

What is the Ambassador Program?

The Ambassador Program connects Calgarians and visitors to information on retail, other services, places and supports in the downtown area. The Ambassador Program also builds ties with local businesses, community organizations as well as socially and economically diverse citizens who may be spending time in the area. The Ambassador Program is based on an approach that is welcoming, engaging, and inclusive. An ambassador's role is to spread the message that everyone is welcomed – businesses, shoppers, people who live, work and visit the downtown and Calgarians experiencing vulnerabilities.

This program requires a mix of hospitality, outreach service and being connected with the Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) in the greater downtown to understand the business community, events, and areas of concern. The ambassadors' duties include routinely checking-in with downtown businesses to build relationships and hear any concerns they might have. The ambassadors can then direct people to different resources for business support if needed.

The ambassadors work as part of a team (in pairs) to provide coverage in a designated area, seven days a week, up to 10 hours a day.

Why would the Ambassador Program be needed?

- The Ambassador Program is based in an approach that is welcoming, engaging and inclusive. The ambassadors' role is to spread the message that everyone is welcomed – businesses, shoppers, people who live in the downtown and Calgarians experiencing vulnerabilities.
- The Ambassador Program augments and supports a coordinated community of care response.
- The ambassadors spend time in the community – providing a welcoming presence, supporting businesses, and building relationships with Calgarians.
- The team can assist with developing mitigation strategies with businesses, navigating the space between uniform and social services and bringing a thoughtful supportive presence to problem-solving and relationship building. The ambassadors can also be available through regular patrols, email and by phone for businesses and other community stakeholders to problem solve specific situations and respond to emergency situations.

What are some of the outcomes achieved with the current Ambassador Programs?

- Replicated in other geographic areas in Calgary.
- Increase the availability of non-emergency support and outreach services.
- Have a friendly presence in areas seven days a week that is well informed of the area and local businesses.
- Provide an increased coordinated response to mental health and addiction crises for individuals, families, and communities in Calgary.

Why a collaborative approach to the Ambassador Program?

- A success of the current programs is strong collaboration across the social and uniformed services but also the involvement of the Business Improvement Areas and their member businesses.
- The greater downtown Business Improvement Areas represent most of the businesses in the area and are important stakeholders in the program.
- The Business Improvement Areas can provide information and programs related to activation and vibrancy in their areas, which can aid in having the ambassadors be well informed.
- Having regular communication between the Business Improvement Areas, the social and uniform services and the ambassadors has supported coordinated approaches to community safety.