

Annual Report



INTRODUCTION

WE HAVE THE CHANCE TO MAKE A CHANGE.

For 40 years, wages have stagnated and public spending on our essential public services has declined. As the pandemic has stretched across years, already-existing inequality has soared. Our front-line workers are stretched thin and burnt out. The costs for everyday essentials like food, rent, and utilities are skyrocketing. Climate change is reaching critical and irreversible levels.

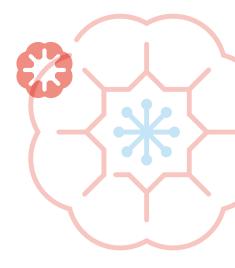
There is no doubt that the situation we are facing is dire.

But we have seen time and time again what happens when the people band together in solidarity to demand change. We need to create a future where absolutely no one is left behind.

That's why labour and civil society leaders founded Public Interest
Alberta: to work together with allies from across the province **to strengthen and protect the public services, spaces, and institutions** so that every Albertan has access to the services and support they need.

Public Interest Alberta has had a banner year, full of inspiring successes. And as all of us gear up for a provincial election in the next year, Public Interest Alberta's mission has never been more critical.

What we do over the next year has consequences for every family in Alberta. And Public Interest Alberta, alongside our allies in labour and civil society, is more than ready for the challenge.



VISION & MISSION

Public Interest Alberta envisions a just future for all Albertans. To achieve this, Public Interest Alberta advocates for the strengthening of public spaces, services, and institutions in Albertans' lives. We build power with and through a network of people and organizations committed to advancing the public interest to government, corporations, civil organizations, and the public.

WE BELIEVE

In the value of public services and spaces.

That collective well-being benefits everybody.

In the collective power of workers to make societal change.

That democratic action can lead to the creation of a society we want to live in.

Economic, social, and environmental justice are key to our collective wellbeing.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

We believe that active citizens interacting with their democratically-elected and accountable governments are central to change in Alberta. **We focus mainly on building active citizens through public awareness campaigns**; however, by monitoring and responding to governments' actions, **we create opportunities for Albertans to hold governments accountable.** Through our task forces, we create tables where different activists, organizations, labour groups, and passionate members of the public can share information and coordinate their advocacy work. We build and support existing coalitions and alliances who are driving change and working to overcome systemic barriers.

OUR GOALS

Strengthen our collective power: Over the next three years, we will broaden our base and support our staff, board members, and task forces so that they can sustain their work. We will be leaders in building the movement.

Effectively influence decision makers: Over the next three years, we will impact government policy in key areas identified by our task forces and partners. We will be seen as a credible and trusted voice on public interest and public service to the media. We want more Albertans to know about us, respect our policy alternatives and be mobilized by our campaigns and events.

Reflect the diversity of Alberta: Over the next three years we wish to see greater diversity on our board and task forces, while reaching a more diverse audience.

PUBLIC INTEREST ALBERTA BY THE NUMBERS



45

Task Force Meetings

74

Media Mentio

Media Mentions

Op-eds and Letters to the Editor

3.2K

Letters Sent to Government Officials by PIA supporters

4.9KTwitter Followers

5.7KFacebook Likes

9.5KNewsletter
Subscribers

28KUnique Website
Visitors

We've *** Been

PIA published an op-ed in the Edmonton Journal to explore federal parties' stances on affordable child care during the snap federal election.

"If we as a society want to achieve the best in child care, then we need a universal, publicly funded and publicly delivered child-care system. And we need to move away from thinking of child care as a marketplace for profit to a public good for our society and future. This is why investment into a universal system of high quality, accessible and affordable child care is the way to go."

SEPTEMBER

2021



PIA hosted a conversation with world-renowned economist and author Yanis Varoufakis PIA interviewed hundreds of candidates in the 2021 Municipal Elections in Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, and Wood Buffalo.

We asked the mayoral, council, and school trustee hopefuls about their priorities in the public interest, including protecting and strengthening municipal public services, expansion of public transit, housing for all and ending the homelessness crisis, and removing dark money from municipal politics.



PIA hosted a webinar with Parkland Institute about how municipalities shoulder the dire consequences of provincial austerity and severe budget cuts

The webinar asked: what can be done to protect and strengthen our municipal public services? **And how do we ensure fair elections where citizens, not dark money, decide the outcomes?**

PIA and our allies celebrated an historic win as the Alberta and federal governments sign a \$10-a-day child care agreement.

"Today is a momentous day for working families in Alberta. Advocates have been striving for decades to build a national system of high quality, accessible and affordable child care.

The federal plan for \$10-a-day child care is a gamechanger for Alberta. Families have been struggling for too long making rent or mortgage-sized payments to get decent care for their children, during a time when many people are struggling to make ends meet."



OCTOBER

PIA asked municipal election candidates to pledge to disclose their donors prior to the municipal election.

PIA also asked all candidates to promise that, if elected, they will **advocate for changes to election financing laws** to require this disclosure prior to election day in future municipal campaigns.

206 candidates agreed to do so.

→ NOVEMBER

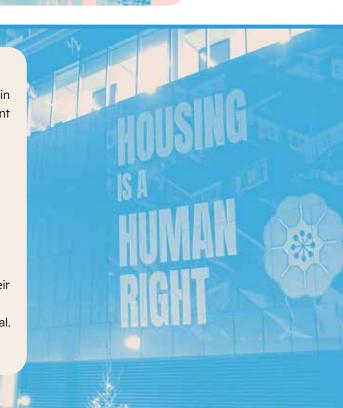
PIA launched the Housing is a Human Right Campaign.

Communities across Canada recognize November 22 as National Housing Day. We, alongside our allies in the housing sector, knew it was critical to bring advocacy to end the housing emergency to the forefront in our province.

"Seven in 10 Canadians agree that urgent action is needed to address access to adequate, accessible, and affordable housing. This ongoing crisis has been deepening for decades, and has been accelerated by the pandemic. In Canada, wages have stagnated for over 40 years and we have suffered with decades of cuts to public services—including public affordable housing. Canadians living with disabilities have seen their income support shrink year over year. In major Albertan cities, the minimum wage is far below the living wage where someone can afford adequate housing."

We took our message to the streets and projected our message in downtown Edmonton on the ICE District. What location better represents the housing crisis than a multi-billion dollar gift to the wealthy that has pushed people out of their homes?

We "evicted" the provincial government for their total failure to address the housing crisis and made front-page news in the Edmonton Journal.





PIA rang the alarm about the UCP passing their doomed-for-failure affordable housing strategy.

"[The Housing Strategy] is not a plan for more affordable housing, but rather a plan to further privatize public assets. At a time when Albertans are struggling to make ends meet, the Kenney government's decision to sell off public housing to the highest bidder is an egregious one. Nationally, 1 in 3 renters are concerned about their ability to pay rent next month. 24,000 Albertan households are on the waitlist for affordable housing. A full one third of those waiting households are seniors. They can't afford to wait 10 years for affordable housing. They need it now."

PIA took the UCP government to task for their fumbling of back-to-school amidst the crushing Omicron wave.

"Despite shuttering schools for another week after the scheduled winter break to 'prepare,' the Kenney government has utterly failed Alberta's teachers, students, and parents.

"As our health care system is crushed by this fifth wave of the pandemic and cases are soaring astronomically across the province, the extra week – while it left many parents in the lurch to figure out child care arrangements, or needing to take time off of work to care for their kids – could have been a time to get teachers and students the protection they need such as test kits, HEPA filters, and N95 masks. They could have revised isolation rules and reinstated contact tracing.

"Instead, what have they done? Absolutely nothing. The UCP are setting the public education system to fail, just as they have done time after time. Albertans are beyond sick of this utterly incompetent government."

DECEMBER

Why does the Kenney government insist on putting the bottom lines of the wealthy corporate landlords and their shareholders above the basic human rights of Albertans?"

2022 PIA spearheaded a

PIA spearheaded a campaign to urge Edmonton City Council to reject corporate handouts and reverse a decision to hand tens of millions of dollars over to a private developer and rather invest it into urgently-needed supports for Edmontonians experiencing homelessness.



The PIA Seniors
Task Force met
with former
Seniors Advocate
Dr. Sheree
Kwong See.

PIA and the members of the Post-Secondary Education Task Force stand in solidarity with the striking faculty members at the University of Lethbridge:

"Post-secondary education is a cornerstone of Alberta. Post-secondary education creates hundreds of thousands of jobs, and is one of the major employers in the province. It trains the workforce of tomorrow and works tirelessly to promote the public interest through ground-breaking research, teaching, and community engagement.

Alberta's universities, colleges, and post-secondary institutions have been under attack. Since the Kenney government took power and have enacted their fanatical agenda of privatization and deregulation, they have hammered the sector with deep and punitive cuts. This reckless agenda could do generational damage to Alberta's prized institutions.

But ULFA Faculty are taking a brave stand.

They are not only fighting for their own contracts, but for the future of Alberta. The teaching conditions in our universities, colleges, and technical institutes are the learning conditions of the students – the future leaders of our province."

JANUARY (cont.)



PIA and the Post-Secondary
Education Task Force stood in
solidarity with the faculty at
Concordia University of Edmonton,
the first-ever faculty association in
Alberta's history to go on strike. The
11-day strike resulted in significant
gains in the new collective
agreement, including salary increases,
reduced workloads, protection
against arbitrary discipline, and
intellectual property protections.



In response to the Freedom Convoy's descent on the nation's capitol and the blockade at Coutts, PIA published an op-ed in the Edmonton Journal:

"This past weekend, trucks arrived in Edmonton, making visible what we have been watching in Ottawa from a distance. Even as we have kept pitching in to help each other through our second full winter living through this pandemic, it can feel difficult to find hope.

For the first time for many of us, we are being confronted with the grim reality that our institutions are not serving us or the public interest equally. For many more of us, this is just another reminder of the complex, and yet very fundamental, ways in which privilege works for some and not for many others."



FEBRUARY (cont.)

After the federal government declared a state of emergency, PIA hosted "All Hands on Deck," an advocacy and public narrative training designed to empower advocates and activists to utilize their personal narrative, and connect with one another in a time of isolation and alienation.

"Practicing leadership — enabling others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty — requires engaging the heart, the head, and the hands: motivation, strategy, and action. Through narrative we can articulate the experience of choice in the face of urgent challenge and we can learn how to draw on our values to manage the anxiety of agency, as well as its exhilaration."

- MARSHALL GANZ



→ MARCH

PIA, Friends of Medicare, and a coalition of seniors advocacy groups launched a campaign demanding a Seniors Advocate.

The campaign was launched on the same day as the grim two-year anniversary of the WHO's declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic and to commemorate the disproportionate toll on Alberta seniors. Over 450 Albertans have joined the movement **demanding a legislated, independent, and properly-empowered Seniors Advocate dedicated to promoting the rights and well-being of Alberta seniors.**

"The continuing-care system in Alberta and across the country has been in a state of crisis for years. After decades of increasing privatization, declining staff-to-patient ratios, and a chronically underpaid and stretched-thin workforce, the COVID-19 pandemic swept away

any pretence of a functional care system. This crisis has thrown the myriad dangers facing seniors into sharp relief. Seniors are suffering physically, mentally, materially and emotionally and far too many have died alone and too soon." PIA, Alberta College of Social Workers, and the Edmonton Social Planning Council released the annual child poverty report.

PIA hosted an online speaker series Our Power: Creating a Just Future for All every Thursday evening for the month of April.

Our speakers included:

- Martha Friendly, world-renowned child care advocate and researcher
- Jason Schilling, President of the Alberta Teachers' Association
- Shima Robinson, Spoken Word Poet and Organizer with Camp Pekiwewin
- John Cartwright, National Chair of the Council of Canadians
- Blake Desjarlais, Member of Parliament for Edmonton-Griesbach and Canada's first Two Spirit MP
- Trisha Estabrooks, Chair of the Edmonton Public School Board Trustees
- Mustafa Farooq, CEO of the National Council of Canadian Muslims

PIA hosted a roundtable discussion with representatives of the child care sector and Members of Parliament to discuss the ways the rollout of the \$10-a-day program could be improved.

PIA hosted a
by-invitation-only
session with
Former UN Special
Rapporteur, Leilani

Farha, with decision-makers from across the province to address the housing and affordability crisis in Alberta.

APRIL

MAY



"The crisis of homelessness is getting larger as the solutions for people stuck in cycles of extreme poverty are disappearing, leaving them with no options. Let's not ever forget that people in homelessness are our neighbours, friends, and loved ones — and that many are one job loss or injury away from homelessness. We see heartbreaking firsthand reports of the violence and indignity of encampment displacement and the catastrophe of insufficient housing and the gaping holes in supports that fail people for years."



PIA weighed in on the UCP Leadership race after Jason Kenney stepped down.

"Under the UCP government, Albertans have been struggling with an affordability crisis even as large corporations post record profits and the provincial government is projecting a large in-year surplus. Food prices are up 8.8% since 2021 and food bank usage is up 26% in Calgary this past year. This government has consistently invested in an asymmetrical "recovery" that puts shareholder profits ahead of Albertans' bottom line, and Albertans are falling further and further behind and demanding real leadership."

PIA launched the **Just Future Essay Contest.**

PIA mobilized supporters to push the political parties to commit to ending charter school funding and redirect the much-needed funds back to the public system.

PIA spoke at the commemoration of the deadliest weather event in Canadian history, the 2021 Heat Dome.

PIA stressed the importance of safe, adequate, and affordable housing to protect the most vulnerable from extreme weather and heat.

"The crisis of housing and homeslessness and the crisis of climate change are inextricably linked. The extractive forces of global capital that are driving greenhouse gas emissions are the same that treat seniors like cash cows in substandard for-profit care are the same that are snatching up housing stock and driving rents up higher and higher."

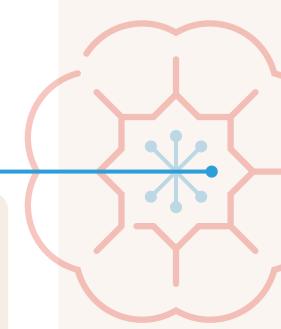


PIA launched a final resistance to the roll-out of the disastrous curriculum.

→ AUGUST

Thousands of Albertans took a stand for high-quality public education.

"Schools should be safe, inclusive and equitable spaces for all students and families. Accurate, authentic and inclusive representation in curriculum matters. Curriculum shows students what society values and what is deemed worthy of knowing. The importance of ensuring that authentic and diverse voices, lived experiences, and histories are taught respectfully and truthfully cannot be overemphasized."





As we head into a critical time in advance of a provincial election, we have the opportunity to work alongside our many partners and allies to build power and create the lasting chance to better Albertans' lives, no matter which party is in the Legislature.

Each of our task force chairs submitted their top priorities for the coming year that the **task forces will be working on:**



CHILD CARE TASK FORCE



Advocating for full-day kindergarten

Engaging with parents and caregivers to develop capacity to demand positive interventions for their families

Pushing back against government cuts to programs that foster healthy development in children

ENVIRONMENT TASK FORCE



Collaborating with allies on shared priorities connecting climate and workers

Challenging all political parties to take bold environmental stances and include justice-based climate action plans in their platforms during the provincial election

Pushing for provincial action on rent control and other tenant protections to recognize the link between housing and climate change

DEMOCRACY TASK



Advocating at the municipal level for a municipal lobbyist registry

Participating in the Canada-wide Local Choice Initiative to promote more equitable ways of voting (such as ranked ballots) at the municipal government level in Alberta

Continuing to push for the removal of dark money from Alberta politics at all levels

HUMAN SERVICES AND POVERTY TASK FORCE



Advocating for greater access to programs that will aid with the affordability crisis, including greater food security, increasing and re-indexing income supports, and affordable housing

Ending child poverty

Diversifying the task force, and including more people with lived experience



Annual Report 2021 — 2022 Public Interest Alberta

K-12 EDUCATION TASK FORCE



Advocating for the redirection of funding for charter schools back into the public system

Addressing classroom conditions and class sizes

Scrapping the widely-panned new curriculum and pushing for the creation of a pedagogically appropriate curriculum

SENIORS TASK FORCE



Challenging all candidates in the upcoming provincial election to address seniors' issues

Continuing to push for public ownership and public oversight of seniors' care

Raising awareness and public consciousness of the rights of seniors to live their 'golden years' with dignity in environments that maximize the health and well-being of seniors and their caregivers.

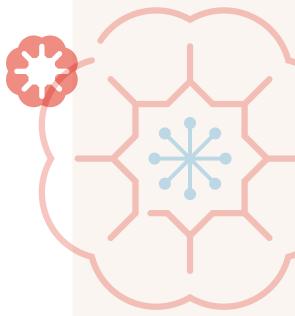
POST-SECONDARY TASK FORCE



Reaching out to Indigenous post-secondary education groups and working in solidarity with them to meet their goals

Creating momentum with Alberta political parties and civil society groups to reinvest in the PSE sector, rather than have these allies repeat conservative policies of targeted investment in industry training and business priorities.

Using the opportunity of the UCP Leadership Race and General Election as a space to discuss re-investment and re-hiring the laid off workers in the PSE sector.



Financial State	ement	Year E	nding March 31, 2022					
REVENUE	2022	2021	OPERATING EXPENSES	2022	2021	PROGRAM COSTS	2022	2021
Membership Fees	306,551	313,559	Staffing	257,528	248,621	Child Care & Early Learning Task Force		624
Donations	3,134	4,792	Communications & Outreach	22,737	8,000	Human Services & Poverty Task Force	50	10,882
In-Kind Contributions	442	553	Rent	32,016	28,034	Environment Task Force	78	
Wage Subsidy		4,118	Equipment/Software		164	Post-Secondary Education Task Force	53,359	187,629
Campaign Income	34,127	218,472	Telecommunications	4,916	3,334	Seniors' Task Force	70	454
Speaker Honorarium		250	Office Supplies	384	373	General Advocacy Campaigns		220
Interest Income	304	449	Audit Fees	7,980	6,930	Conference (2022)	132	
			Amortization	2,924	2,849	Conference (2021)		1,544
			Insurance	2,053	2,030			
			Business Taxes and Licenses	23				
			Interest and Bank Charges	2,737	903			
			Annual General Meeting	132				
			Board/Executive	4,623	198			
			Affiliations	565	245			
			WCB	120	611			
			Achievements/Service Awards	1,045	109			
	344,558	542,193		339,783	302,401		53,689	201,353

 Total Expenses 2022:
 393,472
 Total Expenses 2021:

 Surplus/Deficit 2022:
 -48,914
 Surplus/Deficit 2021:
 38,439

Soard

Terry Price, President

Alison MacIntosh, Vice-President

Mike Parker, Vice-President, Health Sciences Association of Alberta

Jonathan Teghtmeyer, Treasurer, Alberta Teachers' Association

Donna Staszenski, Secretary

Gil McGowan, Director, Alberta Federation of Labour

Heather Smith, Director, United Nurses of Alberta

Carol Wodak, Director, Seniors' Action and Liaison Team

Susan Slade, Director, Alberta Union of Provincial Employees

Tristan Turner, Director,
Non-Academic Staff Association

Collin Anderson, Director, Alberta Federation of Union Retirees

Greg Mady, Director, Edmonton & District Labour Council

Rory Gill, Director, CUPE Alberta Division

Ex-officio

Chris Gallaway, Director, Friends of Medicare

Staff

Bradley Lafortune, Executive Director

Deanne Timmons, Finance and Administration Officer

Laura Kruse, Director of Communications and Organizing

Public Interest Alberta

604-12323 Stony Plain Road NW Edmonton, AB T5N3Y5

780.420.0471 office@pialberta.org pialberta.org

