



ABBOTSFORD
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The **Business** of **Doing Good**

AN UPDATED ANALYSIS OF THE ECONOMIC IMPACT
OF ABBOTSFORD'S NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR

December 2024

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Message from the Committee Chair	5
About the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce.....	6
About The University Of The Fraser Valley.....	6
Background	7
Summary of Key Findings	8
An Update to 'The Business of Doing Good'	9
Change in the Not-For-Profit Sector	10
The Business of Doing Good Today	12
Not-For-Profits in Action	12
Case Study: The Power of Sector Collaboration in Response to the 2021 Floods	13
Case Study: Supporting Those Affected by the Transit Strike	16
Case Study: Archway Foodbank.....	18
Acknowledgments	22
2023-2024 Business of Doing Good Contributors.....	23



Introduction

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

The not-for-profit sector continues to play a vital role in Abbotsford, not only as a cornerstone of community support but also as a significant economic contributor. Our latest report, “The Business of Doing Good,” provides an updated analysis of the sector’s social and economic impact, highlighting its resilience and adaptability in challenging times.

Over the past few years, the sector has faced a reduction in government contributions, pushing many organizations to innovate and diversify their revenue streams to sustain operations. Despite these financial challenges, Abbotsford’s not-for-profits have expanded their reach, ensuring that crucial services remain accessible to those who need them most.

As one of the largest employers in the city, the not-for-profit sector has seen a remarkable increase in its workforce, now supporting over 6,000 employees. This growth is a testament to the sector’s capacity to create meaningful employment opportunities and stimulate the local economy, even during periods of broader economic uncertainty.

The ability of our non-profits to mobilize swiftly in response to emergencies has been demonstrated repeatedly, most notably during the COVID-19 pandemic and the devastating floods of 2021. In the aftermath of the atmospheric river event, the sector united to establish the Abbotsford Disaster Relief

Fund, raising over \$4.4 million to support local recovery efforts. This rapid response not only provided immediate aid but also laid the foundation for a more resilient community.

**Abbotsford
Disaster
Relief
Fund** → 
>\$4.4million raised

The data presented in this report underscores the essential role that Abbotsford’s not-for-profits play in shaping a sustainable and inclusive future. As we look ahead, let us continue to recognize and support the sector’s vital contributions to our economy and quality of life.

Jennifer Willford,
Thrive Fundraising Solutions,
Not-For-Profit Committee Chair

ABOUT THE ABBOTSFORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce is a leading member-driven organization that has served the business community of Abbotsford for over 110 years. Comprised of over 700 members – business enterprises, civic organizations, not-for-profit organizations, and individuals – it is the largest Chamber in the Fraser Valley.

The Chamber works on behalf of its diverse business members, fosters the next generation of entrepreneurs and young professionals, advocates for investments and policies to help businesses succeed, and builds community and connections.

Our Vision

To be known as the most vibrant and relevant business association in B.C.

Our Mission:

To build and sustain a thriving business community.

Our Core Values:

Genuine relationships, vibrant culture, and growth orientation

Our Strategic Priorities:

Advocate: Move the needle on policy and ensure that the challenges facing businesses are heard at every level of government in Canada.

The Chamber is delivering a bold economic vision for the future of the Fraser Valley.

Benefit: Provide access to business resources, workshops, entrepreneurship programs, the Chambers Plan and Member Perks, to engaging the network on advocacy, networking, and business to business connections and marketing opportunities.

Connect: Deliver high-impact events that add value and create opportunities for greater connection across the community. The Chamber is inclusive, and valuable for shaping Abbotsford's future and convening people and organizations to make a difference.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FRASER VALLEY

A Fully accredited public university since 2008, the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) serves the communities and students of British Columbia's Fraser Valley from a distributed network of campuses and online services. With scores of programs at numerous degree and credential levels, UFV makes it possible its 15,000 students, of all ages and backgrounds, to pursue higher education.

UFV was established in 1974 as Fraser Valley College. Right from the beginning it created a strong presence throughout the region with locations in Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Mission, and Hope.

UFV offers its students more than 100 programs including three master's degrees,

21 bachelor's degrees with majors, minors, and extended minors in more than 35 subject areas, four graduate certificates, and more than a dozen trades and technology programs.

Celebrating its 50th anniversary, UFV is marking this milestone throughout the year with exciting events, the launch of UFV 50 Program Grant Fund, and the celebration of 50 remarkable UFV alumni.

UFV's Vision:

UFV will be known as a gathering place for learners, leaders, and seekers. We will pursue diverse pathways of scholarship, leading to community connection, reconciliation, and prosperity, locally and beyond.

UFV's Mission:

Engaging learners, transforming lives, building community.

yoystexw ye totilthet, ayeqet kw'e
shxwaylexws, thayt kw'e st'elt'elawtexw

UFV's Values:

Integrity | letse o sqwelewel
Inclusivity | lexwsq'eq'ostexw
Community | st'elt'elawtexw
Excellence | ey shxweli

BACKGROUND

A joint study by the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce and the University of the Fraser Valley analyzed data from a voluntary survey, 2019 CRA declarations of 278 Abbotsford not-for-profit organizations, and their websites.

Results of this research were presented in the 2021 report, "The Business of Doing Good" and reported on the economic and social impact of the not-for-profit sector. The study was able to highlight the true contribution of this overlooked sector.

This update, based on CRA data from 2023, highlights key economic changes in the sector, and spotlights new case studies from major events that defined our community from COVID-19 to the devastating floods in 2021. The non-profit sector continues to be a key economic generator, and this new data provides another tool to articulate the sector's value in shaping our local economy.



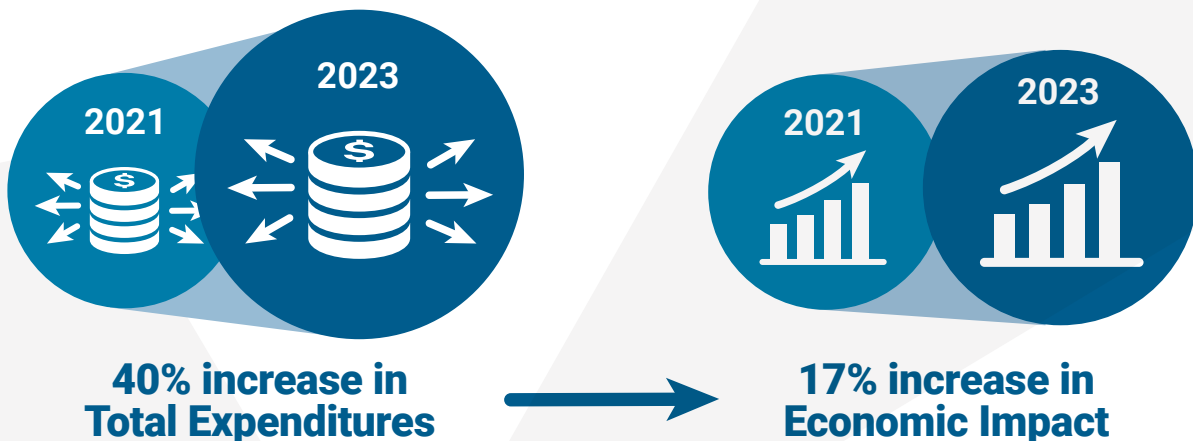
Summary of Key Findings

AN UPDATE TO 'THE BUSINESS OF DOING GOOD'

	2023*	2021**
# of charitable organizations in Abbotsford	311	278
Total Revenue	\$ 586,341,381	\$ 497,278,795
Received Donations	\$ 203,252,426	\$ 207,253,051
Government Contributions	\$ 197,982,407	\$ 199,635,149
Other Sources of Revenue	\$ 185,106,548	\$ 90,390,595
Economic Impact (multiplier of 1.7x)	\$ 996,780,345	\$ 854,373,951
Total Expenditures	\$ 467,656,249	\$ 333,744,655
Wages	\$ 239,490,842	\$ 191,756,434
Charitable Activities	\$ 360,232,957	\$ 141,988,221
Economic Impact (multiplier of 1.7x)	\$ 795,015,623	\$ 567,365,913
Employees	6,290	4,579
Full Time Employees	2,950	956
Part Time Employees	3,340	3,623

* Based on 2023 CRA Data

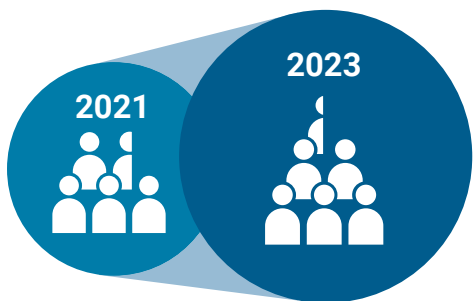
** Based on 2021 CRA Data, organization websites, and self-reporting surveys



CHANGE IN THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR

Between 2021 and 2023, Abbotsford's not-for-profit sector has experienced significant growth and adaptation. The number of charitable organizations in the city increased by 12%, reflecting a stronger presence in the community. In response to a decline in traditional donations, many charities are diversifying their revenue streams creatively, ensuring they can continue to fund their operations. Despite fewer resources, these organizations are expanding their charitable activities, making a larger impact across the community.

Employment within the sector has seen rapid growth, with the number of employees rising from 4,579 in 2021 to 6,290 in 2023, and full-time employment tripling from 956 to 2,950 during the same period.



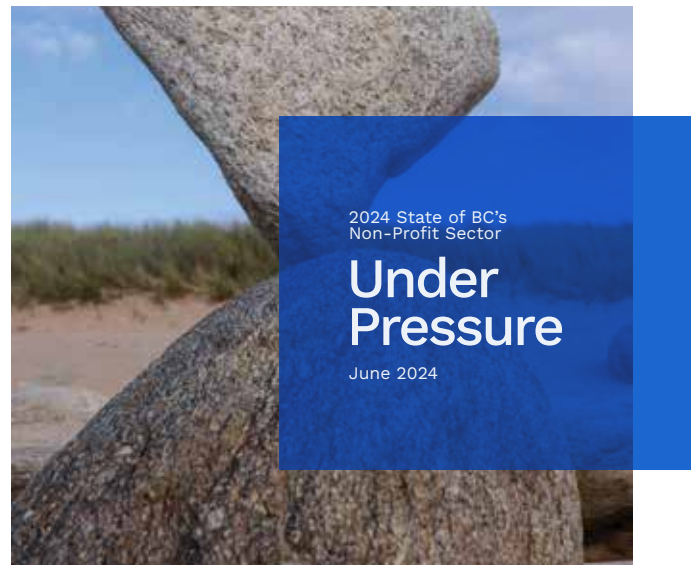
>37% more employees

While employment rates have stalled throughout B.C., charitable organizations have experienced a surge in Abbotsford. It highlights the sustained and significant economic impact.

From the Vantage Point Report:

"Our findings reveal that the non-profit sector in BC is grappling with skyrocketing demand for services and supports from clients and communities, while its capacity to deliver programs and services has remained the same. Additionally, volunteerism, crucial to the sustainability of non-profits has not recovered from pre-COVID-19 levels within the sector. In responding to increasing community needs, the sector has become overburdened, as evidenced by staff burnout, high staff turnover, and the necessity to offer higher wages and salaries to retain staff, often stretching available funding."

Under Pressure: 2024 State of BC's Non-Profit Sector - Vantage Point







The Business of Doing Good Today

CASE STUDIES: NOT-FOR-PROFITS IN ACTION

In this update of the Business of Doing Good, 3 local not-for-profit organizations share their key activities and how their work significantly impacts the lives of those who live in the community and the Abbotsford economy.

CASE STUDY: The Power of Sector Collaboration in Response to the 2021 Floods

In response to the November 2021 floods, the Abbotsford Community Foundation (ACF), the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce (ACC), and the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) came together to establish the Abbotsford Disaster Relief Fund (ADRF).

In the space of a few short months, over \$4.4 million was raised to support local recovery and rebuild efforts. 100% of the funds raised were and are being distributed locally - and for many businesses, farmers, and families, these funds were the first monies they received to help with their most urgent needs immediately following the disaster.

UFV helped with marketing, awareness, and supporting the campaign at the outset, immediately developing cohesive communication tools and assets to help direct donors to the ADRF. The ACC helped mobilize their team to reach out to the business and agricultural community and helped distribute just over \$1.86 million dollars to over 200 businesses and farmers. ACF handled the donations, issued the charitable tax receipts, and began a granting program to support frontline charities supporting our most vulnerable populations with emergency needs – food, emergency supplies, clean up and





whatever gaps that flood impacted families and individuals needed to survive.

Since that initial crisis period, the fund has supported a gradual transition to rebuild and recover with every dollar critical to the efforts of families, farmers, and businesses to restore what was and return to their homes.

Without this local effort in coordinating donations and directing them to the greatest needs in our community, many of those dollars may have flown to other communities as we've seen demonstrated with relief efforts with national and regional organizations. This was a local effort on the part of our non-profit and charitable sector, coming together to ensure our community was supported, empowered, and given the opportunities

to rebuild and recover thanks to the generosity of over 6,000 individual and corporate donors wanting to support Abbotsford.

Snapshot:

- 200 businesses and agricultural operations received ADRF grants
- 1000+ families and individuals supported - either with funds to rebuild, refurnish, repair homes and/or provided with emergency food, supplies, and clean up
- Just over \$4.4 million raised, just over \$4.1 million granted so far

ADRF Distribution:



45.6%

\$1.86 MILLION
to businesses & farms
(through ACC granting program)



36.8%

\$1.5 MILLION
distributed for frontline services
to families and individuals
(through local churches)



14.4%

\$588,000
distributed to local
charitable organizations



3.1%

\$127,000
distributed to the
Abbotsford Public School Board

CASE STUDY: Supporting Those Affected by the Transit Strike

In Spring 2023, Fraser Valley Transit caused significant disruptions to thousands of residents for 124 days with the second-longest transit strike in BC history. Students, seniors, those with disabilities, newcomers and low-income families were among the groups disproportionately affected.

Suzan Deng, an immigrant from Sudan, used public transportation to attend English language classes at Archway Community Services four days a week and to get to work. During the bus strike, every day was a juggling act. She sometimes walked half an hour both ways to make it to classes.

Her daughter was studying to become a nurse and struggled to afford the \$100 round trip taxi fare to Surrey five days a week.

“I try to work overtime, 12 hours, every day to get enough money to pay for the taxi,” said Deng at the time. “No overtime, no taxi. It’s very hard. I’m always tired.”

Given that Abbotsford is the largest municipality in British Columbia in terms of land area, public transportation is critical for our community’s health and well-being.

During the strike, secondary and university students had difficulty accessing classes and some students dropped out of school. People missed out on vital appointments with their medical or service providers and had difficulty getting essentials like groceries.

One senior with a disability described

how she was walking 45 minutes to pick up groceries and then had to spend three days in bed to recover from the exertion.

She shared, “I have spent hundreds of my already tight budget on taxis since the strike began. This often left me at the end of the month trying to figure out how to get by with no food for myself and my cat.”

“Some clients weren’t able to pick up their food bank hampers or travel to work, which put them even further behind,” shared Archway CEO, Rod Santiago.

“And we heard from seniors who experienced increased isolation and loneliness which significantly impacted their mental health and well-being.”

Foundry Abbotsford, run by Archway, also saw a drop in the number of youth accessing mental and physical health services in-person.

Because non-profits like Archway work with already vulnerable populations, the strike had a substantial impact on services. Archway staff did what they could to support their clients without any extra resources and already being stretched for time. Staff provided virtual services, deliveries, and emotional support during the strike. They organized donations of bicycles and worked with clients to find alternate meeting or pick-up times.

The Archway Community Van program, which provides low-cost rides within Abbotsford, doubled the number of rides normally provided



and had to book out 10 days in advance to accommodate all the requests.

While being reactive and meeting individual needs, Archway also tried to be proactive by advocating for a resolution. Archway staff and clients were featured in several media publications which helped amplify the voices of those affected.

A crisis like a four-month-long transit strike highlights how essential affordable and accessible transportation is for our community. When evaluating current and future community transportation options, the needs of vulnerable populations must be considered.

For those with barriers to accessing public transportation, there is still a need for services

like the Archway Community Van program. Clients may not live near a bus route or may be uncomfortable with public transportation due to health concerns, trauma or mobility barriers.

Other transportation barriers include the cost of gas, insurance and car seats. For many newcomers and low-income families, choosing between purchasing necessary items such as age-appropriate car seats or providing food and housing for their families is a struggle.

As we move forward, let's remember the words of the late civil rights advocate Elijah Cumming who noted that decisions about transportation "determine the connections and barriers that people will encounter in their daily lives - and thus, how hard or easy it will be for people to get where they need and want to go."

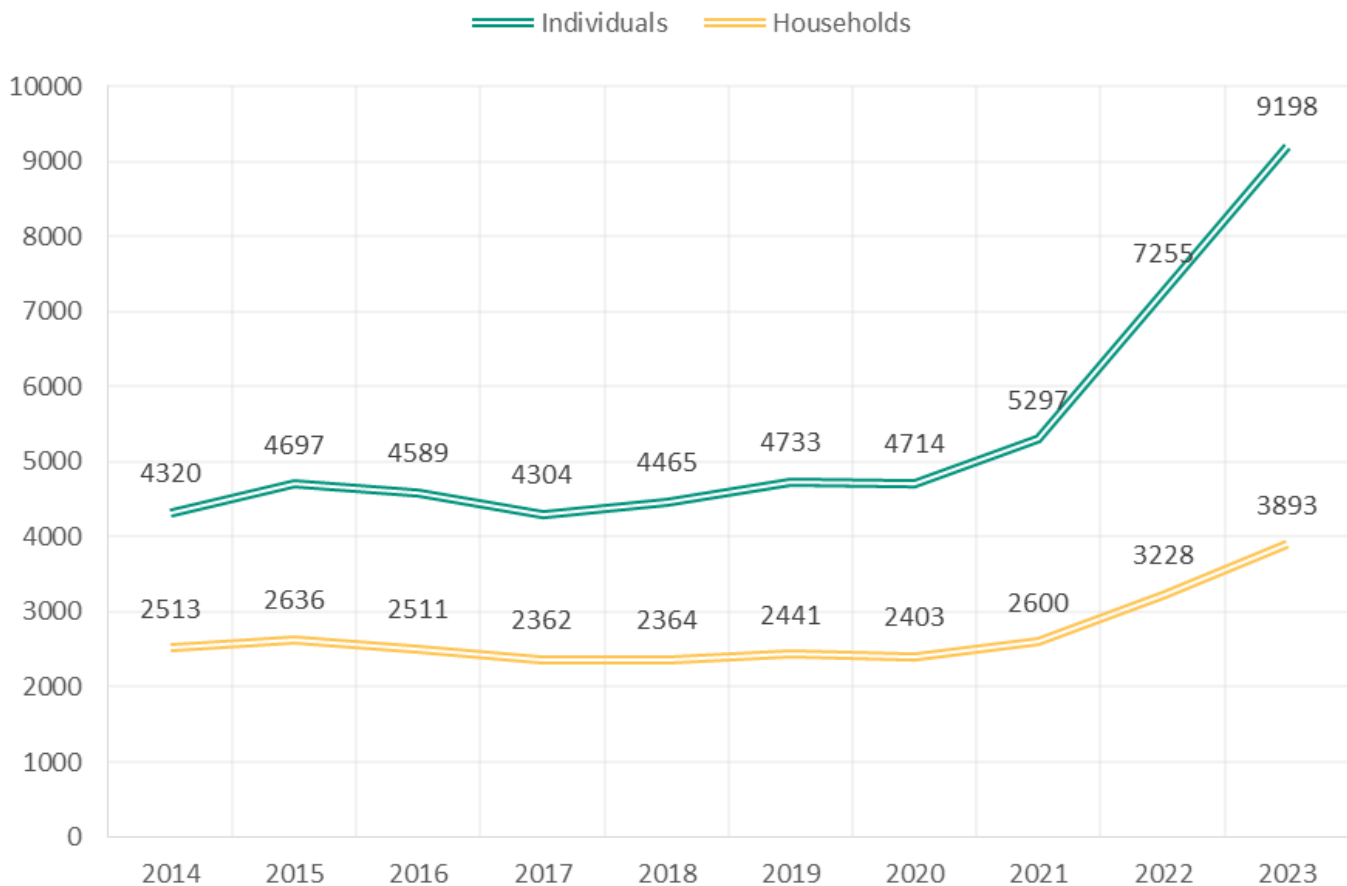
CASE STUDY: Archway Foodbank

Archway Food Bank has been supporting our community with access to food for over 50 years. In the last few years, the Food Bank has improved service delivery by reducing barriers, increasing healthy food choices, adding satellite locations, and empowering individuals to feed their families with culturally preferred food. In addition to the pantry staples, families select fresh and nutritious produce, choice of protein and baby supplies.

In the last five years, the Food Bank has seen a significant increase in the number of people needing to access food. There has been a 94% increase in the number of individuals that accessed food in 2023 compared to pre-pandemic numbers of 2019. In 2023, roughly 5% of Abbotsford's population accessed food at the Food Bank (2024 estimated population 176,284).



FOOD BANK UNIQUE USERS 2014-2023



One of the clients is Tammy who rarely leaves home after a vehicle accident. Having a connection to the Home Delivery volunteers has made all the difference to her outlook on life.

“I call the volunteers my ‘arch angels’ because Archway saved my life. And I’m gonna cry because they were the only ones that took time to help, you know. They treat people with respect and dignity. They don’t look down at you. They don’t judge how you are.”

Of the 9,198 individuals that accessed food in 2023, over 5,000 visited each month. While community members are grateful that social

food programming like the Archway Food Bank exists, most people would prefer that they didn’t have to access the services.

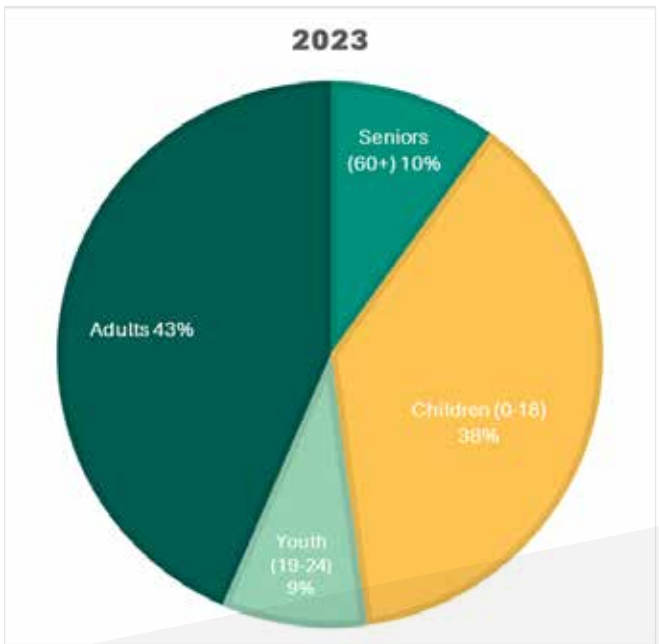
“We are continually looking at ways to ensure that there are equitable and dignified methods of ensuring that no one is left behind while the cost of living and basic human necessities continues to rise,” explained Rebecca Thuro, Food Security Manager.

Unfortunately, donations have not kept pace with the increased needs. Recently, food donations began to dwindle, and food purchasing became necessary. Year after year, food drives are no longer the main source of food



supply, so the Food Bank has turned to food recovery and food purchasing to fill in the gaps.

In 2023, the team was able to recover almost \$2 million in food nearing expiration from grocery stores. A team of volunteers and staff sort through the food items to share with clients, local charities, and farmers. In addition to recovered food, over \$450,000 was spent on purchasing staple pantry items, culturally diverse foods, milk, eggs, and fresh produce so that a consistent menu of nutritious foods can be offered to all clients.



Demographics of clients accessing the Archway Food Bank

Beyond the monthly food hampers, the Free Dental Clinic provides no-cost dental services and each year hundreds of families access the gifts and Christmas hampers through the Christmas Bureau. The Archway Food Bank also provides Starfish Packs to 735 children at 39 schools in Abbotsford to ensure they have food over the weekends.

“This program has made it so much easier for my daughter and son to have food that they deemed special and just for them. Snacks that we otherwise would not be able to provide as often or afford due to multiple medical issues and tremendous medical bills. The kids always looked forward to bringing home their separate bags every week and trading for their favourite foods. It wasn’t just food, it made them happy and feel special,” Starfish Pack parent.

“We’ve worked to create multiple ways and places to access food because we believe that maintaining consistent access to nutritious foods builds up the safety net of our community and helps limit the effects of poverty in areas such as mental and physical wellbeing, education, and crime,” said Thuro.

[Learn More at AbbotsfordFoodBank.com](https://www.abbotsfordfoodbank.com)



Acknowledgments

2023-2024 BUSINESS OF DOING GOOD CONTRIBUTORS

- Gary Fehr, University of the Fraser Valley

Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce Not-For-Profit Committee

- Jennifer Willford, Thrive Fundraising Solutions, Chair
- Alex Mitchell, Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce
- Areni Kelleppan, Abbotsford Community Foundation, Member at large
- Cindy Walker, Archway Community Services, Member at large
- Coletta Holmes, Life Recovery Association, Member at Large
- Hanif Ladha, Fraser River Funeral Home, Member at large
- Marion Keys, Maplewood Care Society, Member at large
- Melissa Pettit, Fraser Valley Child Development Centre, Member at large
- Tracie Seeley, Canuck Place Children's Hospice, Member at large
- Vincent Clements, Heritage Abbotsford Society, Member at large



ABBOTSFORD
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

(604) 859-9651

hello@abbotsfordchamber.com

207 - 32900 South Fraser Way

Abbotsford, BC V2S5A1

The Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce is situated in the traditional territory of the Stó:lō peoples. The Stó:lō have an intrinsic relationship with what they refer to as S'olh Temexw (Our Sacred Land); therefore, we express our gratitude and respect for the honour of living and working in this territory.