



Sport for Life

Impacts of COVID-19 on Local Sports Organizations – Alberta Report

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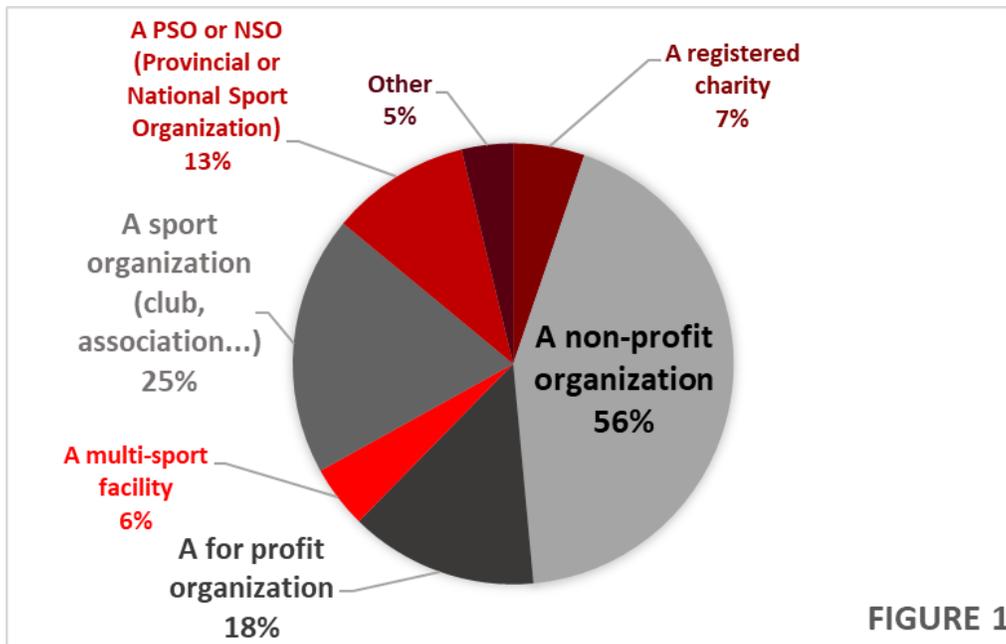
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1.0 Survey Demographics – Alberta

1.1 Jurisdiction

Alberta sports organizations represent 370 of 1,300 survey responses, or 29% of the nationwide data. More than 25 communities throughout the province responded to the survey, representing more than 2,497,450 members, including:

- Airdrie
- Beaumont
- Black Diamond
- Calgary
- Clairmont
- Cochrane
- Cold Lake
- Drayton Valley
- Edmonton
- Fort Macleod
- Fort McMurray
- Fort Saskatchewan
- Hinton
- Indus
- Lacombe
- Lethbridge
- Medicine Hat
- Okotoks
- Oyen
- Red Deer
- Rockfort Bridge
- Rockyview
- Sherwood Park
- Spruce Grove
- Wembley
- Westlock



1.2 Organization Profile

Survey respondents indicated all (multiple) applicable ways to classify their organization. As Figure 1 demonstrates, more than half of the Alberta organizations are non-profit.

The Organizational profile of Alberta survey respondents differs from the national survey results in that more Alberta respondents indicated they belong to a for-profit organization (which accounted for only 10% of the national results). Further, sport clubs and associations only account for a

quarter of Alberta’s sports organizations, whereas nationally, they make up nearly half (45%) of the sports organizations.

1.3 Sport Distribution of Survey Responses

As Figure 2 demonstrates, 47% of survey responses in Alberta were generated from Ringette, Boxing, Badminton, Volleyball and Football organizations, while the other two most common responses were Multisport and “Other” Sports. Only Boxing is reflected in the top 10 sports in the national survey results.

Sport	%	Sport	%	Sport	%	Sport	%
Ringette	18%	Football	3%	Wheelchair Basketball	2%	Speedskating	1%
Multisport	16%	Lacrosse	3%	Athletics	1%	Swimming	1%
Boxing	16%	Basketball	2%	Baseball	1%	Taekwondo	1%
Other	13%	Rugby	2%	Canoe and Kayak	1%	Triathlon	1%
Badminton	5%	Soccer	2%	Cycling	1%		
Volleyball	5%	Softball	2%	Gymnastics	1%		

FIGURE 2

Sport-specific data from Alberta respondents was not reported for the five Alberta jurisdictions who conducted the survey independently. Therefore, the figures in Figure 2 are only representative of Sport for Life’s 88 Alberta responses.

1.4 People and Communities Served

Survey respondents indicated all applicable communities they serve as part of their mandate, and Alberta responses included children (0-12 years old), youth (13-19 years old), adults, older adults, Indigenous community, LGBTQ+ community, people with a physical disability, people with an intellectual disability, newcomers, women and girls, and/or other under-represented populations.

Alberta organizations were reflective of the national data; while only 59% reported they provide service to youth, in comparison to 79% at the national level, this accounts for the majority of responses.

2.0 Operational and Financial Impacts of COVID-19 on Sports Organizations

2.1 Organizational Operations

99% of Alberta sports organizations have been impacted by COVID-19 and the status of their organizational operations matches national survey results. 70% of respondents said their organization has been temporarily closed. 23% reported their organization is operating but with modification.

The majority of Alberta sports organizations said their organization will continue to be impacted by COVID-19 for the next 3-6 months, which differs from the national results where most respondents indicated 7 to 12 more months of expected impact. 48% will be impacted into 2021.

2.2 Financial Impacts of COVID-19

Alberta organizations reported experiencing decreased revenue from sales of goods, membership and participation fees, fundraising, and sponsorships. Decreased revenue from registration and participation fees has had the greatest impact on Alberta’s sports organizations, which aligns with the national results.

Alberta organizations’ annual operating budgets differ from the national findings; the majority of respondents said their organization operates between \$250,000 and \$499,999 a year.

In comparison to the national results, Alberta sports organizations seem to have been more successful in reducing their fixed and variable operating costs; 27% said they reduced their fixed costs (compared to 16% nationwide) and 31%

confirmed they'd reduced their variable costs (compared to 24% nationwide). 67% have not been fully able to reduce their fixed costs and 64% have not fully reduced their variable costs.

2.3 Emergency Funds and Other Needs to Maintain Operations

19% of Alberta organizations said they would need between \$20,000 and \$49,999 in emergency funding to maintain operations and meet the demand for services, whereas 16% said they would need less than \$20,000. 22% would need more than \$100,000, which is much higher than the national results (11%).

Beyond funding, 23% of Alberta respondents expressed wanting more clear communication and specific guidelines around Return to Play (RTP) from their sport-governing bodies. Many felt strongly that there should be *one* unified message around return to sport developed by Alberta sport leaders and health authorities. In comparison to national results, 17% of Alberta sports organizations indicated they want a better indication from their sport governing body or the government of the longer-term funding options that will be made available to support sports organizations as the province gradually returns to sport. Long-term funding only accounted for 7% of the nationwide responses. Positive promotion of sports to engage and garner participants was another common response among Alberta survey respondents.

2.4 Organizational Sustainability in Current Conditions

In contrast to the national results, 32% of Alberta organizations felt they could remain afloat for 3 to 6 months. Only 28% felt they could sustain operations beyond 6 months.

2.5 Typical Employee Demographics

Most Alberta organizations reported having between 1 and 4 staff, either full time, part time, contract or others. On average, 14% indicated having 0 staff, and 23% indicated "Not applicable" for one or multiple employee ranges.

37% of Alberta respondents indicated they're predominantly or entirely volunteer-based and therefore do not qualify for the current federal and provincial emergency initiatives. 34% of Alberta respondents indicated they have not laid off any staff because they do not have any paid employees.

61% of Alberta organizations with staff have or will be laying off employees. Only 24% in Alberta know they'll be able to hire their staff back based on current federal or provincial COVID emergency funding. However, 25% indicated rehiring staff was not applicable to their organization, either because they are volunteer-based, or because they never laid off staff in the first place.

All employee demographics are similar to the national survey results.

2.6 Use of Federal and Provincial Initiatives

More than a third of Alberta organizations are not eligible for one or multiple of the current federal or provincial emergency initiatives. On average, 24% of Alberta sports organizations have made use of one of the emergency initiatives put in place by the government. 15% reported to have used the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (75%), and 16% said they intend to use it.

2.7 Summer Initiatives

89% of Alberta organizations that run summer camps may or will not run them this year due to COVID-19. 83% of respondents indicated their organization did not apply for Canada Summer Jobs.

2.8 Building Support Networks

69% of Alberta organizations have reached out to another organization – whether it be their sport governing body, other local organizations, other organizations operating in the same sport or other sports organizations, to work together and/or support one another in starting initiatives. This is reflective of the national findings.

Most Alberta respondents explained they're either working with other organizations involved in the same sport or other organizations within their community to make long-term plans:

"We are a network of regional centres and we are working together to communicate our needs/values to the GoA"

"A group of community stakeholders (hotels, sport venues, post-secondary institutions, host committees) has met once to share their current situation, challenges, and plans for the future. Have met with our funder to discuss our revised COVID-19 budget, shared our pivoted services, and made the argument to be able to keep all of our operating grant."

"The Cheerleading gym owners in Alberta have been meeting up bi-weekly to provide support to one another and to discuss ideas to get through these times."

2.9 Organizations' Responses to COVID-19

As was identified in the national results, most Alberta organizations are taking steps to create long-term plans and adjust their program delivery models to meet the COVID-19 safety measures and guidelines. 57% of Alberta respondents are developing contingency plans or making operational updates in compliance with RTP guidelines and/or creating and working to implement an RTP strategy.

26% of Alberta sports organizations are waiting for additional information to make long-term plans.

2.10 Concerns of COVID 19's Future Impact

Primary concerns among Alberta survey respondents echo the national results: 20% of respondents are concerned about membership retention and growth as restrictions begin to be lifted and people can return to modified sport programs and services.

"The economic strain that COVID-19 has placed on families, will no doubt affect the amount of kids that return to play. Even if we keep registration fees the same and variable costs down, we expect to see a decrease, just simply due to the financial strain that families are enduring at this time. It will be difficult for some people to come back from this pandemic, financially."

"We are doing everything we can to keep registration fees same as last year. If facility costs go up due to Covid this will force us to increase fees which means we will start to lose players that are financially strained."

26% indicated they're concerned about the long-term operational impacts of COVID-19 and their ability to recover:

"If this continues past June or July, I don't think we will survive."

"The expense to run smaller groups long term will be too high without any help. We have spent many years promoting and growing our sport. Cost will be a huge factor moving forward."

On a par with the national findings, 8% of Alberta respondents expressed this being an opportunity for sport to change and adapt.

2.11 Organizations' Messages to Grant Administrators, Investors and Sponsors

Messaging to grant administrators, investors and sponsors from Alberta organizations mirrors what was reported at the national level. Key messages include:

“Sport continues to be a uniting and dynamic vehicle for so many citizens of all ages and diverse backgrounds; sports will be relied upon more than ever to help our society move forward once we are safely able to return to play. Please consider lending your support today so that when the world is ready to get back to the new normal, we can be there to help facilitate the new path forward.”

“We would like our sponsors to be patient with us during this time. If the situation continues into next season, we will need some support to encourage active membership and community support.”

“That this is hard on everybody of all ages but the beautiful thing about ringette and others sports is that it brings people together as a community. Not only is it good for the children's physical health but their mental health as well which I feel gets pushed under the rug because they are just kids. For how scary our world is right now to kids, I would hate for some not to be able to play something they love because families not having enough money due to lay offs etc. children are our future and if they can't live a physically/mentally healthy life then we can't have a healthy future.”

27% of Alberta organizations emphasized the social and economic importance of amateur sport for communities, and 31% indicated how needed and appreciated funding is at this time.

Additional Information

Sport for Life would like to sincerely thank Sport Calgary for allowing us to use and disseminate this survey to local sports organizations nationwide.

For more information about Alberta results from the national *Impacts of COVID-19 on Local Sports Organizations* survey, please contact francesca@sportforlife.ca.