



Municipal Election 2021

Dear Candidate

Greater Edmonton Alliance is an alliance of faith, labour, health education and community organizations dedicated to building a base of everyday civic leaders to effectively stand for change they want to see in their communities.

GEA is a multi-issue organization.

The issues we work on change from year to year, arising directly from the concerns of the thousands of people in our member organizations through shared stories.

We cross economic, faith, and neighbourhood lines to find common ground and act on our values.

As you are a candidate running for the councillor position in your ward, the members of GEA have some questions to ask you that are of importance to our members in their communities.

Value 1: Workplace Mental Health

We value a city that supports mental health and well being. Over the last 2 years we have approached the city to adopt the Canadian National Standard for the Psychological Safety in the Workplace as official policy. The present city council has only agreed to use it as a benchmark. Psychological health problems cost the Canadian economy \$51 billion per year - \$20 billions of which results from work-related causes.

Under the standard there is a rigorous monitoring, measurement and internal auditing process that would need to be adhered to and this is the piece that we feel is most needed as official policy.

The present City Council has stated there will be a report presented to council concerning Workplace Mental Health in approximately 1 year (May 2022).

- *As a candidate, what is your opinion concerning psychological safety in the workplace? When elected, would you commit to meeting and working with The Greater Edmonton Alliance to discuss Workplace Mental Health before the City Administration Report is presented and reviewed?*

I have a PhD in Psychology. I have specialized in public education and awareness building about wellness and teach university courses in the same area. I have also facilitated workshops on mental health in the workplace, including at the annual AFL Winter Labour School. Mental health is my area of expertise and intend to prioritize in when elected. I will absolutely commit to meeting with the GEA to discuss Workplace Mental Health.

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- *Would you support the City of Edmonton adopting the Canadian National Standard for Psychological Safety in the Workplace as official policy? State reason for your answer.*

Yes, absolutely. For the same reasons as stated above. Mental health is my primary discipline and I have spent many years working in this area. I have worked in partnership with the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the Canadian Mental Health Association to advocate for these standards.



Value 2: The Path to Shared Prosperity

We value creating an equitable city that allows equal participation for people facing challenges of poverty and disability. When one of us struggles it has a negative effect for the whole community. Poverty is a condition of a person who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power to have a basic level of living standards and non-living wages disproportionately impacts women, immigrants, indigenous people and people with disabilities in our communities. This is why GEA has identified Living Wages as a solution to this issue and has developed an educational course to be presented to the people and businesses of our communities. Work should lift people out of poverty and give families the ability to have a decent standard of life.

- *When elected, will you commit to meeting and working with GEA’s Living Wage/ Quality Jobs Research/Action team as we reach out to our communities with our educational program?*
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- *What actions would you take to increase equity in our community and participation of the business community to make Edmonton a truly living wage city?*
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Value 3: Truth and Reconciliation:

We value building and healing our relationships with Indigenous peoples by fully implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). GEA is reaching out to Local Indigenous Leaders in our communities to lead our organization to a better understanding of the “truth” of colonization, residential schools and their ongoing aftermath.

- *Once GEA has completed our internal reflections on Truth and Reconciliation and are working with our Local Indigenous Leadership, when elected, will you commit to meeting with our Truth and Reconciliation Research/Action team to discuss the calls to action and how we may partner to bring these actions to our communities?*

Absolutely. I have been seeking the advice of a Knowledge Keeper and Indigenous friends throughout my campaign. I have also been participating in anti-oppression and anti-racism training. I have been overseeing an internal structural examination of my workplace for the past two years with the intent of removing barriers to equity and better incorporating Indigenous ways of learning and being.



Values 4: A Just Transition for Workers

We value a healthy environment that can sustain us into the future but with Climate Change and the Transition to Green Energy or a Greener Future, workers always seem to be forgotten in this process. As the economy changes workers need to be re-trained, this seems to fall on the shoulders of the worker and the family most times.

- *As a candidate, what role do you see the City of Edmonton taking to lessen the impact of this transition period for workers and their families?* Municipalities have responsibilities to lead improvements in job quality and incomes on a large scale from more productive processes, as well as greener products and services in sectors like urban development, construction, recycling and tourism. We need to ensure that we are thinking about climate in all decisions we are making. But specifically to this question, we need to think ahead to the changing nature of work for our civic employees and ensure that they are being properly prepared and transitioned into job that support their families as well as serve the City's changing needs and priorities. We must be proactive rather than reactive or workers, services, families and the city will suffer.

Once elected will you commit to meeting and working with the Greater Edmonton Alliance to explore the possibilities to keep quality jobs in the hands of Edmonton workers.

Absolutely. This was one of the major projects we worked on when I was with the Alberta Federation of Labour.

Value 5: Community Mental Health

We value healthy communities within our city and this is why GEA has identified Community Mental Health initiatives as a solution to the increasing mental health concerns particularly due to the effects of the pandemic. By creating community mental health resources to build resiliency, by fostering peer support networks, an under-utilized resource, whole communities can improve the mental health of those in need. We know these networks can reduce the stigmatization about mental health, improve crisis response, and support early intervention.

- *As a candidate, what role do you see the City of Edmonton taking to support building community mental health initiatives?*

The City plays a key role in helping build and fund front line mental health and crisis services. I have successfully lobbied the City for funding for mental health activities and projects previously. The City can very effectively influence with efficiency of interventions and appropriateness of responses to mental health needs. It is important to liaise with the Province around mental health but still a lot the City can do. The City needs to take a stronger stance against ineffective and harmful services and practices as well. For example, shelters that engage in discriminatory practices need to be sanctioned. Additionally, day shelter services need to be increased. More access to services and supportive housing options are needed. Finally, we need to prioritize harm reduction and safe consumption options.

- *When elected, would you commit to meeting with GEA's Mental Health Research/ Action team and support the ongoing efforts of GEA to partner with certain departments within the City of Edmonton and Edmonton Public Libraries to create community mental health initiatives?*

Yes. I worked for 5 years, conducting public education and stigma reduction related to mental illness and addiction. I organized events in partnership with many entities around Alberta, including libraries. Libraries are vital for community wellness in so many ways.



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We would like to thank you for taking the time to respond to GEA's survey questions and to inform you that GEA will have your responses posted on our website. Our affiliate organizations have also agreed to post on their social media accounts and websites for their memberships.

If you have any questions please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely

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