

# Better Every Day



## THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S YEAR END REPORT

# AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE CALGARY TRANSIT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Picture yourself stepping onto the CTrain for your daily commute. In a sea of faces, you catch the eye of another rider who gives you a friendly smile and warm greeting. You wonder for a moment if you've met this person before, as you're taken back by their kindness. A quick glance at their red vest and you realize they're no stranger, they're part of Calgary Transit's Ambassador program.

**This dedicated team of over 50 people spend their days helping Calgarians feel safe and welcome while riding the CTrain or waiting at stations. From giving directions and fare information to managing service disruptions and sparking conversations, the Transit Ambassadors help customers navigate routes and solve problems.**

Joevis Sumpter is the Supervisor and Lead of the Transit Ambassadors and has been a part of the team since it started in 2022. As part of The City's larger [Public Transit Safety Strategy](#), the ambassadors are trained to create a safe and welcoming environment to help reduce the number of incidents.

"Our main thing is to enjoy people and have positive interactions. We're ensuring that they're safe and well taken care of," explains Sumpter. "The program was designed to improve a sense of safety on Calgary Transit and also to rebuild our community trust between our riders, our drivers and transit overall."

While the team isn't tasked with checking fares or enforcing bylaws, their job is to make people feel safe with a visible presence and support riders when they need it.

"If someone is in trouble, they're welcome to come to us and we will provide them with safety resources by removing them from the situation and asking for the Peace Officers to come and intervene," he explains. "We're there to give a helping hand and guide them where they need to go."



Ambassador Candice Mann hands out a sticker to a young rider



For more information on Calgary Transit's commitment to safety, visit [calgary.ca/TransitSafety](https://calgary.ca/TransitSafety)

As the program celebrates its two-year anniversary, Sumpter says it's clearly having a positive impact on riders. While his top priority is keeping people safe, he's also known for his friendly fist bumps and smiles.

"In our day-to-day travels, we get a lot of feedback sharing that people are happy we're there, in case they are lost or have any questions," says Sumpter. "If you want to tell a joke to us, we're there to listen and share and swap jokes. Anything you want to discuss, we're there for you," he adds.

Nik Vig recently joined the team after working as a Calgary Transit Shuttle Bus Driver and loves having the opportunity to help people and make an impact.

"I've been with the team for over six months now, and I'm loving every second of it," says Vig. "The idea is that we are doing one interaction at a time to try and build the sense that our riders are important to us, and they matter."


"I remember there was a lady by herself during one of the service disruptions late in the evening. It was kind of cold and English wasn't her first language – a definite barrier in communication. I walked her away from the platform, up the walkway, all the way to the shuttle and stood with her until the bus came so she felt better," he adds.

"Before leaving, she said I reminded her of her son. That's something that makes all of this so worth it in terms of the experiences we're able to provide for people. So that stood out with me. And the hugs and the smiles of course, every day. I love it."

Candice Mann also joined the ambassador team after working for Calgary Transit as a driver for 13 years and is known for handing out stickers and tattoos to riders.

"I love to make people happy. Helping somebody get to where they have to go makes my job worth it," she explains. "When I see somebody on their phone and they're looking at a map, I stop and ask if they need directions to get somewhere."

Above all, she agrees interacting with people is the best part of the job.

"We helped a lady who moved here from up North and had nowhere to go, no job or anything. She had a shopping cart full of all her personal belongings. She was so upset and didn't know what to do – everyone had turned her down. We told her about The Alex Centre and escorted her there, and to this day I have not seen her again." 

Members of The City's Transit Ambassador team, left to right: Nik Vig, Joevis Sumpter and Candice Mann ▼

## CALGARY TRANSIT AMBASSADORS WORK MULTIPLE SHIFTS BETWEEN 6:30 A.M. AND 9 P.M. EVERY DAY AND CAN BE FOUND AT CTRAIN STATIONS OR RIDING THE SYSTEM.





# SECOND ANNUAL HOUSING CONFERENCE HOSTS HUNDREDS



On November 26, City Administration's Housing Team hosted its second annual Housing Conference. The event, held under the theme, Housing Partnerships: Working Together to Address Calgary's Housing Crisis, brought together more than 250 professionals from the housing sector – a diverse mix of builders, non-profits, community members and agencies – to discuss innovative solutions to the city's housing challenges.

The conference began with a moving prayer from Elder Jackie Bromley, a cultural leader, teacher and residential school survivor hailing from the Kainaiwa Nation in southern Alberta. Mayor Gondek followed with opening remarks emphasizing the collective responsibility to addressing the housing crisis, stressing housing affordability impacts everyone in the community, which requires a collaborative and collective community effort to help our fellow Calgarians.

**Attendees participated in several panel discussions and presentations, focusing on:**

- **Leveraging Partnerships in Mixed-Income Housing**
- **Innovative Approaches to Building Housing in Calgary**
- **Housing Policies & Partnerships That Work: Addressing Calgary's Housing Crisis**
- **Housing for Indigenous People and Equity Deserving Populations**

Another highlight of the day was a fireside chat with Bernadette Majdell, CEO, HomeSpace Society, and Alan Norris, Managing Partner, Real Estate, Brookfield, discussing how public-private partnerships can be leveraged to build more affordable housing.




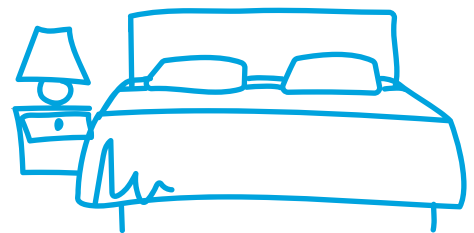


The entire day offered thought-provoking perspectives on how Calgary can move forward with innovative, inclusive, and sustainable housing strategies.

Feedback gathered from participants in a post-event survey revealed overwhelmingly positive responses. Many attendees said the conference left them feeling inspired, informed, and motivated to continue focusing on collaboration and partnerships. They praised the event for its diversity of perspectives, the quality of the discussions, and the tangible steps outlined for moving forward.



**OVERALL, THE CONFERENCE SUCCEEDED IN CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE PROFESSIONALS ACROSS CALGARY'S HOUSING SECTOR COULD UNITE IN THEIR SHARED GOAL OF ADDRESSING THE CITY'S HOUSING NEEDS AND BUILDING A MORE INCLUSIVE FUTURE.** 







# SUPPORTING NEW ENTREPRENEURS: THE BUSINESS EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

Starting a new business can be a daunting journey for anyone. From understanding licencing to navigating health and safety permits, the information can be overwhelming.

That's where The City's [Business Experience program](#) comes in, giving new entrepreneurs the one-on-one support they need to take ideas from concept to reality.

Launched 2022, the program assigns every new business licence applicant with a file manager who ensures they understand the process and apply for the right permits to create faster outcomes. The file manager is there to guide applicants through each step of the application and answer any questions along the way.

Ann Sager is a Business Experience Representative and has been part of the team since the program began.

"There's a lot of information to sift through, so we're able to break it down into chunks and explain why and how they need to move forward," she explains. "I love helping people and making sure they have the knowledge they need to open a business. It's super rewarding and fun to be part of that journey."

"We advise them and reach out along the way about what's required, what's outstanding and what they can expect. We also field lots of questions about who to contact at Alberta Health Services or the Fire Department, how Alberta Liquor and Gaming Commission (AGLC) works, how Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council (AMVIC) licensing works. We pretty much guide the new business through the business licensing process," adds Sager.

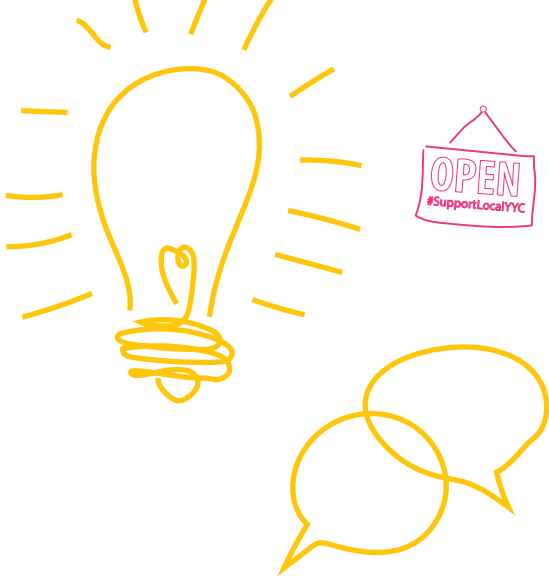
Launching a business can be even more overwhelming when you're new to the city, which is why the Business Experience team also partners with community organizations like the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) to help newcomers understand what it takes to start a business.

Members of the Business Experience team present at CCIS's seminars, which is part of their 10-week [Newcomer Entrepreneur Program](#).

**"It's a class for entrepreneurs that are new to Canada, and we have been invited to help students go through the business licencing process. We educate them about the purpose of a business licence, why you need one, and why they're important for public safety," says Sager.**

Bibiana Cala is the Entrepreneurship Programs Coordinator for CCIS and says it's been helpful for newcomers to connect directly with The City during the seminars.

"It's been so important, and I know because I'm an immigrant. I was there 16 years ago when I opened my first business as well. It's a little bit intimidating, so seeing a person and having a name makes things way easier," says Cala. "It breaks down a bit of the barrier between a newcomer and the government."



Ann Sager, Business Experience Representative, explains the benefits of The City's Business Experience program. ▶


"They show us the process you need to go through for license and registrations with The City. We're constantly learning about new programs and new services from The City. They provide us with contact information to follow up directly with them because they have a lot of specific questions about their businesses," she explains.

CCIS offers four intakes for their entrepreneurship program each year with around 20 successful applicants in each group. The next intake for January 2025 is already full.



**"PEOPLE REALLY APPRECIATE THE PROGRAM. THEY TELL ME, 'I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS A FREE PROGRAM!' IT BLOWS THEIR MINDS BECAUSE THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN IN THEIR COUNTRIES. THAT'S WHY I'M SUPER PASSIONATE ABOUT MAKING A GOOD PROGRAM AND HAVING THE CITY INVOLVED IS AMAZING. IT JUST BREAKS THOSE BARRIERS TO KNOW THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS THERE FOR THEM," ADDS CALA.**

As for the Business Experience Team, they're happy to play a key part in launching successful businesses.

"What I love about the program is I'm able to develop a relationship with people. It's really fun to see a business owner that had no idea what they're doing in the beginning to get their licence at the end," says Sager. 

For more information on the Business Experience program, visit [calgary.ca/Business](https://calgary.ca/Business).