

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Archway Community Services is a multi-service nonprofit operating primarily in Abbotsford, Chilliwack, and Fraser Valley, British Columbia and continues to expand province-wide. Archway provides over 100 programs to the public, including programming for children, youth and adults, addiction counselling services, parenting classes, and services for the unhoused. The organization promotes social justice, well-being, and positive leadership within its communities of operation.

INTERSECTIONAL PROGRAMMING

In the wake of extreme weather events in British Columbia since 2021, Archway Community Services has been adapting its services to provide emergency relief. During the 2021 heat dome in British Columbia, many residents had no cool air or resources to accommodate the harsh conditions. Archway recognized that their client base, specifically elders and youth, were vulnerable to the heat but relied on other organizations to help, such as Greenpeace or Red Cross. In the fall of 2021, British Columbia was impacted by a flood and the food bank of Archway Community Services was called in to help as it was the largest food bank in the area. Archway recognized the need to expand its services beyond providing food to include the evacuation of vulnerable individuals. Archway volunteers assisted people experiencing homelessness, farm workers, farms, and other people at risk to safely leave the area.

While helping the community during these two catastrophic weather events, Archway recognized the need to incorporate services to address how climate disasters and climate change will impact their clients. Archway acknowledged the need for clearly established roles so community members would know which organizations to turn to for assistance during times of environmental distress. They began preparing for the future to ensure their community is safe. Archway is working with the City of Abbotsford to create a retroactive survey of their clients to understand how they have been impacted by weather disasters and what resources clients would require before, during, and after these events. Archway also began researching the systemized ways for a community to deal with future climate disasters. Archway strives to be more intentional in its support during climate disasters and has been focusing on extreme heat and cold events. During heat events, they have frequent wellness checks for their seniors' program (including providing extra water, sunscreen, and air conditioning units) and they have introduced building upgrades such as misting stations. During extreme heat and cold weather events, Archway promotes its locations as refuge stations for individuals that are unhoused and those with limited resources. Archway Community Services will be prepared for climate events as they continue to implement climate change considerations into their services and programs. They continue to calculate how its services and volunteers can best support the community every day and during crises.

As an organization, Archway Community Services continues to promote environmentally friendly practices to reduce its own carbon footprint. The locations of their facilities are not well supported by public transit systems, therefore, the majority of their staff and patrons must drive. They have proposed a plan to create an electric vehicle charging station on their premises to allow users to charge their cars at work. Additionally, Archway is upgrading to energy-efficient windows to further manage their buildings' energy consumption.

Archway Community Services recognized the social impacts of climate change and immediately took action to incorporate climate change into its plans and strategies. Specifically, their programming addresses the social impacts of extreme weather. Additionally, the organization is reducing their own environmental impact, which will reduce operational costs in the long run, which is important as climate change impacts the financial capacities of social purpose organizations.



Emergency Reception Centre set up by the City of Abbotsford that Archway volunteered at during major flooding events (Archway Community Services, 2021).