What is Vital Signs?

Vital Signs is a community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our region and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life. Vital Signs is coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada.

The Community Foundation of Lethbridge and Southwestern Alberta has published Vital Signs reports since 2013. In addition to informing donors of areas of need in the community, it has grown into a tool that helps to determine the allocation of financial support through granting initiatives. Applicants to the Community Foundation’s Community Priorities and Henry S. Varley Fund for Rural Life granting programs must indicate how their proposed project addresses areas of need by identifying within which of the six Impact Areas their project fits.

Vital Signs is a tool to spark dialogue. The information presented in this report is a quick look at bigger topics—use Vital Signs as a starting point to initiate conversations and learn more.

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Methodology

Vital Signs relies on publicly available information as well as data supplied by local charities and other organizations to paint a broad picture of quality of life in Southwestern Alberta. Where appropriate, provincial, national, and international data is used to provide context to local information.

The Community Foundation endeavours to provide complete and comparable information wherever possible. However, data collection is limited by external factors, such as differences in record keeping, availability of equivalent data, or ability to share information, due either to policy or organizational capacity.

In addition to the research findings presented in the report, each of the six Vital Signs Impact Areas contains three features: How the Community Foundation Helps, Did you know?, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

1. Cardston County
2. County of Warner
3. ID of Waterton
4. Kainai Nation
5. Lethbridge County
6. Municipality of Crowsnest Pass
7. MD of Pincher Creek
8. MD of Ranchland
9. MD of Taber
10. MD of Willow Creek
11. Plikan Nation
12. Vulcan County
How the Community Foundation Helps

The “How the Community Foundation Helps” feature indicates the amount of grant funding awarded in 2018 through the Community Priorities and Henry S. Varley Fund for Rural Life granting programs to projects under each Impact Area, offering a quick insight into how the Community Foundation responds to areas of need throughout Southwestern Alberta. For a full list of grants awarded by each of the Community Foundation’s granting programs, please visit www.cflsa.ca/granting.

Did you know?

The “Did you know?” feature highlights important, interesting, or colourful details related to the information presented in each Impact Area.

Sustainable Development Goals

Part of the United Nations’ Agenda 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 interconnected objectives focused on eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, and championing responsible, sustainable growth by the end of the next decade.

The Government of Canada’s implementation of the UN’s Agenda 2030 includes the development of a national strategy to make progress toward achieving the targets of the SDGs. This strategy includes the development of a Canadian Indicator Framework, which prioritizes the SDGs relevant to Canadian society and enables close measurement of progress using factors specific to Canada.

The Community Foundation has incorporated the SDGs into Vital Signs to generate awareness and promote action toward achieving these goals—locally, provincially, and nationally. Each Impact Area lists a number of SDGs that relate to the data presented. Readers can use each Impact Area to identify local efforts made toward the achievement of goals relevant to that area.

For more on the SDGs, visit sustainabledevelopment.un.org.

Impact Areas

Vital Signs measures quality of life in Southwestern Alberta through six Impact Areas:

- **Community Connections**
  - What creates and sustains our sense of belonging in Southwestern Alberta?

- **Healthy Communities**
  - How do mental and physical fitness contribute to quality of life?

- **Environment**
  - How do natural and built environments affect quality of life?

- **Living Standards**
  - To what extent are our basic needs satisfied by our communities?

- **Cultural Life**
  - How do we celebrate our heritage and experience the arts in our communities?

- **Lifelong Learning**
  - What knowledge and skills can we attain, and how do we learn them?

Vital Signs Committee

- Ronda Reach, Chair
- Surya Acharya
- Bjorn Berg
- Amanda Jensen
- Birthe Perry
- Renee Richards
- Laurel Van Vaerenbergh
- Kaitlynn Weaver

Community Foundation Staff

- Charleen Davidson, Executive Director
- Rob Dowell, Research and Community Knowledge Coordinator
- Caitlin Gajdostik, Grants Coordinator
In 2018, after years of declining ridership, Greyhound Canada terminated bus services in Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. In an effort to fill the void created in transportation options for those in rural communities, the Government of Alberta announced a pilot project with four new bus routes connecting areas of rural and urban Alberta. One of these routes, the Highway 3 Connector, serves many communities in Southwestern Alberta, making 11 stops on its route between Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. There are no inter-municipal bus services that access communities like Pincher Creek or Waterton, in the southwest corner of the region.

Regional Transportation

In 2018, after years of declining ridership, Greyhound Canada terminated bus services in Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. In an effort to fill the void created in transportation options for those in rural communities, the Government of Alberta announced a pilot project with four new bus routes connecting areas of rural and urban Alberta. One of these routes, the Highway 3 Connector, serves many communities in Southwestern Alberta, making 11 stops on its route between Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. There are no inter-municipal bus services that access communities like Pincher Creek or Waterton, in the southwest corner of the region.

There are 27,000 residents along the Highway 3 Connector route with access to public transportation for the first time.

There are three inter-municipal bus services that stop in communities in Southwestern Alberta:
- **Highway 3 Connector**: Service to Lethbridge and Medicine Hat
- **J&L Shuttle Service**: Service from Lethbridge and Medicine Hat to Calgary
- **Red Arrow Express**: Service to Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, and Red Deer

Rural Transportation

Many communities in Southwestern Alberta also offer transportation services geared toward seniors and residents with special needs, through charitable transportation groups, societies, or accessible ride services.

Approximate trips per month in 2018:
- **300-320**: Cardston Community Handi-Bus Association
- **80**: Claresholm and District Transportation Society
- **11,750**: Lethbridge Access-A-Ride
- **15-30**: Nanton and District Handi-Van
- **20**: Pincher Creek Care Bears
- **580-750**: Taber and District Handi-Bus Association

**Community Connections**

This Impact Area looks at the ways we associate, relate, and connect with our family, friends, and neighbours.

University of Lethbridge UPass

A 2018 University of Lethbridge referendum resulted in the implementation of a universal transit pass, or UPass, which builds the cost of a Lethbridge Transit Post-Secondary Semester Pass into tuition fees for all students. The UPass reduces student transit fares by $212, from $289 to $77 per semester.

Lethbridge Airport

In July of 2018, the City of Lethbridge took over ownership of the Lethbridge Airport from Lethbridge County. Commissioned by the City and County in conjunction with the Lethbridge Airport, the YQL Airport Master Plan was delivered in 2018 and provides a 20-year strategy to update and modernize the facility, a project that has an estimated total cost of $35.5 million.

Currently, the airport offers direct flights to Calgary through two airlines, Air Canada and Westjet, the latter of which began offering flights in June of 2018. The number of passenger movements at the airport in 2018 was 87,000, up 52% from 2017.

From November 2017 to November 2018:

- **73.3% increase in arrivals**
- **77.4% increase in departures**

Jane’s Walks

Named in honour of pioneering urban sociologist Jane Jacobs, Jane’s Walks reveal to residents of urban communities many of the hidden or unnoticed facets of their neighbourhoods, offering an opportunity to share stories and connect through conversation and exercise.

Jane’s Walks take place on the first weekend of May each year. There were 11 Jane’s Walks in Lethbridge in 2019, including one “Jane’s Ride,” which was carried out on bicycles. The “Education is the New Buffalo” walk, led by Indigenous Elders, began with a smudge ceremony held in a tipi behind the Galt Museum & Archives, and shared Indigenous histories and their impact on the city.

Lethbridge was the southernmost of the eight Alberta communities to host Jane’s Walks in 2019.

Lethbridge’s 2019 Jane’s Walks:

- **Dieppe Boulevard RiverStone**
- **Legacy Park Upper Victoria Park**
- **London Road 13th Street North**
- **Public Art in Downtown Lethbridge**

**Did you know?** According to a report released by Statistics Canada in 2019, at $700, the Lethbridge Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) has the second-highest median donation in all of Canada. The CMA with the largest median donation is Abbotsford-Mission, at $840.
Indigenization Practices at Post-Secondary Institutions

Established in 2014, Indigenous Student Affairs at the University of Lethbridge (U of L) provides advising services and hosts Indigenous Awareness Days as well as a convocation celebration for Indigenous students. It also offers cultural demonstrations and educational events. Indigenous Student Affairs operates out of Iikaisskini, the U of L’s Indigenous Gathering Space. Iikaisskini is Blackfoot for “low horn.” The team also offers outreach and engagement to Indigenous students, provides Indigenous Elder support to the campus, and advises on Indigenous-related matters, Indigenization, and Reconciliation for the university.

In 2018, the University of Lethbridge began offering a special stole for Indigenous graduates to wear during Convocation. The stole features an eagle feather, an Inukshuk, the Métis infinity symbol, the U of L buffalo, and the school crest. Graduating Indigenous students also have the opportunity to wear cultural regalia as an alternative to the U of L’s traditional blue cap and gown.

In 2019, the University of Lethbridge elected former Blood Tribe Chief Charles Weaselhead as chancellor. Weaselhead is the fourteenth individual to serve in this role, and the U of L’s first Indigenous chancellor.

Lethbridge College began offering a special stole to its Indigenous graduates in 2019. The institution’s Indigenous graduation stole features an eagle feather, the Métis infinity symbol, and an Inukshuk. It depicts the silhouette of a juvenile buffalo in front of a mature buffalo, a symbol of how education provides for basic needs, as the buffalo once did.

The stole is a new aspect of Lethbridge College’s Indigenization efforts, which include the establishment of the Niitsitapi Gathering Space, opened in 2017. That same year, Lethbridge College received a Blackfoot name, Ohkotoki’aahkkoiyiiniimaan, which means “stone pipe.”

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls (MMIWG)

Reclaiming Power and Place: the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was released in June of 2019. The report outlines 231 Calls for Justice, divided into categories of relevant strata of society: levels of government, non-governmental institutions, social services, private industry, and the general public.

Between the beginning of the inquiry in 2015 and the release of the final report, Alberta had the highest number of MMIWG cases, at 93. The second-highest number of cases in that period was 65, in Ontario.
The Opioid Crisis

Between January 2016 and September 2018, over 10,000 Canadians died from overdoses related to opioids, including fentanyl, carfentanil, and other related substances. More than 3,200 of these deaths occurred between January and September 2018. Between January 2016 and September 2018, 1,842 individuals from Alberta died from opioid overdoses.

In 2018, Alberta Health Services’ South Zone, which includes Southwestern Alberta, had the second highest rate of apparent fentanyl poisoning deaths, at 15.3 per 100,000 person years. The provincial average is 15.5, and the highest average is the Calgary Zone, at 18.8.

**Did you know?** An opioid overdose is not immediately fatal. The prompt administration of naloxone can reverse the effects of acute opioid poisoning by binding to opioid receptors in the brain and temporarily reversing the slowed breathing caused by the overdose.

In 2018, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responded to opioid-related calls in Lethbridge at a rate five times the provincial average:

- **Lethbridge**: 491 per 100,000 person years
- **Alberta**: 98 per 100,000 person years

The major symptoms of an opioid overdose are pinpoint pupils, loss of consciousness, and slowed breathing.

**Note:** A person year is a unit of measurement that accounts for the number of people tracked and the amount of observation time. A study that follows 100,000 people for 1 year would have 100,000 person years of data.

### Deaths Due to Apparent Fentanyl Poisoning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Lethbridge</th>
<th>AHS South Zone (excluding Lethbridge)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>25</td>
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</table>

In Southwestern Alberta, resources and services focused on addressing the opioid epidemic are located primarily in Lethbridge. A number of facilities provide treatment and detox services throughout the region.

#### Supervised Consumption Sites

Supervised Consumption Sites (SCS) have become a prevalent public health tool. As of July 2019, the SCS in Lethbridge averaged approximately 675 users per day.

In Southwestern Alberta, resources and services focused on addressing the opioid epidemic are located primarily in Lethbridge. A number of facilities provide treatment and detox services throughout the region.

#### Detox and Treatment Facilities

1. **Foothills Detox Centre, Fort Macleod**
   - A non-medical, short-term centre with 11 detox beds and 4 transitional housing program beds.
   - **2018-19 admissions**: 639
   - **2017-18 admissions**: 602
   - **Clients in the transitional housing program in 2018-19**: 122

2. **Lander Treatment Centre, Claresholm**
   - **2018-19 admissions**: 659
   - **2017-18 admissions**: 684

3. **Lethbridge Youth Treatment Centre**
   - An 8-bed facility supporting youth recovering from addiction.
   - **January to June 2019 admissions**: 16
   - **2018 admissions**: 38

4. **South Country Treatment Centre, Lethbridge County**
   - A 21-bed residential treatment facility, offering a four-week inpatient addiction treatment program.
   - **2018-19 admissions**: 225
   - **2017 admissions**: 253

5. **Southern Alcare Manor, Lethbridge**
   - A 33-bed long-term treatment facility—patients stay for approximately 90 days. Facility staff report demand for services has seen sporadic increases in 2018.
   - **2018 admissions**: 30

6. **St. Paul Treatment Centre/Kainai Healing Lodge**
   - A 24-bed residential treatment facility offering services that reflect traditional Indigenous cultural practices.
   - **2018-19 admissions**: 684
   - **2017-18 admissions**: 602

**Note:** facility staff attribute the decrease in admissions between 2017 and 2018 partly to a reduction in personnel.
Happiness

Hygge: a Scandinavian-European concept referring to the happiness and contentment garnered through an appreciation for life’s simple pleasures. Hygge is closely associated with feelings of physical and mental "coziness," and is considered a major contributing factor to the consistently reported high quality of life in Nordic countries.

In Canada

Canada ranks 9th of 156 in the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network’s 2019 World Happiness Report. The three highest-ranking countries are Finland, Denmark, and Norway.

In Alberta

Using standards developed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, a recent Conference Board of Canada report puts Alberta 6th out of the ten provinces for life satisfaction. Alberta’s score, 8.03 out of 10, places the province behind Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Manitoba.

Mental Health

In Alberta Health Services’ South Zone in 2018, emergency room visits for depression and other stress-related issues were higher than provincial rates:

- 329.45 (South Zone) vs 265.62 (province): visits for depressive disorders
- 872.28 (South Zone) vs 704.82 (province): visits for neurotic, stress-related, or somatic symptom disorders

Life satisfaction, Alberta Community Health Survey:

1. Between 2014 and 2016, response rates of “no satisfaction” in the South Zone increased from 8.1 to 10.7.
2. Provincial “no satisfaction” response rates increased from 7.2 to 8.2 in that same period.

Walk Scores

Walk Scores measure the walkability of a community. Points out of 100 are awarded based on a location’s proximity to various amenities, like shopping, parks, or civic facilities. The closer a location is to an amenity, the higher its walk score. Walk Scores also measure pedestrian accessibility by factoring in population and traffic intersection density, and city block length.

A neighbourhood's walkability has been linked to positive physical health outcomes. According to a study published by Statistics Canada, people who live in neighbourhoods with high Walk Scores—and thus high walkability—are more likely to engage in simple physical activity, like walking or bicycling to work or for errands. Residents of neighbourhoods with low Walk Scores had a relatively high Body Mass Index compared to those living in areas of high walkability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blairmore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coleman</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taber</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardston</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Macleod</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulcan</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claresholm</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lethbridge</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaldale</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture Butte</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parkrun

Parkrun is a free, weekly 5-kilometre run open to participants irrespective of skill or ability. They share in post-run socializing afterward at local cafes. Parkruns are international—participants can sign up at one event and use their personalized barcode at over 1,000 other Parkruns worldwide to keep track of personal milestones.

Southwestern Alberta’s two Parkruns take place on Saturdays at 9:00 a.m. in Lethbridge and Taber (statistics are after 11 and 32 events, respectively):

1. Henderson Lake, Lethbridge
   - 58 runners per week on average
   - Highest attendance: 98 runners
   - Average run time: 38 min 48 s
   - Cumulative distance run: 3,200 km

2. Trout Pond, Taber
   - 17 runners per week on average
   - Highest attendance: 43 runners
   - Average run time: 35 min 54 s
   - Cumulative distance run: 2,720 km
Twelve of these chargers are planned for locations in Southwestern Alberta:

1. Cardston
2. Fort Macleod
3. Vulcan
4. Crownest Pass
5. Lethbridge
6. Waterton

The fuel economy of an electric vehicle is measured in gasoline litres equivalent per 100 km, or Le/100km.

According to Natural Resources Canada, model year 2018 EVs (excluding hybrids) have an average fuel economy of 2.2 Le/100 km. In Alberta, electricity costs anywhere from 6.2 to 6.8 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh), which would make the approximate cost of a 100-kilometre trip 15 cents.

The Peaks to Prairies Electric Vehicle Charging Network is a collaborative effort between several agencies to bring a network of more than 20 EV chargers to Southern Alberta. Local partners include the SouthGrow Regional Initiative, Alberta SouthWest Regional Alliance, and the City of Lethbridge. The network will use renewable energy generated in Southern Alberta.

Twelve of these chargers are planned for locations in Southwestern Alberta:

Cardston
Crownest Pass
Pincher Creek
Fort Macleod
Taber
Lethbridge
Warner
Nanton
Waterton

Did you know? With an area of 1,618 hectares, the City of Lethbridge’s Oldman River Valley parks system is the third largest in Canada. It is comprised of Alexander Wilderness Park, Botterill Bottom Park, Bull Trail Park, Elizabeth Hall Wetlands, Indian Battle Park, the Lethbridge Nature Reserve, P的なquim Park, and Popson Park.

In 2018, the Community Foundation awarded $37,000 in grant funding to 5 organizations for projects focused specifically on enhancing quality of life within the Environment Impact Area.
Pathways and Trails

Southwestern Alberta is home to many walking paths and nature trails:

- Beauvais Lake Provincial Park has 14 trails, with a total combined length of approximately 28 kilometres.
- The 23-kilometre Crowsnest Community Trail connects the communities of the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass.
- Lethbridge has 230 kilometres of pathways and trails.
- Picture Butte has the 1.5-kilometre Walk on the Wild Side path, located around the Picture Butte Reservoir.
- Taber has two dedicated walking trails: Trout Pond/West Trail, and North Trail.
- Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park has three trails, with a total combined length of approximately 3 kilometres.

Fort Macleod has a number of walking routes within the town. The Old Fort Trail follows a 2.5-kilometre path along the Oldman River. The River Valley Wilderness Park contains a 2-kilometre loop. Also within the town are the 6.2-kilometre Circle the Town and the 3-kilometre Parks and Playground walking loops.

Additionally, Crowsnest Pass has approximately 1,200 kilometres of backcountry trails, used for activities like hiking, cross-country skiing, or snowmobiling. During winter, these trails are groomed for recreational use.

Infrastructure Recovery in Waterton after the Kenow Fire

Waterton Lakes National Park has received $96 million over the past four years through the Federal Infrastructure Investment Program. An additional $20.9 million was later allocated by the federal government to aid recovery from the 2017 Kenow Wildfire.

Areas scheduled to be re-opened:

- 2019 Alpine Stables
- 2019 Bear’s Hump Trail
- 2019 Cameron Falls
- 2019 Red Rock Parkway
- 2019 Townsite Campground
- 2021 Akamina Parkway
- 2021 Visitor Centre
- 2022 Crandell Mountain Campground

Solar Energy in Raymond

The Town of Raymond became the first net zero community in Alberta in 2019, after retrofitting public facilities with solar panels. As a net zero community, the town is able to power its nine public buildings and the town’s streetlights with electricity generated by solar power.

The solar panels will reduce the town’s emissions by over 800 tonnes, generate 1,252 MWh of electricity, and save the town as much as $150,000 per year.

Grasslands

North America is covered by over 720,000 square kilometres of grasslands. In Alberta, fescue grasslands are prevalent. The Foothills Fescue Natural Region covers 13,623 square kilometres, approximately half of which is located in Southwestern Alberta.

- 69.1% Cropland/Pasture
- 22.4% Grasses
- 2.6% Developed Land
- 2.5% Herbaceous Cover
- 1.3% Water

Fescue grassland is an important resource in Southwestern Alberta, providing a unique source of food for both wild and domesticated grazing animals.

Lethbridge’s Curbside Recycling Program

In May of 2019, Lethbridge rolled out its citywide residential curbside recycling program. In the first six weeks, the program collected 98% more recyclable materials in the curbside bins than the recycling depots collected during the same period in 2018.

Since initial collections in May of 2019, the program has gathered over 562,000 kg of recyclable material, of which approximately 10% was contaminated or unrecyclable. About 394 tonnes of fibre materials and 19 tonnes of plastic have been transported from Lethbridge to pulp mills in Canada and the United States, and plastic recycling plants in Eastern Canada, respectively. Outside of Lethbridge, curbside recycling has been available in Coaldale since 2013, and in Nanton since 2018.
Crime and Safety in Lethbridge

The City of Lethbridge’s Downtown Clean and Safe Strategy, adopted in 2019, was formulated to address negative perceptions of cleanliness and safety in the community’s downtown area. There are 12 items in the action plan, separated into areas of enforcement, security, outreach, cleaning, promotion, education, and built environment improvements.

In response to real and perceived increases in crime in the downtown core, Lethbridge Police Service (LPS) doubled the size of its Downtown Policing Unit (DPU) in 2019, to four teams of two, patrolling on foot, on bicycle, and in a dedicated DPU van.

The Watch

Established as an outcome of the City of Lethbridge’s Downtown Clean and Safe Strategy, The Watch is a volunteer-based patrol group that aims to enhance community safety in downtown Lethbridge. The Watch began patrols in May of 2019. Watch patrollers can be identified by their red polo shirts, with “The Watch” emblazoned across the back in white lettering.

There were 35 volunteers in the initial intake in April 2019. A second call for volunteers was announced in July.

SAGE Clan

SAGE is an acronym that stands for “Serve, Assist, Guard, Engage.” Based on a successful community watch program from Winnipeg, the SAGE Clan is made up of volunteer patrollers with lived experiences.

SAGE Clan patrollers can be identified by their fluorescent yellow-green high-visibility vests, which feature their logo, an eagle with three feathers in front of a sunburst, on the front.

Diversion Outreach Team, Lethbridge

The Diversion Outreach Team (DOT) is an initiative of the HomeBASE program of the Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta South. It offers outreach and diversion response for vulnerable people in Lethbridge. DOT also provides transportation and referral services.

DOT performed 6,100 transports in 2018, of which 16 were unable to be completed due to violent behaviour. This number represents neither an increase nor a decrease in demand for services—DOT has operated at capacity since its launch in December of 2015.

Passengers are transported to a destination of their choice, provided that it is a safe location where they are welcome. Most individuals ask to be taken to the Lethbridge Shelter and Resource Centre. Individuals requiring non-emergency medical care can also request access to medical services.

Did you know? The website www.helpseeker.org is an online tool that maps organizations offering social services and supports, enabling users to locate resources within their own communities to get the help they need.

DOT is available Monday to Friday from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., and on weekends until 6 p.m. They can be contacted at 403-892-3707.
Housing and Homelessness

Lethbridge
As measured by many social service agencies, the maximum portion of household income that households should be required to pay for housing and shelter costs is 30%.

- 21.5% the percentage of households in Lethbridge that spend more than 30% on shelter
- 7.7% the percentage of households in Lethbridge that spend more than 50% on shelter
- $77,883 the 2018 median household income in Lethbridge

Lethbridge’s poverty line in 2018, expressed as annual income:

- Individual $19,951
- Single parent and one child $28,215
- Couple with two children $39,902

According to the 2019 Municipal Census, 101,482 people live in the City of Lethbridge. This makes Lethbridge the third-largest city in Alberta, ahead of Red Deer by 480 people.

In 2018, 223 individuals in Lethbridge self-identified as homeless, an increase of 150.6% over 2016. These individuals self-identified as:

- 73% Indigenous Peoples
- 72% Aged between 25 – 64
- 59% Male

Of the city’s 223 homeless individuals, 84% report coming to Lethbridge from elsewhere in the province.

Top three reasons for coming to Lethbridge:
- 16% to access support services
- 16% to find housing
- 14% for emergency shelters

Emergency Housing Shelters in Lethbridge

1. Lethbridge Shelter and Resource Centre
   - 68 clients on average per month between April 2018 and March 2019, for a total of 24,847 bed nights
   - 80 number of beds
   - 111 maximum capacity

2. Wood’s Homes Emergency Youth Shelter
   - 85 clients on average in 2018, for a total of 670 bed nights
   - 8 number of beds
   - 8 maximum capacity

Rural Homelessness
The Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN) conducted a province-wide initiative in 2018 to investigate rural homelessness. Twenty communities participated in the study, including Fort Macleod and Kainai Nation in Southwestern Alberta.

Fort Macleod
46 of 57 respondents’ reasons for unstable housing:
- 24 low income
- 20 addiction or substance abuse
- 16 unable to pay rent/mortgage

Unstably housed respondents:
- 63% identify as male
- 37% identify as female
- 44% born in Canada

Kainai Nation
98 of 243 respondents’ reasons for unstable housing:
- 20 low income
- 13 addiction or substance abuse
- 49 lack of adequate housing

Unstably housed respondents:
- 44.9% identify as male
- 53.1% identify as female
- 2.0% identify as two-spirit or other
- 93% born in Canada

In 2018, the Community Foundation awarded $77,070 in grant funding to 9 organizations for projects focused specifically on enhancing quality of life within the Living Standards Impact Area.

HOW THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION HELPS

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GOALS
Cultural Life

This Impact Area looks at how life in Southwestern Alberta is enriched through celebration of our culture and heritage.

Dr. Margaret (Marmie) Perkins Hess Gallery at the University of Lethbridge

In June of 2018, the University of Lethbridge received a bequest from the estate of Dr. Margaret “Marmie” Perkins Hess, a onetime member of the university’s senate and 2004 recipient of an honorary doctorate.

With over one thousand pieces, Dr. Hess’ bequest is the largest gift of cultural properties in the University’s history. A significant number of works in the collection are by Inuit and Indigenous artists. The collection also includes works by Picasso and artists from the Group of Seven.

The first exhibition of works from Dr. Hess’ collection, Recent Acquisitions: highlights from the collection of Dr. Margaret (Marmie) Hess, opened to coincide with the gift’s announcement, attracting 3,067 visitors, including a significant number of visitors from Calgary and Edmonton.

Fibre Arts

Quilting is a fibre arts practice linked to storytelling. Quilts were initially a way to repurpose leftover fabric, later becoming an artistic outlet, with quilts and quilt blocks depicting patterns and symbols. Quilting bees have become popular events for socializing and building community.

Claresholm Fibre Arts and Quilt Fair

Presented by the Claresholm Arts Society each year in early May, the Claresholm Fibre Arts and Quilt Fair provides a venue for members of the community to display their work, support local arts initiatives, and connect with fibre arts practitioners from across the province.

Back to Back Wool Challenge

The Back to Back Wool Challenge is an international wool-spinning competition that raises money for international cancer research. Teams of 8 compete to shear a sheep, spin wool, and knit a sweater from the same pattern in the shortest amount of time. In the 2019 competition, the team from Lethbridge placed second, completing a sweater in 10 hours and 10 minutes. Over the competition’s 25-year history, 140 teams from 8 countries have competed, including 27 teams from Canada.

Music and Youth

Lethbridge & District Music and Speech Arts Festival (LDMSAF)

The LDMSAF, formerly the Kiwanis Music and Speech Arts Festival, orchestrates a performing arts competition for people living in or studying under a teacher from Southwestern Alberta.

The festival marked its 89th year in 2019. Participants ranged in age from four years old to adulthood.

Lethbridge Symphony

Lethbridge Symphony has a number of programs and initiatives that focus on making music accessible to youth.

The Kids Choir initiative offers school choirs the opportunity to perform onstage alongside members of the Lethbridge Symphony. Over 11,000 primary school students have participated since the program’s inception in 1999.

The Young Artist Competition awards one youth each year with the opportunity to play as a guest soloist with the Lethbridge Symphony. The competition is open to anyone at the Royal Conservatory of Music’s grade 10 level.

The Orchestra Mentorship program helps young musicians grow their skills through instruction and mentorship, usually from existing members of the orchestra. Mentors help students prepare to audition for a seat in the orchestra.

The Opera Collaboration (established during the 2011-12 symphony season) is a joint initiative between the Lethbridge Symphony and the University of Lethbridge that gives undergraduate opera students from the university the opportunity to perform with a live orchestra.

Back to Back Wool Challenge

The Back to Back Wool Challenge is an international wool-spinning competition that raises money for international cancer research. Teams of 8 compete to shear a sheep, spin wool, and knit a sweater from the same pattern in the shortest amount of time. In the 2019 competition, the team from Lethbridge placed second, completing a sweater in 10 hours and 10 minutes. Over the competition’s 25-year history, 140 teams from 8 countries have competed, including 27 teams from Canada.
Rodeos

Rodeos have a lengthy history in Alberta, thanks in no small part to the Calgary Stampede. In Southwestern Alberta, rodeos form an important part of our heritage. As demonstrations of skill honed through years of work on Southwestern Alberta’s ranches, rodeos in our region have seen their share of notable milestones.

Established in 1902, the Raymond Stampede is the oldest rodeo in Canada, predating the Calgary Stampede by a decade. It is held annually around Canada Day.

Held for the first time in 1929, the Stavely Pro Rodeo is Canada’s first indoor rodeo. It takes place annually in May.

The Piikani Nation’s first Powwow and Celebration was in 1957. Held in August, the event is the oldest First Nations celebration of its kind in Canada, and features an official Indian Rodeo Cowboy Association-sanctioned rodeo.

First held in 1994, the Pincher Creek Pro Rodeo takes place annually in August.

Local Attractions

Southwestern Alberta is home to many locations of archeological, geographical, and historical significance, including two World Heritage Sites.

The World Heritage Site designation is bestowed by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization), and brings with it international recognition and protection, boosting tourism, and enhancing conservation and preservation.

Writing-on-Stone/Áísínai’pi Provincial Park

Established in 1957, Writing-on-Stone/Áísínai’pi Provincial Park is located among the hoodoos of the Milk River Valley. The site is the location of significant Indigenous petroglyphs (rock carvings) and pictographs (drawings), and is considered sacred to the Blackfoot Peoples. In July of 2019, Writing-on Stone/Áísínai’pi Provincial Park became Alberta’s sixth UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Áísínai’pi is a Blackfoot word meaning “it is pictured or written.”

The site receives between 60,000 and 65,000 visitors per year.

Did you know? The Town of Coaldale celebrates its centennial in 2019, commemorating the milestone by installing a community mural mosaic.

Landmarks

Quirky and fascinating, “world’s biggest” (or in a few cases, “world’s smallest”) attractions become forever entwined with the visual identity of many communities throughout the region. Southwestern Alberta is home to a number of these monuments to local history and lore.

Bellevue’s “Back to God” miniature chapel
Blairmore crows and nest
Chin trout statue
Coleman’s “World’s Biggest Piggy Bank”
Lethbridge Viaduct (High Level Bridge)
Lethbridge wind gauge
Milk River’s Tyrannosaurus rex
Nobleford’s noble blade
Pincher Creek’s giant pincers
Taber’s giant corn stalk
Vauxhall’s twin potatoes
Vulcan’s Starship Enterprise

Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre

Located west of Fort Macleod, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre is located on a site of Indigenous historical importance. It received its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981. The site is the location of a section of cliff used by Indigenous peoples to hunt buffalo by driving them over the edge.

The centre is home to archeological remains of prehistoric Indigenous settlements. The interpretive centre recounts histories of the Plains Peoples from Indigenous and European perspectives.

The site received approximately 56,000 visitors between March 2018 and March 2019, down from 63,800 in 2017-18. Staff attribute rates of higher attendance during that period to traffic diverted from Waterton during the Kenow Fire, as well as the free parks passes distributed for Canada 150, though the site is not a national park. Visits to Alberta’s historic sites and museums during 2017 increased by 4.1% to 794,000 visitors, almost tripling the increase (1.4%) from 2016.

In 2018, the Community Foundation awarded $84,335 in grant funding to 13 organizations for projects focused specifically on enhancing quality of life within the Cultural Life Impact Area.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION HELPS

In 2018, the Community Foundation awarded $84,335 in grant funding to 13 organizations for projects focused specifically on enhancing quality of life within the Cultural Life Impact Area.
Continuing Education

Residents of Southwestern Alberta have access to a number of continuing education opportunities through the University of Lethbridge and Lethbridge College. Continuing education typically refers to education undertaken by adults after their time in the formal education system, often as a means of career skill-building or personal interest. Taking a post-secondary course not for academic credit, otherwise known as auditing, is a popular method for continuing education.

University of Lethbridge

- 41 students auditing courses (2018-19)
- 44 students auditing courses (2017-18)
- 22 students aged 65 and older attending U of L (2018-19)
- 27 students aged 65 and older attending U of L (2017-18)

Lethbridge College

Through its Corporate and Continuing Education Department, Lethbridge College offers classes for those looking to expand professional training, enhance skills, and learn new hobbies.

- 3,627 students in continuing education courses at Lethbridge College in the 2018-19 academic year
- 1,768 students auditing classes and/or taking continuing education courses at Lethbridge College from January to May 2018

Career Exploration

Chinook Regional Foundation for Career Transitions’ Career Exploration Group Program offers rural grade 11 and 12 students from Southwestern Alberta an opportunity to take part in a group job shadow in a field of their interest. Groups of students with like-minded interests spend a working day with a professional and experience a typical day in that career.

The goal of the program is to expose participants to an insider’s view of a particular career, helping them to engage with their future career ambitions.

- 55 2019 students who took part
- 10 the number of different professions students could shadow

Reading

A report released by Hill Strategies in March 2019 assessed Albertans’ reading habits. It found that within a 12-month period, Albertans got their news from print and online sources almost equally:

- 2.6 million online
- 2.4 million print

Libraries

In Alberta, reading is the second-most popular cultural activity for residents over 15 years of age. The March 2019 Hill Strategies report found that 2.5 million Albertans over the age of 15 had read a book in print format within the last 12 months. An additional 1.1 million reported reading an ebook in the same period.

In 2018, the Chinook Arch Regional Library System had:

- 40,955 cardholders
- 817,338 physical items
- 15,037 digital items
- 1.6 million items checked or renewed

Lethbridge Public Library

In celebration of its centennial, Lethbridge Public Library waived the fee for library cards in 2019. In the first quarter, the number of new and renewed memberships increased by 153%.

Lethbridge Public Library’s Lethbridge Presents Program gives library patrons the opportunity to “check out” passes, tickets, and entry fees to events and attractions throughout Southwestern Alberta. Items are available to anyone with a valid Chinook Arch library card. In 2018-19, the program made passes to 45 events and attractions available to 18,802 library patrons.

Piitoyiss, which means “eagles’ nest” in Blackfoot, is the name given to the renovated community space in the Lethbridge Public Library’s north wing. The space features titles from the library’s collection of Indigenous literature, and serves as a gathering space for community events, including book readings, author signings, and many of the library’s ongoing programming initiatives.

Did you know? A study, released in 2019, found that when local newspapers suffer, so does local democracy. The study found a link between newspapers that have undergone cuts to staffing and candidacy and voter turnout in municipal elections. A decline in newspaper staffing levels correlated with a decrease in declared mayoral candidates, as well as a greater margin of victory for the eventual winner.

In 2018, the Community Foundation awarded $70,200 in grant funding to 10 organizations for projects focused specifically on enhancing quality of life within the Lifelong Learning Impact Area.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources and Contributors</th>
<th>Sources and Contributors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alberta 511</td>
<td>Lethbridge College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta Community Health Survey</td>
<td>Lethbridge News Now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta Health Services</td>
<td>Lethbridge Public Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta Parks</td>
<td>Lethbridge School District No. 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta Rural Development Network</td>
<td>Lethbridge Symphony Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta Tourism Market Monitor</td>
<td>Livingstone Range School Division No. 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta Utilities Commission</td>
<td>Municipality of Crowsnest Pass</td>
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<td>ATCO</td>
<td>Nanton and District Handi-Van</td>
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<td>Calgary Herald</td>
<td>NASA Earth Observatory</td>
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<td>Canada Council for the Arts</td>
<td>Natural Resources Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta South Region</td>
<td>Nature Conservancy of Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cardston Community Handi-Bus Association</td>
<td>Open Government Program, Government of Alberta</td>
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<td>Canadian Broadcasting Corporation</td>
<td>Orangeshirtday.org</td>
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<td>Chinook Arch Regional Library System</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinook Regional Foundation for Career Transitions</td>
<td>Outdoorclassroomday.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Lethbridge</td>
<td>Parkrun.ca</td>
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<td>Claresholm and District Transportation Society</td>
<td>Parks Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claresholm Arts Society</td>
<td>Pincher Creek Care Bears</td>
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<td>Reconciliation Lethbridge Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>Foothills Detox Centre</td>
<td>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</td>
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<td>Galt Museum &amp; Archives</td>
<td>SAGE Clan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global News</td>
<td>South Country Treatment Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government of Alberta</td>
<td>Southern Alcare Manor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 4</td>
<td>Statistics Canada</td>
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<td>Janeswalk.org</td>
<td>Taber and District Handi-Bus Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kainai Healing Lodge</td>
<td>University of Lethbridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lander Treatment Centre</td>
<td>Urban Affairs Review</td>
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<td>Lethbridge Access-A-Ride</td>
<td>Walkscore.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lethbridge and District Music and Speech Arts Festival Society</td>
<td>Wood’s Homes</td>
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