

# WINTER NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026

## Important Dates Coming Up!

Please ensure you take note of the important deadlines coming up in March. Whether it's regarding memberships or Penelope, you can always reach out to [main@alberta-pcap.ca](mailto:main@alberta-pcap.ca) with any questions you may have.



Alberta **PCAP** Council  
Parent-Child Assistance Program

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL



**Renew by March 31<sup>st</sup>**  
**to receive current member rate pricing!**

**An Alberta PCAP Council membership allows to receive many benefits such as training discounts, access to the Members Only website, site specific data reports and more!**

Visit [alberta-pcap.ca](http://alberta-pcap.ca) or email [main@alberta-pcap.ca](mailto:main@alberta-pcap.ca) for more information

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## Biannual Deadline

**All PCAP Biannual Data is due on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Please ensure all biannuals prior to March 31<sup>st</sup> are entered into Penelope.**

# ALBERTA PCAP COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

## Recent Updates

On **December 12** the *Board of Directors* met virtually to discuss policy reviews, strategic plan goals and upcoming events for 2026. On **January 6**, the Board of Directors met in Edmonton as follow-up to their special meeting in September. This meeting was called to continue further discussion on operations of the Alberta PCAP Council and future goals of all PCAP programs.

On **November 25-26**, a virtual PCAP Core training was led by Trainers Candice Sutterfield and Tracy Renshaw. We had **8 new mentors** join from Camrose, Grande Cache, Hinton, Red Deer and Wetaskiwin. They were asked “*What characteristics do PCAP mentors have?*”; look below to see what they said!

On **February 18 & 19**, PCAP Trainer Candice Sutterfield led an in-person Refresher training in High Level. This session included 9 staff from North West Regional FASD Society and the Western Metis Settlements. Executive Director, Kristin Bonot, also presented a brief Penelope/Biannual Refresher presentation. In-person PCAP Refresher is a developing initiative for small groups who have previously taken the PCAP Core Training. PCAP Council looks forward to continuing to improve and offer this option.



### Relational Theory

Mentors are expected to behave differently – as relational theory requires.

chaos coordinators  
multitaskers  
resourceful

What characteristics do PCAP mentors have?

open-minded  
being humble

empathetic  
flexible  
trauma informed



honest  
genuine  
patient  
reliable  
non-judgemental  
great sense of humour  
trustworthy  
good communication



Alberta PCAP Council is on Instagram!  
We're ramping up our social media to help spread the word about PCAP and FASD prevention. **Follow, like and share** to get updated on more Alberta PCAP Council events, updates and more!

Click the subscribe button to check it out!

## A Biggest Thank You- Pam van Vugt

We are sad to share that **Pam van Vugt** will be retiring as a PCAP Trainer. We are so grateful for her dedication and passion that she has brought to not only her role, but to all the new staff that she has come to train. She has truly made a difference during her time with us, and we are grateful for all her teachings, especially in PCAP supervision and family planning education. You will still see some of Pam's presentations in our online refresher modules. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours. **Thank you Pam from all of us!**





# SPOTLIGHT STORY

## Aaksisstowa'pssinni Men's Program



**Aaksisstowa'pssinni** – “having initiative, and/or being aggressive, in a good way, looking for opportunities.”

**Maaksikowattsimaani** - “Setting or guiding the path for a person”. Before a grandparent or elder gives a name to a person he makes an announcement such as “I never touched alcohol or drugs my whole life” or “I traveled many places” or anything positive. That announcement is “Maaksikowattsimaani”. It is spiritual.

Oki nisto anokoke O'tsiss'api (White Shell Old Man). My government name is Nicholas Many Fingers, and I am a Mentor with the **Maaksikowattsimaani (First Steps for Healthy Babies)** program under the Blood Tribe Department of Health – Community Health. I am also one of the facilitators, alongside Duce Cross Child and William Tyler Chief Calf, of the Aaksisstowa'pssinni Men's Program, which was created to provide culturally grounded support for fathers, expecting fathers, and male caregivers on the Blood Reserve.

The men's program was developed as a complementary support to the First Steps for Healthy Babies program, which is now called Maaksikowattsimaani. Team Leader Maggie Head recognized that while mothers and children receive structured supports, there were limited services available to fathers and male partners who play a critical role in family stability and child wellbeing. In 2019, Duce Cross Child was hired, myself in 2021, and recently Tyler Chief Calf in 2025. We started having Men's Group meetings when Covid restrictions relaxed in 2023.

### Challenges

At the outset, we recognized that many families were working hard to make positive changes, particularly mothers engaged in PCAP and related services, but fathers and male partners often lacked access to culturally relevant support systems.

Many of the men in our community were experiencing:

- *Social isolation*
- *Lack of confidence in parenting roles*
- *Disconnection from cultural identity*
- *Recovery challenges related to addiction*
- *Limited opportunities to engage in positive, family-oriented activities*

We also observed that when men in recovery began making changes, they often faced boredom and isolation, which increased the risk of returning to previous environments or behaviours.

The Aaksisstowa'pssinni Men's Program was created to provide a **safe, supportive space for fathers and future fathers** to connect, build confidence, strengthen their roles within the family, and develop positive coping strategies.

### Making it Happen

We began offering regular group meetings for men in the community, providing opportunities to:

- *Connect with peers in a supportive environment*
- *Discuss fatherhood roles and responsibilities*
- *Set personal and family goals*
- *Access advocacy and mentorship support*
- *Participate in culturally grounded learning opportunities*



In addition to the monthly meetings, our program provides additional support such as one-on-one mentorship and home visits, transportation for appointments and essential needs, family inclusive events, Niisitapi Parenting workshops alongside female mentors and opportunities for participants to engage in community and cultural activities.

Our approach focuses on **strengthening** men as fathers and role models in order to promote healthier families and improved outcomes for children.

# PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

## Aaksisstowa'pssinni Men's Program

### *The Impact*

Since its inception, our Aaksisstowa'pssinni Men's Program has **supported over 30 men** within the community. Throughout this time, we have observed meaningful growth and positive change, including increased participation in parenting roles and stronger engagement with children and family members. Participants have pursued education and employment opportunities, attended health and school appointments more consistently, and experienced reduced social isolation. We have also seen strengthened peer support networks and greater confidence among participants in advocating for themselves and their families.

Some participants have transitioned from long-term reliance on income support to employment or enrollment in upgrading and post-secondary education programs.

### *Moving the Work Forward*

Moving forward, we continue to see positive changes not only in individual participants, but also within families. Participants have reported:

- Improved communication with partners and children
- Increased sense of belonging within the community
- Stronger connections to cultural identity
- Greater motivation to pursue long-term goals

We are also seeing participants build lasting peer support networks, which contribute to recovery maintenance and ongoing personal growth.

### *Share Your Spotlight Story*

We love hearing about PCAP programs across the province! The work you do matters and deserves to be celebrated. Whether big or small, we would love to share your stories in hopes that another program may benefit or learn.



**SHARE YOUR STORIES**

### *In Summary*

One of the Niitsitapi lessons we have learned is that supporting fathers is an important part of supporting families as a whole.

When fathers feel confident, connected, and supported, they are better able to contribute positively to the wellbeing of their children and partners.

*"This program helped me realize that I can be more than what I grew up seeing. I can be there for my kids and build a better future for my family."*

*-Participant of the Aaksisstowa'pssinni Men's Program*

Our hope is that initiatives like Aaksisstowa'pssinni can continue to provide fathers and future fathers with the support they need to strengthen families and communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our work. We are grateful to collaborate with PCAP and other community programs in supporting healthy families on the Blood Reserve.



*(Left to right) O'tsiss'api Nicholas Many Fingers, Kaa'taiyi'tsinii'poka Duce Cross Child, I'kottsiiksistiko William Tyler Chief Calf*

# UPCOMING TRAINING & EVENTS

## Safety and Drug Awareness Webinar

NEW!

Lead by Carey Lai, BSc.Pharm, this webinar will provide staff with a practical overview of commonly used and misused substances, including prescription, non-prescription, and illicit drugs. Attendees will also learn how to recognize signs and behaviors associated with substance use.

The same training will be offered on two days, **March 12th (9:00AM-11:00AM)** and **March 19th (1:00PM-3:00PM)**, to allow for smaller group discussions and participation.

**Registration is now open at the link: <https://forms.gle/BQ42bREYCRx48AVNA>**

*\*\*Please note that PCAP staff will receive priority registration. If space allows, registration for additional staff from member agencies will open in a few weeks. Once capacity has been reached, the registration will be closed.\*\**

## PCAP Core Training- In Person!

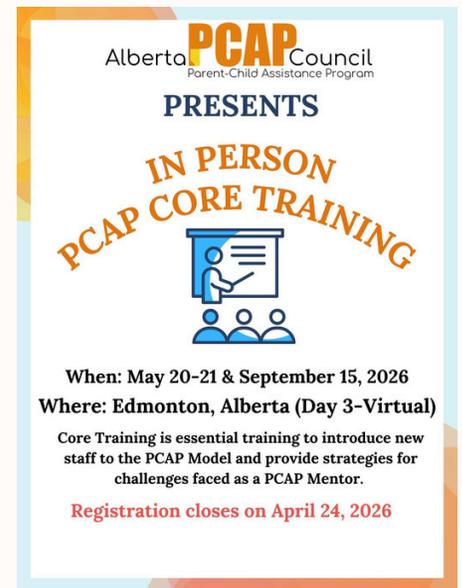
Are you a new mentor? Do you have questions about being in your role? Do you want to hear stories and connect with other new mentors?

PCAP Core training is an essential training to introduce new staff to the PCAP model and provide strategies for challenges faced as a PCAP mentor. This session will be offered on **May 20-21, 2026 in Edmonton**, with Day 3 on September 15, 2026 virtually. Registration link will be sent to all programs when opened!

## Community of Practice Teleconference

Alberta PCAP Council hosts “Community of Practice” calls every month for both supervisors and mentors. This is a great opportunity to bring questions, create discussions on current successes and challenges within each program and to network with other staff across the province! Register below to secure your spot:

- **Supervisors: 3rd Tuesdays, select months (SCHEDULE CHANGE)**
  - **March 17**
  - **May 19**
  - **August 18**
  - **November 17**
- **Mentors: 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month**



Alberta **PCAP** Council  
Parent-Child Assistance Program

**PRESENTS**

**IN PERSON  
PCAP CORE TRAINING**



**When:** May 20-21 & September 15, 2026  
**Where:** Edmonton, Alberta (Day 3-Virtual)

Core Training is essential training to introduce new staff to the PCAP Model and provide strategies for challenges faced as a PCAP Mentor.

**Registration closes on April 24, 2026**

## Penelope 101 Webinar

Penelope is our database used to collect information from participants to track their journey throughout their time in PCAP. Whether you are new to the system, or you need a refresher, Alberta PCAP Council hosts Penelope 101 to help support you navigate the database.

**[Register here for upcoming webinar or March 4<sup>th</sup>!](#)**

# PENELOPE'S CORNER: Medical Emergency Use

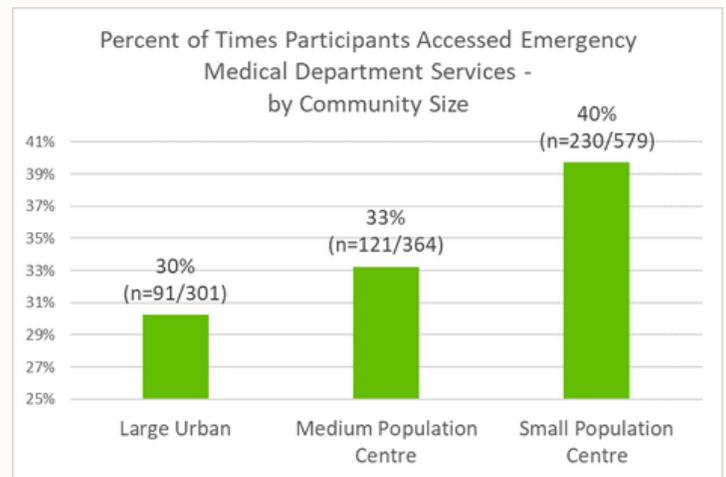
In the absence of adequate access to doctors, hospital emergency departments often become an option when medical services are needed. Looking at 1244 biannual documents collected since October 1, 2023, 36% of biannual documents showed participants accessing emergency medical services at some point.\* This represents almost half of participants (49%) accessing emergency departments for medical services at some point. In total there were 571 participants who needed some medical intervention amongst which 281 participants used an emergency department at some point.

*\*=Each participant will have multiple biannual documents throughout their service.*

While emergency medical accesses were so common amongst participants, there were a few trends which point to sub-groups with more complex needs within the PCAP population.

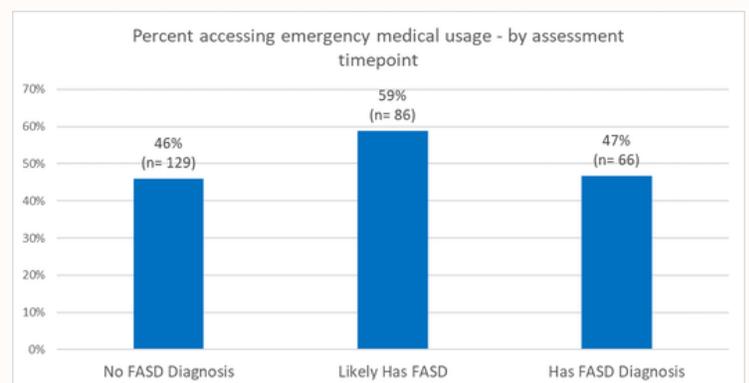
## *Emergency Medical Access by Community Size*

Smaller communities have a higher rate of emergency department access for medical services. Smaller communities overall have less services than larger urban centres, and medical services are no exception. However, the differences amongst community sizes may be smaller than expected. 30% of the time (91 of 301 time points) participants at large urban PCAP programs were accessing emergency medical services. This was 3% higher (33%) at medium population centres (121 of 364 time points) and 10% higher (40%) at small population centres (230 of 579 time points).



## *Emergency Medical Access by FASD Status*

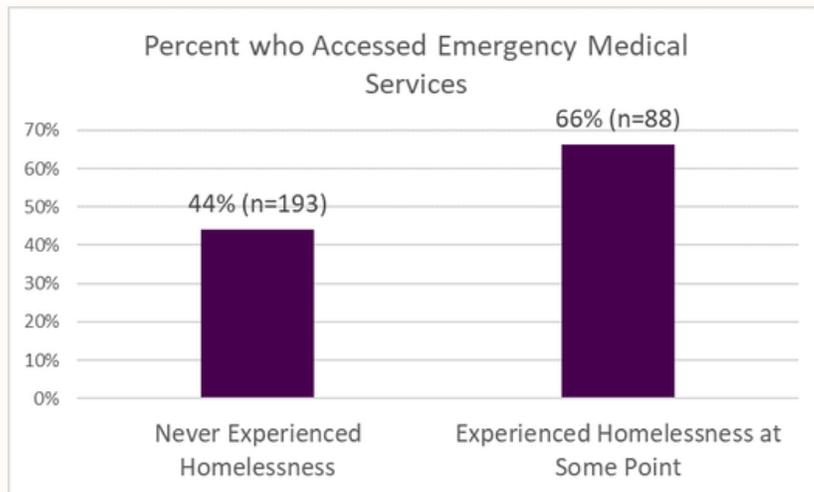
Participants who likely have FASD, but no diagnosis, had a higher rate of emergency medical usage than those with a diagnosis or those without FASD. 59% of participants (n=86) who likely have FASD accessed emergency medical use at least once. Compare to 47% of participants who had an FASD diagnosis (n=66) who accessed emergency medical services and 46% (n=129) of participants without FASD accessed emergency medical services.



# PENELOPE'S CORNER: Medical Emergency Use

## Homelessness

Amongst participants who experienced homelessness at some point, 66% (n=88) accessed emergency medical services at least once. Amongst those participants who never experienced homelessness, 44% (n=193) accessed emergency medical services.



## Any Questions?

I welcome your comments and suggestions for analysis topics.

Feel free to drop me a line:

[robert.jagodzinski@alberta-pcap.ca](mailto:robert.jagodzinski@alberta-pcap.ca)

## Summary

There were only a few strong trends in emergency department medical use amongst participants. Those with more complex cases, or maybe higher needs, tended to access emergency departments more often. Since demand for health services is only expected to increase it underscores the need to be resourceful, especially in smaller communities. Have you observed any trends in medical service accesses in your communities? How can we work with increasing demands on the medical system while addressing case complexity with participants?

Article written by guest contributor:



**Robert Jagodzinski**

Data Analyst

Alberta PCAP Council

[Robert.Jagodzinski@alberta-pcap.ca](mailto:Robert.Jagodzinski@alberta-pcap.ca)

Frequent links for staff:

- [Update on a staff change](#)
- [Add a new Participant to Penelope](#)
- [Submit support or other requests](#)
- [PCAP Forms and Documents](#)
- [Take the Penelope 101 webinar](#)

# ALANA PETERS

## Conflict as Relationship: Choosing Courage in a Fractured World

It's easy to believe that the world is unraveling because there is so much conflict. Everywhere we look, there are opposing sides, hardened positions, and conversations that seem to collapse before they even begin. Conflict spills forward, feeding more conflict, until it feels as though tension itself has become the dominant language of our time.

And yet, in the natural world, **difference is not something to eliminate**—*it is something to tend*.

Vulnerability is the willingness to listen—to the land, to each other, to the discomfort that tells us something is out of balance. It asks us to slow down enough to notice what the conflict is revealing rather than rushing to silence it. In Indigenous teachings, **listening is an act of respect**. It signals that we understand ourselves to be part of something larger, not separate from it.

When conflict is ignored or overridden, it tends to return louder and more destructive. But when it is approached as a messenger, it can become a teacher. It can show us where reciprocity has been broken, where voices have been excluded, where care has been replaced by efficiency or fear.

From a courage perspective, conflict invites us into responsibility—not blame, but responsibility for how we show up in relationship. This kind of courage asks:



*What do I owe this moment?*

*What does care look like here?*

*How do I respond in a way that  
sustains life rather than depletes it?*

These questions shift conflict from a battleground to a shared landscape. They don't promise ease or agreement, but they open the possibility of repair. Like ecosystems under stress, human systems need **tending, patience, and humility**—not just solutions imposed from above.

**Boundaries still matter. Accountability still matters.** Courage does not mean allowing harm to continue unchecked. But even firm boundaries can be held with respect for relationship and an eye toward long-term healing rather than short-term victory.

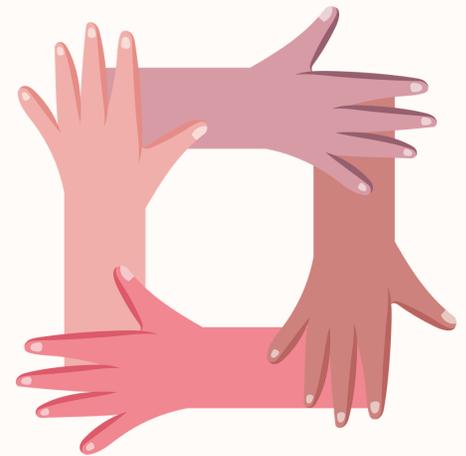
In a world shaped by extraction—of resources, time, attention, and even people—conflict offers a chance to choose a different ethic: one of reciprocity, care, and belonging. To remember that how we engage with difference shapes what grows next.

# ALANA PETERS

## Conflict as Relationship: Choosing Courage in a Fractured World

Our world needs conflict that is met with **listening hearts and courageous restraint**. It needs people willing to resist the urge to dominate and instead ask how we might live well together—even, and especially, when it's hard.

**Conflict will continue to arise wherever life is interdependent.** The question is whether we will meet it as something to conquer—or as an invitation to remember our responsibility to one another and to the living systems that hold us all.



### Reflection Questions

- *When conflict shows up in your work or life, what is your most common instinct—armor up, move quickly to fix, or pull away—and what might that response be protecting?*
- *Where might conflict be inviting you to listen more deeply: to yourself, to someone else, or to a truth that's uncomfortable but important?*
- *What could become possible—for you, your team, or your community—if conflict were met with courage and vulnerability instead of certainty and control?*

If these questions resonate, you're already standing at the doorway of courageous leadership. Dare to Lead is an opportunity to build the skills and practices that help us stay present in hard conversations, engage conflict without losing our humanity, and lead from our values—especially when it would be easier not to.

*If you're ready to explore what it looks like to choose courage over armor and connection over withdrawal, I invite you to join my upcoming Dare to Lead™ training.*



Article written by guest contributor:

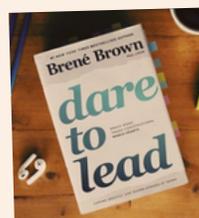
**Alana Peters**

Leadership &

Executive Coach

Dare to Lead Facilitator

[www.alanapeters.com](http://www.alanapeters.com)



Dare to Lead™ Training I

In Person

March 13, 20 & 27, 2026

Red Deer, Alberta

# RESOURCES

Register now for BCAPOP's 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Perinatal Conference. This 3 day event will have an opportunity to learn and network with perinatal professionals such as pregnancy outreach workers, nurses, physicians and more!

To see the full conference program or to learn more information, visit: [www.bcapop.ca/event-6224723](http://www.bcapop.ca/event-6224723)



Did you know that ATB has a community program for donations or sponsorships? They support work of organizations surrounding mental health, financial empowerment and innovation in children in youth.

To apply, visit:

[www.atb.com/company/community/atb-community-foundation/donation-guidelines/](http://www.atb.com/company/community/atb-community-foundation/donation-guidelines/)



As part of the Improving Treatment Together Project (ITT), the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCS) came together with organizations and community members across British Columbia and Alberta to create resources about opioid use in youth. This includes a parent handbook as a support tool for families of young people struggling with substance use.

To read the handbook, or to find more information on ITT, visit: [Improving Treatment Together Project](#)



Changing Pathways is a court-approved treatment program for individuals that are struggling with family violence. The program focuses on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, trauma-informed care and research. There are two phases with the group, with Phase I being 12 weeks (2.5 hours/week)

To learn more, visit:

[www.edmontonvpc.ca/our-programs/changing-ways/](http://www.edmontonvpc.ca/our-programs/changing-ways/)



Parents  
like us.

THE UNOFFICIAL SURVIVAL GUIDE TO  
PARENTING A YOUNG PERSON WITH  
A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

written by parents  
for parents



# YOUR CURRENT PCAP COUNCIL DIRECTORS

## Executive Officers

**Chair** Sandra Rorbak, Human Resources Leader in the Public Sector, Calgary

**Vice-Chair** Velvet Buhler, Program Manager, Healthy Families Healthy Futures, Westlock

**Treasurer & Secretary** Maggie Heavy-Head, Program Supervisor, Blood Tribe Department of Health

## Directors

**Beth van den Elst** First Steps Supervisor, Catholic Social Services, Edmonton

**Candice Sutterfield** Mothers-to-Be Mentor Supervisor, Lakeland Centre for FASD

**Wanda Beland** Executive Director, Northwest Regional FASD Society- Mackenzie Network, High Level

**Tanya Dehmel-Neving** Outreach Support Team Lead, Central Alberta FASD Network, Red Deer

## Banker

**Brandy Berry** Executive Director, Healthy Families Healthy Futures, Westlock

## Staff

**Kristin Bonot** Executive Director

**Kathleen Hounsell** Administrative Assistant

**Robert Jagodzinski** Data Analyst

### Are you interested?

The Alberta PCAP Council is currently inviting new applicants to join its Board of Directors. Visit the link below to find out more!

[Join the Board of Directors](#)

## Let's Connect!

 [main@alberta-pcap.ca](mailto:main@alberta-pcap.ca)

 780-701-5113



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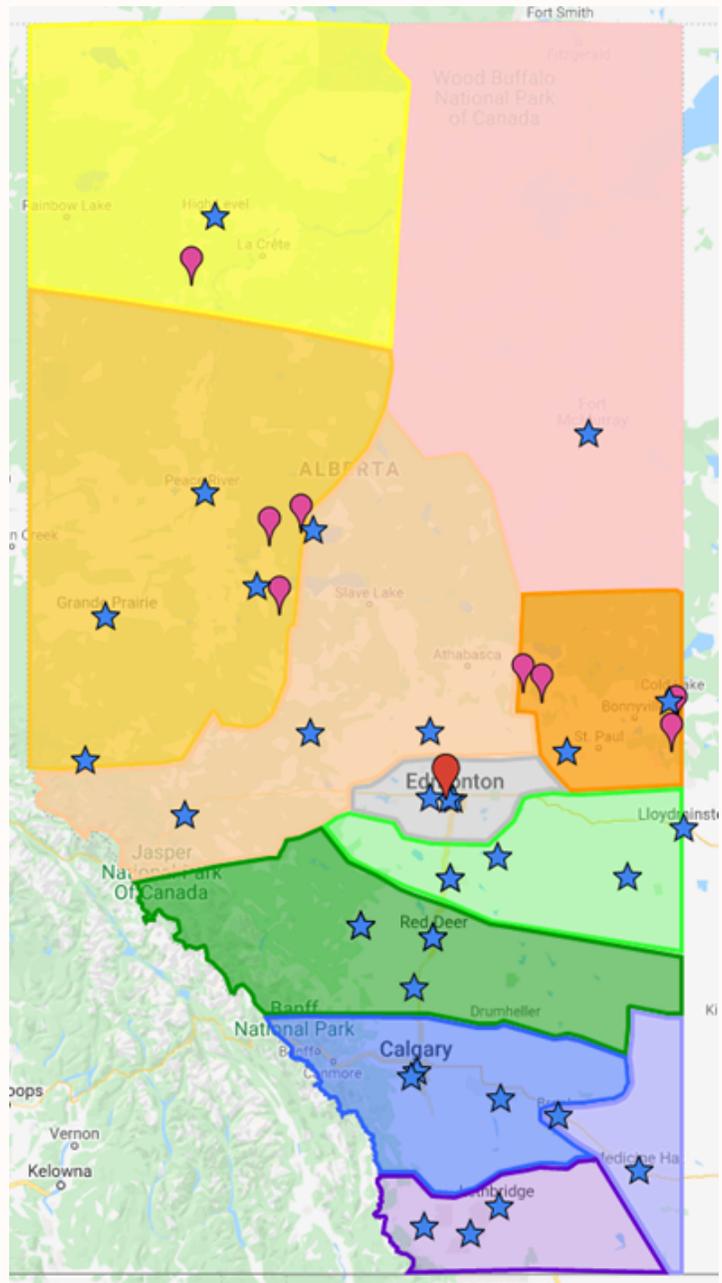


[@albertapcap](https://www.instagram.com/albertapcap)

# ALBERTA PCAP NETWORKS & PROGRAM MAP

- Mackenzie Regional FASD Network**  
Northwest Regional FASD Society
- Northeast Alberta FASD Network**  
McMan Fort McMurray
- Northwest Peace FASD Service Network**  
Aseniwuche Winewak Nation  
Drift Pile First Nation  
East Prairie Métis Settlement  
Gift Lake Métis Settlement  
Grand Prairie Family Educational Society  
Peavine Métis Settlement  
Whitefish Lake First Nation  
Taproot Community Support Services
- Willow Winds Support Network**  
Healthy Families Healthy Futures  
Hinton Adult Learning Society  
Taproot Community Support Services
- Lakeland FASD Society**  
Lakeland Centre for FASD
- Edmonton Fetal Alcohol Network**  
Catholic Social Services Edmonton
- Prairie Central FASD Network**  
Camrose Association for Community Living  
Catholic Social Services Wetaskiwin  
Ermineskin Brighter Futures\*  
Midwest Family Connections  
Samson Healthy Families\*
- Central Alberta FASD Network**  
Central Alberta FASD Network  
Family Services of Central Alberta  
O'Chiese Health Centre\*
- Calgary Fetal Alcohol Network**  
Calgary Fetal Alcohol Network
- South East Alberta FASD Network**  
Bridges Family Program  
The SPEC Association for Children and Families
- South Alberta FASD Network**  
Blood Tribe Department of Health\*  
McMan SCIF  
Recovery Alberta

*\*These organizations run the PCAP model and are located in the geographic regions listed but are not FASD Network funded*



Locations >