase stronger and more independent advocates.** The Party will boost funding for the offices of the Health Advocate, the Mental Health Patient Advocate, the Disabilities Advocate, and the Seniors Advocate.



View the full Alberta Liberal Party platform [here](#).

Conclusion

While recognizing the various commitments by the parties to the nonprofit sector, it is also important to consider areas that were not addressed or missed (e.g. policy commitments towards gender equity and anti-discrimination). We look forward to working with whichever party forms government and are encouraged by the broad commitments made to the sector, particularly in the areas related to open communication and longer-term flexible funding. We encourage our nonprofit community to consider the implications that each platform has on their area of work and to share widely with colleagues and stakeholders as we head to the polls next week. The nonprofit sector is powerful and important and together we can make sure that the provincial parties address issues that are crucial to all Albertans. Let us make it known, that [#nonprofitsvote](#).

Additional Resources

Below is a select list of linked resources that highlight a variety of subject areas related to the party platforms. We do not endorse the opinions reflected in the publications. We will provide further resources as they come. *If you have resources you would like to add, please email us at policy@calgarycvo.org.*

[CBC News: Overview of Top Promises in Platforms](#)

[The Star Calgary: Where do Alberta's Parties Stand on Indigenous Issues?](#)

[Education: Side-by-Side Analysis of Party Positions](#) (source: <https://twitter.com/IAmaMeatShield>)

[Livewire: Inclusive Schooling](#)

[The Star Calgary: Responses to Opioid Crisis](#)

[Edmonton Journal: How Parties will Tackle Major Portfolios](#)

[Global News Alberta election cheat sheet: A last-minute voter's guide](#)

[Sprawl Calgary: Where Parties Stand on Human Rights](#)

[Alberta Council of Disability Services: Political Party Responses to the ACDS Survey](#)

[Alberta Environmental Network: Environmental Platform Survey Results](#)