

2026



Alberta Recreation & Parks Association (ARPA)

ANNUAL REPORT



Photo: North Saskatchewan River, Edmonton, AB.

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ARPA would like to acknowledge the First Nations, the Métis, the Inuit and all of the people across Alberta who share a history and a deep connection with this land. We dedicate ourselves to moving forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.



YEAR AT A GLANCE

September 2025 - September 2026

Our Reach



2840

Individual Members representing municipalities, businesses, non-profits, post secondary education institutions and students

Our Vision

Albertans recognize recreation & parks as essential for enhancing the wellbeing of individuals, communities & our natural and built environments.

Our Purpose

To collaboratively support our members & partners to (re)create healthy citizens, communities & environments, enhancing the wellbeing of all Albertans.

Events



6

Events Hosted

- **2025 ARPA Conference & Energize Workshop** | Lake Louise, AB
- **2026 Alberta Healthy Communities Symposium** | Edmonton, AB
- **2026 Parks Forum** | Edmonton, AB
- **2026 Leaders Summit** | Banff, AB
- **75th Anniversary Celebration Events** | Edmonton, AB & Calgary, AB



755

Total Attendees

We recognized the hard work of individuals, communities, and organizations by...

Awarding

5

ARPA Awards

Awarding

3

Scholarships for a total of \$5000

Awarding

4

Lietenant Governors Awards

ARPA gratefully acknowledges our funding partner, the Government of Alberta.

Alberta



Photos: ARPA 75th Anniversary Celebration Event in Edmonton, AB

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ARPA's 75th Anniversary has provided an opportunity to celebrate the Association's rich history and the lasting impact of the recreation and parks sector across Alberta. It has also been a time to look ahead, ensuring ARPA remains well positioned to support members and champion the benefits of recreation and parks for generations to come.

A key focus this year has been strengthening the organization's long-term sustainability. The Board of Directors has been reviewing ARPA's governance model to ensure it remains relevant, responsive, and connected to members. Proposed changes include a smaller, more strategic Board supported by new committees and networks that will strengthen engagement with members, partners, and the broader sector. Implementation will begin at this year's Conference and continue over the coming year.



Supporting this work is a new strategic plan, featuring an updated purpose statement and refreshed core values. The plan prioritizes organizational sustainability, stronger partnerships, and continued responsiveness to the evolving needs of members.

Like many organizations, ARPA experienced both challenges and successes this year. The Community Compass program concluded as planned, leaving behind a collection of evergreen resources that will continue supporting a diverse workforce across the recreation and parks sector. Following a temporary funding pause, Communities ChooseWell has resumed and will continue advancing healthy eating and active living, with a particular focus on rural and Indigenous communities.

Strong partnerships remain central to ARPA's work. Collaboration with Alberta's Ministry of Tourism and Sport continues to grow, including the transition of Winter Walk Day and Ageless Motion Day from SHAPE Alberta to ARPA. Nationally, ARPA continues to contribute through the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, supporting initiatives such as the renewal of the National Framework for Recreation and Parks in Canada, CAN Active Insights, and the Advocacy Capacity Building Initiative.

The 75th Anniversary celebrations brought together alumni, members, partners, and the public through events held across the province in June. These celebrations complemented an expanded June is Recreation and Parks Month campaign, helping showcase the many ways recreation and parks contribute to healthier people, stronger communities, and vibrant environments.

Looking ahead, the future is bright. New programs, services, and opportunities will be introduced over the coming year to better support members and continue advancing recreation and parks throughout Alberta. Thank you to our members, partners, volunteers, and staff for your continued commitment and for helping shape the next chapter of ARPA's legacy.

Sincerely,

Katie Biberdorf - ARPA President

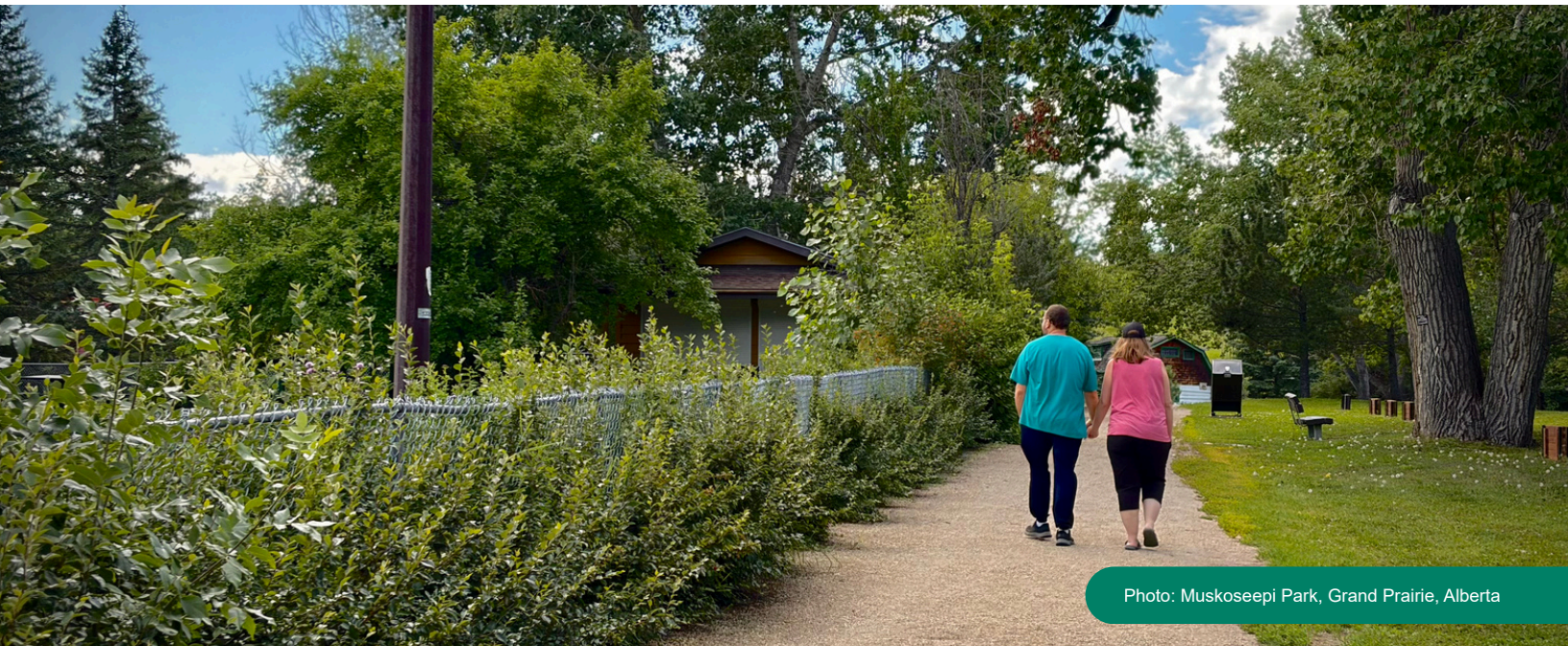


Photo: Muskoseepi Park, Grand Prairie, Alberta

BOARD MEMBERS

Katie Biberdorf
ARPA President

Deb Comfort
Past President

Kortney Stanley
Student Representative

Nicole Fraser
VP External

Julie Dolmont
Region 1 Member (North)

Travis Kennedy
Jorn Starko

Graham Jones
VP Internal

William Choy
Region 2 Member (Central)

Julia Soucie
Leslie Webb
Ryan Poole

Jarret Hoebers
Treasurer

Scott Richter
Region 3 Member (South)

Directors at Large

STAFF

Steve Allan
Executive Director

Janet Naclia
Director of People & Programs

Lori Simmonds
Finance and Operations Coordinator

Caleb Boorse
Communications & Member Services Manager

Callie Woodley
Communications & Marketing Specialist

Jessica Frechette
Member Services & Events Coordinator

Patrick MacQuarrie
Community Compass, Program Manager

Jagdeep Kundi
Industry Connections Coordinator

Simrat Bandesha
Community Compass, Program Coordinator

Julie Venner
Communities ChooseWell, Program Manager

Maddison Drader
Communities ChooseWell, Program Officer, Education & Allyship

Emilia Grindlay
Communities ChooseWell, Program Officer, Healthy Eating & Engagement

Kayla MacIntosh
Communities ChooseWell, Program Officer, Storytelling & Communications

Alyssa Warwick
Communities ChooseWell, Program Officer, Events & Partnerships

Iheoma Joakin-Uzomba
Special Events Coordinator



Photos: ARPA Board (left), ARPA Staff (right)

PARTNERS & COMMITTEES

We continue to build relationships with other associations and institutions with shared goals.

We have partnerships and collaborations with the following organizations:

Associations:

- Active Abilities Canada
- Alberta Association of Agriculture Societies (AAAS)
- Alberta Association of Recreation Facilities Personnel (AARFP)
- Alberta Municipalities
- Alberta Sport Leadership Association
- Alberta TrailNet
- Alberta Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA)
- Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA)
- Elders Knowledge Circle Society
- Ever Active
- InMotion Network
- Lifesaving Society Alberta and Northwest Territories Branch
- Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA)
- Siksika Health Services

Post Secondary Institutions:

- Mount Royal University; Faculty of Health, Community & Education
- Olds College
- University of Alberta; Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport and Recreation (KSR)
- University of Alberta; Centre for Healthy Communities
- University of Calgary; School of Architecture, Planning & Landscape
- University of Calgary; Faculty of Kinesiology

Government:

- Government of Canada
- Province of Alberta; Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women
- Province of Alberta; Ministry of Forestry and Parks
- Province of Alberta; Ministry of Primary and Preventative Health Services
- Province of Alberta; Ministry of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration
- Province of Alberta; Ministry of Tourism and Sport

We also have working relationships with:

- Action for Healthy Communities
- Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention
- Calgary Foundation
- Indigenous Sport Council of Alberta
- Mahegun Tails Inc.
- Miskanawah
- Prescription to Get Active
- United Way Calgary
- YMCA of Northern Alberta

Committees, networks & task groups:

- Advocacy Committee
Chair: Nicole Fraser
- Awards and Scholarships Committee
Chair: Glenn Jensen
- Children and Youth Training Review Task Group
Chairs: Jen Goeres and Julia Soucie
- Education and Professional Development Committee
Chair: Deb Comfort
- Parks & Open Space Committee Network
Chairs: Doug Evans & Erin Pickard

ARPA gratefully acknowledges our funding partner, the Government of Alberta.



Photos: 75th Anniversary Celebration Event in Edmonton (left), 75th Anniversary Celebration Event in Calgary (right)

RECONCILIATION

Making Relatives

As ARPA celebrates its [10-yr reconciliation journey](#), we were able to highlight this work at our 75th Anniversary events in both Calgary and Edmonton in June. Participants engaged in several experiential learning opportunities that deepened their understanding of Indigenous cultures and traditions. These included assisting with the raising of a tipi, participating in cultural crafts, being immersed in an Elder dialogue, and joining a community round dance. By leading with this values-based framework, ARPA demonstrated how recreation and parks can serve as spaces that advance reconciliation, promote respect, and support anti-racism through collective action.

Thanks to both the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada for funding these events.

The Creation of a Brand New Anti-Racism Action Map

ARPA was also pleased to announce ARPA's forthcoming Anti-racism Action Map for Alberta's recreation and parks sector. This new map is meant to complement ARPA's existing [Walking With Indigenous Communities: Action Map](#). Its theme is combatting racism using the Indigenous concept of 'making relatives' and is intended to provide recreation and parks-based organizations, as well municipalities, with practical guidance for advancing equity and inclusion. The creation of this new resource will happen in collaboration with Indigenous Elders and partners throughout 2026 with completion anticipated by the fall of 2027.

Thanks to the Government of Alberta for supporting this new initiative.

A Commitment to Education

This past year also highlighted the creation of two key resources focused on reconciliation-based education for the recreation and parks sector. We were excited to launch a new resource: the [Two-Spirit Toolkit](#). This toolkit was designed to help support the understanding of what Two-Spirit means and what it can look like to take action to support Two-Spirit folks across Alberta. ARPA also introduced Communities ChooseWell's new ['Indigenous Peoples in Recreation and Sports Settings' e-module](#).

Thank you to our funders for:

The Reconciliation Stream at the 2025 ARPA Conference & Energize Workshop:



The 75th Anniversary Celebration Events in Calgary (June 6) and Edmonton (June 13):



The Creation of a brand new Anti-Racism Action Map:



Photos: Yung Gunz Drumming Group at the 75th Anniversary Event in Calgary (left), Medicine Bag making at the 75th Anniversary Event in Edmonton (right)

PROGRAMS

Communities ChooseWell

Communities ChooseWell is a program that inspires healthy living champions across Alberta to transform their communities into places where eating well and being active are easy choices for everyone. The partnership between ARPA and our funder, the Ministry of Primary and Preventative Health Services, demonstrates the joint commitment by the recreation and health sectors to improving the health and wellbeing of Albertans and their communities.



Who We Reached



1512

Unique
Champions



367

Unique
Communities



512

Champions Working with
Indigenous Communities



159

Indigenous
Communities



107

Alberta Healthy Communities
Symposium Delegates

Key Successes



Community Workshops were launched and held directly in 2 communities this year: Manning, and Vegreville.



This year, we hosted Symposium alongside ARPA's Parks Forum, providing additional opportunities for intersectoral networking across the province.



In collaboration with the Indigenous Sports Council of Alberta, we launched a new eModule: [Indigenous Peoples in Recreation and Sports Settings](#).

We Celebrated the Hard Work of Communities by...



Recognizing

7

Champions with
ChooseWell Awards



Distributing

\$33,944

through 7 Healthy
Community Grants



Featuring

14

Community partners at the
Community Stories Market



Hosted

4

webinars featuring
community champions

According to our Annual Champion Survey...

94%

of champions improved their knowledge of healthy eating, active living, community development and/or reconciliation

81%

of champions increased their access to learning opportunities

76%

of champions increased connections in their network and communities



Photos: 2026 Alberta Healthy Communities Symposium

Community Compass

The Community Compass initiative wrapped up in March 2026 after three years of funding provided by Alberta Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration.

Community Compass was designed to address workforce shortages in Alberta's recreation and parks sector while improving access to employment for equity-deserving groups. The project focused on increasing awareness of recreation careers, supporting job-seekers through training and resources, and helping employers build more inclusive hiring and workplace practices.

Overall, Community Compass contributed to increased awareness of recreation careers, improved employer capacity, and expanded access to training and employment pathways. The project also highlighted ongoing challenges, including language barriers and limited capacity for hands-on experiences, reinforcing the need for continued investment in inclusive workforce development across the sector.

The Community Compass work will stay alive through evergreen and legacy content and resources shared on the ARPA website. ARPA will continue to leverage the resources developed to build on the momentum of the initiative, including having a focus on career awareness for the recreation and parks sector.



Key Successes



Engaged with
2900
job seekers at job
and career fairs
and events



Reached more than
764,000
individuals through a
digital career
awareness campaign



88
job seekers
completed online
training



Through career workshops
3500
individuals gained
awareness of roles, skills,
and career pathways



Over
400
employer resource
downloads



14
employer workshops
hosted, involving **60**
organizations

We would like to thank the **Government of Alberta** for supporting the **Community Compass** project through multi-year funding.

We would also like to thank our formal **Community Compass** partners:

- Action for Healthy Communities
- Alberta Association of Recreation Facility Personnel (AARFP)
- Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA)
- InMotion Network
- Lifesaving Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories
- Maskwacis Employment Centre
- The Steadward Centre
- YMCA of Northern Alberta



June is Recreation & Parks Month (JRPM)

ARPA celebrated June is Recreation & Parks Month (JRPM), emphasizing the vital role recreation and parks play in fostering healthy, active, and connected communities across Alberta. The month-long celebration featured weekly themes, an engaging activity guide, and a dynamic social media contest, encouraging participation and awareness among individuals and organizations. This year's JRPM theme was #Recreation&ParksMatter and was all about recognizing the vital role that recreation and parks play in building healthy, active, and connected communities.



A new addition to this year's JRPM celebrations was the "75 Hours of Recreation & Parks Challenge", which challenged Albertans to discovering just how much recreation and parks matter by spending 75 hours throughout June participating in recreation & parks activities.

June is also recognized as National Indigenous History Month (NIHM) and Pride Month. In our efforts to tie together JRPM, NIHM, and Pride month we featured local events on our website. We also hosted a webinar in collaboration with the Calgary Adapted Hub on "Celebrating Inclusive Recreation in Alberta".

ARPA extends its gratitude to all municipalities, organizations, and individuals who participated in and supported JRPM 2025. Your involvement underscores the collective commitment to building vibrant communities through recreation and parks.



969

people registered for the 75 Hours of Recreation & Parks Challenge



75

unique communities represented through participants



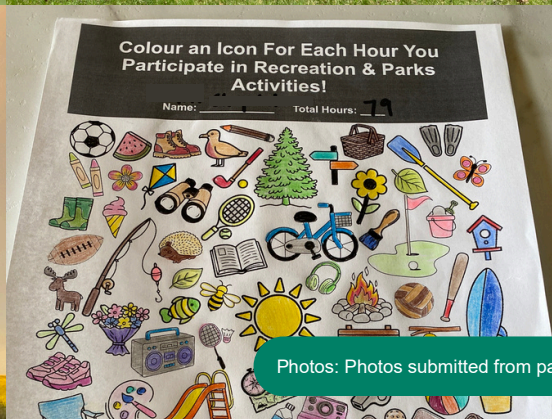
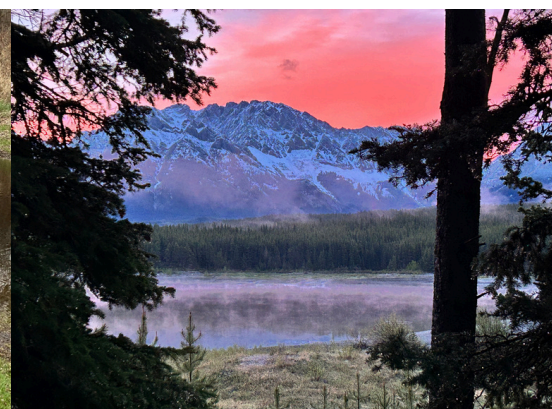
324,988

social media impressions



4,683,000

billboard impressions



Photos: Photos submitted from participants of the "75 Hours of Recreation & Parks Challenge"

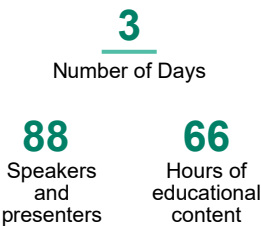
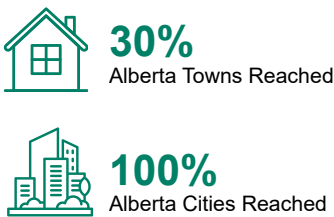
EVENTS

2025 ARPA Conference & Energize Workshop

This year’s ARPA Conference & Energize Workshop, held **October 23–25, 2025** at the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, centered on the theme **“Beyond the Backyard”**, and explored how recreation and parks can inspire local tourism, foster community pride, and strengthen connections to the places we call home.



This year’s conference highlighted how recreation and parks professionals can create meaningful local experiences, from uncovering hidden gems and enhancing outdoor adventures to fostering cultural appreciation and environmental stewardship.



Photos: 2025 ARPA Conference & Energize Workshop

2026 Leaders Summit

The 2026 Leaders Summit was hosted from May 7–9, bringing together senior recreation, parks, community development, FCSS, arts and culture, and municipal leaders from across Alberta to Banff.



The program focused on the evolving role of recreation and parks and the leadership required to navigate a changing sector. Through keynote presentations, facilitated discussions, interactive sessions, and opportunities for peer connection, participants explored current trends, emerging challenges, innovative approaches, and strategies for strengthening their organizations and communities.

With leaders from communities across Alberta in attendance, the 2026 Leaders Summit reinforced ARPA's role in creating meaningful opportunities for professional development, knowledge sharing, collaboration, and leadership connection. The Summit equipped participants with new perspectives, practical ideas, and stronger networks to help them lead strategically and shape the future of recreation and parks in their communities.

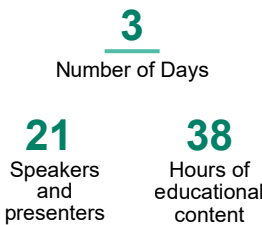


2026 Parks Forum

The 2026 Parks Forum took place from March 18–20 in Edmonton, bringing together parks professionals, municipal leaders, planners, consultants, and industry partners from across Alberta. The Forum provided an opportunity for professionals working in parks and open spaces to connect, share knowledge, explore emerging practices, and consider how parks can continue to respond to the changing needs of Alberta communities.



The 2026 Parks Forum reinforced ARPA's commitment to supporting Alberta's parks professionals through professional development, sector connection, and the exchange of innovative ideas and best practices. By bringing together professionals from across the province, the Forum helped strengthen the network of people working to plan, protect, manage, and enhance Alberta's parks and open spaces.



Photos: 2026 Leaders Summit (left), 2026 Parks Forum (right)

75th Anniversary Events

2026 was a big year for ARPA - we celebrated our 75th Anniversary as an organization. To help us mark this milestone we hosted 2 free community celebration events, with one hosted in Calgary, AB, and the other in Edmonton, AB:

- **June 6, 2026** | Hosted at **Riverbend Community Association, Calgary, AB**
- **June 13, 2026** | Hosted at **Northeast River Valley Park Event Centre, Edmonton, AB**

We want to extend a massive thank you to everyone who joined us at our 75th Anniversary Celebration Events to help us celebrate 75 years of ARPA. From reconnecting with familiar faces to welcoming new ones these events were a true reflection of the power of recreation and parks in bringing people together.

We would also like to thank the Government of Alberta for funding provided through the Community Initiatives Program to enhance our June celebration events.



Photos: ARPA 75th Anniversary Celebration Events in Calgary & Edmonton

FINANCIALS & AUDIT

Treasurer's Report (2025 Fiscal)

The 2025 fiscal year presented both challenges and opportunities for ARPA. Continued support from multi-year grants provided important stability; however, inflationary pressures, reduced special project funding, and several one-time expenses impacted the year's financial results.

ARPA closed the fiscal year with revenues exceeding \$2.7 million and a net operating loss of \$60,700. This result reflects strategic investments in governance modernization, an unexpected conference contract attrition penalty, and the temporary impact of an Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis (AGLC) review of our charitable status and casino use of proceeds. With that review now complete, ARPA has resumed access to charitable gaming revenues under the approved use-of-proceeds framework.

Despite these challenges, the organization achieved several positive financial outcomes during the year, including:

- Growth in membership revenue.
- Continued funding for the Communities ChooseWell and Community Compass programs.
- Strong partnership with Alberta's Ministry of Tourism and Sport through both our organizational grant and the Energize program.
- Three successful multi-day education and networking events.
- Ongoing investment in reconciliation through Walking with Indigenous Communities, including support for the Elders Knowledge Circle Society.

Looking ahead, the financial environment will remain challenging as Community Compass funding concludes, grant funding remains largely static, and operating costs continue to increase. In response, the Board and staff are focused on strengthening ARPA's long-term financial sustainability through prudent fiscal management, diversified revenue sources, and an increased emphasis on fundraising, as outlined in the Association's new strategic plan.

The Board remains confident that these actions will position ARPA to continue delivering value to members while advancing recreation and parks across Alberta for years to come.

Jarret Hoebers, ARPA Treasurer



Summarized Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS	2025	2024
Current Assets		
Cash	902,286	236,548
Short-term investments	144,261	1,137,719
Accounts receivable	14,880	111,165
Prepaid expenses	22,282	27,390
GST receivable	-	848
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	1,084,773	1,513,670
Equipment		
Computer	63,140	63,140
Office	32,607	32,607
Subtotal	95,747	95,747
Less accumulated amortization	94,684	94,119
TOTAL EQUIPMENT	1,064	1,629
TOTAL ASSETS	1,084,773	1,515,299
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	57,909	16,416
Deferred Contributions	560,787	972,106
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	618,696	949,168
NET ASSETS		
Internally Restricted Funds	198,610	192,325
Unrestricted Fund	266,404	332,824
Equipment Fund	1,064	1,629
TOTAL NET ASSETS	526,777	559,023
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	1,084,773	1,515,299

Summarized Statement of Financial Operations

REVENUE	2025	2024
Grants & Contracts	1,686,512	1,689,218
Memberships	118,231	104,852
Education Services	598,150	627,009
Projects	41,916	180,794
Casino	38,299	30,590
Administration	252,499	265,332
Donations	1,886	-
Interest Income	6,285	6,000
TOTAL REVENUES	2,743,778	2,903,795
EXPENSES		
Administration - General	60,187	62,942
GST Expenses	18,361	20,369
Salaries & Benefits	487,573	480,631
Board & Executives	29,672	23,914
Liasons	1,673	2,099
CPRA/Memberships	34,820	35,589
Education Services	477,409	570,512
Casino	207	5,567
Committee & Network Activity	20,361	16,207
Projects	1,674,215	1,718,210
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,804,478	2,936,040
NET GAIN (LOSS) FOR THE YEAR	(60,700)	(32,245)
NET ASSESTS, BEGINNING OF THE YEAR	526,778	559,023
NET ASSETS, END OF THE YEAR	466,077	526,778