



TRENDS IN REVIEW 2022

A review of social trends
to the Red Deer and
District area

Executive Summary

The Red Deer & District FCSS partnership is undertaking a priority setting process to identify funding priorities for the 2024-2026 funding cycle. This report is a compilation of current trends in health and social wellbeing within the Red Deer & District FCSS partnership boundaries meant to help inform priority selection. Various databases, literature, research papers, and websites were reviewed for data from the catchment area and Alberta in general. The literature review and the participatory compilation of the data led to the following seven themes, each of which must be considered in both the rural and urban context of our region.

Mental Health. The pre-existing mental health struggles and additional stresses brought by the Covid-19 pandemic have further degraded the mental health and wellbeing of residents. Data shows an increase in the anti-anxiety and anti-depressant dispensation rate and a rise in cases of suicide since the 2019.

Substance Use: An Acute Mental Health Challenge. There has been a general increase in emergency room visits caused by substance-related disorders in the central zone since 2016. As a reflection of the services provided primarily for those experiencing addiction and acute mental health crises, the Social Diversion Teams are currently responding to over five calls a day in Red Deer and there is an increasing volume of encampment garbage in the city since 2019.

Relationships and Family Cohesion. Family and domestic violence data depict a slight fall in the number of cases in the central zone indicating gaps in reporting the issue. Data shows six months to a year of wait time to access group therapy which is enough time to worsen the mental health condition of domestic violence and family abuse victim.

Economy. Between 2019 and 2020, the average income in Red Deer decreased by 7.9%, while income in other provinces in Canada increased¹. Food bank usage at the Red Deer food bank remains lower than 2018 levels but is expected to rise with the increasing cost of groceries. The housing prioritization list is continuing to grow far faster than the current housing supply.

Physical Health. Physical health continues to be impacted by Covid-19 as there has been a large decline in sports participation. In the Red Deer & District FCSS catchment there are ongoing increases in rates of diabetes and the use of diabetes-related drugs. Hypertension, however, has remained relatively stable in the population.

Community Involvement. In terms of community involvement, there was a substantial decrease in the number of volunteer hours from 2019 onwards and a gradual decrease in the number of volunteers per year. Albertans report a significant loss in quality of life due to loss of access to community programming and events.

Diversity and Inclusion. The Red Deer RCMP Annual Policing Plan Survey 2022 found that half of the respondents identifying as a visible minority reported experiencing discrimination or harassment based on their visible minority status over the last 12 months. Additionally, 39% of respondents identifying as Indigenous reported experiencing discrimination or harassment based on their Indigenous identity over the previous 12 months.

Red Deer & District

The Red Deer & District catchment is located in central Alberta, between Calgary and Edmonton. Red Deer & District catchment consists of six municipalities: the City of Red Deer, Red Deer County, the Town of Penhold, the Village of Elnora, the Town of Bowden, and the Village of Delburne. These lands have been historically inhabited by many First Nations, including the Blackfoot, Plains Cree, and Stoney ⁱⁱ. The city and area serve key industries, including oil and gas extraction, agriculture, health and social care, education, and hospitality.

Introduction and Objective

The 2022 Trends in Review report is a compilation of current social trends of wellbeing in Alberta with a specific focus on our FCSS catchment. This report includes data and information available since 2016 to the most recent available year, which varies based on data source. The 2022 Trends in Review report aims to provide background information to stakeholders in the FCSS 2024-2026 funding priority setting process.

Process and Approach

The creation of this report started with a literature review and compilation of relevant data on the general well-being trends in Alberta, with a focus on central Alberta. The Interactive Health Data Applicationⁱⁱⁱ, Statistics Canada^{iv}, Red Deer & District community reports, and locally based research papers were reviewed for gathering data. The FCSS Research and Evaluation (R&E) team looked for data that was relevant to community well being, timely in its availability, and publicly accessible.

To organize the data collected, FCSS community facilitators, workers, and project leads were engaged for meaning making using an approach called card sorting. Graphs and charts were created using the available data and cut into several separate pieces and provided as a set to teams of FCSS workers and facilitators. Then, teams were asked to use the data to build the story of the area over the last 3 years.

The data elements were launching points to discuss local trends related to the well-being staff saw in their communities. Participants were also asked to identify any additional data needed to paint a picture of their community or any irrelevant data that could be removed. At the end of the activity, each team identified significant themes and created their collaged story in several charts. A secondary level analysis of all the charts was done by the R&E team to identify major themes, connecting points, and differences between each team's charts and facilitate the final report design.



This participatory approach worked to ensure that the experiences of front-line workers throughout our FCSS communities were reflected in the understanding and presentation of the available data. FCSS community workers and facilitators have first-hand experience of working with our communities and have an on-the-ground experience of community assets and needs.

Regional Population

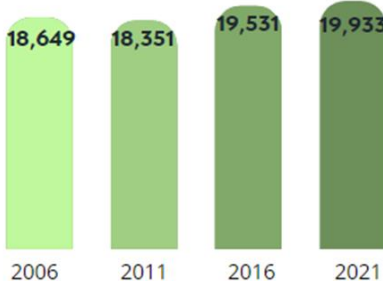
2006-2021

vviiviiiixx

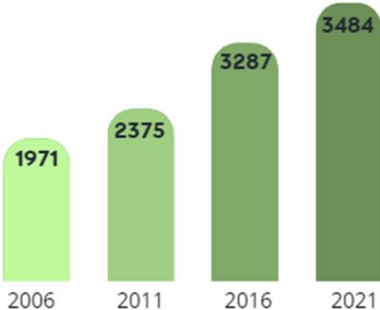
CITY OF RED DEER



RED DEER COUNTY



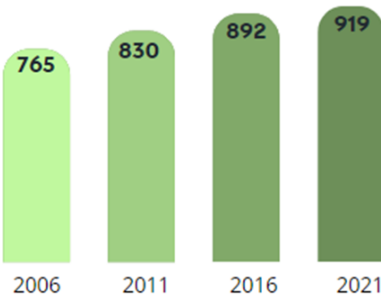
PENHOLD



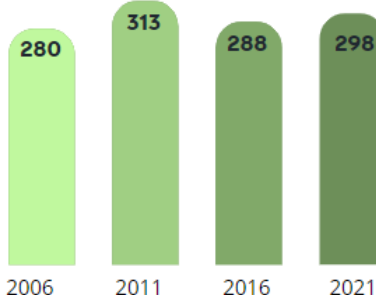
BOWDEN



DELBURNE



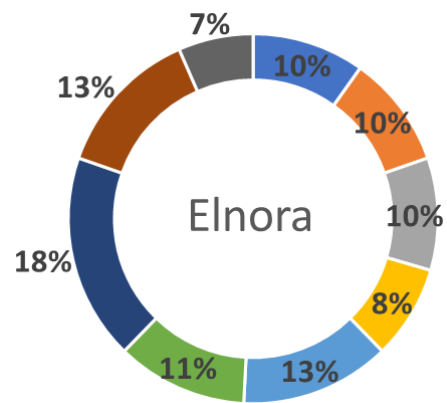
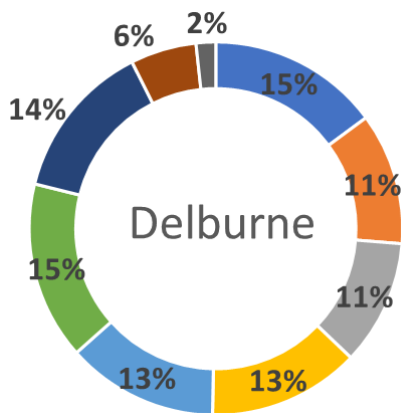
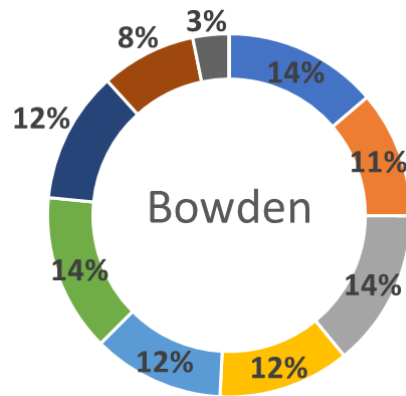
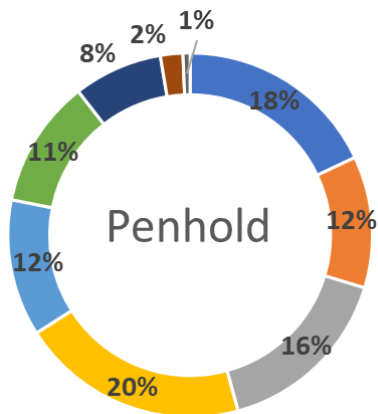
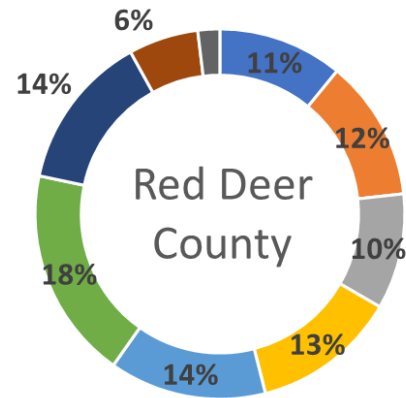
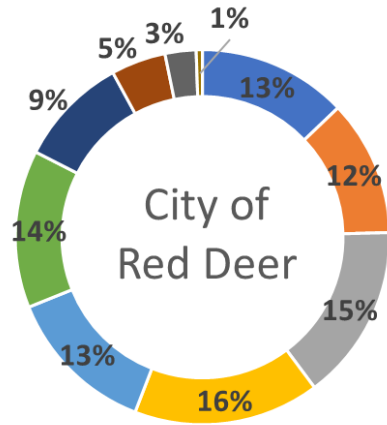
ELNORA



Regional Age Demographics

2006-2021

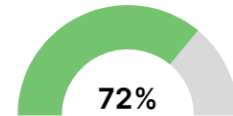
xixixixixivxxvi



■ 0 to 9 years ■ 10 to 19 years ■ 20 to 29 years ■ 30 to 39 years ■ 40 to 49 years ■ 50 to 59 years ■ 60 to 69 years ■ 70 to 79 years ■ 80 to 89 years

Mental Health

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted mental health and social wellbeing globally^{xvii}, particularly those who have experienced direct impacts of the pandemic such as social isolation, the ability to work, relationship dynamics, the ability to seek support from closed ones, and community involvement^{xviii, xix, xx}. The mental health impact of Covid-19 pandemic might be different for rural and urban communities because of the differential availability and accessibility of the support services. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the global prevalence of anxiety and depression increased by 25% in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic^{xxi}.

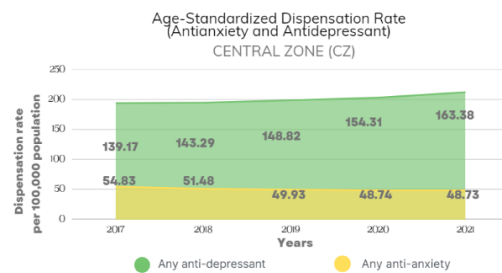


72%
Albertans who report stress, anxiety, or depression due to the pandemic

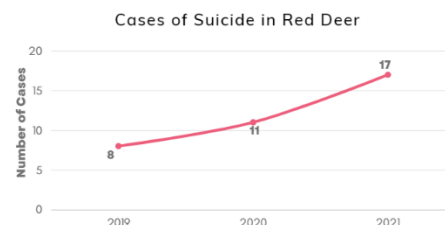
Statistics Canada states that youth are at higher risk of experiencing poor mental health during the pandemic compared to other age groups^{xxii}. Pandemic-related school closures, decreased interaction in school, family stress, and social distancing measures played a role in enhancing the social isolation and other mental health challenges for children and youth^{xxiii}.

Data in Alberta and the central zone specifically reflect these changes to mental health. In Alberta, 72% population experienced stress, anxiety, or depression due to the pandemic and among them only 19% found help from online resources^{xxiv}. Among those who reported experiencing stress, anxiety, or depression due to pandemic, 50% faced challenges maintaining relationships and 46% faced loneliness^{xxv}. These struggles may be reflected in the anti-anxiety and anti-depressant dispensation rate seen in the central zone up to 2021^{xxvi}. In the Red Deer public school district, there has been an upward trend in the percentage of students accessing family school wellness programming.

Academic Years	Counselling		
	Students Accessing Wellness Programming in Red Deer Public	Student Population for Red Deer Catholic	% of Students Accessing Programming
2017-2018	752	6680	11.3%
2018-2019	523	6792	7.7%
2019-2020	565	6773	8.3%
2020-2021	529	6527	8.1%
2021-2022	880	6584	13.4%



As an acute outcome of mental health challenges, there has been a rise in cases of suicide since the 2019 onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2020, incidents of suicide in Red Deer went up from 11 in the year 2020 to 17 in the year 2021.

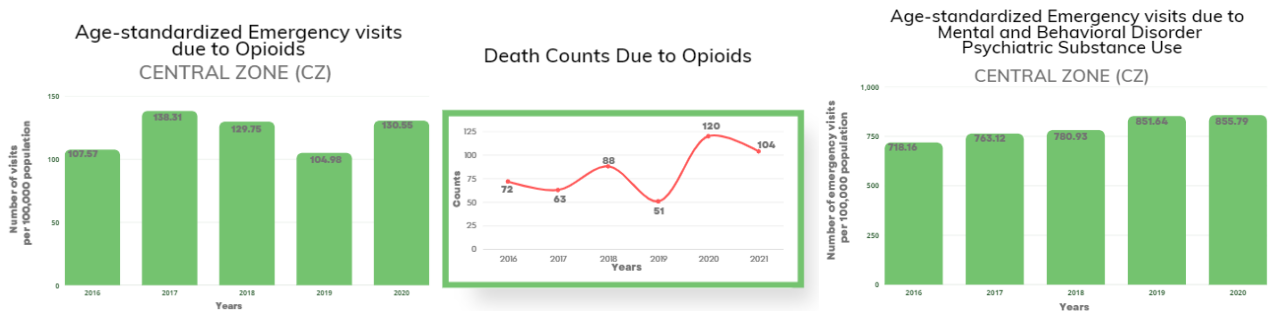


Substance Use: An Acute Mental Health Challenge

While the world has adapting to considerable changes through the Covid-19 pandemic, Canada’s opioid crisis has similarly had deep impacts on our communities. Changes in social habits, availability of supports, and shifting public priorities have collided with the ongoing public and individual challenges posed by addiction.

Red Deer acts as a resource provider for members of the city and neighbouring communities, both within and outside of the FCSS catchment. While public resources like detoxification services and shelter beds are stretched thin in Red Deer, these supports are simple not available in smaller rural communities. In this way Red Deer carries the burden of the opioid crisis regionally and the health trends noted here should be understood as a reflection of the acute mental health crisis in our entire FCSS catchment.

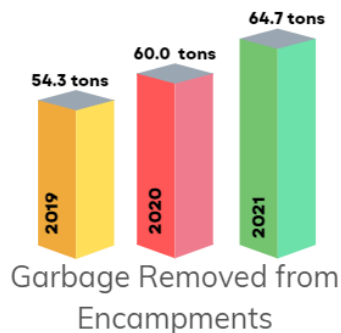
Emergency visits due to opioids in the central zone have stayed relatively consistent in the last 5 years, while opioid overdose deaths continue to trend upwards^{xxvii}. There has also been a general increase in the number of emergency room visits caused by substance related mental or behavioral disorders since 2016^{xxviii}.



As a reflection of the services provided primarily for those experiencing addiction and acute mental health crisis, we looked at the Social Diversion Team and the clean up volumes of rough sleeper camps. The Social Diversion Team is a health and social work outreach that responds to non-emergency crisis in place of an RCMP response. The Social Diversion Team delivers an integrated community response to non-emergency crisis situations, providing the public with a resource to call. They are currently responding to over 5 calls a day in Red Deer. Additionally, we have seen the volume on encampment garbage in the city (a reflection of the number of people sleeping rough) increase consistently since 2019.



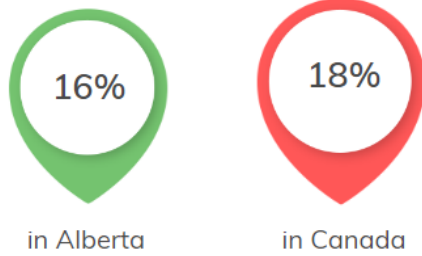
"The Social Diversion team responded to an average of just over 5 calls per day"



Family Cohesion and Relationship

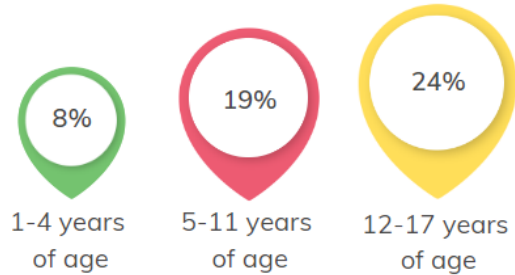
The Covid-19 pandemic and associated safety measures resulted in a seismic shift in social practices and personal relationships. For some, the distance from friends and family were a painful loss. More than half of the Albertans reported not staying as socially connected to their family and friends as they were before pandemic which impacted their mental health and wellbeing in a negative way^{xxixxxxxxxxxixxxii}. The increased time at home and economic strain of the pandemic was also a source of strain on marriages and other home relationships.

Percentage of children who have experienced parental separation or divorce



(Source: 2019 Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth)

Percentage of children who have experienced parental separation or divorce in Canada



(Source: 2019 Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth)

For others, spending more time at home had a more acute impact. Those in situations of abuse or who found primary relational supports outside the home found themselves apart from much needed support. Preventive measures taken for Covid-19 pandemic such as lock down, social distancing, promoting indoor stay, restricted travel, and closures of key community resources led to the heightened risk of family violence and domestic abuse^{xxxiii, xxxiv}. The pandemic made it more challenging for people trying to flee family violence and domestic abuse^{xxxv}.

Statistics Canada did a web panel survey^{xxxvi} during the early months of the pandemic where 8% of Canadians reported being very or extremely concerned about the possibility of violence at home. This proportion was higher for women (10%) as compared to men (6%)^{xxxvii}.

As Statistics Canada shares, the decline in police-reported family violence could be due to various reasons such as *"restrictions imposed in the context of the pandemic may have meant victims had less opportunity to report as they were living with their abuser"*, reduced interaction with people outside leading to lower ability to share the issue or who would otherwise encourage the victim to report the violence^{xxxviii}.

Family and Domestic Violence Reports to RCMP



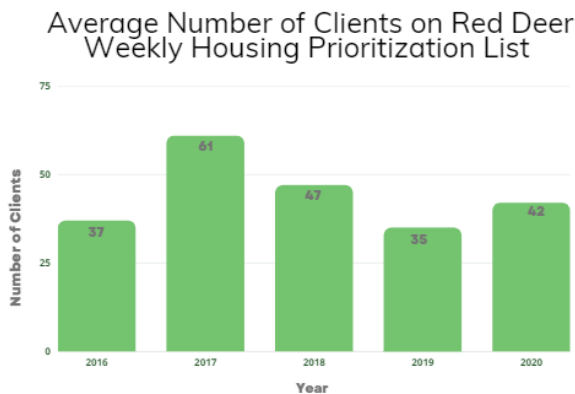
Wait time to access domestic violence group therapy at Apex Services in Red Deer: 6-12 months

Economy

As in the rest of Canada, the Red Deer and District FCSS catchment experienced the economic downturn that was a hallmark of Covid-19 restrictions and changes and continues to feel the financial repercussions at individual and societal level. Albertan employment rate decreased from 2019 to 2020 as the pandemic set in, and quickly recovered to near pre-pandemic levels in 2021. Between 2019 and 2020, average income in Red Deer decreased by 7.9%, while income in other provinces in Canada increase^{xxxix}. Average income in Alberta overall was down during this period^{xl}, with Red Deer standing out for the larger drop in average income. And while Alberta continues to enjoy higher than national average incomes, the impact of reducing incomes with our currently high inflation rate introduces uncertainty into the lives of all residents.

“
Canadian household owe \$1.86 for every \$1 earned of disposable income.
 ”

In terms of resident needs and situations of acute deprivation, we looked at usage rates of the Red Deer foodbank and the regional housing prioritization list, a list of clients waiting for access to reduced rate and/or supportive housing. Food bank usage at the Red Deer foodbank remains lower than 2018 levels but is expected to rise with the increasing cost of groceries^{xli}. The Red Deer housing prioritization list continues to grow far faster than current housing supply, meaning that there are few housings or accommodations available to those experiencing barriers to housing^{xlii}.



2018
 9,763 hampers/households= 24,325 ppl



2019
 7,819 hampers/households= 19,283 ppl



2020
 6,046 hampers/household = 14,225 ppl



2021
 6,942 hampers/household = 16,583 ppl



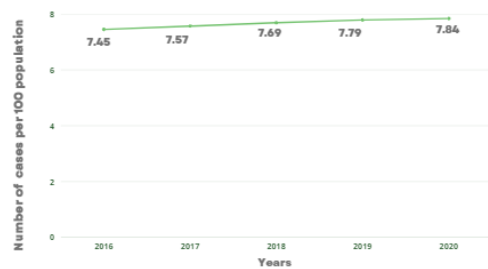
Physical Health

The physical aspect of health is significant to well-being, especially in the pandemic era. Being able to access health care service and service providers on time is as important as other health care factors. Changes in health habits, ways of accessing services, availability of health care supports, and changing health priorities have collided with the ongoing physical and social restrictions posed by Covid-19 pandemic. These intersections might result in variations in the physical health status in rural and urban Alberta.

Along with broader societal changes towards increased sedentary behavior, Albertans reported decreased participation in organized sport though the pandemic^{xliii}. The change in sport practice will have longer term health effects not yet seen in data. Even so, in the Red Deer and District FCSS catchment specifically there are small but consistent increases in rates diabetes and use of diabetes related drugs. Hypertension, however, has remained relatively stable in the population.

Additionally, in recent years the central health zone has seen higher rates of preterm and low weight birth compared to the rest of the province.

Age-adjusted Diabetes Prevalence



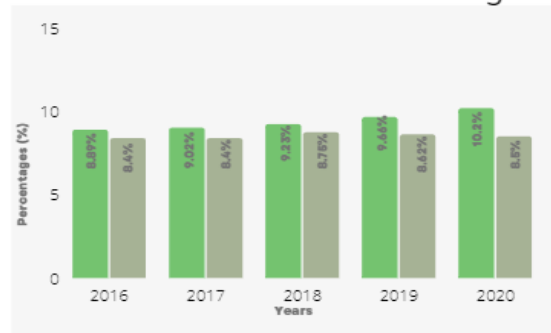
Age-adjusted Hypertension Prevalence



Percent Births with Low Weight



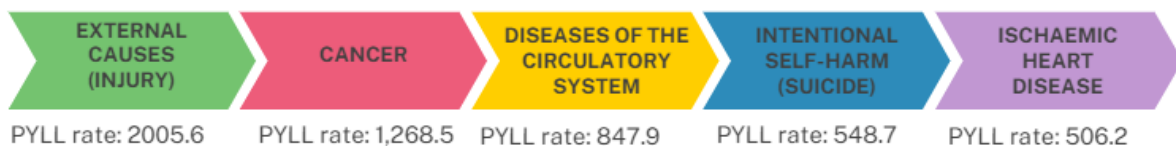
Percent Births with Low Weight



Central Zone (CZ) ■ Alberta (AB) ■

Of all causes of death, we considered the potential years of life lost (PYLL). That means that an individual died prematurely from the cause of death. The leading cause of potential years of life lost was external injury, including motor vehicle collision, falls, and other accidents. This was followed by cancer, circulatory disease, and suicide.

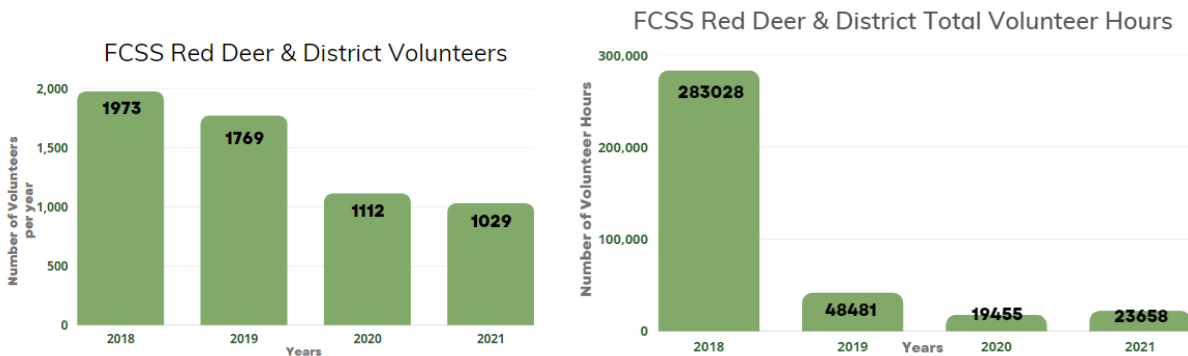
Age Standardized Potential Years of Life Lost per 100000



Community Involvement

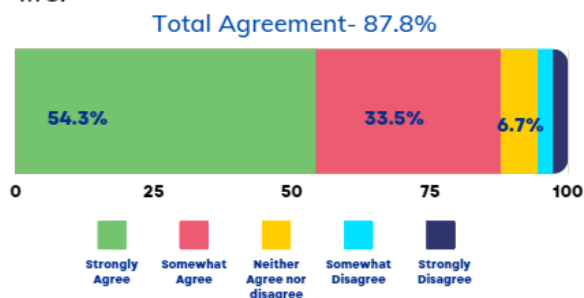
The last few years have seen large changes to how individuals connect with their own communities. The loss of volunteer opportunities has had major impacts on residents across the country, as well as the impact to service provision by agencies where individuals volunteered. Albertans report large decreases in quality of life in relationship to their inability to volunteer through the pandemic, with 25% fewer Albertans reporting volunteers service in 2020, from 85% in 2020 to 60% in 2021^{xliv}.

Red Deer has shared in this experience, to both the volunteer and the places they volunteered. Every year, a high number of volunteers support the planning and implementation of FCSS funded programs by dedicating a significant number of hours to the provision of services. As shown in the charts, there was a substantial decrease in the number of volunteer hours 2019 onwards and gradual decrease of number of volunteers per year^{xlv}. This was due to the onset and rise of the pandemic and restrictions on in-person gatherings and events, virtual mode of program delivery, and fear of infection resulting in less volunteering participation.

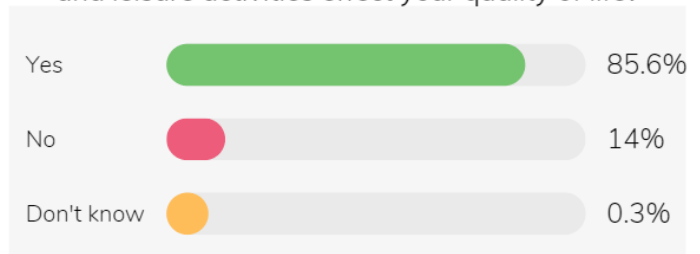


Similarly, restrictions and changes in habit have impacted public participation in events and clubs. Albertans report decreased ability to participate in leisure and cultural activities as a result of the pandemic, while still reporting that such opportunities make their communities a better place to live^{xlvi}.

Participating in or attending organized sport activities or events in your community contributes to your quality of life.



Did Covid-related inability to participate in culture and leisure activities effect your quality of life?

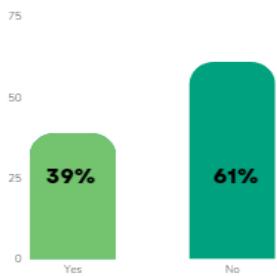


Diversity and Inclusion

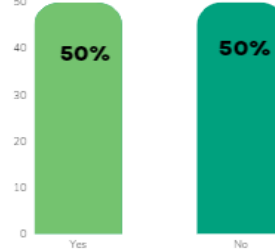
Diversity refers to the existence of variable characteristics in a group of people. Furthermore, inclusion is a state of being valued, respected, and supported considering those differences. It is about creating a favorable and supportive environment for everyone to achieve their full potential. In simple terms, "diversity is the mix; inclusion is getting the mix to work well together."^{xlvii} The dynamic composition of our communities provides an opportunity to understand life here through numerous perspectives. It gives us a change to understand what it is like to live here for those who do not identify with majority characteristics.

The social distancing practiced in the last few years led to more online engagement with social media, which in turn has a polarizing impact on attitudes and beliefs. In the 2022 Red Deer RCMP Policing Plan Survey, there was a strong emphasis on the impacts of social media on polarizing the public. At the same time, half (50%) of the respondents identifying as a visible minority reported experiencing discrimination or harassment based on their visible minority status over the last 12 months^{xlviii}. Additionally, 39% of respondents identifying as Indigenous reported experiencing discrimination or harassment based on their Indigenous identity over the last 12 months^{xlix}.

Experienced discrimination or harassment in the last 12 months based on your Indigenous identity (n=28)

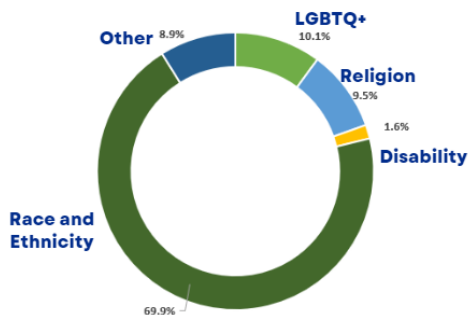


Experienced discrimination or harassment in the last 12 months based on your visible minority identity (n=32)



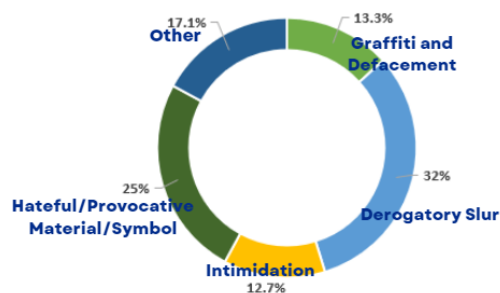
Overall, 70% of all reported hate incidents in Alberta are due to race or ethnicity, followed by sexual identity and religionⁱ. Data from hate incidents in Alberta on the type of incident depicts that derogatory slur (32%) was the most reported incident followed by hateful/provocative material/symbol (25%), graffiti and defacement (13.3%), and intimidation (12.7%)ⁱⁱ.

Motive of Incident



(Reported Hate Incidents in Alberta from February, 2017 to Nov 30, 2021)

Type of Incident



(Reported Hate Incidents in Alberta from February, 2017 to Nov 30, 2021)

- ⁱ Statistics Canada. (2022, July 13). The Daily. Retrieved July 20, 2022, from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220713/dq220713d-eng.htm>
- ⁱⁱ (Red Deer, Alberta; Wikipidea | The Free Encyclopedia, 2022)
- ⁱⁱⁱ (Government of Alberta, 2022)
- ^{iv} (Statistics Canada, 2022)
- ^v Statistics Canada. 2017. *Red Deer [Census agglomeration], Alberta and Alberta [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed July 25, 2022).
- ^{vi} Statistics Canada. 2017. *Red Deer County, MD [Census subdivision], Alberta and Alberta [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed July 25, 2022).
- ^{vii} Statistics Canada. 2017. *Penhold [Population centre], Alberta and Alberta [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed July 25, 2022).
- ^{viii} Statistics Canada. 2017. *Bowden [Population centre], Alberta and Alberta [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed July 25, 2022).
- ^{ix} Statistics Canada. 2017. *Elnora, VL [Census subdivision], Alberta and Red Deer [Population centre], Alberta* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed July 25, 2022).
- ^x Statistics Canada. 2017. *Delburne, VL [Census subdivision], Alberta and Red Deer [Population centre], Alberta* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed July 25, 2022).
- ^{xi} Statistics Canada. 2017. *Red Deer [Census agglomeration], Alberta and Alberta [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed July 25, 2022).
- ^{xii} Statistics Canada. 2017. *Red Deer County, MD [Census subdivision], Alberta and Alberta [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed July 25, 2022).
- ^{xiii} Statistics Canada. 2017. *Penhold [Population centre], Alberta and Alberta [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed July 25, 2022).
- ^{xiv} Statistics Canada. 2017. *Bowden [Population centre], Alberta and Alberta [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed July 25, 2022).
- ^{xv} Statistics Canada. 2017. *Elnora, VL [Census subdivision], Alberta and Red Deer [Population centre], Alberta* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed July 25, 2022).
- ^{xvi} Statistics Canada. 2017. *Delburne, VL [Census subdivision], Alberta and Red Deer [Population centre], Alberta* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed July 25, 2022).
- ^{xvii} (Health Quality Council of Alberta, 2020)
- ^{xviii} (Statistics Canada, 2021)
- ^{xix} (World Health Organization, 2022)
- ^{xx} (Statistics Canada, 2021)
- ^{xxi} (World Health Organization, 2022)
- ^{xxii} (Findlay & Arim, 2020)
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