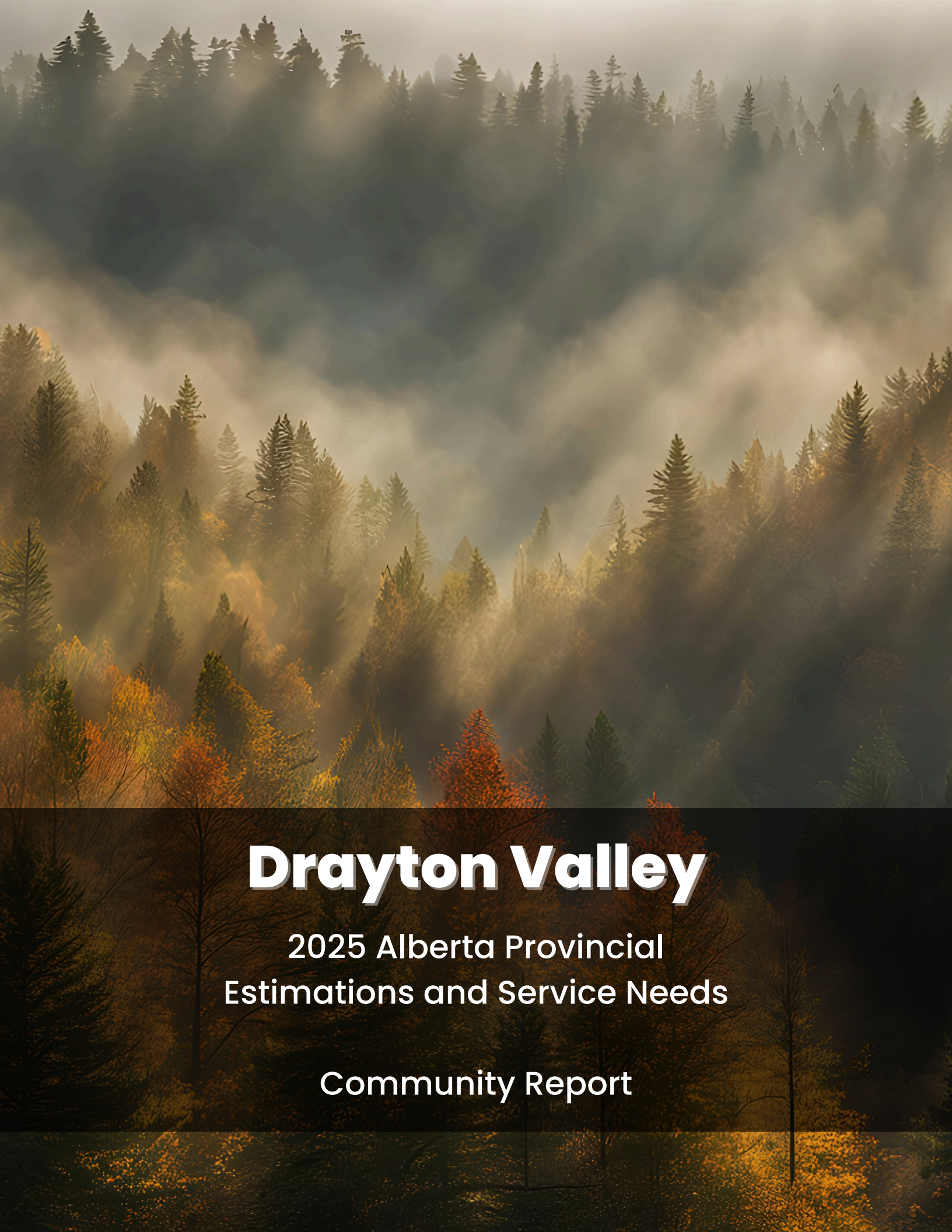

Drayton Valley

2025 Alberta Provincial Estimations and Service Needs

Community Report

DRAYTON VALLEY

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Acknowledgements

The Rural Development Network's (RDN) physical office is located on amiskwacîwâskahikan ᐊᒥᐢᑲᐧᒋᐋᐧᐢᑲᐦᐃᑲᐣ, known as Beaver Hills House or Edmonton, the historical land of Treaty 6 Territory and homeland of Fort Edmonton Métis District 9. As a national organization, we also acknowledge that RDN staff and the communities we support live, gather, and organize across Turtle Island.

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples are experiencing homelessness at disproportionately high rates in Canada, especially compared to non-Indigenous people. Unlike the common, colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous houselessness 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 houselessness. 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 houselessness.

In an ongoing effort to support Indigenous communities in addressing issues of housing, houselessness, and service needs, we are committed to decolonizing houselessness research and advocating 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 Thank You.

This report and the information within were made possible through the efforts of many dedicated individuals and groups. First and foremost, we would like to thank the residents of Drayton Valley for sharing their experiences and insights about housing and service needs in the community. We appreciate your time, effort, and knowledge! Additionally, we want to thank the front-line staff at participating service provider locations for their support, dedication, and commitment to this project

Drayton Area Community Food Bank Society

humans helping humans Housing Foundation

McMan

fcss Drayton Valley & District Family and Community Support Services

PCCS Pembina Crisis Connection Society

The Youth Hub kickstand Drayton Valley

CAN Career Assistance Network

Warming Hearts One Bowl at a Time

Brighter Futures

This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy

Canada

About this Report

In 2025, the Rural Development Network (RDN) partnered with 19 organizations representing 64 communities across Alberta to conduct the fourth iteration of a province-wide Housing and Service Needs Estimation.

This report outlines Drayton Valley's results within the provincial estimation, highlighting the number of residents who are housing insecure and their experiences with housing insecurity. This report is complemented by the Alberta Provincial Report, which highlights the combined results of all 64 communities across the province.

This report is intended to support decision-making across organizations, funders, and government around housing insecurity by providing reliable and up-to-date data on housing and service needs in Drayton Valley. It can also be used in the community for program planning and advocacy purposes related to housing insecurity, housing stock, and service needs.

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

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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, more recently termed "houselessness," considers the traumas imposed on Indigenous Peoples through colonialism. Indigenous houselessness is not only defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews, including: "individuals, families, and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages, and identifies" (Thistle, 2017).

Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant and stressful. 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, 2012).

In this report, we will use "housing insecure." The term will be used to encompass the entire spectrum of homelessness, including unsheltered, emergency sheltered, provisionally accommodated, and at risk of homelessness, as well as those experiencing Indigenous houselessness.

Introduction

Housing insecurity is a continued and increasing concern in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities across Alberta and the entire country. When it comes to housing insecurity, the urban experience tends to dominate the conversation, mainly due to the visibility of unsheltered individuals experiencing housing insecurity in urban centres. The issue of housing insecurity in rural and remote areas is far less understood and acknowledged because of its hidden nature. Recent data suggests that rural homelessness is prevalent at rates equivalent to or greater than urban per capita rates (Schiff et al., 2022).

In 2023, the Alberta Provincial Housing and Service Needs Estimation identified 2,429 survey respondents as experiencing housing insecurity. An additional 2,354 dependents under 18 and 2,537 adults reported living with housing insecure survey respondents, meaning there were at least 7,320 community members experiencing housing insecurity across the 21 participating communities in rural and remote Alberta (Rural Development Network, 2023). While some housing insecure respondents had experiences of being unsheltered or emergency-sheltered, the majority of housing insecure respondents were provisionally accommodated or at risk of homelessness, further speaking to the issue of visibility, or rather invisibility, of housing insecurity in rural and remote communities.

As rural, remote, and Indigenous communities continue to experience growth amidst a national housing and affordability crisis, it has become more apparent than ever that more evidence is required to support decision–making on housing insecurity, housing stock, and services across the province.

Recognizing this, RDN conducted the 2025 Alberta Provincial Housing and Service Needs Estimation with 19 organizations representing roughly 64 rural, remote, and Indigenous communities across Alberta in an attempt to better understand what housing insecurity looks like in each community and across the rural provincial landscape. Specifically, the purpose of this estimation is to:

1. Provide a comprehensive picture of housing insecurity in Drayton Valley and across Alberta, including demographic information on who is experiencing housing insecurity and details on service use and gaps.
2. Help inform service providers and municipal, provincial, and federal policies, practices, and funding decisions on housing insecurity, housing stock, and support services.
3. Develop recommendations and next steps for service providers and all levels of government to address housing insecurity in Drayton Valley and across Alberta.
4. Elevate and incorporate the voices of people experiencing housing insecurity in local, provincial, and federal responses to housing insecurity.

This is the fourth iteration of the Alberta Provincial Housing and Service Needs Estimation. It was also conducted in 2018, 2020, and 2023, with 20, 24, and 21 communities, respectively. Table 1 details Drayton Valley participation in previous Provincial Housing and Service Needs Estimations.

Table 1: Past Participation in Provincial Estimations

	Total # of Respondents	# of Housing Insecure Respondents	# of Housing Insecure Dependents and Additional Adults	Total # of Housing Insecure Community Members
2018	35	33	28	61
2023	139	92	175	267

Methodology

The methodology employed in this Housing and Service Needs Estimation comes from the Step-by-Step Guide to Estimating Rural, Remote, and Indigenous Homelessness, published by the Rural Development Network (2022). RDN initially developed the Step-by-Step Guide due to the lack of available, accurate, and current data on rural housing insecurity. A lack of data limits the ability of rural communities like Drayton Valley 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. It recognizes the difficulties of conducting standard Point-in-Time (PiT) counts in rural and remote areas and 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.

Please note: *As with a PiT count, this estimation is an undercount and represents only those individuals identified during the four-week period. The number of people experiencing housing insecurity is greater than presented in this report.*

Following the model proposed in the Step-by-Step Guide, RDN worked with communities and academics across Canada to develop a survey that reflected the contexts of rural and remote communities. The survey was developed following the definitions of homelessness proposed by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and adopted by the federal government. 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, which could cause distress to their clients. By reframing the language of the survey, service providers were able to encourage all clients to participate, instead of targeting specific 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 considered their living conditions secure or insecure and to indicate scenarios in a "select all that apply" question that determined 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 insecure. As shown in the results below, some individuals who did not consider themselves housing insecure qualify as such based on the national definitions of homelessness.

The same survey was used across all communities participating in the 2025 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 Drayton Valley location parameters.

Figure 1: Drayton Valley's Location Question on Survey

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

- ☐ Drayton Valley
- ☐ Brazeau County
- ☐ Yellowhead County
- ☐ Parkland County
- ☐ Other: _____

RDN worked with Drayton Valley to develop a survey administration process to ensure the greatest participation level possible. For Drayton Valley, surveys were advertised at service provider locations and online as an open SurveyMonkey link across the community. Surveys were available through these locations and online for a period of four weeks, from October 1 to October 31, 2025.

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, prioritizing 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 allowed RDN to maintain the integrity of the data without knowing respondent identities. The unique identifier was 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?

Drayton Valley collected 349 survey responses during the four weeks. Of the 349 surveys, 90 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 (e.g., characters instead of numbers, etc.).
3. Survey respondent(s) submitted multiple surveys (determined based on unique identifier(s)).
4. Survey respondent(s) indicated they were located outside of community boundaries.
5. Survey respondent(s) did not complete enough questions to determine housing stability (e.g., abandoned the survey).

Based on this, 259 were deemed 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 service providers were informed that participants under 14 years old required guardian consent to participate in the survey. We recognize that this is inherently problematic and exclusionary, as most youth experiencing homelessness would not have a guardian to provide consent. However, to maintain survey ethics, this requirement complies with the Alberta College of Social Workers' Standards of Practice.

Additionally, the data does not represent Drayton Valley as a whole; rather, it represents only those who accessed services in the region during the four-week enumeration period.

As a result, there remains a portion of people experiencing housing insecurity in Drayton Valley whose voices were not captured in this project. Therefore, while the trends and highlights discussed in this report are informative, it is always important to remember that this report presents a conservative picture of the housing and services needs in Drayton Valley.

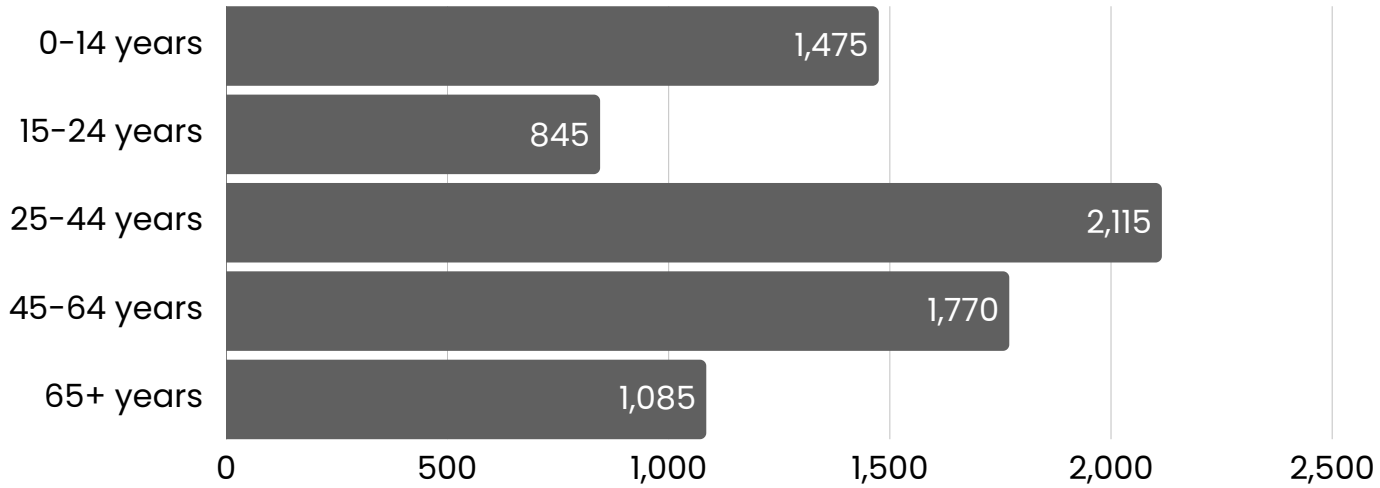
Results and Analysis

Drayton Valley Population Overview

According to Alberta's Regional Dashboard (Government of Alberta, 2025), Drayton Valley covers 30.9 square km of geographical land base and has a population size of 7,291 (Statistics Canada, 2021).

50.2% (3,660) of Drayton Valley reported as women, while 49.7% (3,630) reported as men (Statistics Canada, 2021).

Figure 3: Drayton Valley Population Age Breakdown (2021)



The average age in Drayton Valley is 38.8 years.

According to Statistics Canada (2021) Census numbers, 8.1% (570) of Drayton Valley's population were immigrants to Canada. Further, 8% (565) of Drayton Valley's population identified as Indigenous, 2.9% (205) of whom were First Nations and 5.1% (360) were Métis.

The 2021 Census also reported that Drayton Valley has 2,895 private dwellings with an average of 2.4 people per household. Of the 2,895 private dwellings in Drayton Valley, 71.3% (2,065) were owned, while 28.7% (830) were rented, with average monthly shelter costs for rented dwellings reported as $1,176. Additionally, 62.8% (1,825) were single-detached houses, 18.59% (540) were apartments,[1] 9.8% (285) were moveable dwellings,[2] 6.7% (195) were semi-detached houses, and 2% (60) were row houses.

28% (810) of households in Drayton Valley reported 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."

1 Includes apartments or flats in a duplex and apartments in both buildings with fewer than five storeys and with five or more storeys.
2 According to Statistics Canada (2021), a moveable dwelling includes mobile homes and other movable dwellings such as houseboats, recreational vehicles and railroad cars.

The median after-tax income in Drayton Valley is $38,400 for individuals and $75,500 for households. The Economic Research Institute (2026) estimates the cost of living to be 3% higher than the national average and 1% lower than the Alberta provincial average for Drayton Valley.

Housing & Service Needs Estimation Survey Respondent Population Overview

Gender and Sexuality

68% (173) of respondents identified as women, 30% (77) as men, and 2% (5) preferred not to answer.

81% (208) of respondents identified as straight, 5% (12) as bisexual/pansexual, 3% (7) as lesbian/gay, 1% (3) as asexual, and 0% (1) as Two-Spirit. Additionally, 9% (24) preferred not to answer.

Age

5% (12) of respondents were between the ages of 15 and 24, 46% (18) were 25 to 44, 38% (98) were 45 to 65, and 12% (31) were 65 and older.

Household Makeup

5% (4) of respondents noted that they or someone in their home was pregnant, 24% (21) indicated they live in a multi-generational home, and 72% (63) were in single-parent households.

Time Spent in Care

9% (23) of respondents indicated they spent time in foster care, a youth group home, or in a youth/young adult agreement. 2% (4) preferred not to answer.

Immigration

87% (226) of respondents were born in Canada, while 13% (33) immigrated to Canada. 88% (29) of respondents who immigrated to Canada have lived here for more than ten years.

Race and Indigenous Identity

89% (218) of respondents identified as white, compared to 4% (11) of racially diverse respondents. 7% (16) of respondents preferred not to answer, and 0% (1) self-disclosed as "Canadian."

Further, 20% (51) of respondents self-identified as Indigenous, while 3% (9) preferred not to answer. Of those respondents who self-identified as Indigenous, 43% (22) identified as First Nations, 41% (21) as Métis, 2% (1) as Inuk, and 18% (9) as other Indigenous ancestry.

Veteran Status

7% (17) of total respondents indicated that they served in the Canadian Armed Forces, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), or emergency services. Of those who indicated they have served, 35% (6) served in the Canadian Armed Forces, 12% (2) served in the RCMP, and 59% (10) served in emergency services.

Objective Housing Situation

As part of the survey, participants were asked: *"Do you consider your housing situation 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 259 survey respondents, 98 self-identified as housing insecure, 129 indicated "I'm not sure," while 32 indicated they were housing secure. Using the national definitions of homelessness to guide further analysis,169 survey respondents were identified as housing insecure and 90 as housing secure. An additional 136 dependents under 18 and 221 adults were reported as living with housing insecure survey respondents.

Tables 2 and 3 show breakdowns of respondents by housing security status and highlight the number of dependents and adults who reported sharing living conditions with housing insecure respondents in Drayton Valley.

Table 2: Breakdown of Respondent Housing Status

	# of Individuals
Housing Secure	90
Housing Insecure	169

Table 3: Breakdown of Dependents & Adults Sharing Insecure Housing Living Conditions

	# of Additional Individuals
Dependents	136
Adults	221

Based on survey results, there were at least 526 community members experiencing housing insecurity in Drayton Valley.

The top three reasons for housing insecurity in Drayton Valley, as reported by survey respondents, were:

1. Health challenges[3]
2. High housing costs[4]
3. Low vacancy rates[5]

3 "Illness/medical condition," "Mental health concerns", "Mental disability," and/or "Physical disability"
4 "My rent/mortgage is too high for my current income"
5 "There is almost no vacancy/no rentals available"

Housing Secure vs. Housing Insecure Survey Respondent Population Overview

Table 4: Housing & Service Needs Estimation Survey Population Overview Comparison by Housing Stability

Demographic Characteristic	Housing Secure	Housing Insecure
Number of Survey Respondents	90	169
Gender	Gender non-conforming: 0	Gender non-conforming: 0
	Man: 13	Man: 64
	Trans-man: 0	Trans-man: 0
	Trans-woman: 0	Trans-woman: 0
	Woman: 75	Woman: 98
	Not sure: 0	Not sure: 0
Sexual Orientation	Asexual: 1	Asexual: 2
	Bisexual/Pansexual: 0	Bisexual/Pansexual: 12
	Lesbian/Gay: 2	Lesbian/Gay: 5
	Straight: 80	Straight: 126
	Two-Spirit: 0	Two-Spirit: 1
	Not sure: 0	Not sure: 0
Age	0-14 years: 0	0-14 years: 0
	15–24 years: 2	15–24 years: 10
	25-44 years: 23	25-44 years: 95
	45-64 years: 42	45-64 years: 56
	65+ years: 23	65+ years: 8

Demographic Characteristic	Housing Secure	Housing Insecure
Household Makeup	Pregnancy in household: 0	Pregnancy in household: 4
	Multi-generational household: 4	Multi-generational household: 17
	Single-parent household: 17	Single-parent household: 46
	Spent time in care: 2	Spent time in care: 21
Immigration Status	Born in Canada: 79	Born in Canada: 147
	Born outside of Canada: 11	Born outside of Canada: 22
Racial Identity	White: 81	White: 137
	Racialized: 1	Racialized: 12
Indigenous Identity	First Nations: 3	First Nations: 19
	Métis: 4	Métis: 17
	Inuk: 0	Inuk: 1
	Other Indigenous ancestry: 1	Other Indigenous ancestry: 8
Served in Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP, Emergency Services	Canadian Armed Forces: 0	Canadian Armed Forces: 6
	RCMP: 2	RCMP: 0
	Emergency Services: 2	Emergency Services: 8

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

- Respondents identifying as women were 1.5 times more likely than their male counterparts to be housing insecure.
- 87% of respondents who identified as 2SLGBTQIA+ were housing insecure.
- 92% of racialized respondents were housing insecure.
- 85% of Indigenous respondents were housing insecure.
- 91% of respondents who spent time in care were housing insecure.
- 81% of respondents living in a multi-generational household were housing insecure.

Exploring the Spectrum of Homelessness in Drayton Valley

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 Drayton Valley. This understanding can be achieved by exploring the experiences of the 169 housing insecure respondents.

To accurately place respondents along the spectrum of homelessness, a series of measures were used to understand their situations. These measures included their self-identified housing security response, calculated housing security, current housing situation, and the amenities they lack in their current situation.

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. Statements included, but were not limited to, "I slept in a vehicle," "I slept in a hotel overnight because I had nowhere else to go," "I live in supported or transitional housing," and "I live in housing that needs major repairs."

Respondents were able to select more than one statement. To accurately represent what housing insecurity might look like for respondents over a month, all responses have been included.

When reading this table, an important consideration is that people experiencing housing insecurity often fluctuate in and out of their situation. Someone who was unsheltered one night may 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 complexities of housing insecurity in Drayton Valley. This means that more incidents of housing insecurity are reported in the table below than the number of housing insecure respondents.

Table 5: Respondents by Housing Situation on the Homelessness Spectrum

Place on the Homelessness Spectrum	# of Incidents
Unsheltered	84
Emergency Sheltered	49
Provisionally Accommodated	192
At Risk of Homelessness	219

The above table illustrates respondents' diverse experiences with housing insecurity in Drayton Valley, emphasizing that homelessness presents itself in more ways than simply sleeping outside.

Respondents identified as **at risk** reported:

- Difficulty paying their rent or mortgage,
- Spending more than 30% of their monthly income on housing,
- Living in overcrowded accommodations with not enough bedrooms for the number of people staying in the unit,
- Staying in a home needing major repairs (e.g., heating or plumbing problems, mould, leaky roof, etc.), and/or
- Staying in a home with unsafe conditions (e.g., exposed wiring, no railing or banisters, physical hazards, etc.).

Respondents who indicated they experienced being **provisionally accommodated** noted:

- Staying in a hotel overnight because they had nowhere to go,
- Living in accommodations provided by their employer,
- Living in a home that is owned/rented out by a First Nations or Métis Settlement,
- Staying in an RV/trailer,
- Staying in a medical/detox facility,
- Staying in a jail/prison/remand centre,
- Staying with friends/family because they had nowhere else to go,
- Staying with a stranger because they had nowhere else to go,
- Staying in a home where they experienced violence because they had nowhere else to go, and/or
- Enduring unwanted sexual activity to have a place to stay.

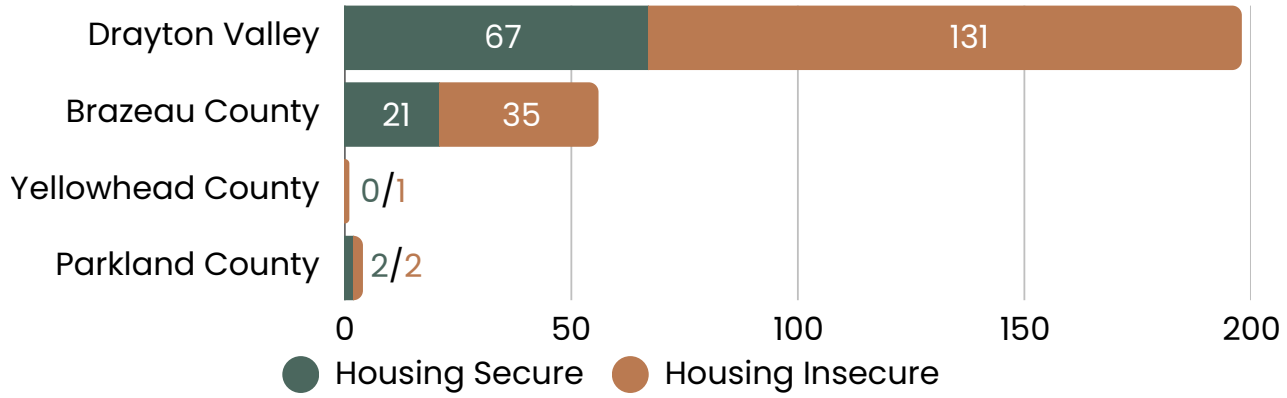
Respondents who had experiences of being **emergency sheltered or unsheltered** reported:

- Staying in an emergency shelter,
- Staying in domestic violence/women's shelters, and/or
- Staying in makeshift shelters such as a vehicle, tent, or shack.

Living Situation

Residents in and around Drayton Valley responded to the survey, as seen in Figure 4.

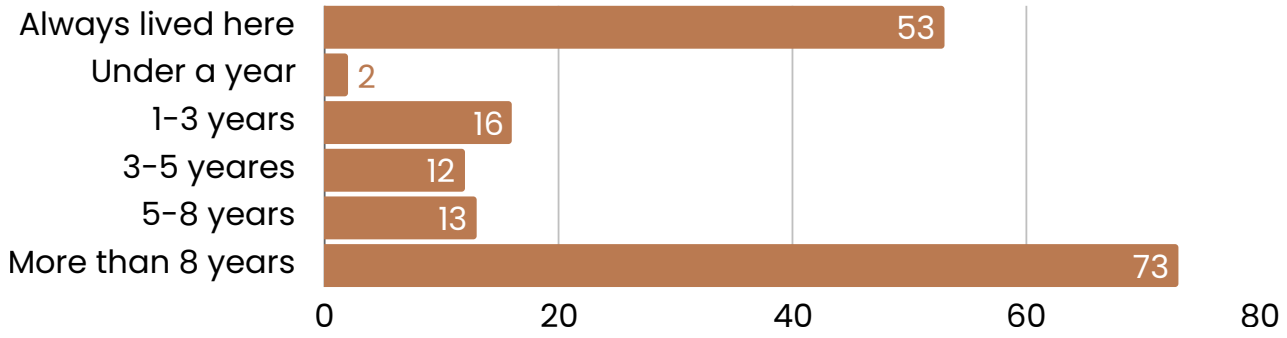
Figure 4: Breakdown of Survey Respondents by Location



Migration

28% (72) of all respondents, 74% (53) of which are housing insecure, have always lived in and around Drayton Valley. Figure 5 outlines the various lengths of time respondents have lived in the community.

Figure 5: Breakdown of Housing Insecure Respondents' Length of Time Lived in Drayton Valley



69% (116) of housing insecure respondents were not born in Drayton Valley. 56% (53) moved from another community in Alberta, 2% (2) moved from a First Nation community in Alberta, 1% (1) moved from a Métis Settlement, Métis District, or Métis Community in Alberta, 1% (1) moved from an Inuit Nunangat (Inuvialuit, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut, or Nunavut), 36% (34) moved from another province or territory, and 4% (4) moved from another country.

Respondents were also asked: *"What are the main reasons you came to this community? If you have always lived here, why have you chosen to stay in this community?"*

The top three reasons housing insecure respondents came to the area are:

- Family-related reasons (to be closer to family, to follow family, etc.)
- Employment-related reasons (look for work, work-related transfer, more work opportunities, etc.)
- For the lifestyle the community offers

Other reasons housing insecure respondents moved to the community included housing-related reasons (to access affordable and appropriate housing, etc.), the connection to culture, community, and traditions, fear for safety/fleeing from violence, access to services, education opportunities (to attend school, access better educational opportunities, etc.), environmental displacement (flooding, wildfire, lack of clean drinking water, etc.), and access to emergency shelters.

In comparison, the top three reasons housing insecure respondents stayed in the area are:

- Family-related reasons (to be closer to family, to follow family, etc.)
- For the lifestyle the community offers
- For the connection to culture, community, and traditions

Other reasons housing insecure respondents stayed in the community included employment-related reasons (look for work, work-related transfer, more work opportunities, etc.), access to services, housing-related reasons (to access affordable and appropriate housing, etc.), education opportunities (to attend school, access better educational opportunities, etc.), and fear for safety/fleeing from violence.

Noteworthy here is that 44% (34) of housing insecure respondents have moved between three and six times in the past 12 months and 17% (13) have moved more than six times in the past 12 months.

Housing Situation and Missing Amenities

To better understand respondents' current living situations, they were asked to indicate if they rent or own their home (or if neither was true for them). 35% (59) of housing insecure respondents indicated that they owned their homes, 26% (44) indicated that they rented their homes, 30% (50) noted that they sleep in a shelter, makeshift shelter, vehicle, outside, tent or shack, and/or couch surf, and 9% (16) noted none of the above were true for them. Comparatively, 96% (86) of housing secure respondents owned their homes while 4% (4) rented their homes.

95 unique housing insecure respondents, whether they rented, owned, or were in a different situation entirely, indicated that they lacked specific amenities in their current housing situation, many of which are considered necessary for a secure living situation. At the time of the survey, 78% (74) of these respondents did not have sufficient and affordable heating and 72% (68) did not have fire protection (including fire extinguishers, smoke alarms, and a safe exit out of their space).

Table 6: Breakdown of Housing Insecure Respondents' Missing Amenities

Missing Amenities	# (%) of Respondents
Sufficient and affordable heating	74 (78%)
Fire protection (smoke alarms, fire extinguishers)	68 (72%)
Safe drinking water	60 (63%)
Indoor plumbing/bathing facilities	57 (60%)
Cooking facilities	50 (53%)
Refrigeration	50 (53%)
Electricity	46 (48%)

This breakdown highlights respondents who lacked basic amenities and is one way respondents' objective housing situation is calculated. Some respondents self-identified as housing secure but lacked amenities required for their housing to be considered stable according to the Canadian definitions of homelessness, including indoor plumbing/bathing facilities, sufficient and affordable heating, electricity, access to safe drinking water, and fire protection.

Experiences of Violence, Abuse, and Unwanted Sexual Activity Amongst Housing Insecure Respondents

17% (29) of housing insecure respondents indicated experiencing violence, abuse, and/or unwanted sexual activity at the time of the survey. Based on additional analysis, we know that:

- **79%** identified as women, **21%** identified as men
- **69%** were straight, **7%** were bisexual/pansexual, **7%** were asexual, **3%** were lesbian/gay, **3%** were Two-Spirit, and **10%** preferred not to answer

Age Breakdown

15-24	**10%**
25-44	**55%**
45-64	**31%**
65+	**3%**

Indigenous Identity

34% were Indigenous

- **50%** were First Nations
- **20%** were Métis
- **30%** other Indigenous ancestry

- **31%** were employed in some capacity at the time of the survey, while **69%** were unemployed

Education, Employment, and Income

Education

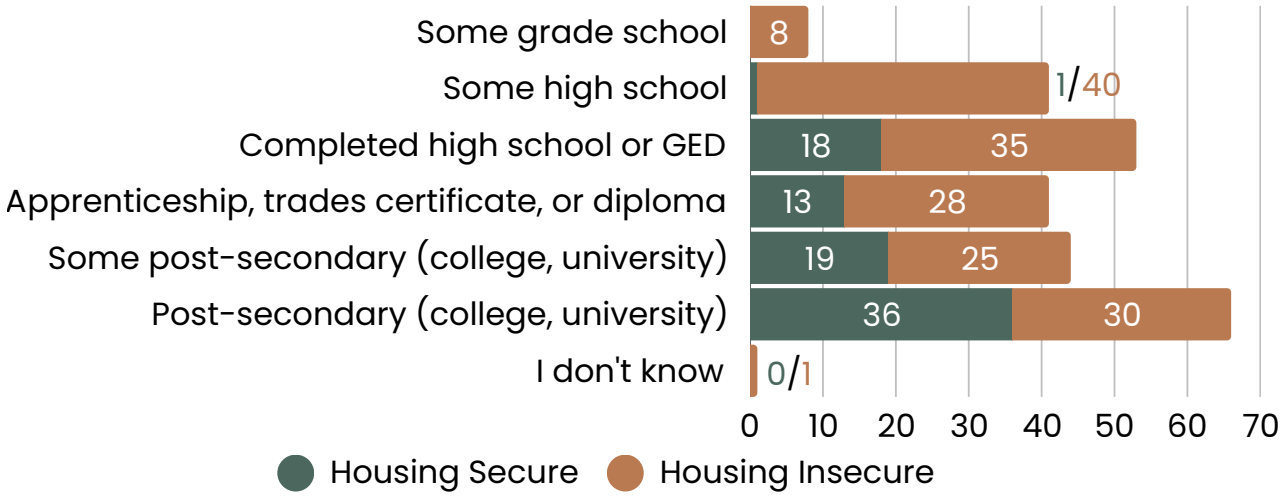
Respondents indicated various education levels when responding to the question, "What is the highest level of education you've completed?"

In Drayton Valley:

- 3% (8) of respondents had completed some grade school
- 16% (41) completed some high school
- 21% (53) completed high school or received their GED
- 16% (41) had an apprenticeship, trades certificate, or diploma
- 17% (44) had some post-secondary (college, university)
- 26% (66) had a post-secondary degree (college, university)
- 0% (1) did not know their highest completed level of education

Figure 6 provides a more detailed look at respondents' education levels.

Figure 6: Housing Secure and Housing Insecure Respondents' Education Levels



Employment

44% (71) of housing insecure respondents were employed at the time of the survey. Additionally, six respondents indicated they were retired. Of employed housing insecure respondents:

- 52% (37) were full-time (e.g., more than 30hrs/week)
- 27% (19) were part-time (e.g., less than 30hrs/week)
- 3% (2) were casual
- 1% (1) were on contract
- 3% (2) were seasonal
- 13% (9) were self-employed

Additionally, one respondent selected "other", indicating that they worked a full-time and part-time job.

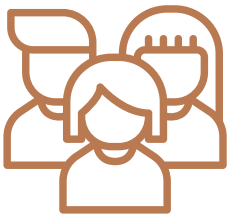
In contrast, 90% (52) of housing secure respondents were employed at the time of the survey, and 29 respondents were retired. Of employed housing secure respondents:

- 81% (42) were full-time (e.g., more than 30hrs/week)
- 8% (4) were part-time (e.g., less than 30hrs/week)
- 2% (1) were casual
- 6% (3) were on contract
- 4% (2) were self-employed

Unemployment Amongst Housing Insecure Respondents

56% (90) of housing insecure respondents were unemployed at the time of the survey. Based on additional analysis, we know that:

44% identified as women and **44%** as men



68% were straight, **9%** were bisexual/pansexual, **4%** were lesbian/gay, **2%** were asexual, **1%** were Two-Spirit, and **11%** preferred not to answer

Age Breakdown

15-24	**7%**
25-44	**59%**
45-64	**31%**
65+	**3%**

Indigenous Identity

34% were Indigenous

- **48%** were First Nations
- **35%** were Métis
- **16%** other Indigenous ancestry

Income

Housing insecure respondents were also asked to disclose their approximate household income for the previous year. Responses varied widely, as seen in Table 7.

Table 7: Housing Insecure Respondents Approximate Household Income in the Last 12 Months

Total Household Income in the Last 12 Months	# (%) of Respondents
Less than $22,000	82 (49%)
Between $22,001 and $55,000	29 (17%)
Between $55,001 and $88,000	17 (10%)

Between $88,001 and $132,000[6]	24 (14%)
More than $132,001	11 (7%)
Prefer not to answer	5 (3%)

This can be broken down further to understand household income level by housing security status, as seen in Table 8.

Table 8: Respondents' Household Income in the Last 12 Months by Housing Status

Total Household Income in the Last 12 Months	# (%) of Housing Secure Respondents	# (%) of Housing Insecure Respondents
Less than $22,000	4 (5%)	82 (49%)
Between $22,001 and $55,000	12 (14%)	29 (17%)
Between $55,001 and $88,000	12 (14%)	17 (10%)
Between $88,001 and $132,000	25 (29%)	24 (14%)
More than $132,001	21 (24%)	11 (7%)
Prefer not to answer	12 (14%)	5 (3%)

Of the housing insecure respondents, 66% (101) reported a household annual income of $55,000 or less compared to 53% (46) of housing secure respondents who reported an annual income of $88,001 or more.

Interestingly, 10% (17) of housing insecure respondents reported a household annual income of between $55,001 and $88,000. This suggests that respondents who reported moderate income levels were experiencing housing insecurity, and again speaks to the spectrum of housing insecurity - respondents can and were making moderate income while unsheltered, emergency sheltered, provisionally accommodated, and/or at risk of housing insecurity.

Further, 43% (73) of housing insecure respondents indicated they spent more than 30% of their household income on housing (e.g., rent or mortgage payments) in the 12 months prior to completing the survey.

6 It is important to remember the spectrum of homelessness when considering income rates amongst housing insecure respondents. Someone who is experiencing domestic or family violence, for example, is considered housing insecure no matter their annual household income. Additionally, it is important to remember that people cycle through the spectrum of homelessness regularly and just because some reported an annual household income of $88,001 or higher in 2024, for example, does not mean they were not experiencing housing insecurity in 2025 - this could have occurred as a result of job loss, a death in the family, increasing interest and utility rates, or any number of reasons.

Community Supports

To better understand service needs and gaps in Drayton Valley, respondents were asked: *"Which support services do you access and where do you most often access them?"*

Housing insecure respondents primarily accessed services in Drayton Valley for:

- Basic needs (79%)
- Health and wellness services (44%)
- Shelter services (42%)

In comparison, those accessing services outside of Drayton Valley did so primarily for:

- Health and wellness services (65%)
- Legal services (41%)
- Shelter services (41%)

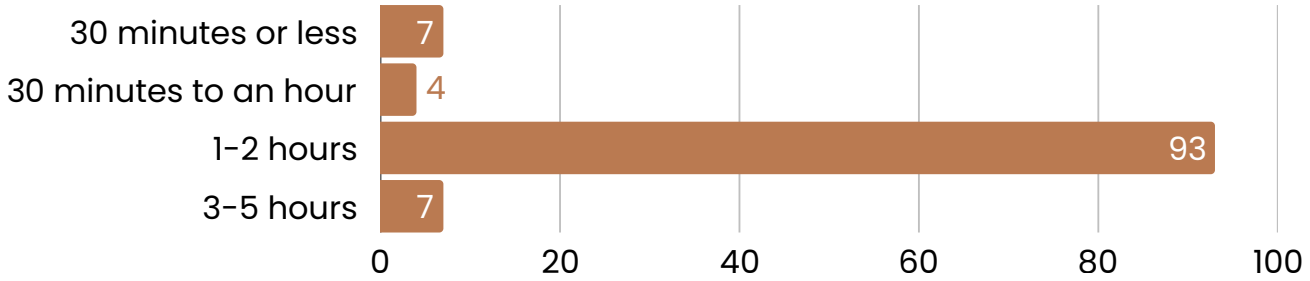
Table 9: Reasons Housing Insecure Respondents Accessed Support Services

Services Accessed	# (%) of Respondents who Primarily Accessed Services in the community	# (%) of Respondents Primarily Accessed Services Outside of the community
Basic needs (Food bank, clothing donations, public washrooms, etc.)	99 (79%)	11 (15%)
Shelter (Emergency shelter, domestic violence shelter, transitional housing, housing assistance, and outreach support, etc.)	52 (42%)	30 (41%)
Financial (Rental assistance, non-market housing, financial life skills training/education, etc.)	47 (38%)	29 (39%)
Crisis financial support (Eviction support, utility shutoffs, damage deposits, etc.)	33 (26%)	25 (34%)
Family/Parenting (Child care, parental resources, relationship issues, child developmental assessment tools/referrals, etc.)	36 (29%)	25 (34%)

Health and wellness (Addictions, mental health, physical health care, spiritual or cultural well-being, etc.)	55 (44%)	65 (48%)
Legal (Separation/divorce/custody, wills/estates, employment/labour standards, landlord/tenant issues, immigration issues, criminal/misdemeanour, etc.)	42 (34%)	41 (30%)

Of the services housing insecure respondents accessed outside of Drayton Valley, most travelled between one and two hours to access them, as seen in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7: Distance Travelled by Housing Insecure Respondents for Services Outside of the Community



To access these services, 60% (78) housing insecure respondents travelled by car or truck, 2% (2) took public transportation, 33% (43) relied on a family member or friend, 6% (8) took a taxi or ride-share service, 8% (10) had a service provider arrange a ride for them, and 5% (6) caught a ride with a stranger or hitchhiked there. Additionally, 9% (12) respondents indicated "other," indicating they either biked or walked to access services.

It is important to consider that respondents who are unable to access supports and services are more likely to continue experiencing housing insecurity than those who can access the necessary supports and services to stabilize their housing situation.

Shelter Use

66 unique housing insecure respondents reported staying in a shelter in the past year. Among them:

- 86% (57) stayed in an emergency shelter.
- 61% (40) stayed in an extreme weather space or shelter.
- 6% (4) stayed in a women's/domestic violence shelter.
- 2% (1) stayed in a shelter but weren't sure what type of shelter it was.

Additionally, 0% (1) of housing insecure respondents reported stays in transitional housing.

28% (48) housing insecure respondents reported needing emergency shelter services at some point in the 12 months before completing the survey, but did not access them. Several reasons were provided for this, as outlined in Table 10. The main reason these respondents did not access shelter services when needed was because the shelter was full.

Table 10: Reasons Housing Insecure Respondents Did Not Access Shelter Services When Needed

Reason for Not Accessing Shelter Services	**# (%) of Respondents**
The shelter was full	15 (31%)
The right kind of shelter wasn't available (for example, I needed a women's or family shelter where I could stay with my kid(s) and couldn't access one)	14 (29%)
Alcohol/substance use is not permitted on-site	11 (23%)
No shelters in my area	10 (21%)
Lack of transportation	9 (19%)
I didn't feel safe	8 (17%)
No pets allowed	8 (17%)
The shelter was too far away from my family and/or friends	5 (10%)
I didn't meet the intake criteria to access the shelter	3 (6%)
The shelter was unclean	3 (6%)
Lack of disability accommodations	2 (4%)
I exceeded my stay at a shelter	0 (0%)
The shelter did not welcome me because of my gender identity	0 (0%)

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

To gain more insight into respondents’ perceptions of service provision in Drayton Valley, they were asked: “Does your community provide enough…accessible and affordable housing; access to food; addictions and mental health supports; employment services; free/accessible recreation/social opportunities; public transportation services; social services?”

Table 11: Total Respondents' Perceptions of Drayton Valley’s Provision of Services

Does the Community Provide Enough:	Yes	No	Unsure
Accessible, affordable housing	28 (12%)	162 (68%)	50 (21%)
Access to food (grocery stores, markets, food banks, etc.)	176 (74%)	48 (20%)	15 (6%)
Addictions and mental health supports (counselling, treatment, post-treatment support, etc.)	55 (23%)	124 (52%)	58 (24%)
Employment services (resume writing, job searching, etc.)	80 (33%)	68 (28%)	91 (38%)
Free/accessible recreation/social opportunities	80 (34%)	114 (48%)	43 (18%)
Public transportation services	12 (5%)	201 (86%)	9 (21%)
Social services (libraries, emergency services, outreach programs, etc.)	122 (51%)	63 (27%)	52 (22%)

In Table 11, there is a significant discrepancy in respondents who, at the time of the survey, believed there was enough accessible and affordable housing in Drayton Valley (12%) versus those who believed more housing was needed (68%) or were not sure if more housing was needed (21%). Additionally, only 5% of respondents believed there was enough public transportation services in Drayton Valley compared to 86% of respondents who believed more public transportation services were needed.

Opportunities Moving Forward

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

- Foster community awareness and understanding of housing insecurity,
- Increase awareness of, and access to, services, and
- Encourage sustainable housing growth in Drayton Valley.

Foster community awareness and understanding of housing insecurity.
Implementing a community engagement strategy is crucial to addressing housing insecurity in Drayton Valley. The purpose of implementing a community engagement strategy is to support community learning on issues related to housing insecurity in Drayton Valley. More specifically, this will help inform residents about the spectrum of housing insecurity and the different experiences and realities of housing insecurity in their community. In addition, community conversations will aim to shift public perceptions of housing insecurity, ensuring that residents experiencing housing insecurity and any projects specific to addressing housing insecurity are met with understanding, empathy, and support.

Of the 295 survey respondents, only 98 self-identified as housing insecure. However, upon further analysis, 169 survey respondents were identified as housing insecure. This means that 71 respondents were unaware of their housing insecurity status and likely have not accessed social or housing services that could help improve their housing situation. A community engagement strategy would help increase residents' understanding of housing insecurity and make them aware of the current service offerings available to support their housing situations.

With at least 526 residents experiencing housing insecure living conditions, public perceptions of housing insecurity must be met with understanding and empathy to successfully address housing insecurity in Drayton Valley.

Recommendations:

- Host community conversations on housing insecurity.
- Host community conversations and opportunities to learn about emergency shelters and transitional housing developments.
- Promote programs and service offerings that support residents experiencing housing insecurity widely.
- Encourage inclusive and welcoming events that bring the whole community together.
- Identify and share community initiatives that focus on community connection.
- Offer orientation and training sessions around housing insecurity to support elected officials in leading the community to address housing insecurity in Drayton Valley.

Increase awareness of, and access to, services.
65% of housing insecure respondents indicated that they had to access health and wellness services (e.g.,, addictions supports, mental health supports and services, physical health care services, spiritual or cultural well-being services, etc.) outside of Drayton Valley. Further, of the housing insecure respondents who accessed services outside of Drayton Valley, 84% had to travel between one to two hours to access services. While 60% travelled by car or truck, 33% relied on a family member or friend to take them, and 22% had to either walk, bike, or have a service provider arrange a ride for them.

Given this, efforts should be made to further identify service gaps in the community and address these gaps, either by offering new services or by better promoting the availability of current services that community members may not be aware of. Additionally, given that 87% of 2SLGBTQIA+ respondents, 92% of racialized respondents, and 85% of Indigenous respondents respondents were housing insecure, it is important to consider whether services offered are inclusive and culturally appropriate.

Recommendations:
- Conduct an informal audit of services (also called service mapping) in Drayton Valley.
- Determine gaps in service delivery in Drayton Valley and develop an action plan for filling any gaps in services.
- Promote current programs and service offerings that support community members experiencing housing insecurity and/or with health and wellness concerns.
- Host training sessions for service providers in Drayton Valley focused on providing inclusive and culturally appropriate services.

Encourage sustainable housing growth in Drayton Valley.
It is critical to highlight the need for accessible, affordable, adaptive, and appropriate housing projects to increase housing options in Drayton Valley. Two of the top three reasons for housing insecurity in Drayton Valley were reported as high housing costs and low vacancy rates. Additionally, 68% of respondents believed there was not enough accessible and affordable housing in Drayton Valley compared to 12% who believed there was enough accessible and affordable housing and 21% who were unsure if there was enough housing in Drayton Valley. Further, 44% of housing insecure respondents have moved between three and six times in the past 12 months while 17% of housing insecure respondents have moved more than six times in the past 12 months, suggesting a need for increased accessible and affordable housing to ensure respondent stability.

95 housing insecure respondents indicated that they lack specific amenities in their current housing situation, many of which are considered necessary for a secure living situation. At the time of the survey, 78% (74) of these respondents did not have sufficient and affordable heating and 63% (60) did not have access to safe drinking water. Limited awareness of or access to supports likely plays a contributing role in their inability to access safe drinking water and/or sufficient and affordable heating.

It is also important to consider that 28% of housing insecure respondents reported needing emergency shelter services at some point in the 12 months before completing the survey, but did not access them. The main reason respondents did not access shelter services when needed was because the shelter was full.

Recommendations:

- Conduct a housing needs and demands assessment in Drayton Valley to better understand housing need.
- Work with all levels of government to develop a model to deliver short- and long-term housing solutions in the community (e.g. emergency shelter, transitional housing, and affordable/below-market rate housing). This model should include wraparound supports (including basic needs supports) typically associated with a Housing First Program.
- Conduct community engagement sessions to address concerns and misconceptions around housing development.
- Implement a Housing First philosophy into service delivery in Drayton Valley.

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