

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2025-2026



ballad

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Message from the President

As Ballard enters its 14th year, I find myself reflecting not only on how far we have come, but on what that growth has allowed us to build. From a small office in Whitecourt, Ballard has grown into an organization of nearly 100 dedicated employees serving seven communities across Alberta, with 13 offices now in operation. This past year, many of the things we have been working toward for several years came to life. For me, the most meaningful part of that momentum is seeing what our growth makes possible and knowing our work is reaching more Albertans.

I saw that firsthand at the openings of our largest facilities to date in Calgary and Edmonton. Government partners, employers, community organizations, and local residents came through our doors, met our teams, and showed genuine excitement for the work happening in their communities. We saw that same response in Brooks, where partners and residents welcomed Ballard before our doors were even open. These moments were a reminder that a new facility is only one part of the story. The relationships and trust built around it are what make the work inside possible.

The reach of Ballard's work extends beyond the individual participating in one of our programs. When an Albertan finds meaningful employment, that change can shape their family and the life they are building in their community. Our work with employers helps businesses find the people they need to grow, creating jobs and contributing to the local economy. Through our consulting services, we also help communities plan for long-term economic success. That broader ripple effect is an important part of what Ballard's work means to me.

As I look ahead, I am excited about what comes next. Our continued growth is allowing us to reach even more people, and next year, we are on track to serve more than 1,500 Albertans through employment services. That momentum reflects the increasing scale of our work, but it also comes with a responsibility to maintain the level of service people have come to expect from Ballard. What matters most is that, as we grow, we stay true to why we started this work in the first place.

Thank you to our team, our government and community partners, our clients, the employers who work alongside us, and the Albertans who continue to place their trust in Ballard. Your collaboration and support make this work possible. I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished this year, and I believe we are only beginning to see what Ballard can become as we grow our reach across Alberta and look toward opportunities beyond our province.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'X' shape followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

John Corie
President

Investing in People.

Strengthening Programs.

Engaging Employers.

At Ballad, we believe business can and should be a force for positive change. Over the past year, we made strategic investments in the people, programs, and partnerships that create lasting workforce outcomes across Alberta.

Investing in our people. We continued building a workplace where talented people choose to stay and grow their careers. Leadership development and internal promotions helped strengthen the team behind our mission, while our culture continues to be shaped by purpose and collaboration. Investing in our staff strengthens our ability to deliver high-quality programs and better serve the communities where we work.

Strengthening our programs. Across Alberta, we expanded and enhanced our simulated worksites to create modern, industry-informed training environments that better prepare participants for today's workforce. We added new equipment, improved learning spaces, and brought programming to additional communities, giving participants more opportunities to build practical skills and prepare for employment.

Engaging employers. As Ballad has evolved, so has our understanding of how lasting workforce change is created. Participants remain at the centre of our work, but employers have become increasingly important partners. They contribute by hiring participants, sharing industry expertise, providing mentorship, and investing in training. This year, we expanded our Impact Commitments to include "Engaged Employers & Inclusive Workplaces", reflecting the role employers play in building a stronger, future-ready workforce.

This report highlights the progress made across our five Impact Commitments over the past year. From participant and employer outcomes to community impact and systems-level change, the pages that follow show how Ballad is helping build a stronger workforce across Alberta.

Our Impact Commitments

01

Begin with Ballad

We strengthen our own organization by embedding social, environmental, and economic responsibility into the way we operate, ensuring our business practices reflect the change we seek to create.

02

Resilient & Employable Workforce

We support people to achieve long-term workforce attachment while building the skills, confidence, and resilience needed to thrive in a changing economy.

03

Engaged Employers & Inclusive Workplaces

We partner with employers to hire diverse talent, provide meaningful hands-on learning opportunities, and build the skilled workforce needed to meet Alberta's evolving labour market needs.

04

Empowered & Prosperous Communities

We partner with municipalities, Indigenous communities, non-profit organizations, industry, and governments to strengthen local economies, build organizational capacity, and support communities in achieving their long-term vision.

05

Scaling Impact & Transforming the Ecosystem

We amplify what works through research, evaluation, knowledge mobilization, and strategic partnerships, helping shape more effective workforce systems across Alberta and beyond.

Top 10 Impact Highlights

1

Supported 842 Albertans through 11 Employment Services programs, with an average completion rate of 67%.

2

Deepened employer investment in workforce development, generating \$259,195 in employer contributions.

3

Created 26 community projects through participant training, giving participants opportunities to apply their skills while contributing to local organizations and communities.



4

Renewed our **three-year partnership with Olds College**, continuing agricultural training opportunities that have supported **46 participants**.

5

Completed **2,971 exposure courses and certifications** through our WERC program, helping participants build practical, job-ready skills.

6

Welcomed **25 new full-time employees** and promoted **11 team members** internally, strengthening Ballad's capacity while creating opportunities for career growth.

7

Engaged **1,122 communities and stakeholders** across **24 consulting projects**, bringing local perspectives into planning and decision-making.

8

Connected **25 Ballad employees** through our **Mentorship Program**, supporting professional development and knowledge-sharing across the organization.

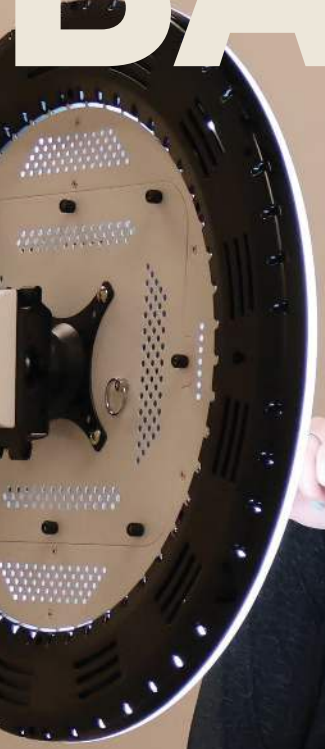
9

Supported **273 businesses** through Employer Edge throughout the program, helping employers strengthen their workforce practices.

10

Reached record employee engagement with an **eNPS score of 87**, reflecting strong employee satisfaction and willingness to recommend Ballad as a place to work.

BEGIN WITH BALLAD



01

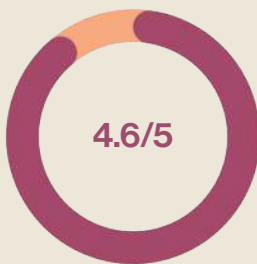
Employee Well-being

Creating a workplace where people feel supported, connected, and motivated remains a priority at Ballard. This year, we achieved our highest Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) to date, **reaching 87**, a strong indicator of employee engagement, satisfaction, and willingness to recommend Ballard as a great place to work. Some of the top things people liked were: company culture, management support, and meaningful work.

Our employee survey also highlighted consistently strong well-being measures:



Happiness



Personal Motivators



Company Motivators



Workplace Relationships

These results reflect a workplace culture built on trust, meaningful work, and strong connections.

Investing in Our People

This year, Ballard celebrated **11 internal promotions** and welcomed **25 new full-time employees**, reflecting continued investment in the people and capacity behind our work.

As Ballard has grown to **13 offices across Alberta**, so has the need to build strong teams that can support that growth. We are creating more opportunities for employees to advance their careers and take on greater responsibility, while new roles are helping us meet the needs of expanding programs across the province.

By growing talent from within and bringing new expertise into the organization, we are building a team that can grow alongside Ballard. That means more capacity to support our programs, respond to new opportunities, and continue delivering meaningful results for the clients and communities we serve.



Staff at the Ballard Energy Square office in Edmonton celebrating the playoffs.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

This year Ballard facilitated two mentorship cohorts with a total of 25 participants. Here's what people are saying:

"Participating in the program has strengthened my confidence in my leadership abilities and affirmed my interest in continuing to grow as a leader. Seeing the positive impact of mentorship reinforced my passion for supporting the growth and development of others within my team and organization."

- Robyn Haiste, Mentor

"My mentee has fully embraced Ballard's ACE values, and it's been great to see someone take the values seriously and apply them to their everyday work whole-heartedly. We've both enjoyed the mentorship sessions, and are going to continue meeting monthly to check in with each other and see if there are opportunities where we can continue to collaborate to strengthen our programs."

- Melissa Olsen, Mentor

"Having someone give me direct, honest feedback has helped me grow in a way I couldn't have done on my own[...]The real value of this program isn't just picking up tips, it's having someone in your corner who'll be honest with you about your blind spots and push you to practice things you'd otherwise avoid."

- Ian Walters, Mentee

"Early in the program, one of the most valuable pieces of feedback my mentor shared was the importance of looking at my ideas from a broad perspective first, then learning how to narrow and refine them as my vision evolved. That approach fundamentally changed the way I think through projects, opportunities, and long-term goals."

One of the most meaningful moments came near the end of the program when my mentor commented on how much she had seen that skill develop over the course of our time together. Hearing that growth recognized by someone I respect was incredibly validating and reinforced the progress I had made."

- Dana Martin, Mentee

Diverse and Inclusive Place to Work

Ballad is committed to building a workplace where people from diverse backgrounds feel welcomed, valued, and empowered to succeed. We believe that diverse perspectives strengthen our organization, enhance innovation, and enable us to better serve the communities we work alongside. This year:

63%

of employees
identify as women

33%

of employees
identify as a visible
minority

Building a Safe and Inclusive Workplace

Creating psychologically safe workplaces remains central to Ballad's culture. We continue to foster an environment where employees feel respected, supported, and empowered to share ideas, ask questions, and raise concerns.

To strengthen this commitment, 100% of staff completed Trauma-Informed Care training, equipping our team with the knowledge and skills to better support one another, our participants, and our community partners through empathy, understanding, and culturally responsive practices.

Living Wage Employer

Ballad is proud to be a Living Wage Certified Employer for another year, ensuring that every employee, across every location, earns above the living wage for their community.



Our WERC Grande Prairie team at a job fair.



Our Calgary team hosting a Stampede event for employers.

02

**RESILIENT &
EMPLOYABLE
WORKFORCE**

Employment Services Impact Stats



842

Albertans served
through Employment
Services



636

participants served
through WERC

67%

Employment
Services program
completion rate



2,971

exposure courses
completed



525

hours of
individual
counselling
provided



26

community
construction
projects
completed



Construction remained
the most selected
simulated worksite

PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

Wyatt Harris

NW ESTS* Graduate

Wyatt joined the Northwest Essential Skills to Success (NW ESTS) program after moving to Whitecourt from the Hamlet of Cherrill. Having been homeschooled as one of ten siblings, he shared that he often felt sheltered and uncertain in social situations. With limited work experience and transportation challenges, Wyatt joined the program eager to build the skills and confidence needed to find employment.

Through hands-on kitchen and shop training, Wyatt gained experience using basic tools and a point of sale system. With support from Ballard staff, he also created his first resume, practiced interview skills, and became more confident connecting with his peers.

After his first interview with Flying J did not result in a job offer, Wyatt worked with staff to strengthen his interview skills. Soon after, he interviewed with 7-Eleven and successfully secured a cashier position.

*The NW ESTS program is now called WERC Whitecourt



Expanding Access to Hands-On Workforce Training

Ballad continued to expand access to practical, employment-focused training across Alberta through the Workforce Employment Readiness and Connections (WERC) program.

Originally operating in Whitecourt, Red Deer, and Grande Prairie, WERC now delivers programming from **seven simulated worksites** across the province, including High Level, Edmonton, Calgary, and Brooks. Each purpose-built training facility replicates real workplace environments through construction bays and hospitality suites, allowing participants to develop technical skills, workplace behaviours, and confidence before entering employment.

This year also marked the expansion of new industry pathways with the integration of Oilfield Services and Piping Systems training and the development of an Energy-Efficient and Sustainable Construction program, ensuring training continues to reflect Alberta's evolving labour market.



WERC Grande Prairie team and participants delivering a custom sandbox for the Centre for Young Parents.

Learning Through Community Impact

Across all seven WERC locations, participants developed construction skills while completing projects that improved local communities.

Working alongside employer partners, shop foremen, and community organizations, participants designed and built real projects including patios, picnic tables, benches, flower boxes, sheds, and accessibility improvements. These projects provided meaningful work experience while creating lasting community assets.

Community Project Highlights

Red Deer

- Built four sheds, including one donated to Springbrook Family and Community Support Services through support from Ballad and Minister Jason Nixon.
- Partnered with Borrens Construction, Marshall Construction, Carpet One, and BILD Red Deer to build a playhouse that raised \$1,600 for Habitat for Humanity ReStore.
- Built flower boxes for The Mustard Seed, enhancing outdoor community spaces while showcasing participant craftsmanship.

Grande Prairie

- Built and donated a handcrafted bench for a United Way fundraising auction.
- Designed and constructed a custom sandbox displayed at Canadian Tire in support of the Centre for Young Parents.

Whitecourt

- Supported Wellspring Family Resource and Crisis Centre through the Red Cabinet Initiative, helping improve access to essential personal care items for women in crisis.



Professional Careers and Certifications

Ballad continued to expand its integrated training programming, funded by Alberta's Ministry of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration, connecting Albertans with career opportunities in high-demand sectors.

Throughout 2025–2026, Ballad delivered four programs across Edmonton and Calgary, serving **178 participants** through industry-informed training, certifications, and direct connections to employers.

A major milestone came through the Professional Insurance Careers program, where all **16 participants** in the Edmonton May cohort passed the General Level 1 Insurance Licensing Examination on their first attempt—the first time a Ballad cohort has achieved a **100% first-attempt pass rate**.

Employer involvement remained an important part of the training experience. **116 employer guest speakers** shared industry knowledge and helped participants better understand workplace expectations and career opportunities.

Building on this work, Ballad was awarded **two new JETI contracts** to expand integrated training into Red Deer and Lethbridge, extending access to career-focused training in more communities across Alberta.

“I realized the program was perfectly designed for someone going through a career transition. It challenged me in the right ways, with a balance of learning and support that kept me moving forward. That experience helped me push through, earn my license, and find my current job.”

– Professional Insurance Careers Program Graduate



PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

Hamdi Adams

WERC Graduate

Hamdi joined the WERC program as a quiet and reserved participant who rarely spoke unless spoken to. New to Canada and without an established social network, she entered the program unsure of herself, but her warm smile quickly became part of her presence within the group.

As the program progressed, Hamdi became more comfortable expressing herself and connecting with others. She began building confidence in ways both big and small, while developing greater independence in her new environment.

Throughout the program, Hamdi demonstrated a strong work ethic and quiet determination. She completed tasks thoroughly and consistently showed initiative by finding additional ways to stay productive. Her commitment to learning remained strong throughout her time in the program.

By the end of the program, Hamdi had achieved her goals and become a mentor and advocate for others, offering guidance to people she recognized as facing similar challenges as newcomers to Canada. She also secured full-time employment as a merchandiser with Canadian Tire, where she continues to succeed.

Her journey reflects the confidence and independence she built throughout the program, as well as the important role she now plays in supporting others.



PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT



Thomas Bruno

WERC Graduate

Before joining our WERC program in Red Deer, Thomas was navigating housing instability, staying in shelters and with friends while working toward the goal of having a place of his own. From day one, he showed focus and commitment, and ultimately secured stable housing for himself.

During the program, Thomas completed a job shadow with Lou Lou Enterprise, which turned into several months of work. His attitude, reliability, and strong work ethic made such an impression that he was offered a full-time position, even when one wasn't initially available.

Today, Thomas is still thriving in his role and continues to check in with our team. He brought positivity, encouragement, and determination into the program every day, always willing to learn and support others along the way.



Building Participant Resilience

Employment readiness extends beyond technical skills. Every WERC participant completes Ballad's **Circle of Resilience**, a holistic outcome measurement that assesses strengths in seven interconnected resilience categories: **Basic Needs (1)**, **Sense of Self (2)**, **Physical & Mental Health (3)**, **Money (4)**, **Skills & Employability (5)**, **Connections & Relationships (6)**, and **Spirit & Culture (7)**. The CoR evaluation is facilitated at program entry, completion, and at the 90-day follow-up. Each participant holds the potential to identify, utilize, and grow their strengths in each of these categories to move towards a more resilient future and livelihood.

The biggest improvements from intake to program completion were observed in:

- Skills & Employability
- Money
- Sense of Self

Across all WERC locations, **80%** of participants increased in two or more categories, and **38%** improved in **5 or more** categories. These outcomes demonstrate that participants leave the program with growth in many areas of their life that will support long-term stability and economic resiliency.



ENGAGED EMPLOYERS & INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES



Engaged Employers & Inclusive Workplaces

Employer partnerships continued to grow throughout 2025–2026, strengthening participant learning while increasing industry investment in Ballard's Workforce Employment Readiness and Connections (WERC) programs. More than 100 employer contributions generated **\$259,195** in co-investment across six WERC locations, supporting hands-on training, industry engagement, and participant success.

Employers contributed far more than financial resources. Donated equipment and materials enhanced simulated worksites, employer-led learning sessions and guest speakers provided valuable industry knowledge, and worksite tours and facility access gave participants firsthand exposure to Alberta's workplaces and career opportunities. These partnerships ensured participants developed relevant skills while helping Ballard's training remain aligned with the needs of Alberta's evolving labour market.

Employer Co-Investment Highlights

Each contribution has significant value and impact. Below are some of the highlights from last year.

- **Strike Group** in High Level donated a Picker Truck at approximately \$120,000+ in value.
- **Mark's Work Wearhouse** made multiple donations of workwear and PPE exceeding \$35,339.
- **Nightline Contracting LTD.** in Whitecourt donated new vinyl siding at a value of \$8,394.
- **Edmonton Meals on Wheels** provided hands-on learning at their kitchen facility, with a value of \$5,100.
- **Home Hardware** in Red Deer donated \$7,000 in materials for participants to build sheds for local customers.

\$259,195

in total employer co-investment

100+

employer contributions to WERC

116

employer guest speakers who shared industry knowledge and career insights through JETI programming

Strike Group picker truck donation in High Level.



04

A man with a beard, wearing a brown blazer and a lanyard, is speaking into a microphone. A decorative orange line loops around the image, starting from the left, passing behind the man, and extending towards the bottom right. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

EMPOWERED & PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES

Building Stronger Communities

Ballad partners with municipalities, Indigenous communities, non-profit organizations, and governments to help turn local priorities into action. Through facilitation, research, planning, and project management, we support communities in building the capacity, partnerships, and strategies needed to achieve long-term social and economic outcomes.

A Focus on Housing

This year, Ballad supported a diverse range of housing initiatives across Alberta, including:

- Wellspring Family Resource & Crisis Centre
- Makwa Housing Development Management Services
- N'Deh Moose Meadows Housing Development Management Services
- Islamic Family and Social Services Association – Community-Based Rent Supplement Program
- Autism Independent Living Association – Housing Application and Funding Management
- Lac La Biche Housing Needs Assessment
- Alberta Forestry, Parks and Lands Housing Needs Assessments
- N'Deh Apartment Renovation Project

In addition, Ballad team members Asad Bhatti and Aaron Critch attended the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association's Annual Congress in St. John's, NL. Asad's presentation, entitled Building to Last: Addressing the Housing Needs of Indigenous Communities in Northern Alberta, and delivered alongside Jordan Asels, CEO of N'Deh Limited Partnership, showcased important work contributing to housing development in High Level, AB, providing innovative solutions to the challenges associated with developing housing in northern climates.

Highlights

- Partnered with **31 communities**, engaging **1,122 residents**, stakeholders, and partners in community planning and decision-making.
- Advanced **three community-led projects** from concept to implementation, creating tangible economic and community benefits.
- Expanded our housing portfolio, supporting the **launch of a Ballad housing strategy** and delivering eight housing-related projects that increase planning capacity and access to affordable and supportive housing.

Together, these projects are helping communities strengthen housing systems, improve access to safe and affordable housing, and build the capacity needed to support long-term community well-being and economic resilience.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Building Pathways Beyond Emergency Shelter

Ballad partnered with Wellspring Family Resource & Crisis Centre to help advance the development of **12 new second-stage housing units** for women and children fleeing violence in Whitecourt. The project addresses a critical gap between emergency shelter and permanent housing, providing safe, affordable homes alongside ongoing wraparound supports that help residents build stability and transition to independent living.

Over the past year, the project reached several key milestones, including property acquisition, completion of pre-development planning and design, and securing capital funding through Alberta's Affordable Housing Partnership Program. Construction is anticipated to begin in Spring 2027, creating a lasting community asset that will strengthen Whitecourt's housing continuum for years to come.

Photo 1: A Ballad team member presents the results of the 2025 Foreign Direct Investment Attraction Plan to councillors for the City of Moose Jaw.



Planning Recreation for Future Generations

Ballad partnered with Kneehill County to develop a long-term vision for parks, recreation, and community spaces through research, community engagement, and stakeholder collaboration.

The assessment identified opportunities to strengthen recreation infrastructure, support healthy and connected communities, and better empower the volunteers who are essential to delivering local recreation opportunities. The resulting strategy provides a roadmap to guide future investment, enhance community well-being, and ensure recreation assets continue to meet the needs of residents for years to come.

Innovating Housing Affordability

Ballad worked with the Islamic Family & Social Services Association (IslamicFamily) to design an innovative community-based rent supplement program that addresses housing affordability while aligning with faith-based financial principles and Canadian regulatory requirements.

The proposed model combines rental assistance with wraparound supports such as financial literacy, mental health services, and community connections, creating a pathway toward long-term housing stability. Designed to support refugee families, single mothers, survivors of violence, and other vulnerable households, the initiative demonstrates how innovative partnerships can expand access to safe, stable housing while preserving dignity and independence.

Photo 2: Collecting feedback from members of Makwa Sahgaiehan First Nation on designs for their new Child and Family Services Centre.



05

Employers Fuel Workforce Success



**SCALING IMPACT &
TRANSFORMING
THE ECOSYSTEM**

WorkFirst
Alberta
Summit

Systems Leadership & Sector Impact

Ballad is committed to strengthening Alberta's employment services system beyond the programs we deliver. Through research, strategic partnerships, thought leadership, public speaking, and knowledge sharing, we help shape conversations, influence practice, and build stronger connections between employers, communities, educators, and government.

Strengthening Industry & Academic Partnerships

Ballad continued to expand industry-responsive training through strategic partnerships with Alberta's post-secondary institutions.

During the year, Ballad renewed its partnership with **Olds College of Agriculture & Technology**, continuing to deliver agriculture-focused programming under the newly named **Introduction to Agriculture Operations program** in WERC Red Deer.

Ballad also established a new partnership with **SAIT** to deliver curriculum for the **Energy Efficient and Sustainable Construction pathway**, which will launch through WERC Calgary in September 2026.



Graduates of the Olds College Introduction to Agriculture Program in Red Deer.

WorkFirst Alberta Summit

On September 16–17, 2025, Ballad delivered the inaugural **WorkFirst Alberta Summit** on behalf of Alberta's Ministry of Assisted Living and Social Services (ALSS), supporting the launch of Alberta's renewed employment strategy.

The Summit brought together **600+ participants** from across Alberta's workforce development ecosystem to explore innovative approaches to labour market participation and employment services.

A job fair featuring **150 employer and community booths** connected job seekers directly with employers, training providers, and support organizations.

The Summit represented a significant milestone in Alberta's renewed commitment to improving labour market participation for Albertans facing barriers to employment while showcasing the programs, partnerships, and innovations helping strengthen workforce outcomes across the province.



WorkFirst Alberta Summit tour of Ballad's Red Deer Simulated Worksite.

Employer Edge

Employer Edge strengthened the capacity of Alberta employers to recruit, retain, and develop their workforce through practical HR resources, workforce planning support, labour market information, and organizational development tools.

During this two-year initiative, **273 employers** participated in Employer Edge, including **206 businesses** in the **Whitecourt** region and **67** in the **High Level** region. The support provided generated an estimated **6,778.5 hours** in time savings, representing approximately **\$1.36 million** in value to participating employers.

For many small and medium-sized businesses, Employer Edge provided access to HR expertise they may not otherwise have had in-house. Employers reported stronger recruitment and onboarding practices, improved retention approaches, and greater confidence in managing workplace requirements. The program also helped reduce the administrative burden associated with day-to-day workforce management.

The Employer Edge HR Portal further expanded access to evidence-based workforce resources, generating:

- **17,090** website views
- **468** employer logins
- **203** resource downloads

The initiative also produced four editions of **The Chronicles**, sharing practical HR guidance and regional labour market insights with employers across Alberta.

By strengthening employer capacity, Employer Edge contributed to more resilient workplaces and a stronger regional labour market.



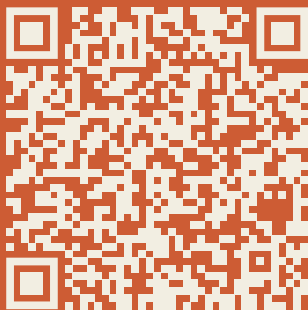
IN THE NEWS

Ballad's work and expertise were featured through media interviews and industry publications, helping elevate conversations around workforce development, employment services, housing, and community resilience.



HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

CTV Article:



CBC Interview:



Steelcase Feature:



Community Investment

Through fundraising, sponsorships, volunteerism, and community partnerships, Ballard continued to support the communities where we live and work. Our total community contribution reached **\$34,590.61** across Alberta, supporting a wide range of local organizations and initiatives.

Some of the ways our teams contributed included:

- Ballard hosted its annual Haunted House fundraiser at our **Whitecourt Simulated Worksite**, raising **\$11,673.95** for **Pat Hardy Elementary School**. The event brought together local families, volunteers, and community organizations, with 100% of proceeds directed to the school.
- The Whitecourt team continued its long-standing partnership with the **Whitecourt Lunchbox Society**, supporting local food security through fundraising, Christmas hamper donations, and participant-led projects.
- In **Calgary**, staff assembled **50 essential item kits** for the **Calgary Drop-In Centre**, contributing nearly \$2,000 in supplies for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- In **Grande Prairie**, Ballard sponsored the **Women of Influence Awards**, providing tickets for award nominees and supporting the recognition of women in leadership.
- In **Whitecourt**, the team assembled and donated hygiene kits for clients of **Tennille's Hope Soup Kitchen** and the **Wellspring Family Resource & Crisis Centre**.
- Ballard contributed **\$2,500** to the **Edmonton Mental Health Foundation** as a sponsor of its fundraising breakfast, supporting mental health awareness and local programming.



Our Whitecourt team at the Whitecourt Lunchbox Fundraiser.



Our Edmonton team walking in the Side by Side for ALS Walk

Volunteering

Community impact is strengthened when employees are empowered to give back. Ballad provides paid volunteer time and organizes team volunteer opportunities, encouraging employees to support causes that are meaningful to them.

Here are a few of the ways Ballad employees supported their communities this year:

- **Edmonton Food Bank:** 12 members of our Edmonton team volunteered at the Edmonton Food Bank ahead of the holiday season. Together, they packed food hampers for families and sorted donations. It was a meaningful way to give back to Edmontonians while spending time together as a team.
- **Supporting MacEwan University Students:** Victoria Gagliardi returned to MacEwan University, where she previously participated in the Co-op program, to help students prepare for the workforce. She conducted mock interviews, offering feedback and encouragement ahead of professional interviews.
- **Bethany Care Home:** In Red Deer, Joshua Smith-Chinski volunteered his professional massage services at Bethany Care Home, providing care to residents living with significant physical disabilities.
- **Sunrise House Youth Shelter:** Amy Bancescu spent a day volunteering at Sunrise House Youth Shelter and the Kickstand Connect Hub in Grande Prairie. She helped organize the shelter's clothing donation room and paint a sensory room, contributing hands-on help to spaces used by local youth.
- **Mamas for Mamas:** Members of our Calgary team volunteered at Mamas for Mamas, located near our WERC Calgary facility. They sorted clothing donations, stocked the Karma Market, and assembled 40 kits for new mothers using items donated by Ballad.

279.3

hours of volunteer time were contributed by employees

56%

of staff utilized their volunteer benefit to support community organizations and initiatives



Our Calgary team packing new mother kits at Mamas for Mamas.



Looking Ahead

Building on this year's momentum, Ballad will continue advancing innovative, evidence-informed solutions that strengthen employment services across Alberta. Key priorities for 2026–2027 include:

- **WorkFirst Alberta Summit 2.0** – Hosting the second provincial summit in Edmonton to bring together employers, government, educators, service providers, and community partners to advance Alberta's employment services system.
- **Social Return on Investment (SROI)** – Launching Ballad's WERC SROI evaluation to measure the broader social and economic impact of our employment programs.
- **Social Enterprise Research** – Advancing research into social enterprise and transitional employment models that create new pathways to employment while strengthening program sustainability.
- **Housing Strategy** – Continuing to implement Ballad's Housing Strategy through new partnerships and initiatives that recognize the critical connection between stable housing and long-term employment success.

Together, these initiatives reflect Ballad's commitment to strengthening not only individual employment outcomes, but Alberta's employment services system as a whole.

The Ballad logo consists of a solid orange square with the word "ballad" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font.

ballad

Learn more about Ballad's impact work at
balladgroup.ca/impact or scan the QR code.



Certified



Corporation