

A large, semi-circular graphic with a light blue background and a pattern of thin, parallel blue lines. Overlaid on this are several overlapping circles in shades of light blue, yellow, and grey-blue, matching the logo colors.

Living in Community:
2021-2022
Annual Report

Messages from our Co-Chairs

As Co-Chair of Living In Community, it has been my pleasure and honour to meet and work with amazing people committed to advancing safety and justice for vulnerable sex workers. This injustice is rooted in harmful attitudes that have disrupted healthy sexuality for centuries. It is long past time we replaced those harmful practices with healing ways. This is worthwhile work.

The year has been very productive in getting organized so that we can become effective and strategic in our work together. We have found an amazing helper, in Halena, to shepherd our group of justice warriors toward our common goals and keep us on the path.

I am thankful to you all for your patience and wisdom and commitment to a better world. It restores my faith that together we can achieve progress on this confounding issue.



Norm Leech, Co-Chair

Executive Director of Vancouver Aboriginal
Community Policing Centre

It has been a pleasure and honour to serve Living in Community as Co-Chair this past year. Even though I've now been involved with - and serving as Co-Chair of the LIC Steering Committee - for the last 6 years, this past year has been a new and different focus. LIC's incorporation as a non-profit has provided the necessary autonomy to ensure that LIC can respond to the issues and needs of sex workers and sex work support organizations across the entire province. In Halena Seiferling - LIC's first Executive Director under incorporation - we have found a dedicated leader who is steadily guiding us through important, foundational work. Building on the years of LIC work, the team is increasingly equipped to meet the needs of an ever-changing landscape.

There is much work to do in community, and alongside, our new and existing partners. Standing in solidarity with sex workers in the advancement of sex workers' rights is the work of Living in Community and we look forward to doing this work, together.



Mebrat Beyene, Co-Chair

Executive Director of WISH Drop-In Centre
Society

Message from our Executive Director

Happy birthday to Living in Community – we are one year old!

Well, actually, it's more complicated than that. Living in Community (LIC) began in 2003 as a series of conversations, and grew over time as stakeholders first in Vancouver and then across British Columbia (and beyond) saw the benefits of the LIC model. What began as an informal project slowly took shape over the years until, in 2020, we decided to incorporate as our own non-profit society.

When we finally began operating as our own independent organization in April 2021, we knew this would be a significant change. We were looking forward to this change as a way to both formalize our structure and our direction as well as to create more spaces for folks with diverse sex work experience and expertise to help shape LIC's work.

The 2021-2022 year was a critical one for us. We welcomed our first Board of Directors, an impressive group of volunteers who bring both personal and professional insights about LIC's work. In October 2021, we held a strategic planning process to shape our direction for the next three years which our staff and Board have since begun implementing. Personally, I have learned more about financial management, non-profit governance, risk management, and Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) policies than I perhaps ever dreamed of!

After several years of transition, LIC is building a stable foundation financially, operationally, and relationally. We are well-positioned to achieve our goals in the four areas of our strategic plan – strengthening and building the capacity of sex worker-serving organizations, deepening and broadening our education and training work, supporting law and policy change to uphold the rights of sex workers, and strengthening our internal capacity – thanks to our committed Board and staff and our supportive funders.

They say the toddler years are tough, but with the passionate people we have in our circles, I am confident we can navigate these next few years with resilience, openness, and care.



Halena Seiferling, Executive Director

Stay up to date with Living in Community's work:

 [@livingincommunitybc](https://www.instagram.com/livingincommunitybc)
 [@livingincommunity.ca](https://www.facebook.com/livingincommunity.ca)
info@livingincommunity.ca
www.livingincommunity.ca

Our Vision:

We envision a future where sex workers' rights are respected and where sex workers are free from stigma, violence, discrimination, and criminalization. We envision a world where diverse stakeholders can come together to share, learn from each other, and work through different sex work perspectives in order to achieve our common goals of health, safety, and well-being for all community members.

Our Mission:

Centering sex workers' rights, Living in Community convenes diverse stakeholders in order to: understand a range of experiences and perspectives; inform sex work-related policies and practices of governments, service providers, and community organizations; and provide education to support these goals.

Our Values:

- We ensure that the diversity of sex workers' experiences and perspectives are at the centre of our work and inform every aspect of what we do.
- We believe that everyone has the right to health and safety, regardless of their social location and lived experience. However, we recognize that, due to differing levels of power and privilege in society, individuals experience inequitable access to health, safety, justice, and other services and supports. We address the systemic root causes which include colonization, criminalization, racism, discrimination, capitalism, and more.
- We are committed to engaging in ongoing learning about how to truly practice decolonization in our work.
- We use an evidence-based, harm reduction lens on sex work to address the impacts of stigmatization and criminalization of sex workers.
- The foundation of our work is being open to listening and seeking understanding of different perspectives in order to find common ground. We value understanding the perspectives of residents, businesses, and other community stakeholders in regard to the challenges they may have in addressing sex work-related issues.

Our Work in 2021-2022

1. Strengthening and building the capacity of sex worker-serving organizations

The first pillar of LIC's work under our new strategic plan is strengthening and building the capacity of sex work support organizations and other key stakeholders across BC to develop mutual learning and a unified voice for sex workers' rights.

One of the main ways we work on this pillar is through convening and supporting the BC Sex Work Support Service Network. The Network is a group of 25 organizations, located across all regions of BC and including one organization in the Yukon, that provide frontline services, supports, and advocacy to sex workers in their communities. LIC holds quarterly meetings for Network members to share updates on their work, identify shared concerns and best practices, and build a unified voice for sex workers' rights in BC, and in 2021 we also began holding quarterly online trainings for Network members to learn new skills and approaches together.

In the 2021-2022 year, we welcomed three new Network members located in Fort St. John, Powell River, and Vancouver. Network trainings in 2021-2022 focused on increasing the accessibility and inclusivity of frontline services for trans, non-binary, and male sex workers, as well as on connecting with less visible sex workers in our communities. This coming year, Network trainings are expanding as we bring in more subject matter experts from across the Network and beyond. Our goal is to focus more on sharing a diversity of perspectives and learning among each other, rather than positioning one speaker or organization as the sole source of knowledge.

More locally, LIC also convenes the SAFE in Cedar Cottage group in east Vancouver. This group of community members and neighbourhood stakeholders meets regularly to discuss and address sex work needs along the Kingsway stroll in the Cedar Cottage area of Vancouver. Though the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to make life difficult for many sex workers in this community and beyond, the Kingsway Community Station – a peer-led drop in space for sex workers along the stroll – provides much-needed services, supports, and community. SAFE in Cedar Cottage continues to be an important space where folks share ongoing and developing needs for the community and work together on solving local problems.

In the coming year, LIC will begin to plan our next provincial conference – stay tuned for more news on that soon! – and will continue to support the growth and depth of the networks we convene across the province.

By the Numbers:

- 11: number of stakeholders who actively participated in SAFE in Cedar Cottage meetings throughout the year

- 25: number of member organizations of the BC Sex Work Support Service Network
- 7: number of BC Sex Work Support Service Network meetings and training opportunities held

2. Deepening and broadening our education and training work

LIC's anti-stigma education and awareness-raising continues to be a key way we shift mindsets, and is the second pillar of our work in our new strategic plan. Since 2013, LIC has been delivering [Curriculum for Change](#), our signature workshop for individuals who provide services to sex workers or whose work duties or life circumstances bring them into contact with sex workers. In the 2021-2022 year, LIC provided or facilitated training to 515 learners in British Columbia, the Yukon, and Ontario. Learners ranged from frontline staff and peers at sex work-serving organizations to law and social work students to municipal City Councillors and labour union leaders.

By the Numbers:

- 515: number of individuals who attended a Living in Community training or educational session in 2021-2022
- 9: number of info sheets about common sex work questions, myths, and misconceptions that LIC produced

In 2021-2022, LIC also broadened the methods we use to share information and resources. We produced [nine new info sheets](#) about common sex work myths, misconceptions, and Frequently Asked Questions, such as why sex work is a labour issue, what are Canada's sex work laws, and how sex work differs from human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation. We also began to use [social media](#) more to share information about our work, such as by recording short videos about our policy positions, creating infographics about the results of our projects, and breaking down our analyses of government consultations or reports in more accessible language.

Another major focus of the past year, which we will complete in the coming year, is our development of an online, self-directed version of Curriculum for Change. The COVID-19 pandemic solidified for us that making our training more flexible and accessible for more stakeholders is important. The online version of Curriculum for Change will enable anyone to simply register for the training and complete it in their own home and at their own pace. [Sign up to our e-newsletter](#) and follow us on social media to be the first to hear when the online training is completed!

Who did we train?

In 2021, Living in Community provided training to:

- Sex worker-serving organizations' staff and peers
- City Councillors
- Social workers
- Frontline staff at community organizations
- Senior staff at community organizations
- Law students
- Social work students
- Community Policing Centre volunteers
- University student services staff
- Health care providers
- Labour union leaders
- Municipal government staff



"[After this training,] I will push my agency to intentionally provide services in a good way to people doing sex work, and to know the difference between sex work and human trafficking."

-Testimonial from training participant, 2021

3. Supporting law and policy change to uphold the rights of sex workers

The third pillar of LIC's work is supporting the development of new laws and policies, and changes in existing harmful laws and policies, to protect the health, safety, and rights of sex workers. The 2021-2022 year brought several opportunities for LIC to participate in government consultations, respond to harmful government decisions, and build collective power toward future policy change.

LIC submitted recommendations to inform both the provincial and federal governments' 2022 budgets, as well as to the provincial government's Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act. We also advocated to the City of Vancouver in favour of rent control for SROs, and to the provincial government to ensure provincial funding is available that explicitly supports the safety of sex workers, not only those who experience violence or are seeking to exit sex work.

Federally, LIC participated in the recent review of the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (PCEPA) by sending a joint submission with several members of the BC Sex Work Support Service Network. We also joined in two consultations about the federal government's consideration of new legislation that would limit sex workers' ability to work online, and we continue to keep an eye on this file.

A major highlight of the 2021-2022 year was the launch of the BC Bad Date and Aggressor Reporting Project. As a member of the Working Group that is overseeing this three-year project to create a provincially-integrated bad date reporting system for sex workers across BC, LIC provides ongoing support and guidance. LIC supported the hiring of the BC BDAR Project Coordinator, Andrea Cupelli, in July 2021, and Research Lead, Courtney Demone, in December 2021.

Since then, Andrea and Courtney have been working hard on building internal capacity, planning and designing consultations, and conducting initial research. The project's consultations will begin very soon.

By the Numbers:

- 30: number of meetings LIC attended with community groups, coalitions, unions, and other allied stakeholders on shared advocacy objectives
- 10: number of municipal, provincial, and federal government consultations and topics for which LIC provided written and verbal submissions
- 8: number of municipal, provincial and federal elected officials whom LIC met with to advocate on sex workers' rights, health, and safety



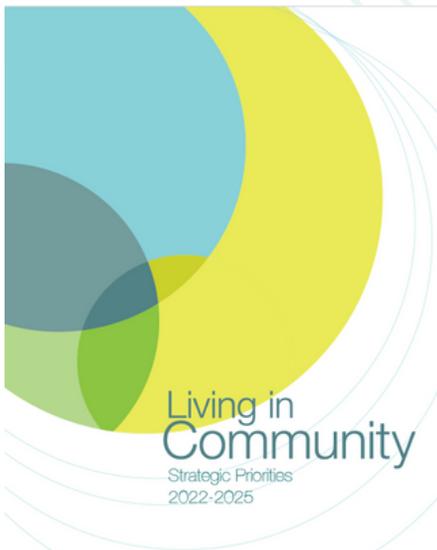
BC BDAR
BC Bad Date & Aggressor
Reporting Project

4. Strengthening our internal capacity

2021-2022 was a critical year for strengthening our organizational capacity and sustainability. After bringing on our first Board of Directors, we held Board training and orientation, strategic planning, and a board development session late in the year to further discuss how the Board and our forthcoming committees will complement and support each other's roles at LIC. We also deepened and clarified our approach to our work by updating our Mission, Vision, and Values. We then updated our website, our Theory of Change, and our 'About LIC' video to reflect these changes.

This coming year, we will launch three committees that will help guide LIC's work. We will also create a joint Basis of Unity collaboratively with all of our staff, Board, and committee members.

LIC has also continued to improve how we track and evaluate our work through ongoing Developmental Evaluation (DE) coaching. Our three-year DE coaching funding is nearly complete, and LIC has benefited substantially from being able to level up how we keep track of, measure, and improve everything we do so we can be sure our work is impactful and meaningful.



Thank you to our Board of Directors for 2021-2022:

- Mebrat Beyene, Co-Chair
- Norm Leech, Co-Chair
- Karen-Angela Corbet, Secretary
- Spencer Johnston, Treasurer
- Andreas Pilarinos, Member at Large
- Heather Paddison, Member at Large
- Jenny Zhang, Member at Large
- Marina Bochar, Member at Large

[Read our 2022-2025 Strategic Plan on our website.](#)

Living in Community thanks the following funders for their generous support of our work in 2021-2022:

City of Vancouver
Government of British Columbia
Government of Canada
Law Foundation of British Columbia
McConnell Foundation – Innoweave
Simon Fraser University
Vancouver Foundation

2020-2021 Financial Statement

Living in Community Society	
Revenue and Expenses	
April 1st 2021 - March 31st 2022	
	Total
REVENUE	
Government	67,915.00
Foundations & Public Institutions	225,174.89
Donations	350.00
Training Revenue	9,784.00
Total Revenue	\$ 303,223.89
EXPENSES	
Personnel Total	174,119.67
Employees	124,539.92
Contracted Services	44,769.75
Honoraria	4,810.00
Administrative Expenses Total	28,377.22
Administrative Fees	8,932.44
Other Administrative Expenses	19,444.78
Program Expenses Total	1,460.46
Total Expenses	\$ 203,957.35
Carryover	\$ 99,266.54

Note: LIC's fiscal year (April 1 - March 31) does not align with most project timelines. Carryover represents funding dedicated to projects occurring or continuing in the next fiscal year.



