

# Membership Asset Map

Connecting Autism Alliance of Canada's Members to the Priority Areas of Canada's Autism Strategy

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In 2024, Autism Alliance of Canada launched a project to better understand the strengths, needs, and goals of the organizations in our membership network. We asked member organizations to take part in a survey and interviews to learn more about where they work, who they support, and what services are still missing in their communities. To date, 38 organizations have participated in the project, and we are grateful to each of them for taking the time to share their insights through in-depth interviews. The goal of this project was to build stronger connections across our network, identify shared priorities for system improvement, and help shape policies that improve fair and equitable access to services and support for Autistic people and their families across Canada.

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## 1 Why Does This Work Matter?

Autistic people and their families rely on autism organizations across the country to supplement government efforts to provide essential services, advocacy, and support. However, significant gaps remain in funding, coordination, and accessibility of services across Canada.

**Implications:** By mapping the assets and needs of member organizations, this initiative supports:

- Stronger networks for collaboration across the country
  - Better representation of organizational priorities in national policy discussions
  - Data to inform and support increased investment and collaboration at the federal level
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## 2 Who Are Our Member Organizations?

**Geographic Representation:** While we have member organizations in each province and territory, these 38 organizations are headquartered in 8 provinces and 1 territory, with the most in Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia.

**Organization Type:** The majority are **registered charities**.

**Mandates:** Most focus on **non-clinical services, advocacy, and clinical services**.

**Inclusion:** **95% include Autistic people and/or family members in governance or staffing**.

**Languages:** **English is predominant**, with 26% offering bilingual services.

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## Who Do They Reach?

In the past year,

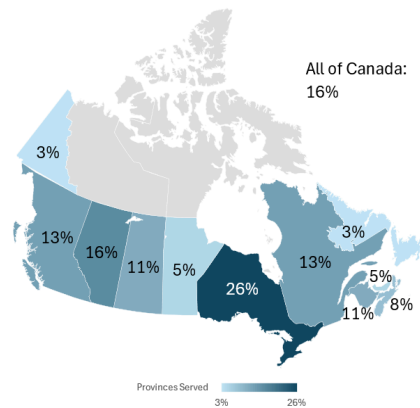
**28,071** Autistic people

**22,890** family members

were supported by this sample of our member organizations.

Taken together, the organizations that participated represent

**34,057** people across the country.



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## What Services Do They Provide?

Most commonly, organizations provide the following services:



### Navigation Support

Helps Autistic people and their families access available services, resources, and funding by guiding them through complex systems such as healthcare, education, and social programs.



### Consulting

Provides expert advice to organizations, employers, policymakers, and service providers on best practices for supporting Autistic people, including accessibility, inclusion, and program development.



### Employment Support

Assists Autistic people with career development, job training, workplace accommodations, and employer education to promote meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities.



### Social Programs

Offers structured recreational, educational, and peer support activities that help Autistic people build social connections, develop life skills, and engage in their communities.

## Canada's Autism Strategy and Federal Support Needs

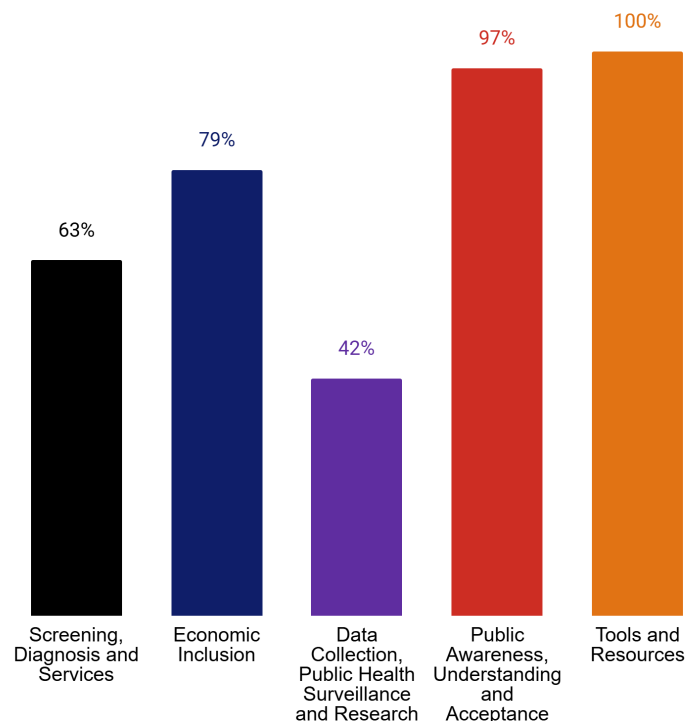
The project identified key areas where autism organizations align with [Canada's Autism Strategy and its priority areas](#), and where federal support is critically needed.

100% of responding organizations align with the "Tools and Resources" priority of Canada's Autism Strategy, with strong alignment also seen in "Public Awareness, Understanding and Acceptance" and "Economic Inclusion".

Many organizations face significant barriers to fully realizing these priorities due to funding instability, gaps in accessibility, and a lack of collaboration opportunities.

To strengthen their impact, organizations identified three major areas where the federal government can provide support:

- **Increased funding** – Nearly 90% of organizations reported needing greater financial stability to sustain and expand services. Many emphasized the need for core funding to support long-term sustainability, rather than short-term project-based funding.
- **Advocacy & awareness support** – Many organizations expressed a need for federal leadership in promoting autism awareness and inclusion, ensuring that public understanding and policy align with the needs of Autistic people.
- **Improved accessibility & service equity** – Over 80% of organizations highlighted the need for stronger federal-provincial coordination to improve access to autism services across Canada, especially in underserved and rural areas.



## Key Themes: Collaboration & Funding

The project also revealed two pressing priorities for autism organizations across Canada: the need for greater collaboration and increased funding. These themes emerged through open-ended survey responses, where organizations consistently described challenges related to siloed services, limited resources, and inconsistent funding structures. While many organizations operate with deep community connections and impactful programs, they struggle with fragmented networks and financial instability—both of which hinder their ability to expand services and meet growing demand.

**Collaboration** - Organizations almost unanimously emphasized the need for stronger networks across provinces, with the federal government, and within the autism sector.

“We would like to see more support for collaboration across organizations within and across provinces. True progress in supporting the autism community comes not from competition, but from collaboration.”

“We would like to obtain more opportunities for collaboration between member organizations as well as inter-provincial collaboration.”

**Funding** - Many organizations operate with limited resources and struggle to meet the increasing demand for autism services.

“Funding innovation isn't as impactful unless there is also funding for sustainability!”

“Government funding could provide significantly more support to Autistic individuals if it allowed for flexibility and choice by expanding the range of approved therapies, rather than the single therapy style currently available.”

“We would like to obtain core funding, to not only assist with the administration of the business, but to allow us to support the many clients we turn away due to lack of capacity.”

## Where Do We Go From Here?

The demand for autism services continues to grow, making sustainable funding and inter-organizational collaboration critical.

### Next Steps:

- Strengthen partnerships among autism organizations to work towards building a unified national network.
- Expand government collaboration to ensure equitable funding and access to services.
- Advocate for policy changes that reflect the needs of the autism community.

By continuing to work together, we can create meaningful change that ensures Autistic people and their families receive the support they need, while also strengthening and supporting the implementation of Canada's Autism Strategy.

### Become a member

[www.autismalliance.ca/membership](http://www.autismalliance.ca/membership)

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[info@autismalliance.ca](mailto:info@autismalliance.ca)

