DRUMHELLER

2023 Alberta Provincial Housing & Service Needs Estimation

COMMUNITY REPORT

RURAL
DEVELOPMENT
NETWORK

DRUMHELLER
VALLEY

Prepared By:
Rural Development Network
(780)-964-2736
11443 - 143 Street, NW
Edmonton, AB

Acknowledgements

RDN's physical office is located on the Traditional Territories of Treaty 6 and is home to many Métis and Inuit Peoples. As a national organization, we also acknowledge that RDN staff and the communities we support, live, gather, and organize across Turtle Island.

Inuit, Métis, and First Nations Peoples are experiencing homelessness at disproportionately high rates compared to non-Indigenous people in Canada. Unlike the common, colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not simply defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully understood as a loss or breakdown of relationships between individuals, families, and/or communities and their land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages, and identities. RDN recognizes the ways in which settler relationships to both the land and the Peoples of this land have been broken and misused, causing and contributing to Indigenous homelessness. We also recognize the ways in which our presence on this land continues to uphold colonialism and reproduces dispossession and violence for Indigenous people, further perpetuating experiences of Indigenous homelessness.

In an ongoing effort to support Indigenous communities in addressing issues of housing, homelessness, and service needs, we are committed to working to decolonize homelessness research and advocate to funders for Indigenous self-determination in the housing and social sectors.

We share this acknowledgement to reaffirm our responsibility and commitment to reconciliation.

We also recognize that this land acknowledgement is just that, an acknowledgement; it is but one step in our journey. We commit to working to uphold the conditions of the treaties that govern this land.

We thank you.

This report and the information within were made possible through the efforts of many dedicated individuals and groups. We wish to thank the front-line staff at participating service agencies and the residents in Drumheller for their support, dedication, and commitment to this project.

About this Report

In 2023, the Rural Development Network (RDN) partnered with 22 organizations representing 45 communities across Alberta to conduct the third iteration of the provincial-wide housing and service needs estimation.

This report outlines Drumheller's results within the provincial estimation, highlighting the number of residents who are housing insecure and their experiences with homelessness. This report is complemented by the Alberta Provincial Report, which highlights the combined results of all 45 communities across the province.

This report is intended to support decision-making across organizations, funders and multiple levels of government around housing and homelessness by providing reliable and up-to-date data on housing and service needs in Drumheller. It can also be used and referred to in the community for program and advocacy purposes related to housing, homelessness, and service needs.

Contact info@ruraldevelopment.ca for more information on Housing and Service Needs Estimations.

Table of Contents

Definitions

What Does Homelessness Mean?

Homelessness

According to the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (Gaetz et al., 2012), homelessness is the situation of an individual, family, or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means, and ability to acquire it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, domestic violence, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination.

Further, Indigenous homelessness considers the traumas imposed on Indigenous Peoples through colonialism. It is defined as a "human condition that describes First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing...Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews" (Thistle, 2017).

Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful, and distressing. The national definition of homelessness notes that individuals who become homeless experience a range of physical living situations, including:

Unsheltered: Absolutely homeless, living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation (e.g. living on sidewalks, squares, parks, vehicles, garages, etc.).

Emergency Sheltered: People who are staying in overnight shelters due to homelessness as well as those staying in shelters due to family violence.

Provisionally Accommodated: People with an accommodation that is temporary or that lacks security for tenure (e.g. couch-surfing, living in transitional housing, living in abandoned buildings, living in places unfit for human habitation, people who are housed seasonally, people in domestic violence situations, etc.).

At Risk of Homelessness: People who are not yet homeless but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards (e.g. people who are one rent payment missed from eviction, people whose housing may be condemned for health, by-law, or safety violations, etc.).

(Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, Canadian Definition of Homelessness, 2012).

Insecure Housing: For this report, the term housing insecure, or insecure housing, will be used to encompass the entire spectrum of homelessness which includes unsheltered, emergency sheltered, provisionally accommodated, and at risk of homelessness.

Introduction

When it comes to homelessness and understanding its causes, the urban experience tends to dominate the conversation, mainly due to the "visibility" of individuals experiencing homelessness in urban centres. The issue of homelessness in rural and remote areas is far less understood and acknowledged because of its "hidden" nature. Further, recent data suggests that rural homelessness is prevalent at rates equivalent to or greater than urban per capita rates (Schiff, et al., 2022).

Recognizing this, RDN conducted the 2023 Alberta Provincial Housing and Service Needs Estimation with 22 organizations representing 45 rural, remote, and Indigenous communities across Alberta in an attempt to better understand what homelessness looks like in each community and across the rural provincial landscape. Specifically, the purpose of this estimation is to:

1. Develop a contextually relevant process for local service providers to engage and collect informed data with those who are at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness.
2. Provide a comprehensive picture of housing insecurity and homelessness in Alberta, including demographic information on who is experiencing homelessness and which services are being accessed and which services are missing.
3. Help inform service providers and municipal, provincial, and federal policies, practices, and funding decisions on homelessness, housing, and support services.
4. Develop recommendations and next steps for service providers and municipal, provincial, and federal governments.
5. Elevate and incorporate the voices of people experiencing homelessness in the solutions to end homelessness.

This is the third iteration of the Alberta Provincial Housing and Service Needs Estimation; it was also conducted in 2018 and 2020 with 20 and 24 communities, respectively. Drumheller was one of the 20 communities that participated in the 2018 estimation, where they surveyed 83 community members, 26 of which were determined to be housing insecure

Methodology

The methodology employed in this Housing and Service Needs Estimation comes from the <u>Step-by-Step Guide to Estimating Rural Homelessness</u>, published by the Rural Development Network. RDN initially developed the Step-by-Step Guide to Estimating Rural Homelessness due to the lack of available, accurate, and current data on rural homelessness. A lack of data limits the ability of rural communities like Hinton to advocate for better resources for their residents.

The guide is unique in that it tackles the issue of housing insecurity and homelessness from a rural perspective and recognizes the difficulties that come with conducting standard Point-in-Time (PiT) counts in rural and remote areas. It instead uses a service-based population estimation approach, which allows for anyone, including small nonprofits and local front-line agencies, to gather data on gaps in local housing and service needs without adding additional strain to workloads and organizational capacities.

Following the model proposed in the Step-by-Step Guide, RDN worked with communities and academics across Canada to develop a survey that reflected rural and remote community contexts. The survey was developed in accordance with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness' definitions of homelessness. However, the survey itself was advertised as a Housing and Service Needs survey; this is a result of feedback from multiple service providers who are committed to minimizing the stigma associated with homelessness that could cause distress to their clients. By re-framing the language of the survey, service providers were able to encourage all clients to participate, instead of pointedly targeting certain individuals.

To further minimize stigma throughout the survey, rather than asking respondents to identify themselves as homeless or housing insecure, they were asked whether they consider their living conditions to be secure or insecure and to fill out checkboxes that determine their objective housing situation. Based on responses to the latter survey question along with subsequent data analysis, RDN was able to determine which respondents were housing-unstable. As shown in

the results, below, some individuals who don't consider themselves to be homeless or at risk of homelessness actually qualify based on the national definitions of homelessness.

The same survey was used across all communities participating in the 2023 Alberta Provincial Housing and Service Needs Estimation project, with one exception; each community's survey was customized to meet their location parameters. Figure 1 showcases Drumheller's location parameters.

Figure 1: Drumheller's Location Question on Survey

Q2. Where do you currently live (or which community do you live closest to)?

- [ ] Drumheller (Nacmine to East Coulee)
- [ ] Carbon
- [ ] Munson
- [ ] Morrin
- [ ] Rosebud
- [ ] Wheatland County
- [ ] Rumsey
- [ ] Michichi
- [ ] Kneehill County
- [ ] Big Valley
- [ ] Starland County
- [ ] I am not sure
- [ ] Other: _____
- [ ] Prefer not to answer

RDN worked with Drumheller to develop a survey administration process that would ensure the greatest level of participation possible. For Drumheller, surveys were advertised at service provider locations and online as an open Survey Monkey link across the community. Surveys were available through these locations and online for a period of four weeks: from March 1 to March 31, 2023.

Before the survey period began, RDN conducted orientation and training sessions with staff from participating agencies. During the training, emphasis was placed on clarifying survey terms, ensuring respondents' confidentiality and privacy, and

securing participants' informed consent. During each training session, resources were provided to staff to improve their understanding of the project and increase comfort in administering the survey. Training and resources also included the various ways to administer the survey in an open, non-intrusive manner, placing extra importance on meeting the individual's reasons for visiting the agency before offering the survey.

Important to note about the survey; to ensure the trust and anonymity of participants, each respondent was asked to give consent at the beginning of the survey and create a unique identifier. The unique identifier allows RDN to maintain the integrity of the data without knowing respondent identities. The unique identifier is a combination of letters and numbers from a participant's name and birthdate.

Figure 2: Unique Identifier Question on Survey

Q1. Anonymous Unique Identifier (ex. John Smith, born on 15th November 1964)

H	N	What are the last two letters of your FIRST name?
T	H	What are the last two letters of your LAST name?
1	5	What is the DAY you were born?
6	4	What are the last two numbers of the YEAR you were born?

Drumheller collected 62 survey responses during the four weeks. Of the 62 surveys, 11 were excluded. Surveys were deemed unsuitable and excluded for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Survey respondent(s) declined to give consent.
2. Survey respondent(s) declined to provide the unique identifier or provided improper unique identifier information (i.e. characters instead of numbers, etc.).
3. Survey respondent(s) submitted multiple surveys (determined based on unique identifier(s).

Based on this, 51 were determined to be suitable for further analysis and will be the focus of the results outlined below.

Limitations

Despite our best attempts to reduce stigma and increase the accessibility of the survey, not all clients who were offered a survey chose to participate. Additionally, staff at participating agencies were informed that participants under the age of 14 years old required guardian consent to participate in the survey. While this is inherently problematic and exclusionary, as most youth experiencing homelessness would not have a guardian present to provide consent, to maintain survey ethics, this requirement is in compliance with the Alberta College of Social Workers. Worth noting here is that not everyone who filled out the survey responded to every question.

As a result, there remains a portion of people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity whose voices and lived experiences were not captured in this project. Therefore, while the trends, highlights, and recommendations made are very informative, it is important to remember that this report presents a conservative picture of the housing and services needs in Drumheller.

Results & Analysis

Objective Housing Situation

As part of the survey, participants were asked the following question: *"Do you consider your housing situation to be unstable or feel you could easily lose your housing?"* Respondents were given the options "yes," "no," and "I'm not sure" to guide their responses. Of the 51 survey respondents, 13 self-identified as housing insecure and six indicated "I'm not sure." Through further analysis, it was determined that 43 survey respondents are housing insecure according to the national definitions of homelessness. An additional 20 dependents and 45 adults reported as living with housing insecure survey respondents. Therefore, based on survey results, there are at least 108 community members experiencing housing insecurity in Drumheller.

The top three reasons for housing insecurity in Drumheller, as reported by survey respondents, are:
1. Low wages
2. Inability to afford rent/mortgage payments
3. Increasing rent costs

Exploring the Spectrum of Homelessness in Drumheller

Recognizing that the national definition of homelessness is complex, encompassing various housing situations across a continuum, it is important to better understand what housing insecurity looks like in Drumheller. This can be achieved by exploring the experiences of the 43 housing insecure respondents.

To accurately place respondents along the spectrum of homelessness, a series of measures were used to understand their situations, including their self-identified housing stability response, their calculated housing stability, their current housing situation, the amenities they lack in their current home, and others. Early in the survey, respondents were asked to outline their current housing situation and were able to choose all situations that applied to them from a variety of statements that ranged from "I own the house I am currently in" to "I lived in supportive housing" to "I slept in a public space" and more. To accurately present what a journey of housing insecurity might look like for respondents over a month, we have included all responses, as respondents were able to select more than one statement.

An important thing to consider when reading this table is that people experiencing housing insecurity often fluctuate in and out of their situation; therefore, someone who was unsheltered one night might have been emergency sheltered or provisionally accommodated the next. As a result, we have highlighted every incident of insecurity respondents experienced in the past month to understand the journey of housing insecurity in Drumheller.

Table 1: Respondents by Housing Situation in the Homelessness Spectrum

Place on the Homelessness Spectrum	# of Respondents in Each Category
Unsheltered	1
Emergency Sheltered	0
Provisionally Accommodated	8
At-Risk of Homelessness	53

This table demonstrates the diversity of respondents' experiences with housing insecurity in Drumheller and outlines that homelessness presents itself in more ways than simply sleeping outside. Respondents that have been identified as "At Risk of Homelessness" emphasized their difficulty in being able to afford their rent/mortgage and/or have stayed in a home with unsafe conditions such as physical construction hazards, no windows, no electricity, etc. Some of these respondents are also living in overcrowded accommodations where there are not enough bedrooms for the number of people staying there.

Respondents who indicated they experienced being provisionally accommodated noted stays in medical/detox facilities and/or transitional housing units. Some respondents also indicated staying in a home unwillingly because they have nowhere else to go and/or enduring violence because they had nowhere else to go.

Drumheller Population Overview

According to Alberta's Regional Dashboard (Government of Alberta, n.d.), the Town of Drumheller covers a 111.5 square km geographical land base with a total population size of 7,968; making up 0.18% of Alberta's total population.

46.1% (3,670) of the population is reported as female, while 53.9% (4,298) reported as male.

Figure 3: Drumheller Population Age Breakdown (2022)
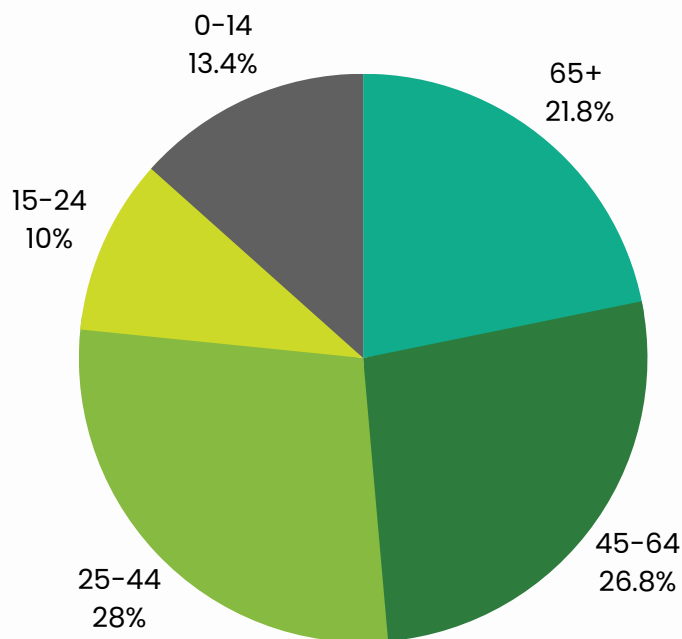
The average age of the population is 43.9 years in the Town of Drumheller.

According to Statistics Canada (2021) Census numbers, 12.3% (850) of the population immigrated to Canada, and 12% (830) of the population identified as a visible minority. Further, 5.8% (400) of Drumheller's population identified as

Indigenous; 31% (125) of whom are First Nations, 56% (225) of whom are Métis, and 10% (40) of whom are Inuit.

The 2021 Census also reports that the Town of Drumheller has 3,200 private households with an average of 2.2 people per household. Of the 3,200 private households, 70.8% (2,265) are owned, while 29.1% (930) are rented, with the average monthly rent for a two-bedroom dwelling listed as $804. Additionally, 83% (2,655) of occupied private dwellings are houses and 12% (385) of occupied private dwellings are apartments. Single-family houses make up 64.4% of all private dwellings in the area. Further, 27.8% (890) of households report one or more of the following:

- Spending more than 30% of their income on shelter costs,
- That their dwelling is "not suitable"; and/or,
- That their dwelling has "major repair needs."

The median after-tax income is $37,600 for individuals and $65,500 for households in the Town of Drumheller. According to the Economic Research Institute (2023), the cost of living in the Town of Drumheller is 1% higher than the national average and 4% lower than the provincial average for Alberta.

Housing & Service Needs Estimation Survey Respondent Population Overview

51 community members responded to the Drumheller survey; 59% (30) identified as female and 41% (21) as male. Additionally, 84% (43) of respondents identified as straight, 2% (1) as lesbian/gay, 4% (2) as bisexual/pansexual, and 2% (1) as asexual. Additionally, 8% (4) preferred not to answer.

Of the 51 respondents, 41% (21) were between the ages of 20-39, 49% (25) were between 40-59, and 10% (5) are 60 or older.

78% (40) of respondents were born in Canada (Turtle Island), while 22% (11) immigrated to Canada. 40% (4) of respondents who were not born in Canada (Turtle Island) are here on temporary work visas.

80% (41) of respondents are white, while 18% (9) of respondents self-identified as racialized and 2% (1) of respondents preferred not to answer. Racialized respondents identified as Asian (South and Indo-Caribbean), Latin American, and Indigenous. Additionally, 6% (3) of respondents self-identified as Indigenous; 67% (2) as First Nations and 33% (1) as Métis.

14% (7) of respondents stayed in foster care, a youth group home, or under a youth/young adult agreement in the past.

Lastly, in terms of demographics, respondents were asked to indicate if they have ever served in the Canadian Armed Forces/Foreign Military Service, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) or Foreign Police Service, or local or foreign Emergency Services (EMS, Police, Fire Department). Of the 51 survey respondents, 6% (3) were in the Canadian Armed Forces or Foreign Military Service, 2% (1) were in local or foreign Emergency Services, and 2% (1) preferred not to answer.

Housing Secure vs. Housing Insecure Survey Respondent Population Overview

Table 2: Housing & Service Needs Estimation Survey Population Overview Comparison by Housing Stability

Demographic Characteristic	Housing Secure	Housing Insecure
# of Survey Respondents	8	43
Gender	Male: 2	Male: 19
	Female: 6	Female: 24
	Trans-male: 0	Trans-male: 0
	Trans-female: 0	Trans-female: 0
	Gender non-conforming: 0	Gender non-conforming: 0
	Don't know: 0	Don't know: 0
Sexual Orientation	Straight: 8	Straight: 35
	Gay/Lesbian: 0	Gay/Lesbian: 1
	Bisexual/Pansexual: 0	Bisexual/Pansexual: 2
	Asexual: 0	Asexual: 1
	Two-spirit: 0	Two-spirit: 0
	Don't know: 0	Don't know: 0

Age	0 – 19 years: 0	0 – 19 years: 0
	20 – 39 years: 1	20 – 39 years: 20
	40 – 59 years: 7	40 – 59 years: 8
	60+: 0	60+: 5
Immigration Status	Born in Canada: 7	Born in Canada: 33
	Born outside of Canada: 1	Born outside of Canada: 10
Racial Identity	White: 8	White: 33
	Visible minority: 0	Visible minority: 9
Indigenous Identity	First Nations: 0	First Nations: 2
	Métis: 0	Métis: 1
	Inuit: 0	Inuit: 0
	Other Indigenous ancestry: 0	Other Indigenous ancestry: 0
Time in Foster Care, Youth Group Home, or Youth/Young Adult Agreement	Spent time in care: 1	Spent time in care: 6
Served in Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP, Emergency Services	Canadian Armed Forces: 1	Canadian Armed Forces: 2
	RCMP: 0	RCMP: 0
	Emergency Services: 1	Emergency Services: 1

Based on this survey population overview breakdown, we can determine the following:

- 100% of 2SLGBTQIA+ respondents are housing insecure.
- 100% of Indigenous respondents are housing insecure.
- 86% of respondents who spent time in care are housing insecure.

Note that the rest of the reported results and analysis will focus on housing insecure respondents unless otherwise indicated.

Education, Employment, and Income Sources

Respondents indicated various education levels when responding to *"What is the highest level of education you've completed?"* 5% (2) of respondents have completed some grade school, 10% (4) have completed some high school, 29% (12) have completed high school or received their GED, 10% (4) have an apprenticeship, trades certificate, or diploma, 21% (9) have a college certificate or diploma, 7% (3) have some post-secondary, 7% (3) have a Bachelor's degree, and 12% (5) have a graduate/professional degree. This can be seen in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Respondents' Education Levels Breakdown
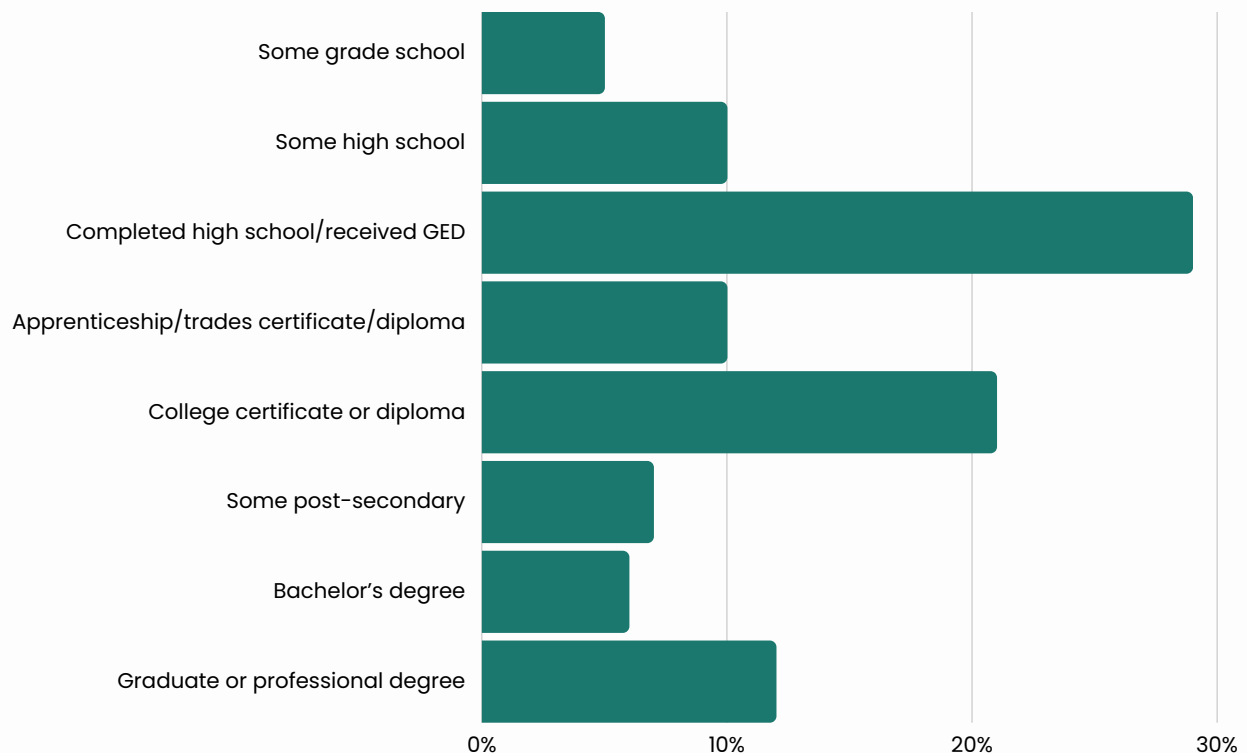
Additionally, 67% (28) of respondents are employed and 2% (1) preferred not to answer; 71% (20) of those employed are full-time while 29% (8) are part-time.

Recognizing that many respondents are not full-time employed, we asked them, *"What are your sources of income?"* Respondents were encouraged to check all that apply from the following list of options: *Job-related* (e.g. employment, partner/spouse's income, alimony/child support, etc.), *Government-related* (e.g. Seniors Benefits, Veterans' Benefits, Disability Benefits, Employment Insurance, Student loans, etc.), *Tax-related* (e.g. child and family tax benefits, GST refunds, etc.), or *Informal* (e.g. bottle returns, panhandling, money from family and friends, etc.).

Respondents noted 38 times that they receive job-related income, 14 times that they receive government-related income, 15 times that they receive tax-related income, and three times that they receive informal income. Additionally, respondents noted five times that they have other sources of income including credit card loans and five times that they preferred not to answer.

Further, respondents were asked to disclose their approximate household income for the previous year. Responses varied widely, as seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Respondents Approximate Household Income in 2022

Total Household Income in 2022	# of Respondents Per Income Level
$30,000 or less	19 (48%)
Between $30,001 and $49,999	6 (15%)
Between $50,000 and $69,999	4 (10%)
Between $70,000 and $89,999	1 (3%)
Between $90,000 and $109,999	2 (5%)
More than $110,000	4 (10%)
Prefer not to answer	4 (10%)

This can be broken down further to understand household income level by housing security status, as seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Respondents' Household Income in 2022 by Housing Status

Total Household Income in 2022	# of Housing Secure Respondents Per Income Level	# of Housing Insecure Respondents Per Income Level
$30,000 or less	0	19 (48%)
Between $30,001 and $49,999	1 (13%)	6 (15%)
Between $50,000 and $69,999	0	4 (10%)
Between $70,000 and $89,999	0	1 (3%)
Between $90,000 and $109,999	2 (25%)	2 (5%)
More than $110,000	4 (50%)	4 (10%)
Prefer not to answer	1 (13%)	4 (10%)

Living Situation

Residents from across Drumheller responded to the survey, as can be seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Breakdown of Survey Respondents by Location
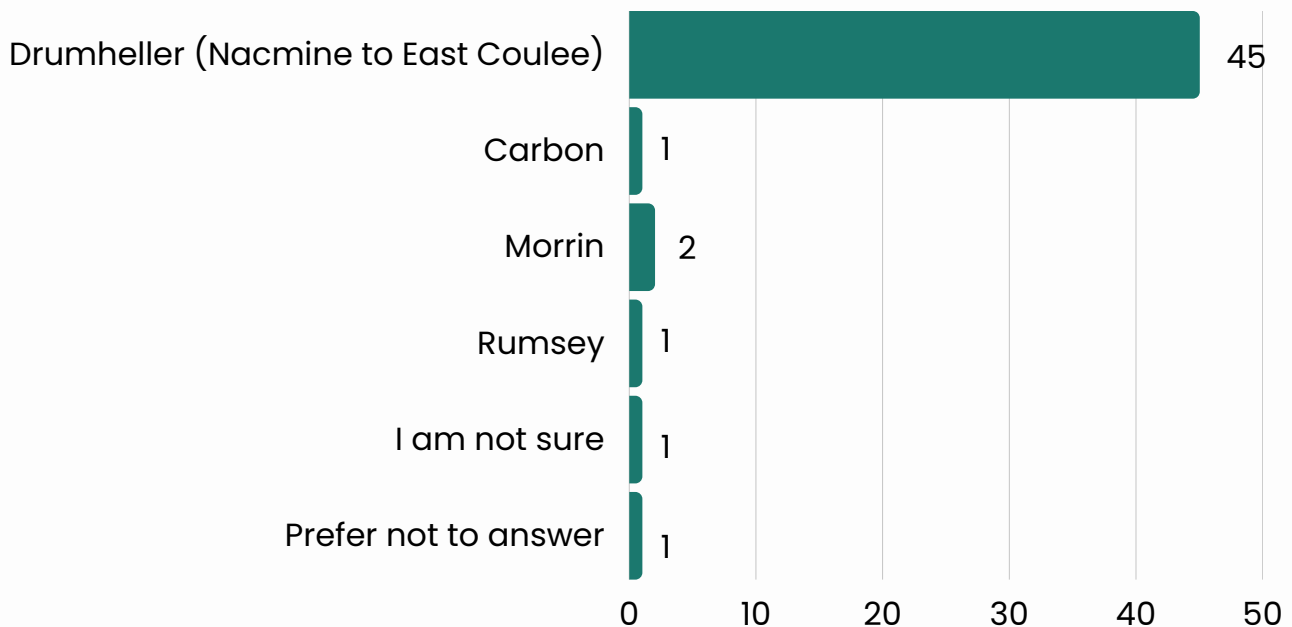
To better understand respondents' current living situations, respondents were asked to indicate if they rent or own their home (or if neither is true for them). 24% (10) of housing insecure respondents indicated that they own their homes, 55% (23) indicated that they rent their homes, 17% (7) noted that they neither own nor rent, and 5% (2) preferred not to answer. Comparatively, 75% (6) of housing secure respondents owned their homes while 25% (2) rented their homes.

Further, respondents were asked, "If you pay rent or a mortgage, how much do you pay per month?" Of the responses, rent and mortgage prices varied.

Table 5: Rent or Mortgage Costs per Month by Housing Status

Rent/Mortgage Cost	# of Housing Secure Respondents Paying Rent/Mortgage Costs	# of Housing Insecure Respondents Paying Rent/Mortgage Costs
Less than $500	0	3 (7%)
Between $500 to $999	3 (38%)	19 (45%)
Between $1000 to $1499	38% (3)	11 (26%)
Between $1500 to $1999	1 (13%)	2 (5%)
Over $2000	0	1 (2%)
I don't pay rent or a mortgage	1 (13%)	5 (12%)
Prefer not to answer	0	1 (2%)

Among housing insecure respondents, whether they rent, own, or are in a different situation entirely, 36% (4) do not have fire protection and 27% (3) do not have access to safe drinking water.

Table 6: Breakdown of Respondents' Missing Amenities

Missing Amenities	# of Respondents Missing Amenities
Indoor plumbing/bathing facilities	1 (9%)
Sufficient and affordable heating	4 (36%)
Safe drinking water	3 (27%)
Refrigeration	0
Electricity (or equivalent - i.e. solar power)	0
Cooking facilities	0
Fire protection (smoke alarms, fire extinguishers)	3 (27%)

This breakdown highlighted respondents who lack basic amenities and is one of the ways in which respondents' objective housing situation is calculated. Some respondents self-identified as housing stable but lacked amenities that would consider their housing situation stable according to the Canadian definition of homelessness, including indoor plumbing, heat, electricity, and access to safe drinking water. Important to note here is that while four respondents do not have sufficient heating and three do not have access to safe drinking water, very few respondents overall are lacking the amenities necessary for their housing conditions to be considered livable.

18% (9) of all respondents, 100% (9) of which are housing insecure, have always lived in Drumheller. Of the housing insecure respondents who were not born there, 21% (9) have lived in the area for more than eight years while 23% (10) have lived in the area for less than one year. Respondents who are not from Drumheller were also asked to indicate why they came to this community. The top three reasons respondents came to the area are:

1. To be closer to family (27%)
2. To access services/supports (20%)
3. To start a job (16%)

Other reasons people moved to Drumheller include to look for work (11%), for the lifestyle the community offers (5%), fear for safety/fleeing from violence (5%), to find housing (4%), to reconnect with culture, family, and traditions (2%), and to access emergency shelter (2%). 9% of respondents indicated "other."

Community Supports

To better understand service needs and gaps in Drumheller, respondents were asked: *"Which support services do you access?"* The main reasons respondents access support services are to help with health and wellness (27%), basic needs (21%) and support services (16%).

Table 7: Reasons Why Respondents Access Support Services

Services Accessed	# of Housing Secure Respondents who Accessed these Services	# of Housing Insecure Respondents who Accessed these Services
Basic Needs – Food, shelter, clothing, etc.	0	10 (22%)
COVID-19 – PPE, information, supports	0	3 (3%)
Crisis Financial Support – Eviction notice, utility bill problems, damage deposits, etc.	0	3 (3%)

Family/Parenting - Child care, parenting/family issues, relationship issues, child developmental assessment tools/referrals, etc.	1 (25%)	3 (3%)
Financial - Employment, housing, training/education, etc.	0	10 (12%)
Health and Wellness - Addictions, mental health, physical health care, spiritual/cultural, etc.	1 (25%)	23 (27%)
Legal - Separation/divorce/ custody, wills/estates, employment/labour standards, landlord/tenant issues, immigration issues, criminal/misdemeanor, etc.	0	5 (6%)

Support Services - Help with government forms, help with accessing government/other programs or services, access to technology, etc.	1 (25%)	13 (15%)
Transportation - Access to basic services/education/ employment, medical transportation	1 (25%)	6 (7%)

To further understand respondents' abilities to access the necessary support services, we asked: *"Which of these services were you able to access in your community?"* and *"Which of these services did you have to access in another community?"* followed by, *"If applicable, how long did you travel to access these services (one-way)?"*

Respondents were most likely to access basic needs and health and wellness in Drumheller, while health and wellness and support services were most accessed outside the community, as seen in Table 8.

Table 8: Services Accessed by Housing Insecure Respondents by Location

Services Accessed in the Community	# of Respondents who Accessed these Services	Services Accessed Outside of the Community	# of Respondents who Accessed these Services
Basic Needs - Food, shelter, clothing, etc.	26 (16%)	**Basic Needs -** Food, shelter, clothing, etc.	7 (11%)
COVID-19 - PPE, information, supports	14 (8%)	**COVID-19 -** PPE, information, supports	5 (8%)
Crisis Financial Support - Eviction notice, utility bill problems, damage deposits, etc.	16 (10%)	**Crisis Financial Support -** Eviction notice, utility bill problems, damage deposits, etc.	7 (11%)
Family/Parenting - Child care, parenting/family issues, relationship issues, child developmental assessment tools/referrals, etc.	12 (7%)	**Family/Parenting -** Child care, parenting/family issues, relationship issues, child developmental assessment tools/referrals, etc.	5 (8%)

Financial - Employment, housing, training/education, etc.	22 (13%)	**Financial -** Employment, housing, training/education, etc.	5 (8%)
Health and Wellness - Addictions, mental health, physical health care, spiritual/cultural, etc.	25 (15%)	**Health and Wellness -** Addictions, mental health, physical health care, spiritual/cultural, etc.	11 (17%)
Legal - Separation/divorce /custody, wills/estates, employment/ labour standards, landlord/tenant issues, immigration issues, criminal/ misdemeanour, etc.	15 (9%)	**Legal -** Separation/divorce/ custody, wills/estates, employment/labour standards, landlord/tenant issues, immigration issues, criminal/ misdemeanour, etc.	7 (11%)

Support Services - Help with government forms, help with accessing government/other programs or services, access to technology, etc.	22 (13%)	**Support Services -** Help with government forms, help with accessing government/other programs or services, access to technology, etc.	8 (12%)
Transportation - Access to basic services/education /employment, medical transportation	11 (7%)	**Transportation -** Access to basic services/education/ employment, medical transportation	7 (11%)

Respondents noted travelling an average of two hours one-way to access services. Time and distance to access services outside of the community are barriers for some respondents; while 65% of respondents travel by vehicle to get to these services, 19% rely on family members or friends, and 13% rely on public transit or e-bus, taxis and/or a service agency staff arranging a ride for them.

Important to consider is that respondents who are unable to access the necessary support will continue to experience housing insecurity at much higher rates than those respondents who can access the support needed to stabilize their housing situation.

5% (2) of respondents accessed an emergency shelter in the past 12 months and 7% (3) preferred not to answer; 50% (1) accessed a standard emergency shelter and 50% (1) were not sure which type of shelter they accessed.
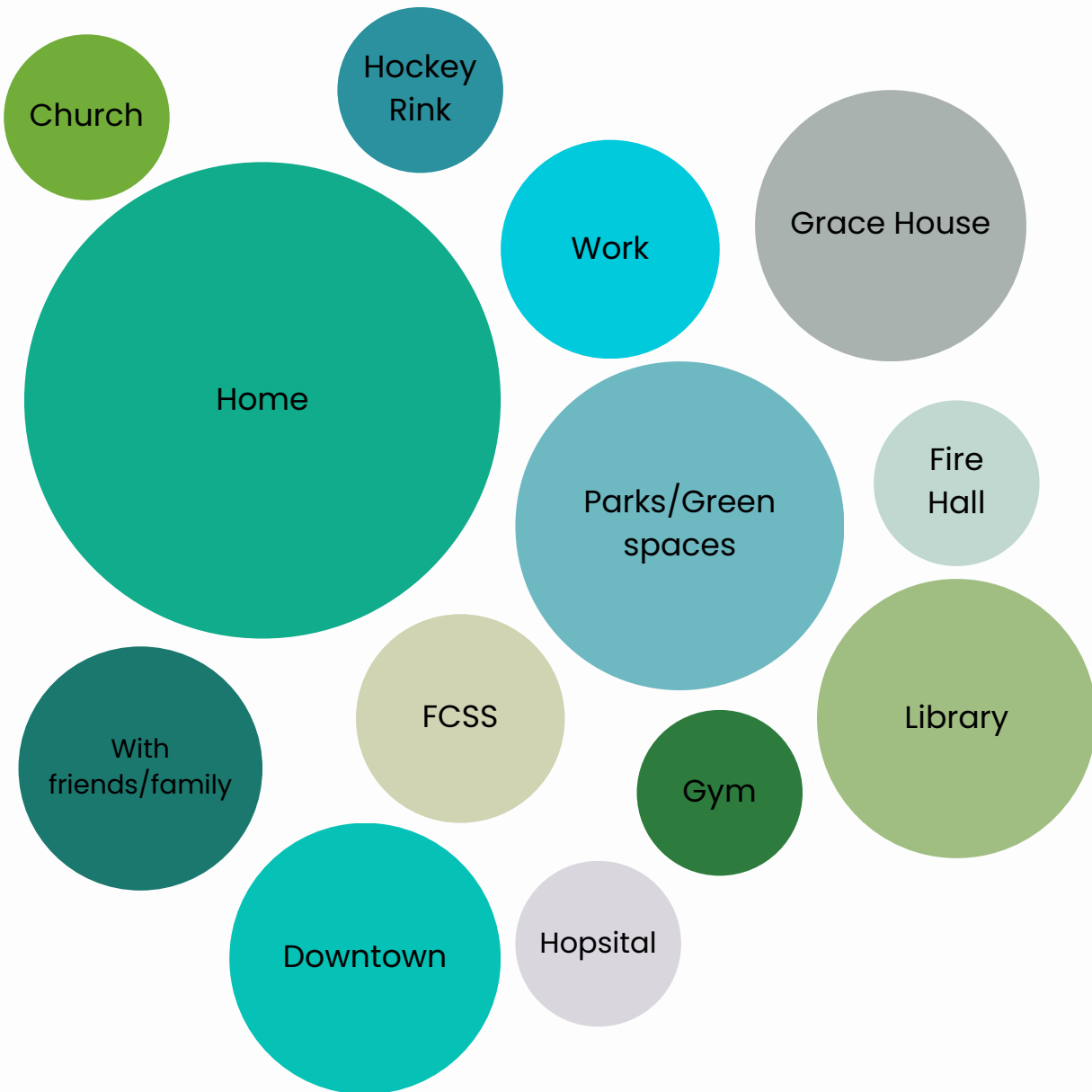
Insights on Community Spaces

Wanting to ensure the respondents had the opportunity to reflect on their experiences in the community, they were asked; *"What are two things you love about the community and what are two things you don't love about the community?"*

In analyzing responses across both housing secure and housing insecure respondents about what they love about Drumheller, two themes emerged: the sense of community and parks and recreation. Respondents repeatedly highlighted the welcoming feel of the community. Many noted how they love that their family is close by and how welcoming and friendly the people are in Drumheller. Respondents also emphasized the beauty of the land they live on, including the surrounding parks and trails.

In contrast, when discussing the things they don't love about the community, respondents spoke often of the lack of housing options and services within the community. Respondents repeatedly mentioned the lack of affordable housing options in Drumheller. Many indicated that there are very few rental units available and those that are available are not pet-friendly. Others emphasized the need for more low-income or below-market-rate housing options. Additionally, respondents highlighted the lack of transportation and mental health services in Drumheller as a concern.
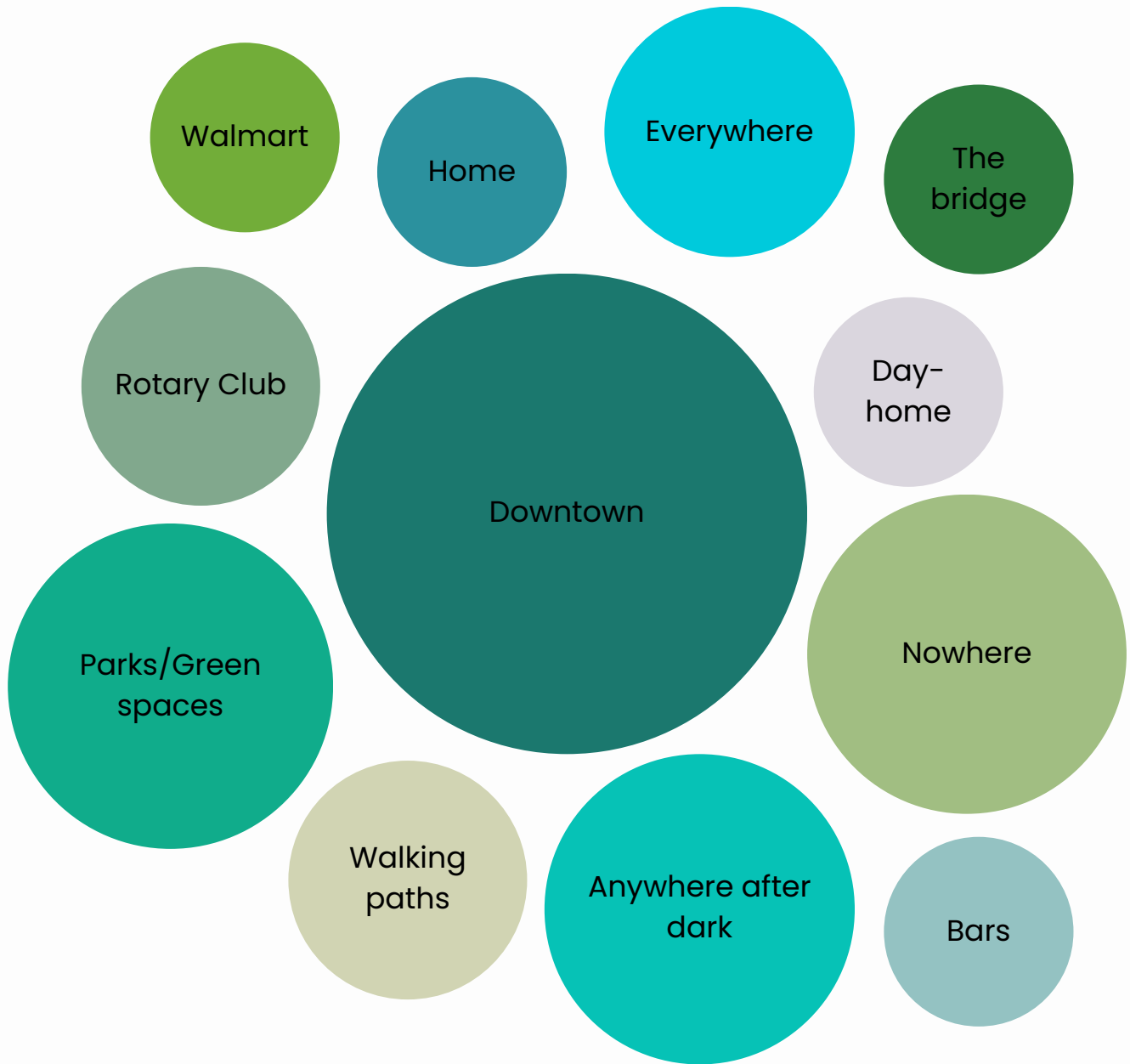
Respondents were also asked, *"What are two places that make you feel safe in the community and what are two places that make you feel unsafe in the community?"* Figure 6 highlights the spaces where respondents feel safe.

Figure 6: Housing Insecure Respondents Safe Spaces

Church

Hockey Rink

Work

Grace House

Home

Parks/Green spaces

Fire Hall

Library

FCSS

With friends/family

Gym

Downtown

Hopsital

Interestingly, as seen in Figure 7, there was overlap in three spaces: home, the downtown, and parks/green spaces. Some respondents indicated they felt safe here while others noted feeling unsafe in the same spaces.

Figure 7: Housing Insecure Respondents Unsafe Spaces

Walmart

Home

Everywhere

The bridge

Rotary Club

Downtown

Day-home

Parks/Green spaces

Nowhere

Walking paths

Anywhere after dark

Bars

"What Would You Like to See More of in Your Community?"

Respondents, both housing secure and housing insecure, outlined many things they would like to see more of in the community. Upon further analysis, they can be categorized into two main themes: housing and services. Interestingly, only one of these themes seems to align with respondents' answers to a previous question they were asked: *"Does Drumheller provide enough...employment opportunities; free/accessible recreational and social opportunities; social services; accessible and affordable housing; public transportation; access to food?" Moreover,* the interest in seeing more specific support services conflicts with respondents' answers as outlined in Table 9.

Table 9: Respondents' Perceptions of Hinton's Provision of Services

Does the Community Provide Enough:	# of Respondents Who Believe the Community Provides Enough...	# of Respondents Who Believe the Community Does Not Provide Enough...	# of Respondents Who Aren't Sure if the Community Provides Enough...
Employment opportunities	20 (41%)	16 (33%)	13 (27%)
Free/accessible recreational and social opportunities	19 (39%)	23 (47%)	7 (14%)
Social services	38 (78%)	6 (12%)	5 (10%)

Accessible & affordable housing	4 (8%)	34 (69%)	11 (22%)
Public transportation	2 (4%)	42 (86%)	5 (10%)
Access to food (grocery stores, markets, food banks, etc.)	37 (76%)	9 (18%)	3 (6%)

Of note in Table 9 is the significant discrepancy in respondents who believe there is enough accessible and affordable housing in Drumheller (8%) versus the number of respondents who believe more accessible and affordable housing is needed (69%) and the number of respondents who believe there is enough transportation (4%) versus the number of respondents believe more transportation is needed (86%).

Housing: Respondents emphasized the need for more affordable and accessible housing options in Drumheller. Specifically, respondents want to see more wheelchair-accessible rental options, pet-friendly rental options, and below-market-rate rental options. Others indicated an interest in seeing a policy implemented that would control the rates at which landlords are able to increase the cost of rent on a unit per year. Additionally, respondents want to see an emergency or women's/domestic violence shelter built in Drumheller.

Services: Respondents outlined several services they would like to see more of in Drumheller. Some noted wanting more supports dedicated to seniors while others suggested more support for unsheltered residents. Most respondents specifically emphasized the need for addiction services and mental health supports, especially low-cost mental health services and supports. Almost all respondents also indicated the need for transportation services in Drumheller in order for them

to access the current supports and services available to them. Many of these respondents also highlighted that transportation services should be wheelchair accessible.

Upon further analysis, an overall satisfaction score was generated to better understand respondents' perceptions of service provision in the community. Interestingly, it was determined that housing secure respondents are 36% satisfied, while housing insecure respondents are 42% satisfied with service provision in Drumheller. This is fairly unusual; more often we see housing insecure respondents less satisfied with services in the community and housing secure respondents more satisfied. Important to note here is that the satisfaction rates calculated above speak to the lack of available services in the area rather than satisfaction with currently available services in the community.

What Does Homelessness Look Like in Drumheller?

In a report that is composed of mainly quantitative data, it can be easy to overlook the humanity behind the numbers reported. Using the most common responses from the survey, we were able to compile a profile of a "typical" respondent facing housing insecurity.

In the case of Drumheller, this is a woman between 20-39 who shares a home with her spouse/partner where she pays between $500-$900 per month in rent. She came to the community less than a year ago to access support services and to start a job. She struggles to keep up with increasing rent costs and accesses basic needs services to help make ends meet.

The true diversity of respondents is illustrated in the Results & Analysis section, but this highlights what someone experiencing housing insecurity might look like in Drumheller.

Opportunities Moving Forward

Based on the findings outlined in this report, RDN has identified three opportunities to support housing insecure respondents moving forward. They are:

1. **Consider public transportation options in Drumheller.** Respondents indicated a lack of transportation as prohibitive to accessing support services, recreation opportunities, and shelter in the community. To ensure respondents can get the support they need to stabilize their housing situation, whether that be access to medical or mental health support, accessing the employment centre, obtaininga job, or even finding housing, accessible transportation is crucial. Public transportation is often very difficult to provide in rural communities, due to lack of infrastructure and costs associated with operations. Consider creative and/or alternative options to public transportation such as car share programs, taxi credits, volunteer ride share programs, or other options to ensure community members, specifically housing insecure community members, can get around the community. Additionally, conducting an accessibility audit across the community to identify infrastructure that is not currently accessible is a great starting point to understand how to support residents who need accessibility support.

2. **Conduct an accessibility audit of current housing options and services in Drumheller.** Respondents overwhelmingly highlighted the lack of wheelchair-accessible housing options in the community. Without housing that is physically accessible to community members, they will be unable to stabilize their housing situation. It is critical to conduct an accessibility audit in Drumheller to identify the percentage of housing options that are currently inaccessible. Once the audit has been completed, it is important to begin addressing the lack of accessibility within the community by working with landlords on updating bylaws and building permit requirements, renovating currently inaccessible locations to improve accessibility, and reaching out to community members to let them know the work that is ongoing to address accessibility concerns.

3. Conduct a gap analysis and audit of service offerings in Drumheller. Respondents indicated that addictions mental health services are severely lacking in Drumheller. Further, housing secure respondents are only 36% satisfied and housing insecure respondents are 42% satisfied with the provision of services in Drumheller. Given these service gaps identified by residents, it is critical to audit the current availability of addictions and mental health supports and services in the community. If these services currently exist in Drumheller or in surrounding communities, consider why respondents identified them as a gap. This might mean rethinking the delivery of certain services, increasing access to these services, looking for ways to better promote these services, or subsidizing these services to increase awareness across the community. Conducting a gap analysis and audit of services in Drumheller will ultimately help identify where new services are needed versus where increased awareness around currently available services is needed.

References

Abedin, Z. (2022). *Step-by-step guide to estimating rural homelessness, 2nd Ed.* Rural Development Network. https://www.ruraldevelopment.ca/publications/step-by-step-guide-to-estimating-homelessness

Economic Research Institute. (2023). Cost of Living Data in Drumheller, Alberta, Canada. https://www.erieri.com/cost-of-living/canada/alberta/drumheller

Gaetz, S., Barr, C., Friesen, A., Harris, B., Hill, C., Kovacs-Burns, K., Pauly, B., Pearce, B., Turner, A., & Marsolais, A. (2012). *Canadian Definition of Homelessness.* Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

Government of Alberta. (n.d.). Drumheller. Alberta Regional Dashboard. Retrieved April 26, 2023 from https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/drumheller/#/

Schiff, R., Wilkinson, A., Kelford, T., Pelletier, S., & Waegemakers Schiff, J. (2022). Counting the undercounted: Enumerating rural homelessness in Canada. *International Journal on Homelessness, 3(*1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.5206/ijoh.2022.2.14633

Statistics Canada. (2021). Census profile, 2021 Census of Population. Drumheller, Town (T) [census subdivision], Alberta. Retrieved from https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?_Lang=E&SearchText=drumheller&GENDERlist=1&STATISTIClist=1,4&DGUIDlist=2021A00054805026&HEADERlist=2,30,5,6,20,23,9,7,11,19,1,3

Thistle, J. (2017). *Indigenous Definition of Homelessness in Canada*. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Rural Development Network
(780)-964-2736
11443 - 143 Street, NW
Edmonton, AB