

Reducing Involvement of Red Deer Youth in Crime

**A Plan for Using BSCF Funding
June 30, 2023**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES FUND

In March 2022, the Government of Canada announced \$250 million in new federal funding for the Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF). Working through municipalities and Indigenous communities, the Fund will support community organizations in further developing and enhancing community-based prevention and intervention programs, specifically for young people. The level of funding for a community is based on two major elements: crime severity (homicide by firearm, incidents of firearms offences, organized crime/street gang-involved crime) and population density. The City of Red Deer is eligible to receive approximately \$2.1 million from the BSCF through 2025-26.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE THREE YEAR PLAN

This report presents the results of:

- A detailed situational analysis to help Red Deer better understand local needs; and
- Work completed with Red Deer's Systems Leadership Team (SLT) and the Community Integration Team (CIT) to develop a Three Year Plan for the BSCF funding. The SLT and CIT are a collaborative effort among Red Deer leaders to come together and provide consistent, visible, systems-wide leadership as part of a broad-spectrum approach to community safety and well-being in Red Deer.

It outlines a funding strategy and series of funding priorities. The Plan ensures that a community-owned and community-driven approach is taken in using BSCF funds and implementing prevention and intervention strategies targeting at-risk and/or high-risk youth. It builds on the success of Red Deer's Community Safety Strategy and will support initiatives that address risk factors associated with gun and gang violence.

To prepare the Plan, we first conducted a situational analysis regarding the involvement of youth in crime in Red Deer and identified the factors contributing to that involvement, the local programs in place to work with at-risk and high-risk youth, and key gaps in the available programming. Research included a detailed document and data review, a review of the programming ecosystem, and interviews with 55 representatives from the SLT, CIT, other community-based agencies that offer youth programming in Red Deer, and selected others as well as three group sessions involving 30 community representatives. Building on the results of the situational analysis, the CIT was asked to establish priorities regarding the types of initiatives in Red Deer that should be supported with the BSCF funding. The priorities were then reviewed, adjusted slightly and confirmed by the SLT.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Socio-economic Factors

The involvement of youth in crime can be influenced by a range of social-economic factors such as the size of a community, how fast it is growing, the size of the youth population, economic conditions (as evidenced by employment and income), and education levels.

- While Red Deer is the third largest city in Alberta, it is much smaller than Calgary and Edmonton and population growth has been moderate. The age of the population is similar to the provincial average, but younger than for Canada overall. Education levels are, on average, lower than the provincial average.
- Relative to the rest of Alberta, the local economy is not quite as strong. Labour market participation rates, employment rates and household incomes tend to be lower. However, the lower incomes are offset somewhat by a lower cost of housing.

Crime in Red Deer

- Reported crime rates and the Crime Severity Index¹ have tended to be higher in Red Deer than in other Alberta cities, although there were improvements during the pandemic. Over the past 10 years, Red Deer has experienced an annual average of 1.7 homicides and 17,060 reported crimes in Red Deer per 100,000 in population.
- Violent crime is an increasing issue for Red Deer. While the number of criminal incidents that came to the attention of police decreased during the pandemic, there was still an increase in the number of violent criminal code violations.
- The level of gun and gang activity in Red Deer is low. Most gang-related activities in Red Deer are associated with gangs based in other communities. There are concerns that increasing levels of gang activity in Edmonton and Calgary could spillover into Red Deer. Edmonton and Calgary report continuing increases in the possession and use of firearms by organized crime and gang members, as well as the harm caused by the trafficking of street drugs.

Involvement of Youth in Crime

- While it is becoming more of an issue, the involvement of Red Deer youth in crime is considered relatively low. From September 2020 to June 2022, the RCMP responded to 1,034 calls for service involving 1,343 youth as subjects of criminal complaints. However, these activities rarely lead to charges. While there are increasing numbers of youth who lack the

¹ The Crime Severity Index considers both the prevalence of crime within a community and the seriousness of the crimes committed.

appropriate supports to steer clear of crime, most youth in Red Deer are not engaging in criminal behaviours.

- Youth aged 12 to 17 years account for a small number of charges (about 100 annually) under the Criminal Code in Red Deer, mostly related to crimes of violence, assaults and property crimes. Common property crime violations in Red Deer include theft, break and enter, theft of a motor vehicle and possession of the stolen goods.
- Focused recruitment of youth into gangs is not common in Red Deer. To the extent it exists, the involvement of youth with gangs tends to consist primarily of low-level drug trafficking. However, the recruitment of youth into low-level criminal activities has the potential to escalate into more formal gang involvement in the future, if prevention and intervention efforts fail to target the underlying issues that drive gang attachment.
- Various factors, often a mix of factors, contribute to the involvement of youth in crime.² Factors commonly identified by key informants included family dynamics, lack of community engagement and role models, socio-economic factors, the impact of the pandemic, education levels, substance abuse, influence of peer groups, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, and mental health and developmental issues.
- While all youth are potentially at risk, some patterns were noted with respect to youth who may face the greatest risks. Key informants notes that involvement in crime, and the level of that involvement, tends to increase with age even though the conditions that led to that involvement may have been in place for many years. While most youth involved in crime are male, there is increasing participation by females. Youth from a wide range of backgrounds and family situations can become involved, with youth from low-income families, single-parent households, and households with domestic violence, Indigenous youth and newcomers not connected to resources often facing greater stressors. Youth with mental health issues, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD), and other developmental disorders can be more susceptible to involvement in crime.

Impact on the Community

- While most residents rate the quality of life in Red Deer high, there are increasing concerns about crime, safety and homelessness. Youth-related crime is one factor contributing to increasing concerns about community safety amongst Red Deer residents.
- Coming out of the pandemic, the increasing numbers of vulnerable and at-risk youth could contribute to increasing involvement of youth in crime going forward. Key informants noted increasing acts of violence, greater involvement of children under the age of 12 in crime, more frequent engagement of youth in high-risk activities, increasing incidences of disruption and dysregulation in public spaces, and increased prevalence of runaway youth.

² It is important to approach the issue of youth involvement in crime with an understanding that these characteristics are not deterministic factors but rather potential risk factors.

Prevention and Intervention Programming in Community

- The review identified almost 50 organizations and programs that help prevent or intervene in the involvement in crime of Red Deer at-risk and/or high-risk youth. These programs and services are designed to meet the needs of pre-adolescents, adolescents, young adults, and their families and caregivers.
- Overall, key informants rated Red Deer’s prevention and intervention programs as somewhat effective in helping to prevent or intervene in the involvement of at-risk and/or high-risk youth in crime. The issue is not the effectiveness of individual programs but rather the presence of significant gaps or capacity limitations in the programming ecosystem. Some of the major constraints are that the levels of funding invested by governments into programs are failing to keep pace with rising demand, a lack of flexibility and sustainability in that funding, and the difficulties that some clients have in accessing available services given capacity constraints, eligibility criteria, service location, and transportation access.
- Many gaps in services and areas were identified where further action could be taken to prevent or limit youth involvement in crime. Commonly identified gaps included:
 - *Prevention and early intervention programs.* Prevention and early intervention programs that target at-risk youth can help identify and address underlying issues before they escalate. Key informants highlighted the importance of increasing access to programming targeted at younger youth (e.g., 8 to 12 years of age), when the opportunities for prevention are greatest.
 - *Outreach services.* Outreach-based work and meeting youth where they are (e.g., schools, skate parks or other community spaces) is critical to building effective relationships. There may be opportunities to partner with easy-to-access diversion programs that provide alternative pathways to take youth away from crime.
 - *Residential care and other support.* Providing safe and stable housing options for at-risk youth is crucial to address their basic needs and provide a foundation for stability and positive outcomes. It is difficult to access residential care for youth, including girls, outside the home when violence and/or exploitation is happening.
 - *Maintaining connections with youth.* There are challenges associated with encouraging youth to first access and then continue to access services. Case management, mentorship programs, counseling, and guidance can maintain connection and help to navigate their way to a positive future.
 - *Specialized services for youth with FASD, Pervasive Development Disorders (PDD), and other conditions requiring intensive support.* These are very complex cases, where it is difficult to support the youth and keep them safe.

- *Accessible mental health support.* Ensuring that youth have access to mental health services is crucial for addressing underlying mental health challenges and reducing the risk of involvement in criminal activities. There is a need to improve access to mental health support services tailored to the needs of at-risk and high-risk youth.
- *Education and skill-building.* Offering educational programs and skill-building opportunities can enhance the prospects of at-risk youth. This includes providing access to quality education, vocational training, job placement services, and promoting educational aspirations. Life skills programs can equip youth with practical skills and knowledge necessary for independent living.

Examples of other identified gaps include sentencing alternatives, health promotion, programming for newcomers, services related to domestic violence, services that support youth by working with parents and families, recreational activities, increased policing and support services, and collaboration and information sharing.

THE THREE YEAR PLAN

Funding Process

The Three Year Plan prioritizes five areas of program need, which will help guide the selection of projects for funding. Funding will be available for up to three fiscal years (2023-2024, 2024-2025, 2025-2026) and funded proponents may receive funding for one or more of these years. The selection of programs and projects will consider the fit with the priorities established by the CIT and SLT as well as the fit with other resources in the community, the planned activities, the capabilities of the delivery organization, the budget, and plans for sustaining activities beyond the end of the BSCF funding. As the procurement process evolves, engagement and consultation with youth will be considered to further inform the funding decisions.

The City of Red Deer will enter into contracts with the proponents and the funding will be administered over the three years. Proponents will be expected to provide annual reports outlining the progress made against in the intended activities, outputs and impacts on an annual basis and a final report outlining the results, the lessons learned and the planned next steps to sustain or build off the progress made. An evaluation of the funded activities will be completed during the final year.

Funding Strategy

Based on key recommendations provided by the CIT and SLT members as well as others who were engaged, a funding strategy was developed which will be used in selecting projects for funding. •It is anticipated that funding will provide financial support for program development and expansion as well as other possible activities such as conducting research, developing other plans, or implementing public awareness and education programs. Red Deer will be open to using the BSCF

to not only fund new initiatives but also to expand or innovate existing programs as well as improve access to existing programs. The funding will be dedicated primarily to major projects rather than a larger number of small projects. The primary focus will be on upstream activities including prevention and early-stage intervention.

Funding Priorities

The CIT established priorities regarding the priority program areas that should be supported with the BSCF funding as well as key segments of the youth population that should be targeted by those programs. The SLT then met to review and approved those priorities as part of the Three-Year Plan. The five key areas, divided into three Top Tier and two Second Tier priorities, include:

Top Tier

- **Housing-related programs.** Housing-related programs facilitate access to stable and safe living environments, reducing the likelihood of youth turning to crime for survival and minimizing their exposure to violence and negative influences prevalent in high-risk neighborhoods. They can also provide access to other supportive services (such as counseling, mentoring, education and employment resources), facilitate community engagement, and help to address the root causes of criminal involvement, such as poverty, lack of opportunities, and family instability.
- **Outreach-based programs.** Outreach-based programs increase access to programs and services by reaching out directly to young people in their own communities, including those who are homeless, involved in gangs, or lacking supportive networks. Outreach workers focus on building trust and establishing relationships with high-risk youth. By creating a non-judgmental and supportive environment, and fostering open communication and rapport, they can provide tailored and individualized support which links high-risk youth to various services and resources.
- **FASD and developmental programs.** Specialized services for youth with conditions like Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD) are able to provide interventions and support tailored to the unique needs of individuals with these conditions. These specialized services may focus on behaviour management, skill building, and teaching coping mechanisms to help youth with FASD, PDD, and related conditions navigate daily life. They employ a multidisciplinary team to provide comprehensive assessments, treatment planning, and ongoing support.

Second Tier

- **Education and life-skills building.** These programs can provide structured learning environments which prepare at-risk and high-risk youth prepare for higher education, vocational training and employment; help to build self-confidence, critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills; teach practical life skills such as communication, teamwork, financial

literacy, and decision-making; and serve as preventive measures against risky behaviours by providing knowledge, promoting positive decision-making, and offering alternatives to harmful actions.

- **Access to mental health services.** Factors such as academic pressure, societal expectations, social media influence, and personal challenges have contributed to a significant increase in mental health issues among young people, including anxiety, depression, eating disorders, self-harm, and substance abuse. Timely access to mental health services ensures that youth can receive support and interventions before these issues escalate.

The main report provides a more detailed discussion of each priority, including identifying key target groups associated with each area of need, related programs that are active in Red Deer, and examples of programs in other jurisdictions which represent potential programs models for a community organization funded in Red Deer. The main report also outlines an approach to evaluating the impact of the BCSF funded programs in Red Deer.

1. INTRODUCTION



1.1 BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES FUND

In March 2022, the Government of Canada announced \$250 million in new federal funding for the Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF). To address the conditions that contribute to a young person falling in with crime, the BSCF will provide funds, through 2025-26, to eligible municipalities and Indigenous communities to prevent gun and gang violence by tackling its root causes. More specifically, the Fund supports community organizations in further developing and enhancing community-based prevention and intervention programs specifically for young people. Support for a community is based on two major elements: crime severity (homicide by firearm, incidents of firearm offences, and organized crime/street gang-involved crime) and population density.

The City of Red Deer was informed by Public Safety Canada that the City is eligible to receive approximately \$2.1 million from the BSCF. Prior to any adjustment that may be made to reflect delays in finalizing the funding agreement for Year 1, the eligible funding was allocated as indicated in the table below.

Table 1: Allocation of Eligible Funding By Year

Year	Eligible Funding
Year 1 (2022/23)	\$213,217.61
Year 2 (2023/24)	\$746,261.64
Year 3 (2024/25)	\$746,261.64
Year 4 (2025/26)	\$426,435.22
Total allocation	\$2,132,176.11

The objective of the BSCF is to support municipalities and Indigenous governments in their efforts to address gun and gang prevalence by providing a determined funding allocation to put in place community-led projects. The program aims to prevent and combat gun and gang violence and address knowledge gaps concerning the impacts of interventions in gun and gang violence. Communities may further distribute funds to recipients of their choice to:

- Develop local and community-based strategies and initiatives
- Enhance evidence-based and targeted prevention and intervention activities
- Build capacity to better understand the nature, scope and impacts of the types of prevention and intervention initiatives implemented
- Advance knowledge and evidence of what works
- Develop a data collection strategy and system

By providing funding to communities, the BSCF is expected to enable them to respond to gun and gang violence in their jurisdictions over the next three years.

1.2 RED DEER COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY

The use of the BCSF funding in Red Deer will be guided by the Community Safety Strategy, which was developed in 2016 with a mission to inspire citizen engagement and coordinated action to strengthen and sustain community safety in Red Deer. It is a guiding document for all community safety-related activities within the city and will help to guide use of the BSCF funding.

The safety vision of the Strategy is:

We live, work, learn and play in a safe and secure community and contribute to the actual and perceived safety and security of ourselves and others."

Working towards that end, the mission of the Community Safety Strategy is:

"To inspire citizen engagement and coordinated action to strengthen and sustain community safety in Red Deer through education, prevention, intervention, and enforcement."

The BCSF will contribute towards the achievement of this mission by supporting a series of initiatives related to prevention and intervention. Taken together, these initiatives will work to reduce the involvement of Red Deer youth in crime, primarily through addressing risk factors and building supports and positive protective factors for vulnerable youth in Red Deer.

Implementation of the Community Safety Strategy is coordinated through the Systems Leadership Team (SLT) and the Community Integration Team (CIT). The SLT and CIT are a collaborative effort among Red Deer leaders to come together and provide consistent, visible, systems-wide leadership as part of a broad-spectrum approach to community safety and well-being in Red Deer. The Teams involve representatives from Alberta Health Services, Alberta Works, Children’s Services – Central Region, Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools, Red Deer College, Crown Prosecutors Office, Red Deer Public Schools, the RCMP, City of Red Deer, Urban Aboriginal Voices Society, and others. The role of the SLT is to provide strategic planning and oversight to create and sustain alignment for community safety and well-being. It:

- Establishes the overall mandate, vision, purpose, and framework for community safety and well-being in Red Deer.
- Prioritizes the allocation of resources based on data, research, and evidence.
- Coordinates the underlying structures and supporting systems integration to enable service delivery.

1.3 THE PLAN

The purpose of developing the plan has been to:

- **Engage the community in the development of the plan.** Extensive consultation was undertaken to ensure that a community-owned and community-driven approach is taken when using BSCF funds and implementing prevention and intervention strategies.
- **Assess community needs.** A situational analysis was conducted regarding the involvement of youth in crime in Red Deer, factors contributing to that involvement, local programs in place to work with at-risk and high-risk youth, and key gaps in the available programming.
- **Define priorities to guide the community's efforts.** The CIT and SLT established priorities have been regarding the types of initiatives in Red Deer that could be supported with the BSCF funding. The plan also provides examples of possible programs or projects that fit with these types and outline criteria that should be incorporated into the
- **Develop a plan for evaluating the results.** A series of performance indicators and methodologies have been proposed to evaluate the results.

The priorities will inform the selection of activities to be funded. The CIT and SLT will take a leadership role in providing recommendations regarding the funding of specific initiatives.

Major steps undertaken in developing the plan included:

- **Detailed document and data review** including a review of crime statistics, demographic data, and literature, articles, research, and background documents relevant to the City of Red Deer. A partial listing of the documents reviewed is provided in Appendix 1.
- **Review of the programming ecosystem.** A profile of existing programs and initiatives working with at-risk populations in Red Deer was developed based on interviews and reviews of program descriptions.
- **Community engagement.** Interviews were conducted with 55 representatives from the SLT, CIT, other community-based agencies that offer youth programming in Red Deer, and selected others. In addition, three group sessions were conducted involving about 30 community representatives. These key informants came from a wide range of organizations including the City of Red Deer, the Government of Alberta, RCMP, educational institutions, and a wide range of social services organizations. The results of the community engagement and review of the programming ecosystem were summarized in the “What We Heard” document.
- **Working with the CIT and SLT to establish priorities for funding under the BSCF.** The CIT played a key role in reviewing and discussing options and then establishing priorities in terms of programming areas and target groups. These priorities were then reviewed, slightly adjusted, and then approved by the SLT. The plan incorporates these priorities regarding types of programming and key target groups to be supported under with funding from the BSCF.
- **Review of potential programming.** A high-level review was conducted to identify evidence-based examples of successful programs that have been undertaken elsewhere or

are currently being developed that align directly with the identified priorities. Findings from the review are provided in the Appendix 1 and 2.

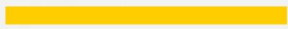
The plan will be implemented from 2023-24 to 2025-26, targeting at-risk and/or high-risk youth. It will build on the success of Red Deer's current Community Safety Strategy and will support community-based prevention/intervention initiatives that address risk factors associated with the involvement of youth.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN

Chapter 2 presents an analysis of the current conditions in Red Deer, taking into consideration socio-economic factors, crime rates, the involvement of youth in crime, resident perceptions regarding community safety, and the existing programming in place to help prevent and intervene in the involvement of youth in crime. It also identifies key gaps in the available programming.

Chapter 3 presents the plan for the BCSF funding, outlining the process through which funding will be provided, the broader funding strategy, the priorities established by the CIT and SLT regarding program areas and target groups, and how the results will be evaluated. Appendix 2 reviews each of the priority programming areas including a description of the issue, the alignment with key target groups, examples of related programs already in place in Red Deer, and identification of successful programs that have been undertaken elsewhere which are currently being developed which align directly with the identified priority. Appendix 2 provides further information on these programs.

2. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS



2.1 KEY SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Involvement of youth in crime can be influenced by a range of social-economic factors such as the size of a community, how fast it is growing, the size of the youth population, economic conditions (as evidenced by employment and income), and education levels.

A statistical profile, comparing the characteristics of Red Deer to that of other Albertan cities as well as Alberta and Canada overall, is provided on the following page. The data is drawn from the 2021 Census and the May 2023 Labour Market Survey conducted by Statistics Canada. As a slower growing mid-sized city, Red Deer does not face the same pressure as the larger centres of Calgary and Edmonton. While economic conditions are not as strong, the weaker economy is offset to some degree by the lower costs of housing.

Some of the key socio-economic characteristics of Red Deer include:

- **While Red Deer is the third largest city in Alberta, it is much smaller than Calgary and Edmonton.** The population of Red Deer reached 100,844 in 2021, greater than the next largest cities of Medicine Hat (63,271), Grand Prairie (64,141) and Wood Buffalo (72,326) but significantly less than Calgary (1.5 million) and Edmonton (1.4 million).
- **Population growth has been moderate.** Red Deer's population grew by 0.4% over the previous five years, a much lower rate than in Edmonton (7.3%) and Calgary (5.5%) as well as Alberta (4.8%) and Canada (5.2%) overall. One of the factors that has contributed to that low growth is the low rates of immigration. Immigrants account for only 16.9% of the population and visible minorities account for 18.9%, much lower than the figures (23.2% and 27.8%) for Alberta overall.
- **The age of the population is similar to the provincial average but younger than for Canada overall.** The average age of residents in Red Deer was 38.8 years, which is similar to Edmonton (37.6), Calgary (38.0), Alberta (38.4), and Canada (41.6). The youth population, as a percent of the total population, is slightly lower in Red Deer than for the province as a whole. Of Red Deer's population in 2021, 18.2% was under the age of 15 and 12.1% was 15 to 24 years, as compared to 19.0% and 11.7% for Alberta overall.
- **Relative to the rest of Alberta, the local economy is not quite as strong.** Labour market participation rates, employment rates, and household incomes tend to be lower. According to the May 2023 Labour Market Survey, the percentage of employed residents aged 15 years and older who were employed was 63%, which is lower than in Edmonton (67%), Calgary (66%), and Alberta overall (66%). In the 2021 Census, the average household income in Red Deer was \$85,000, which is lower than that in Edmonton (\$96,000), Wood Buffalo (\$184,000), Calgary (\$100,000), and Alberta (\$96,000) but in line with the Canadian average (\$84,000). Almost 10% of residents and 11.9% of children aged 0-5 years were living in low-income households.

Table 2: Comparison of Red Deer to Other Jurisdictions Based on Selected Characteristics

(From the 2021 Census except as noted)

Characteristics	Red Deer	Edmonton	Medicine Hat	Lethbridge	Grande Prairie	Wood Buffalo	Calgary	Alberta	Canada
Population									
Population	100,844	1,418,118	63,271	98,406	64,141	72,326	1,481,806	4,265,635	36,991,981
Five Year Growth Rate	0.4%	7.3%	-0.2%	6.1%	1.5%	1%	5.5%	4.8%	5.2%
Median Age	38.8	37.6	42	38	34	34.4	38.0	38.4	41.6
% Aged 0-14 years	18.2%	18.6%	17.4%	19.0%	21.8%	23.0%	18.5%	19.0%	16.3%
% Ages 15-24 years	12.1%	11.9%	11.2%	13.4%	12.3%	10.8%	11.6%	11.7%	11.4%
Households									
Median Person Income	\$42,400	\$45,200	\$40,400	\$40,400	\$50,000	\$75,500	\$44,400	\$44,400	\$39,200
Average Household Income	\$85,000	\$96,000	\$80,000	\$82,000	\$102,000	\$184,000	\$100,000	\$96,000	\$84,000
% Low Income Households	9.8%	8.8%	10.5%	9.8%	7.5%	3.9%	8.6%	9.2%	11.1%
% of Children Aged 0-5 years in Low Income Households	11.9%	12.2%	14.1%	13.2%	10%	5.2%	10.5%	12.7%	12.0%
% spending 30% or more of income on shelter costs	14.1%	16.3%	19.2%	20.5%	22.4%	12.8%	17.5%	16%	14.8%
% in core housing need	3.8%	5.0%	8.3%	9.5%	10.4%	4.7%	5.4%	5.6%	5.3%
Moved in last year	14.3%	13.8%	13.5%	16.5%	16.5%	14.3%	13.7%	13.3%	12.2%
Moved in previous 5 years	43.1%	42.6%	39.6	44.9%	49.8%	45.9%	42.1%	41.1%	39.0%
Employment (From May 2023 Labour Market Survey)									
Participation Rate	62.9%	71.0%	63.4%	63.4%	70.5%	74.7%	70.5%	69.8%	65.5%
Unemployment Rate	5.8%	6.4%	5.7%	5.7%	5.3%	4.5%	6.0%	6.0%	5.3%
Employment Rate	62.9%	66.5%	59.8%	59.8%	66.8%	71.3%	66.3%	65.7%	62.0%
Ethnicity and Immigration									
Indigenous	6.6%	6.3%	5%	6.6%	11.7%	11.3%	3.3%	6.8%	5.0%
Immigrants	16.9%	26.0%	9.7%	15%	13.2%	21.5%	31.5%	23.2%	23.0%
Non-permanent residents	0.9%	1.8%	0.9%	1.5%	1.6%	1.2%	1.9%	1.6%	2.5%
Visible Minority	18.9%	33.0%	8.1%	16.2%	15.9%	27.3%	38.8%	27.8%	26.5%
Highest Level of Education									
Less than High School	16.3%	14.4%	18.7%	14.7%	17.8%	11.6%	12.7%	15.5%	16.2%
High School or Equivalency	32.2%	28.8%	32.8%	32%	33.6%	30.5%	26.2%	28.8%	26.7%

Source: 2021 Census Canada. Employment d is from the May 2023 is from Labour Force Survey (June 2023)

- **However, the lower incomes are offset somewhat by a lower cost of housing.** In comparison to other Alberta communities, Red Deer has a lower percentage of households spending 30% or more of their income on shelter costs (14.1% vs 16.0%) and a lower percentage that have core housing needs (3.8% vs 5.6%).
- **Education levels are, on average, lower.** Red Deer residents were more likely to have not completed high school or have a high school diploma or equivalency as their highest level of education (48.5%) than those in Edmonton (43.6%), Calgary (38.9%), Alberta (44.3%), and Canada overall (42.9%).

2.2 CRIME IN RED DEER

Reported crime rates and the Crime Severity Index have tended to be higher in Red Deer than in other Alberta cities, although there were improvements in these indicators during the pandemic.

Key indicators regarding crime rates include homicide rates, reported crimes per 100,000 residents, and the Crime Severity Index (CSI). CSI “measures the overall seriousness of crime from one year to the next by tracking both the prevalence of crime within a community, and the seriousness of the crimes committed.”³ This provides a better understanding of the impact that crime has on individual community members, their families, and the community as a whole. The CSI is calculated based on the seriousness of each offence and is determined by using objective sentencing data from Canada’s courts. Each individual offence is “weighted” according to the severity of the sentences handed down by judges. Sentencing data comes from both the adult and youth components of Statistics Canada’s Integrated Criminal Court Survey (ICCS).⁴ There are four Crime Severity Indexes including one for overall crime, one for violent crime, one for non-violent crime, and one for youth crime (crimes committed by youth aged 12 to 17 years). However, Statistics Canada does not publish data for the Youth Crime Severity Index for Red Deer.

Over the past 10 years, the City of Red Deer has experienced an annual average of 1.7 homicides and 17,060 reported crimes in Red Deer per 100,000 in population. Given the smaller population base in Red Deer relative to larger centres, the homicide rate can vary widely from year-to-year. Red Deer’s reported crime increased steadily from 2014 to 2017 but returned to 2013 levels during the pandemic in 2020 and 2021.

³ Crime Severity Index in Canada by city 2021: https://canadacrimeindex.com/crime-severity-index?sort=population&min_population=0&province=

⁴ Crime Severity Index: Frequently Asked Questions: <https://nelson.civicweb.net/document/98138/#:~:text=The%20Crime%20Severity%20Index%20is,to%20the%20traditional%20Crime%20Rate.>

Table 3: The City of Red Deer Homicide and Crime Statistics

Year	Homicides	Per 100k Population		Crime Severity Index		
		Homicide	Reported Crime	Overall	Violent	Non-violent
2012	2	2.0	16,252	161	147	166
2013	2	2.0	15,271	157	123	169
2014	0	0	16,870	169	117	187
2015	2	1.9	17,697	184	146	195
2016	3	2.9	19,625	211	146	233
2017	3	2.9	20,211	223	150	249
2018	0	0	15,200	172	115	192
2019	2	1.9	18,040	202	161	216
2020	2	1.9	15,988	172	148	180
2021	5	4.8	15,449	176	176	176
Average	2	1.7	17,060	183	143	196

Source: Statistics Canada Table 35-10-0183-01: Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, police services in Alberta

While homicide rates are lower, reported crime and the CSI tend to be higher in Red Deer than in other Alberta cities.

Table 4: 10 Year Average Comparison of Crime Statistics

	Per 100k Population		
	Homicide	Reported Crime	Overall CSI
Municipal Rates			
Red Deer	1.7	16,965.87	170.8
Medicine Hat	1.9	7,743.22	80.8
Lethbridge	2.0	11,511.97	123.4
Grande Prairie	2.4	17,803.60	164.4
Wood Buffalo	3.1	11,428.11	102
Edmonton	3.5	8,867.60	110.8
Calgary	2.0	5,460.63	75.7

Source: Table 35-10-0064-01: Crime Severity Index

Youth aged 12 to 17 years account for a small percentage of charges under the Criminal Code in Red Deer, mostly related to crime of violence, assaults, and property crimes.

The number of youth charges have averaged fewer than 100 per year over the past five years as compared to about 2,500 adult charges. A summary of the number of adult and youth charges by type of violation is provided below. As indicated, common charges amongst adults are crimes of violence, property crimes, and assaults. Common charges amongst youth are crimes of violence, assaults, and property crimes.

Table 5: Adult and Youth Charges in Red Deer by Type of Violation, 2017-21

Criminal Code Violations	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Adult Charges					
<i>Criminal Code Violations</i>	2,383	2,312	2,744	2,767	2,549
Partial Listing of Types of Violations					
Crimes of Violence	750	682	676	642	551
Homicide	1	0	3	2	3
Attempted Murder	2	0	1	4	0
Assaults (level 1 to 3) ⁹	472	399	428	381	317
Sexual assault (level 1 to 3)	30	46	34	24	55
Total Property crimes	596	541	710	544	405
Total Robbery	47	41	42	55	29
Breaking and entering	97	76	113	91	56
Uttering threats	70	57	46	70	50
Total Drug violations	155	225	285	173	112
Youth Criminal Justice Act	2	3	0	0	0
Youth Charges (Ages 12 to 17 years)					
<i>Criminal Code Violations</i>	72	102	131	80	105
Partial Listing of Types of Violations					
Crimes of Violence	34	52	56	40	48
Homicide	0	0	0	0	0
Attempted Murder	0	0	0	0	0
Assaults (level 1 to 3) ⁹	21	22	29	23	28
Sexual assault (level 1 to 3)	4	0	4	5	11
Total Property crimes	20	24	33	5	16
Total Robbery	2	7	12	3	1
Breaking and entering	5	4	6	2	4
Uttering threats	3	9	5	3	3
Total Drug violations	6	7	1	1	0
Youth Criminal Justice Act	2	2	1	4	0

Source: Statistics Canada, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey Table 35-10-0185-01:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510018301>

Violent crime is an increasing issue for Red Deer. While the number of criminal incidents that came to the attention of police decreased during the pandemic, there was still an increase in the number of violent criminal code violations.

During the time period from 2017 to 2021, the number of criminal incidents that came to the attention of police decreased from 20,894 in 2017 to 16,128 in 2021. However, the number of violent criminal code violations increased from 2,210, in 2017 to 2,472 in 2021.

Table 6: Number of Incidents in Red Deer by Type of Violation, 2017-21

Criminal Code Violations	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Violent Criminal Code Violations	2,210	1,860	2,387	2,367	2,472
Property Crime Violations	13,519	9,908	11,509	9,100	9,173
Other Criminal Code Violations	3,937	3,089	3,837	4,176	3,587
Criminal Code Traffic Violations	686	567	644	669	556
Drug Violations	510	379	481	395	330
Youth Criminal Justice Act	4	6	3	5	1
Total All Violations	20,894	15,819	18,890	16,766	16,128

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 35-10-0183-01: Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, police services in Alberta

Common property crime violations include theft, break and enter, theft of a motor vehicle, and possession of the stolen goods.⁵

The level of gang and guns activity in Red Deer is currently considered low. However, there are concerns that increasing levels of gang activity in Edmonton and Calgary could spill over into Red Deer.

While there has been an increase in violent crime in Red Deer, most violent crime does not involve firearms. For example, across Canada, firearms accounted for only 2.8% of victims of violent crime reported by police across Canada in 2020 and 3.4% of violent crime reported in Alberta. The RCMP noted that there may be 20 to 30 situations annually in Red Deer where guns are an issue; these situations are almost always associated with drug trafficking (e.g., using firearms to collect debts from clients who have not paid).

Most of the gang-related activities in Red Deer are associated with gangs based in other communities. In our consultations, key informants noted that Red Deer is a transport hub for gangs from other major cities in Alberta and Canada. Both Edmonton and Calgary have witnessed a significant increase in gang activities:

- The Edmonton Police Service (EPS) reported that the number of people injured or killed by a firearm in Edmonton has increased from 96 in 2019 to 134 in 2020 and 138 in 2021.⁶ According to the EPS, several factors have contributed to the rise in gun and gang-related violence in Edmonton, including:
 - *An increase in the possession and use of firearms by organized crime and gang members.* EPS data shows that the number of firearms and airguns seized by officers in response to calls for service rose from 1,589 in 2018 to 2,410 in 2021. This suggests that despite law enforcement efforts, gang members are still comfortable with possessing illegal

⁵ Data – Red Deer Municipal Detachment: <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ab/criminal-statistics-statistiques-criminelles/red-deer-eng.htm>

⁶ Guns and Gangs Strategy 2023-2025, Edmonton Police Service: <https://www.edmontonpolice.ca/CommunityPolicing/OrganizedCrime/GunsandGangsStrategy>

firearms. EPS notes that these firearms are often obtained through straw purchases, inter-provincial trafficking, and residential/business break-ins.⁷

- *An increase in the harm caused by the trafficking of street drugs.* Consumption of street drugs such as fentanyl and methamphetamine has been on the rise, leading to crimes such as shoplifting, theft, and break-ins. Additionally, individuals involved in drug trafficking often feel the need to arm themselves for protection, which further contributes to the possession of illegal firearms.⁸
- Sources suggest that Calgary has seen a particular rise in gang-related homicides, with nearly half of all homicides in the city being linked to organized crime in recent years.⁹ The Calgary Police Service (CPS) has identified several organized crime groups operating in the city, including outlaw motorcycle gangs, street gangs, and international drug trafficking networks. Calgary experienced 124 shootings in 2022, about 30% more than the previous year and more than 70% above the five-year average.¹⁰ The CPS attributed this to increases in the possession of illegal firearms by gang members and organized crime groups (largely obtained through theft, smuggling, and straw purchasing)¹¹ and the trafficking of drugs such as fentanyl and methamphetamine, which has led to an increase in drug-related crimes such as thefts and break-ins.¹²

Gang related homicides account for about 20% of the total number of homicides in Alberta annually.

2.3 INVOLVEMENT OF YOUTH IN CRIME

While it is becoming more of an issue, the level of involvement of Red Deer youth in crime is perceived by key informants to be relatively low.

Key informants were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not an issue, 3 is somewhat of an issue, and 5 is a major issue, how much of an issue the involvement of youth (aged 24 years and under) in crime (whether it is violent crime, property crime, or other criminal activity) is for Red Deer. The average rating given by key informants was 3.2. The key informants noted that, while

⁷ Guns and Gangs Strategy 2023-2025, Edmonton Police Service:

<https://www.edmontonpolice.ca/CommunityPolicing/OrganizedCrime/GunsandGangsStrategy>

⁸ Guns and Gangs Strategy 2023-2025, Edmonton Police Service:

<https://www.edmontonpolice.ca/CommunityPolicing/OrganizedCrime/GunsandGangsStrategy>

⁹ 'Bullets don't discriminate': Calgary homicides more than double the average for the time of year:

<https://calgaryherald.com/news/crime/bullets-dont-discriminate-calgary-homicides-more-than-double-the-average-for-this-time-of-year>

¹⁰ What are Calgary police doing about high number of shootings in 2022?: <https://globalnews.ca/news/9363585/calgary-police-shootings-2022/>

¹¹ Eight Firearms seized in organized crime investigation: <https://newsroom.calgary.ca/eight-firearms-seized-in-organized-crime-investigation/>

¹² Drug traffickers targeting homeless Calgarians struggling with addictions, advocates say:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-drug-traffickers-target-homeless-1.6517311>

there are increasing numbers of youth who lack the appropriate supports to steer clear of crime, most youth in Red Deer are not engaging in criminal behaviours.

Focused recruitment of youth into gangs is believed to be not at all common in Red Deer. To the extent it exists, the involvement of youth with gangs tends to consist primarily of low-level drug trafficking. However, the recruitment of youth into low-level criminal activities may have the potential to escalate into more formal gang involvement in the future, if prevention and intervention efforts fail to target the underlying issues that drive gang attachment. Helping youth connect with positive adults and peers and building safe environments where youth experiencing harm can get the types of support that they need are considered crucial in this effort. Youth need support in developing a positive sense of self, high levels of self-esteem, and feelings of self-worth.

Youth crime most commonly takes the form of property crime and theft, vandalism, and involvement with the drug trade. However, acts of violence are becoming more common and more serious.

The RCMP in Red Deer shared that from September 2020 to June 2022 they responded to 1,034 calls for service involving 1,343 youth as subjects of criminal complaints. Red Deer has seen a gradual increase in youth crime over the past two years and, on average, respond to 47 calls involving youth per month. Common complaints related to:

- *Property crime and theft.* Property crimes occur frequently, including instances of theft, burglary, and petty theft.
- *Vandalism.* Vandalism is mentioned as another form of criminal activity. This commonly takes the form of deliberate destruction or damage of public or private property, such as graffiti, defacement, or damaging of buildings, vehicles, or infrastructure.
- *Violence.* Key informants believe that significant acts of violence are occurring more commonly than in the past, including some serious violent offenses involving youth (fighting and other physical altercations) at schools, recreation centres, and other environments where youth gather to socialize. Key informants highlighted incidents of strangulation, bullying, and violence motivated by racism.
- *Drug trade.* Key informants reported that youth use drugs and that some vulnerable youth in Red Deer are drawn into low-level drug trafficking.

These activities rarely lead to charges. Some concerns were also expressed regarding sex trafficking, although the issue is not as prevalent as in larger cities such as Calgary or Edmonton.

Various factors, often a mix of factors, can contribute to the involvement of youth in crime in Red Deer.

The factors most commonly identified by key informants included family dynamics, lack of community engagement and role models, socio-economic factors, the impact of the pandemic, education levels, substance abuse, the influence of peer groups, and community factors:

- *Family dynamics.* Dysfunctional family environments, domestic violence, and cycles of abuse can have a significant impact on youth and increase their vulnerability to criminal involvement. Lack of positive parental role models, inadequate support, and inconsistent discipline can contribute to delinquency.
- *Lack of positive engagement and role models.* Limited access to positive activities, a lack of engagement in school activities or organized sports or social groups, and a lack of positive role models can leave youth feeling alienated and susceptible to negative influences and behaviours.
- *Socioeconomic factors.* Low-income levels and economic stressors including inflation can increase the likelihood of youth involvement in crime. Some youth are facing significant housing and food insecurity issues. Factors like poverty, unemployment, and cost of living pressures may contribute to a sense of desperation and, combined with limited opportunities, push youth towards criminal activities. Economic hardships and poverty can create an environment where youth are more susceptible to engaging in criminal behaviour to survive or attain material goods. High levels of unemployment can lead to increased crime rates among youth as they may resort to illegal activities to meet their financial needs.
- *Impact of the pandemic.* The COVID-19 pandemic is mentioned as a contributing factor, which impacted the economy, mental health, and access to social support systems. The pandemic exacerbated existing challenges and created additional stressors for youth.
- *Substance abuse.* Availability and accessibility of drugs and alcohol, as well as involvement in the drug trade, were mentioned as risk factors by key informants. Substance abuse can impair judgment, increase impulsivity, and lead to engagement in criminal behaviour to sustain addiction or obtain drugs.
- *Influence of peer groups.* Peer pressure and negative influence from peer groups or gangs can contribute to youth involvement in criminal behaviour.
- *Community environment.* The community environment plays a role, with factors such as gang presence, crime normalization, and exposure to violence increasing the risk of youth involvement in criminal activities. Some key informants mentioned factors external to Red Deer, such as the presence of gangs from larger cities in Alberta and across Canada using Red Deer as a transport hub for their criminal activities.

- *Social media.* Key informants also highlighted the impact that social media is having on youth, including the impact in weakening social connections and contributing to mental health issues.

The involvement of youth in crime is often driven by a combination of risk factors, such as emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, household dysfunction, drug use, and mental health issues.

While all youth are potentially at risk, some patterns were noted with respect to youth who may face the greatest risks and therefore represent priorities for program assistance.

Key informants highlighted that:

- Involvement in crime, and the level of that involvement, tends to increase with age even though the conditions that led to that involvement may have been in place for many years. Crimes such as petty theft are more common transgressions in the younger age ranges, while more significant property theft, vandalism, and violence become more prevalent in the 17-24 age range. However, key informants indicated that it is becoming more common to see children as young as eight participating in crime and other forms of disruptive behaviours.
- While most youth involved in crime are male, there is increasing participation of females. Acts of violence perpetrated by females towards both males and females are becoming more common. Key informants cited examples of increased involvement in trafficking, prostitution, and assaults.
- Youth from a wide range of backgrounds and family situations can become involved, with youth from low-income families, single-parent households, households with domestic violence, and newcomers not connected to resources often facing greater stressors.
- Youth who have difficulties connecting with and establishing healthy relationships in the community tend to be at higher risk.
- Indigenous youth face greater socio-economic and political inequities, reflecting the intergenerational trauma resulting from colonialism, residential schools, and both the Sixties and Millennial Scoops (when Indigenous children were taken or “scooped away” from their birth families and communities and placed with non-Indigenous people). This has contributed to higher rates of youth mental health and developmental concerns including PTSD, FASD, substance abuse, homelessness, attachment disorders, and juvenile criminality.
- Difficulties in developing community connections can also increase risks for recent immigrants (newcomers).

- Youth with mental health issues, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD), and other developmental disorders can be more susceptible to involvement in crime. Factors such as trauma, unresolved emotional issues, and limited access to mental health support can contribute to their vulnerability.
- Limited access to education or low educational attainment can hinder employment opportunities, leading some youth to turn to criminal activities.
- Youth with probation orders or other involvement with the justice system may struggle to re-integrate, find opportunities to resume school, and obtain employment.

It is important to approach the issue of youth involvement in crime with an understanding that these characteristics are not deterministic factors but rather potential risk factors. Effective interventions and preventive measures should focus on addressing these risk factors and providing support and opportunities for at-risk youth to thrive and make positive choices.

There is concern that the increasing numbers of vulnerable and at-risk youth coming out of the pandemic could contribute to the increasing involvement of youth in crime going forward.

In addition to some of the trends noted earlier (e.g., increasing acts of violence and greater involvement of children under the age of 12 in crime), key informants highlighted a number of developments that are increasing their level of concern and maybe signaling a shift towards more serious and harmful behaviours:

- *Youth are engaging in more high-risk activities.* Key informants are observing an increased incidence of high-risk activities among youth, including substance abuse and risky sexual behaviours leading to high sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates. Interventions and support services targeting these behaviours are needed.
- *The city is witnessing increased levels of disruption and dysregulation in public spaces.* Key informants raised concerns about youth disruptions, escalating physical altercations, threats and violent acts, theft, and difficulties self-regulating in public spaces like recreational centres and shopping malls. Key informants believe that addressing these issues is crucial for maintaining public safety and a positive community environment.
- *The prevalence of runaway and AWOL youth.* Youth who run away from group homes require a significant investment of police and community resources. Tracking and locating these youth can be challenging. The longer youth are AWOL, the more likely they are to engage in activities that cause them harm, including crime. Key informants highlighted the need to address the underlying issues that lead youth to run away to ensure their safety and well-being.

While the rates of youth involvement in crime are perceived to be lower in Red Deer than in Edmonton and Calgary, the city also tends to have less access to programming and resources.

While many key informants felt that they were not in a position to compare the significance of the issue in Red Deer to that in other communities in Alberta, those who did generally perceived per capita levels of youth crime in Red Deer to be lower than those in Calgary and Edmonton. Some key informants further suggested that levels of youth crime in Red Deer may also be lower than those in other municipalities in Alberta. Higher rates in Calgary and Edmonton were attributed to:

- *Population size.* The larger cities of Edmonton and Calgary have a significantly larger and more diverse population compared to Red Deer. Population size can influence the scale and complexity of crime and the resources available for addressing it.
- *Socioeconomic factors.* Factors such as unemployment, poverty, education levels, and cost of living can vary between Red Deer and larger cities. These socioeconomic factors can impact crime rates and the overall social environment.
- *Urban environment.* The urban environment of larger cities may present different challenges and opportunities for youth engagement, crime prevention, and law enforcement compared to Red Deer's more localized community setting.
- *Gang presence.* Larger cities like Edmonton and Calgary have a more significant presence of organized gangs, which contribute to higher crime rates involving youth. Red Deer's gang activity differs in scale and nature.

While the rates of crime are lower in Red Deer, key informants noted that the city also has less access to resources to address youth crime, such as specialized programs, intervention services, sentencing alternatives, community organizations, and support networks. Red Deer's resources differ in scale and availability.

2.4 IMPACT OF CRIME ON THE COMMUNITY

While most residents rate the quality of life in Red Deer high, there are increasing concerns about crime, safety, and homelessness.

In February 2022, the RCMP conducted a series of small-group community discussions with more than 50 community organizations as well as an online survey of 761 residents to better understand the public's experiences, perceptions, and feelings of safety. Of those surveyed:¹³

¹³ 2022-2024 App Community Consultations, What We Heard Report: <https://www.reddeer.ca/media/reddeerca/city-services/police-rcmp/2022-2024-APP-Public-Consultation-What-We-Heard-Report.pdf>

- 81% rated their quality of life in Red Deer as “good” or very good. However, 18% indicated that their quality of life had greatly declined over the last 2 years and 45% indicated that it somewhat declined, while 28% mentioned that it stayed the same.¹⁴
- While perceptions were impacted by COVID-19, they also reflected increasing concerns about crime, safety, and homelessness. Apart from factors specifically related to the pandemic, the most common responses about the increasing challenges of living in Red Deer include increasing crime (19%), sense of safety (7%), the unhoused population (7%) and the downtown atmosphere (7%). The pandemic has also worsened some challenges which existed prior to the pandemic including social polarization and division (9%), cost of living (7%), and mental health challenges (4%).
- 59% of respondents indicated a decrease in how safe they felt in Red Deer over the previous two years while 33% mentioned their sense of safety levels remained the same.
- Areas of concern regarding crime included property crime, personal and community safety, addictions and substance abuse, justice and enforcement, police response times, and economic and/or business impacts. When asked what can be done to address safety concerns, participants recommended that the community be more engaged, work together and take ownership, and increase access to resources for mental health and addictions programming.

Youth-related crime is one factor contributing to increasing concerns about community safety amongst Red Deer residents.

Key informants shared many of the same concerns that were expressed by residents and felt that youth crime is one of the contributing factors. While some noted that youth involvement in crime is more widespread than the general public recognizes, others felt that the perception of crime is greater than the reality. There is at least the perception that the frequency and intensity of situations involving youth in crime is increasing. Some key informants noted that family members, teachers, students, friends, and others often feel less safe than they may have in the past.

When asked about which locations have been impacted most, key informants most commonly identified the downtown core largely because of the presence of transient or vulnerable people. While much of the public’s focus in terms of community safety is on the downtown core, key informants noted that:

- Issues related to the involvement of youth in crime are not limited to that region. Other regions in and around Red Deer that were identified included Riverside Meadows, parts of Highland Green and Eastview, Anders, and other nearby communities such as Blackfalds, Innisfail, Penhold, Sylvan Lake, Rocky Mountain House, Wetaskiwin, and Ponoka.

¹⁴ 2022-2024 App Community Consultations, What We Heard Report: <https://www.reddeer.ca/media/reddeerca/city-services/police-rcmp/2022-2024-APP-Public-Consultation-What-We-Heard-Report.pdf>

- Most of the activity in the downtown core involves adults, not youth.

Addressing these complex issues will require a comprehensive approach involving targeted support services, prevention efforts, education, community engagement, and collaboration among stakeholders to create a safer and more supportive environment for youth in Red Deer.

2.5 PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMMING IN RED DEER

A range of programs and services have been established to help prevent or intervene in the involvement of Red Deer at-risk and/or high-risk youth in crime.

Almost 50 organizations and programs serving Red Deer were identified as providing programs and services designed to meet the needs of pre-adolescents, adolescents, young adults, and their families and caregivers. Some of the needs addressed by these programs and services are as follows:

- Abuse and neglect
- Barriers to education and employment
- Disabilities and special needs
- Family and domestic violence
- Homelessness and access to housing
- Justice system involvement and community re-integration
- Mental health and developmental disabilities
- Newcomer services
- Sexual health and pregnancy
- Substance abuse and addiction

The “What We Heard” report provided an overview of some of the programming in place in Red Deer, drawn from information provided by key informants as well as a review of program websites and other resources. Some Red Deer programs are targeted widely while eligibility for others is targeted much more narrowly, such as those targeting immigrants and newcomers, Indigenous peoples, or those in the 2SLGBTQI+ community.

A listing of organizations and programs in Red Deer is provided in the table on the following page.

Table 7: Partial Listing of Prevention and Intervention Programs Serving Red Deer Youth

Program Name/ Types of Programs	Abuse & neglect	Family & domestic violence	Mental health	Sexual health & pregnancy	Disabilities & special needs	Homelessness & access to housing	Barriers to education & employment	Justice system involvement	Substance abuse & addiction	Newcomer services
Alberta Health Services (AHS)			•	•					•	
Alberta Child Advocacy Centre (CACAC)	•	•	•							
Alberta Seniors, Community and Social Services			•			•	•	•		
Care for Newcomers						•	•			•
Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health (CASA)			•							
Catholic Social Services (CSS)			•			•	•		•	
Children's Services	•	•								
Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support Centre (CASASC)	•		•	•			•	•		
Ministry of Children's Services Alberta (CFS)	•	•	•	•						
The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)			•							
Cross Roads Church		•						•		
EPSS (Employment & Support Services)							•			
Central Alberta Fetal, Alcohol, Spectrum Disorder Network (FASD)	•	•			•	•	•		•	
Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FCD)					•					
Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)	•	•	•							•
Group Homes			•			•	•			
Arcadia Program (McMan)						•	•			
Hope Mission Red Deer		•	•			•				
John Howard Society of Red Deer						•		•	•	
Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services	•	•			•	•	•			•
Mustard Seed			•		•	•	•			•
Native Friendship Centre		•				•	•			
Outreach School	•	•	•			•	•			
Palix Foundation			•							•

Program Name/ Types of Programs	Abuse & neglect	Family & domestic violence	Mental health	Sexual health & pregnancy	Disabilities & special needs	Homelessness & access to housing	Barriers to education & employment	Justice system involvement	Substance abuse & addiction	Newcomer services
Parkland Class					•					
Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD)	•		•		•	•	•		•	
Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act (PSECA)			•							
Pregnancy Care Network				•		•				
Public Schools			•		•		•			
RCMP	•	•				•	•			
John Howard Society of Red Deer								•		
Red Deer Polytechnic							•			
Red Deer Public Library						•	•			
Red Deer Public Schools			•				•			
Regional Collaborative Service Design (RCSD)					•					
Safe Harbour						•			•	
Sexual Assault Response Team	•		•	•						
Sports Programs					•					
Street Connect					•	•			•	
Street Ties				•		•	•		•	
Step Up Step Down			•							
United Way Central Alberta / Planet Youth Initiative			•						•	
Vantage			•			•				
Woods Homes			•							
YMCA						•	•			•
Youth Shelter	•					•			•	
YouthHQ			•				•			

Examples of some of the services in the community include:

- **Alberta Health Services (AHS).** AHS aims to improve access to healthcare services, optimize health system performance, and contribute to the overall health and wellness of the people of Alberta. AHS offers a range of programs and services designed to support the health and well-being of youth in Alberta including mental health services, addiction and substance abuse services, sexual and reproductive health, school health promotion, youth mental health hubs, peer support programs, and health promotion and education. The primary target groups for AHS programs include residents of Alberta, patients and healthcare service users, vulnerable and high-risk populations, youth and adolescents, pregnant women and new mothers, and community and population health.
- **Alberta Child Advocacy Centre (CACAC).** CACAC is a specialized organization dedicated to addressing the needs of child victims of abuse and providing a comprehensive, coordinated response to child abuse cases in Alberta. CACAC serves as a child-friendly, safe, and supportive environment where multidisciplinary teams work together to investigate, intervene, and support children and their families affected by abuse. Key features and services provided by the Alberta Child Advocacy Centre include child-focused approach, multidisciplinary teams, forensic interviewing, medical and mental health services, victim support and advocacy and prevention education.
- **Arcadia Program (McMan).** The Arcadia program is for youth who have a history of episodic homelessness that spans a significant portion of the last few years. Referrals to the program are accepted based on youth without a permanent place of residence, living on the street, in shelters, or places not intended or suitable for permanent residency, and “couch surfing” or living off others for short periods of time. Once youth are admitted into the program, staff assist youth to identify their strengths, values, preferences, and dreams for the future to create an individual plan.
- **Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA).** CMHA Red Deer is dedicated to promoting mental health, preventing mental illnesses, and supporting individuals living with mental health challenges. CMHA Red Deer provide a wide range of services and supports that address the diverse needs of individuals living with mental health challenges. Some of the programs provided by CMHA for youth include youth mental health promotion, youth peer support, youth counselling services, youth crisis intervention and youth mental health workshops and events.
- **Care for Newcomers.** Various programs and services are available to support individuals and families who have recently immigrated to Red Deer. These programs assist newcomers in their settlement process, providing resources, guidance, and support to help them adjust and integrate into their new community. The services include settlement, language and cultural support, employment and career services, social integration and community engagement, educational support and information, and referral services.

- **Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health (CASA).** CASA is an organization that provides mental health services for children, adolescents, and their families in Red Deer and surrounding areas. CASA Mental Health in Red Deer offers a range of specialized mental health services tailored to meet the unique needs of children and adolescents including assessment and diagnosis, treatment and therapy, collaborative approach, support for families, and education and prevention.
- **John Howard Society of Red Deer.** The John Howard Society of Red Deer is dedicated to crime prevention and operates as a community based charitable organization. Their main goal is to promote community harmony through advocacy, prevention, and re-integration of offenders through the restorative process. The services they offer include client intake and liaison, tax preparation services, affidavit ID program, Alberta government identification, record suspension supports, drug treatment court and horizon house.
- **Ministry of Children’s Services Alberta (CFS).** The Ministry of Children’s Services Alberta leads childcare and intervention, early childhood development, foster and kinship care, adoption, and improvements for children and youth. The types of services offered include adoption and post adoption, childcare, family resource networks, advancing futures bursary, child guardianship, foster care and kinship care, help for abused children, child intervention, and Indigenous caregivers.
- **Public Schools.** Public schools in Red Deer offer various programs and initiatives to support high-risk and at-risk youth. These programs are designed to provide additional assistance, resources, and support to students who may face challenges or barriers to their education and well-being. The types of programs that public schools in Red Deer offer include alternative education programs, counseling and support services, mentorship and peer support programs, collaborative partnerships, and individualized education plans (IEPs).
- **RCMP.** Among other programs, the RCMP offers PACT and YCAT. PACT helps people in times of crisis; a Registered Psychiatric Nurse (RPN) and a RCMP Officer respond to calls involving individuals/families experiencing mental health, addiction, or psychosocial crises, especially when a danger to themselves or the public exists. PACT follows up with clients and connects them with resources. The Youth Community Action Team (YCAT) builds relationships with youth through outreach at locations such as schools, recreation centres, shopping malls, and fast-food establishments.
- **YMCA.** YMCA strives to build strong kids, healthy families, and thriving communities, guided by values such as respect, honesty, caring, responsibility, diversity, and social inclusion. The types of services offered for youth include youth employment programs, childcare, child and youth recreation programs, youth and family services, immigrant services and housing.
- **Youth HQ.** Youth HQ is a non-profit organization that empowers youth by fostering a supportive community. They provide safe environments where young people can learn,

grow, and develop confidence in their unique identities and abilities. The types of services provided include Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and 49 Street Youth Shelter.

Overall, key informants rated the available prevention and intervention programs as only somewhat effective in helping to prevent or intervene in the involvement of at-risk and/or high-risk youth in crime. The issue is not with the effectiveness of individual programs but rather the presence of significant gaps or capacity limitations in the overall programming ecosystem.

When asked to rate the effectiveness of the existing prevention and intervention programs in helping to prevent or intervene in the involvement of at-risk and/or high-risk youth in crime, key informants provided an average rating of 2.8 on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all effective, 3 is somewhat effective, and 5 is very effective. Many key informants were not able to provide a rating as they are not familiar with the broad range of services available or indicated the data that would be needed to measure the effectiveness of activities is not available.

The key informants who provided ratings noted that, in general, existing programs are effective in providing meaningful activities and support to the youth population. The organizations and frontline staff were commended for their dedication. As such, the low ratings did not reflect concerns about the effectiveness of existing programs but rather gaps in the system as well as concerns about:

- *The overall level of funding invested by governments into the programs.* Additional funding is needed to both increase the capacity of existing programs and broaden the range of services. Additional funding could increase staffing levels, expand services, and provide for more intensive support.
- *Access to sustainable and flexible funding.* Key informants identified several programs which had been useful but are no longer in operation because of a lack of sustainable funding (e.g., a youth outreach program offered by McMan). As a result of funding cuts and resource limitations, youth and families are not receiving the consistent support they need; agencies need funding so they can be stable in providing services for youth and families. Some noted that it may be important for the BSCF to sustain existing programs than to fund new programs, if doing the latter would mean that some effective existing programs would no longer be able to continue.
- *Accessibility.* Various factors can impact accessibility such as the program's capacity, eligibility criteria, location of services, and transportation. Some key informants mentioned that:
 - There is limited capacity in existing programs and services, making it hard for some young people to access them.

- Programs (e.g., some programs offered by AHS or CFS) may be open only to narrowly defined target groups making it more difficult for some youth to obtain the support they need (e.g., too many restrictions on which youth can access services).
 - In terms of location, it is important that programs be available to support not only Red Deer residents but also residents of small communities outside of Red Deer that are increasingly reporting substance use and other issues. One respondent highlighted the need to extend services to rural communities and reduce barriers such as transportation to ensure that rural youth can access the same services as urban youth.
- *A failure to keep pace with rising demand.* Demand for services has been rising faster than supply, driven by both the population growth in Red Deer and societal issues.
 - *The need to better support frontline staff.* The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on agency staff, requiring them to work long hours under stressful conditions. Support is needed so that agencies can give more staff time off while paying for their replacements. There is also a longer-term need to improve training and provide clearer career pathways for frontline workers.
 - *The need to improve coordination and collaboration between programs.* Key informants noted that programs often operate in silos and highlighted the importance of continuing to foster greater collaboration and connection among different service providers. Progress has been made in building some linkages between programs and organizations and coordinating case management and taking a more holistic approach to working with individuals. The SLT and CIT help to facilitate communication and coordination. The Centre for Social Impact (CSI) has been established as a centrally located place where charities and non-profit organizations can collaborate, and families can readily access a variety of supports and services; it is working to attract more youth serving organizations. Further strengthening partnerships and networks can lead to more comprehensive and coordinated support for at-risk youth. Collaborative efforts can lead to a better understanding of needs and the development of comprehensive solutions.

Many gaps in services and areas were identified where further action could be taken to prevent or limit youth involvement in crime.

The gaps and actions that were most commonly identified by key informants included:

- *Prevention and early intervention programs.* Prevention and early intervention programs that target at-risk youth can help identify and address underlying issues before they escalate. Examples of such can include mentoring, counseling, life skills training, and positive youth development initiatives.

Key informants highlighted the importance of increasing access to programming targeted at younger youth (e.g., 8 to 12 years of age), when the opportunities for prevention are greatest. This may involve developing a better understanding of Adverse Childhood

Experiences (ACEs) and allocating greater funding towards preventive measures, rather than focusing on trying to address issues later in the youth's development. It was noted that concerns about safety at school, including violence, are increasing anxiety levels and contributing to rising rates of suicide ideation amongst primary school students.

- *Outreach services.* Conducting outreach-based work and meeting youth where they are is critical to building effective relationships. Outreach-based programming targets at-risk youth in their environments, such as skate parks or other community spaces. There may be opportunities to partner with easy-to-access diversion programs to leverage relationships and provide alternative pathways that take youth away from crime.
- *Safe and inclusive spaces.* Creating safe and inclusive community spaces where youth can gather, socialize, and engage in positive activities, such as sports, arts, and cultural programs, can help divert their energy towards constructive outlets and reduce the likelihood of involvement in crime. Expanding shelter services, including day shelters, can contribute to their well-being and prevent their involvement in crime. These initiatives can provide immediate support and resources to at-risk youth, helping them to access the assistance they need.
- *Trauma-informed approaches.* Communities need to work with youth in a supportive way to address underlying trauma and treat the symptoms. Treatment programs to address trauma can help youth overcome deep-seated attachment issues. Even youth in dire need now (i.e., living with addictions, gang involved) need to be supported in a trauma recovery model (e.g., getting them into recovery-based work with trauma focus). Unaddressed trauma can lead youth to seek affiliation and affirmation through involvement with crime and gangs.
- *Residential care and other support.* It was noted that it is difficult to access residential care for youth, including girls, outside the home when violence and/or exploitation is happening. Family disruptions and unsafe home environments have forced many youth in Red Deer to flee their homes to live on the streets. Providing safe and stable housing options for at-risk youth is crucial to address their basic needs and provide a foundation for stability and positive outcomes. There is a need for additional health care, income, and housing supports as well as assistance for other basic needs (i.e., food, clothing). Suggestions were made to increase access to youth shelters and provide more beds for at-risk youth.
- *Food support.* Programs addressing food insecurity are identified as an important intervention. Ensuring that at-risk youth have access to nutritious meals and food support can positively impact their well-being and overall development.
- *Maintaining connections with youth.* Key informants highlighted challenges associated with encouraging youth to first access and then continue to access services. Key informants emphasized the importance of guiding youth and providing them with the necessary steps

and support to ensure their success. This can involve case management, mentorship programs, counseling, and guidance to help them navigate their way to a positive future.

A distrust of the system, combined with fear of change due to systemic trauma and abuse, can result in youth being unwilling to access services. Some youth, particularly violent youth, bounce around programs and are unable to access the services they need.

Examples were cited of youth covered under the Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act (PSECA) or who have mental health issues, suicidal thoughts, anxiety, or trauma that did not stay in placement but rather went to the streets.

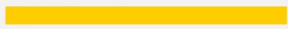
- *Sentencing alternatives.* A challenge is that if a youth commits a crime in Calgary or Edmonton, they have access to more sentencing options because the necessary services to support exist there. However, these options do not exist in Red Deer. For example, to receive an intensive supervision order, the youth must have access to both forensic and psychiatric supports (these do not exist for youth in Red Deer).
- *Specialized services for youth with FASD, Pervasive Development Disorders (PDD), and other conditions requiring intensive support.* These are very complex cases, where it is difficult to support the youth and keep them safe. While treatments such as equine therapy can work well for youth with FASD, the cost is significant.
- *Health promotion.* These programs aim to educate youth about various aspects of life, including sexual and reproductive health (including understanding consent, personal agency, and healthy relationships), financial literacy, and general life responsibilities. By providing such education, youth can make informed decisions and reduce their vulnerability to risky behaviours.
- *Accessible mental health support.* Ensuring that youth have access to mental health services is crucial for addressing underlying mental health challenges and reducing the risk of involvement in criminal activities. There is a need to improve access to mental health support services tailored to the needs of at-risk and high-risk youth. This can involve increasing the availability, affordability, and awareness of mental health resources within the community. This will involve addressing barriers that prevent youth from seeking help, such as stigma or ineffective processes, and ensuring ongoing support is available for them and their families. There should be an emphasis on supporting youth to address and resolve underlying trauma.
- *Programming for newcomers.* It can be more difficult for newcomer youth (e.g., Sudanese and Somali youth) to form relationships and parents are often not clear on where they can receive information and assistance on topics such as drugs and gangs. Bad experiences with police in their country of origin can add to the difficulties.

- *Services related to domestic violence.* Key informants noted a shortage in specialized therapists in domestic violence, outreach services, and other support staff and services that can assist women overcome barriers. Women with children need pathways through which they can escape domestic violence. While there is a shelter for women in Red Deer, there is not one for women with children. The potential demand is significant. It was noted that there can be 2,000 – 3,000 domestic violence files in Red Deer at any point in time.
- *Services targeted at parents and families.* Providing support to families in need can help address risk factors within the home environment. Key informants noted the need for services that will meet parents and children where they are, offer support to the families and not just the youth, and help to build connections and safe networks without the parents feeling that they are going to be shamed or reported to the Ministry of Children Services. This can involve offering parenting classes, family therapy, and connecting families with community resources to improve their overall well-being and reduce stressors.
- *Recreational activities.* Recreation programs are seen as important to engage at-risk youth in positive and enjoyable activities. These programs offer opportunities for socialization, promote teamwork, skill development, and a sense of purpose, and provide healthy outlets for their energy and creativity. These activities can provide an outlet for youth to channel their energy positively and build important life skills.
- *Education and skill-building.* Offering educational programs and skill-building opportunities can enhance the prospects of at-risk youth. This includes providing access to quality education, vocational training, job placement services, and promoting educational aspirations. The need for life skills programs was also identified. These programs focus on equipping youth with practical skills and knowledge necessary for independent living, including topics such as financial management, employment skills, and personal responsibility.
- *Increased policing and support services.* Some suggested that additional policing measures be implemented, and support services be targeted specifically at the at-risk and high-risk youth population. This could involve increased law enforcement presence areas identified as youth crime hotspots to help deter criminal activities. It could also involve expanding YCAT to further establish positive relationships between law enforcement and youth, increasing community outreach, and creating diversion programs aimed at building relationships and providing resources for youth.

Some key informants suggested consideration should be given to reallocating funds from traditional policing approaches to community-based initiatives that address the underlying causes of crime and gang involvement. This perspective suggests that investing in community resources and support systems can be more effective in preventing and intervening in youth crime.

- *Targeted support for adults.* Key informants identified a gap in support services for adults who engage in violence, recognizing that the actions of these adults can influence youth to get involved in crime, gangs, and guns. By addressing the root causes and providing support to adults, the likelihood of youth engaging in such activities can be reduced.
- *Collaboration and information sharing.* Enhancing coordination and information sharing among various stakeholders, including community organizations, schools, law enforcement, and social services, can lead to more effective prevention efforts. This collaboration allows for early identification of at-risk youth and ensures appropriate interventions are in place.
- *Addressing societal factors.* Tackling broader systemic issues like poverty, inequality, and social exclusion is essential for preventing youth involvement in crime. This may involve advocating for social and economic policies that address the root causes of crime and promote social equity.

3. THREE YEAR PLAN



This chapter provides an overview of the process through which the BSCF funding will be delivered, the funding strategy that will be employed, funding priorities that have been established, and plans for evaluating the results.

3.1 THE FUNDING PROCESS

The process that is involved in funding initiatives in Red Deer through the BSCF includes:

- **Development of the Three Year Plan.** This plan was developed through engagement with community organizations and representatives and a review of current conditions, the programming ecosystem in Red Deer, and approaches taken in other communities. The Plan outlines priorities for the funding in terms of types of programs and target groups.
- **Procuring the activities to be funded with the BSCF funding.** Funding will be provided over three fiscal years (2023-2024, 2024-2025, 2025-2026) and proponents may receive funding for one or more of these years. According to the program guidelines, funding can be provided for:
 - *Public Safety Crime Prevention Inventory (CPI) identified model programs.*¹⁵ Organizations can use the CPI to help identify successful/promising practices to incorporate into the development of their programs.
 - *New or innovative programs or initiatives.* Both new and existing programs can be funded. However, for existing programs, there must be an incremental change to the program and the funding cannot be used to support current programs and ongoing core operations. Examples of changes include new or enhanced services, newly defined target populations, the introduction of culturally appropriate programming, and implementation of a new delivery model.
 - *Other activities designed to strengthen the community's response.* Examples could include implementing a public awareness and education program, undertaking research into the factors affecting the participation of youth in crime, providing training for frontline and other workers, developing mechanisms to facilitate greater collaboration and integration of horizontal initiatives related to violence, updating Red Deer's Community Safety Strategy, developing a data collection strategy and system, and evaluating the results.

Funding decisions will consider the:

- *The program design.* Considerations include the fit with the requirements of the BSCF program, the priorities of the CIT and SLT, the needs of the target group,

¹⁵ <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/crime-prevention-inventory>

and the ecosystem in which the program will operate; the extent to which the program is clearly and well-defined; and the readiness for implementation.

- *The delivery organization.* Considerations may include the status of the organization (e.g., registered non-profit organization or an organization registered to legally operate in Alberta), location (presence in Red Deer), focus (e.g., focus on key target groups including pre-adolescents, adolescents, and young adults), and demonstrated experience relevant to the proposed project or program.
- *The budget.* The budget will need to be appropriate given the expected impacts and likely level of effort.
- *Sustainability.* It is expected that a sustainability plan will be developed, indicating how the program or impacts of the project are expected to continue beyond the end of the three years.

As the procurement process evolves, engagement and consultation with youth will be considered to further inform the funding decisions.

- **Administration of the funding.** The City of Red Deer will enter into contracts with the successful proponents and the funding will be administered over the three years. The contracts will outline a series of planned activities, outputs, and intended impacts to be achieved as well as indicators that will be tracked over the course of the project.
- **Project Reporting.** Funded proponents will be expected to provide annual reports outlining the progress made against the intended activities, outputs, and impacts on an annual basis and submit a final report outlining the results, the lessons learned, and the planned next steps to sustain or build off the progress made.
- **Impact Evaluation of the BSCF-funded Projects.** Building on the indicators defined as part of the proponent contracts, an evaluation will be conducted to assess the major achievements, impact, and outcomes of the funded projects, lessons learned, key challenges, and implications for future programming.

3.2 FUNDING STRATEGY

Based on key recommendations provided by the CIT and SLT members as well as others who were engaged, the strategy that will be used in selected projects for funding includes:

- ***Red Deer will be open to using the BSCF to not only fund new initiatives but also to expand or innovate existing programs as well as improve access to existing programs.***

In addition to new initiatives, it was recommended that consideration be given to allowing BCSF funding to be used to:

- Expand the capacity of existing organizations and programs. This could involve increasing staffing levels, expanding services, and providing more intensive support.
- Increase program accessibility. It is important to ensure that not only are programs in place, but that the target groups will be able to access them. That could involve providing subsidies or finding alternative funding sources to reduce or eliminate financial burdens for participants.
- ***The funding will not be spread too thinly.*** It was strongly recommended that, in order to have a significant impact, the BCSF funding should not be spread too thin over a large number of projects but rather concentrated into a small number of effective projects.
- ***It is anticipated that funding will provide financial support for program development and expansion as well as other possible activities such as conducting research, developing other plans, or implementing public awareness and education programs.***
- ***The primary focus is on upstream activities including prevention and early-stage intervention.*** There is broad support that the primary focus should be on improving prevention and early intervention programs that target at-risk youth and can help identify and address underlying issues before they escalate. Prevention is generally considered to be the most effective strategic approach, followed by intervention.
- ***Use of the BCSF funding is community driven.*** Community representatives have been actively involved in identifying issues and gaps and defining priorities. Local community organizations will drive the design of projects, proposing approaches that align with one or more priorities that will help to mitigate those issues.

3.3 FUNDING PRIORITIES

A situational analysis was conducted regarding the involvement of youth in crime in Red Deer, factors contributing to that involvement, local programs in place to work with at-risk and high-risk youth, and key gaps in the available programming. Building on the results of the situational analysis, the CIT was asked to establish priorities regarding the types of initiatives in Red Deer that should be supported with the BCSF funding, as well as key segments of the youth population that should be targeted by those programs. The SLT then met to review those priorities, made some minor adjustments, and approved the priorities as part of the Three-Year Plan.

The CIT and SLT identified five priority areas including three that were rated Top Tier (highest priority) and two that were rated Second Tier. A table summarizing the five prioritized areas of program need is provided on the following page.

Table 8: Priority Areas of Program Need, Target Groups, Local Programs, and Sample Programs from Other Jurisdictions

Priority Areas of Program Need	Target Groups	Local Programs	Sample Programs from Other Jurisdictions
Top Tier			
Housing-Related Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8–12-year-olds) • Adolescents (13–17-year-olds) • Older youth (18–24-year-olds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arcadia Program (McMan) • Solstice House by Vantage Community Services • Safe Harbour Red Deer • 49th Street Youth Shelter • YMCA Red Deer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choices for Youth by Thrive • Dans La Rue • Directions Youth Services by Family Services of Greater Vancouver • GAP Youth Outreach by Brandon Friendship Centre • Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY)
Outreach-Based Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13–17-year-olds) • Older youth (18–24-year-olds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach School • Hope Mission Outreach Centre • Safe Harbour Society • Street Ties Youth Outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EGADZ Downtown Youth Centre • So Adolescents Stay Home (S.A.S.H) Outreach Program • Youth Outreach Program by Rexdale Community Health Centre • Young People Support Branch • Youth at Risk Development (YARD) Program
FASD and Developmental Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8–12-year-olds) • Adolescents (13–17-year-olds) • Older youth (18–24-year-olds) • Natural supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Alberta Fetal, Alcohol, Spectrum Disorder Network (FASD) • Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) • Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McMan LifeSpan Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Program • Youth Action for Prevention by the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute • Youth Justice Program by the Southern Alberta FASD Network
Second Tier			
Education and Life-Skills Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8–12-year-olds) • Adolescents (13–17-year-olds) • Older youth (18–24-year-olds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment and Support Services (EPSS) • YMCA of Northern Alberta • Solstice House 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-Risk Youth Justice by Options Community Services • Youth Engagement Services (YES) • Youth in Transition by Boys and Girls Club of Airdrie
Access to Mental Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8–12-year-olds) • Adolescents (13–17-year-olds) • Older youth (18–24-year-olds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberta Health Services (AHS) • Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health (CASA) • The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) • Step Up Step Down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directions Youth Services • The ZONE Youth Drop-In • Youth Outreach Workers Program

As indicated, the table summarizes the key target groups associated with each area of need, local programs related to this program area that are active in Red Deer, and a sample of programs in other jurisdictions which represent potential program models for a community organization funded in Red Deer. Appendix 1 provides a more detailed description of each priority area.

A discussion of the five areas of need is provided in the following paragraphs:

Top Tier

- 1. Housing-related programs.** Housing-related programs play a crucial role in preventing youth involvement in criminal activity, particularly gangs, for several reasons. First, these programs facilitate access to stable and safe living environments, reducing the likelihood of youth turning to crime for survival. By offering affordable and secure housing options, they minimize exposure to violence and negative influences prevalent in high-risk neighborhoods.

Second, housing programs often offer supportive services such as counseling, mentoring, and access to education and employment resources. These services connect at-risk youth with positive role models and mentors, helping them make positive life choices, develop essential skills, and foster a sense of belonging and self-worth. Further, housing programs facilitate community engagement by organizing events, recreational activities, and skill-building workshops. This promotes social integration, healthy relationships, and reduces the allure of gang involvement and street life. Education and vocational support are also prioritized in many housing programs. By ensuring access to quality education and vocational training, young people acquire skills for future employment, reducing their vulnerability to gang recruitment or illegal activities.

Lastly, housing programs aim to address the root causes of criminal involvement, such as poverty, lack of opportunities, and family instability. By providing barrier-free access to affordable housing and support services, these programs tackle the broader social, economic, and psychological factors contributing to gang involvement, breaking the cycle of crime and violence.

- 2. Outreach-based programs.** Outreach-based programs are valuable for helping high-risk youth due to several reasons. First, they ensure accessibility by reaching out directly to young people in their own communities, including those who are homeless, involved in gangs, or lacking supportive networks. This proactive approach creates opportunities for engagement and support.

Second, these programs focus on building trust and establishing relationships with high-risk youth. Outreach workers create a non-judgmental and supportive environment, fostering open communication and rapport. This trust is crucial for engaging young people who may have experienced trauma or feel marginalized, enabling effective support.

Third, outreach programs provide tailored and individualized support. By directly engaging with youth, they can assess their unique challenges and needs, developing strategies to address them. Whether it involves connecting youth to housing, education, employment, healthcare, or counseling services, outreach programs adapt interventions to meet each individual's requirements. Moreover, outreach workers are trained to provide crisis intervention and harm reduction strategies. They assist high-risk youth in minimizing immediate harm and risks associated with street life, substance abuse, or gang involvement. This practical assistance, such as emergency shelter or access to healthcare, works towards long-term solutions. Additionally, outreach programs act as bridges, linking high-risk youth to various services and resources. They collaborate with organizations, agencies, and community partners to connect young people with housing programs, educational opportunities, vocational training, counseling, mental health services, and legal support. These linkages enable youth to access necessary resources for immediate needs and long-term stability.

Finally, outreach-based programs focus on empowerment and positive development. Through mentorship, life skills training, and personal development programs, they help youth develop resilience, self-confidence, and a sense of purpose. These initiatives encourage young people to set and achieve goals, build healthy relationships, and explore alternative paths to success, reducing reliance on negative influences like gangs or street life.

- 3. FASD and developmental programs.** Specialized services for youth with conditions like Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD) are crucial for several reasons. These services understand and accommodate the unique needs of individuals with these conditions, providing tailored interventions and support strategies. They emphasize an individualized approach, considering the specific strengths and challenges of each young person.

Specialized services focus on behaviour management, skill building, and teaching coping mechanisms to help youth with FASD, PDD, and related conditions navigate daily life. They employ a multidisciplinary team to provide comprehensive assessments, treatment planning, and ongoing support. These services also offer family support and education, recognizing the critical role of families in the well-being of these individuals. Additionally, specialized services play a vital role in transition planning, ensuring a smooth transition into adulthood by addressing areas such as education, employment, independent living, and provide ongoing support services.

Tier Two

- 4. Education and life-skills building.** Educational programs and programs that help youth build important life skills are crucial for several reasons. First, they facilitate academic success by providing structured learning environments with qualified teachers, preparing young people for higher education and future employment. Second, these programs empower youth by equipping them with knowledge, critical thinking skills, and self-confidence,

enabling them to tackle challenges and make informed decisions. Third, they open doors to expanded opportunities, regardless of socioeconomic background, by increasing access to higher education and vocational training.

Fourth, these programs foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills, allowing youth to analyze information, evaluate perspectives, and propose solutions. Additionally, they complement formal education by teaching practical life skills such as communication, teamwork, financial literacy, and decision-making. Moreover, these programs contribute to personal and social development, helping youth explore their interests, develop their identity, and cultivate positive values and social interactions. Lastly, these programs serve as preventive measures against risky behaviours by providing knowledge, promoting positive decision-making, and offering alternatives to harmful actions.

- 5. Access to mental health services.** There has been a significant increase in the prevalence of mental health issues among young people, including anxiety, depression, eating disorders, self-harm, and substance abuse. Factors such as academic pressure, societal expectations, social media influence, and personal challenges have contributed to the increase.

Early intervention and prevention is key to addressing mental health concerns in youth before they escalate. Mental health professionals provide counseling, therapy, and crisis intervention to support at-risk individuals. These services provide opportunities for early identification, assessment, and treatment of these issues and offer evidence-based therapies and interventions designed to support young people in processing their experiences and building resilience. They can promote emotional well-being, improve the overall quality of life and provide a safe space for young people to address and heal from trauma, abuse, grief, loss, and other challenging life events.

By addressing mental health challenges proactively, mental health services can prevent long-term negative consequences and help youth develop healthy coping mechanisms, strengthen resilience, build positive self-esteem, develop healthy relationships, and reduce the risk of suicide. Accessible mental health services combat the stigma surrounding mental health issues and contribute to fostering a culture that encourages open conversations about mental health and promotes help-seeking behaviours among youth.

Target Groups

After consideration and discussion, CIT decided that the following four target groups should be focused on when responding to the priority areas of program need.

- Pre-adolescents (8–12-year-olds)
- Adolescents (13–17-year-olds)
- Older youth (18–24-year-olds)
- Natural supports

3.4 EVALUATION OF THE RESULTS

By providing funding to communities, the BSCF is expected to enable them to respond to gun and gang violence (including the factors that may lead to future gun and gang violence) in their jurisdictions over the next three years. Over the longer-term, the program will be evaluated nationally based on the extent to which the supported prevention and intervention activities are sustained and decrease the rate of homicide by firearm, firearm offences, and homicide by organized crime/street gang involved crime. The activities are also expected to improve the relative performance of the communities in terms of those same indicators (i.e., achieve a positive shift in the rankings regarding homicides by firearm, incidents of firearm offences, and organized crime/street gang-involved crime).

Table 9: Expected Results of the BSCF

Expected Results	Indicators
Short-term (1-2 years)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified municipalities and Indigenous communities have funding for prevention and intervention initiatives to address and respond to gun and gang violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of identified recipients that received dedicated funding to address gun and gang violence through crime prevention and intervention initiatives
Medium-term (3 years)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified municipalities and Indigenous communities implement informed prevention and intervention initiatives to respond to gun and gang violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of municipalities and Indigenous communities who report that the funding has enabled them to respond to gun and gang violence in their jurisdictions
Long-term (4+ years)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified municipalities and Indigenous communities are equipped to address gun and gang violence through intervention and prevention initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of recipients that indicate prevention and intervention activities will be sustained at the end of the BSCF funding Percentage of funded communities that positively shifted in the rankings on the identified communities list based on the proxy indices (Homicides by firearm; incidents of firearms offences; and organized crime/street gang-involved crime) Percentage decrease in rates of homicide by firearm amongst identified communities Percentage decrease in rates of firearms offences amongst identified communities Percentage decrease in rates of homicide by organized crime/street gang involved crime amongst identified Communities

We recommend that an evaluation of the BCSF funding be conducted in 2025-26 to report on the activities, outputs, impacts, and outcomes generated, the anticipated sustainability of the initiatives, best practices identified, and lessons learned. We are proposing four types of indicators, including indicators related to activities, outputs, and outcomes.

- Activities are the key activities which were implemented, including a description of the extent to which the planned activities were implemented;
- Outputs are the products or immediate results that are generated by the activities; and
- Outcomes indicators report on the intended results associated with the overall strategy and specific programs. However, it should be noted that the BSCF funded activities are typically only one of many factors that may influence the outcomes.

The following table illustrates the types of indicators which can be included within each category. As noted earlier, we recommend that tailored output and outcome indicators be developed for each of the funded programs. Possible performance measures and data sources are outlined in the table below.

Table 10: Possible Indicators and Data Sources

Type	Indicators	Data Sources
Activities	• Progress made against planned activities	• Reported by funded proponents
	• Other activities undertaken	• Reported by funded proponents
Outputs	• Service delivered (training, education, outreach, events, etc.)	• Reported by funded proponents
	• Participation levels	• Reported by funded proponents
	• Reports, studies and strategies produced	• Reported by funded proponents
Outcomes	• Report program outcomes	• Reported by funded proponents
	• Crime and youth in crime statistics (calls, charges, types of charges, CSI, etc.)	• RCMP and Statistics Canada
	• Best practices, lessons learned and perceived changes in the community and ecosystem	• Survey of program proponents, CIT and SLT members, and selected others
	• Impact of the funded activities in reducing the potential for gun and gang violence	• Survey of program proponents, CIT and SLT members, and selected others
	• Extent to which the prevention and intervention activities will be sustained at the end of the BSCF funding	• Survey of program proponents, CIT and SLT members, and selected others

Appendices



Appendix I: Profile of Red Deer's Major Priorities

A1. HOUSING-RELATED PROGRAMS

A1.1 The Issue

Housing-related programs play a crucial role in preventing youth involvement in criminal activity, including gangs, for several reasons:

- *Stability and safety.* Housing programs provide stable and safe living environments for young people. By offering affordable and secure housing options, these programs create a sense of stability and reduce the likelihood of youth becoming involved in criminal activities as a means of survival. Stable housing reduces exposure to violence, drug use, and other negative influences commonly found in high-risk neighborhoods.
- *Positive role models and support:* Housing programs often include supportive services such as counseling, mentoring, and access to educational and employment resources. These programs can connect at-risk youth with positive role models and mentors who can guide them towards making positive life choices. The presence of supportive adults and professionals helps young people develop essential life skills, build resilience, and foster a sense of belonging and self-worth.
- *Community engagement:* Housing programs can facilitate community engagement and provide opportunities for youth to participate in constructive activities. By organizing community events, recreational programs, and skill-building workshops, these programs promote social integration and help youth develop healthy relationships with their peers and neighbors. Engaging in positive activities and connecting with a supportive community reduces the appeal of gang involvement and street life.
- *Education and vocational support:* Many housing programs prioritize education and vocational training as part of their services. By ensuring access to quality education and vocational programs, young people can acquire the necessary skills and qualifications for future employment. Education and vocational support empower youth, offering them a pathway to economic independence and reducing their vulnerability to recruitment by gangs or involvement in illegal activities.
- *Addressing root causes of criminal involvement:* Housing programs often aim to address the underlying factors that contribute to youth involvement in crime and gangs, such as poverty, lack of opportunities, and family instability. By providing barrier free access to affordable

housing and support services, these programs tackle some of the root causes that can lead young people down a path of crime and violence. This holistic approach helps break the cycle of gang involvement by addressing the broader social, economic, and psychological factors that contribute to it.

A1.2 Fit with the Target Groups

Housing-related programs are relevant to pre-adolescents (8–12-year-olds), adolescents (13–17-year-olds), and older youth (18–24-year-olds).

A1.3 Existing Programs in the Community

[Arcadia Program \(McMan\)](#): The Arcadia program caters to individuals aged 15 to 24 who have experienced homelessness for a minimum of three months or have a recurring pattern of homelessness spanning a significant portion of the recent years. Referrals are welcome for young people lacking a permanent residence, residing on the streets, in unsuitable shelters, or engaging in temporary living arrangements such as "couch surfing." An interview with the youth or their family is a crucial step in the application process. Prioritization involves carefully assessing all provided information, consulting referral sources, and reviewing admission and screening reports. Once admitted into the program, the Housing Coordinator will collaborate with young individuals to secure reliable sources of income and ensure punctual payments, maintain employment or enrollment in school, and develop essential self-care skills. Every three months, the Housing Coordinator and the youth will reassess their goals. The program aims to assist youths in finding a housing arrangement that suits their needs, ensuring long-term stability. Ultimately, the objective is to ensure that each youth is placed in permanent housing upon completing the program.

[Solstice House by Vantage Community Services](#): Solstice House offers a secure and steady transitional environment designed for teenagers preparing to embark on independent living. This transition to adulthood can pose challenges, but the comprehensive skills acquired at Solstice, including conflict resolution, budgeting, employment readiness, and emotional well-being, lay a strong foundation for their future success. During their stay, they are also encouraged to establish and nurture stable connections with their families and the community.

One notable advantage of the program is the extended duration that youth can reside at Solstice. With the ability to stay for up to a year and a half, they develop a sense of comfort and perceive it as their true home. Consequently, they can more effectively internalize the necessary habits and skills to thrive independently. The program ensures stability for young individuals who would otherwise encounter multiple transitions.

Upon completing their tenure at Solstice, youth may have the opportunity to transition to the connected independent living suite. This program is specifically designed for individuals who have demonstrated their ability to manage finances, maintain employment, or consistently attend school, indicating their readiness for increased privileges and autonomy. Leveraging their existing

relationships from Solstice, they continue to receive guidance and support to facilitate a smoother transition to independence.

[Safe Harbour Red Deer:](#) Safe Harbour runs an emergency shelter and outreach service. Within this service, they run multiple programs including the Overnight Shelter Program, Day Sleep, and a drop in shelter. The overnight shelter program takes between 80 to 100 adults who are under the influence of substances. The Overnight Shelter Program provides a supervised environment for its guests on the streets and in the elements.

[49th Street Youth Shelter:](#) Youth HQ delivers a program called 49th Street Shelter with subprograms including crisis care, youth and family outreach supports, youth in transition, and young adults in transition.

- **Crisis care** is for youth between the ages of 12 and 17 in a crisis situation that prevents them from having a safe place to stay. They are provided with help to work towards a better situation and crisis resolution.
- **Youth and family outreach supports** is for youth between the ages of 12 and 17 and caters to youth and families in the community who are experiencing conflict in the home. Whether they return home or find themselves in another living arrangement, there is support available to help them navigate their ongoing situation. If they require assistance in reconnecting with their family or resolving conflicts, they can rely on the availability of an Outreach Worker who is ready to provide guidance and aid in finding appropriate resources and establishing a network of support.
- **Youth in transition** is for youth between the ages of 16 and 17. They will be assisted in finding suitable housing and receive ongoing support after transitioning into independent living. As they embark on their journey of independence, they can rest assured that they are not alone; a support system will be in place to offer guidance on life skills and provide continuous assistance in pursuing their goals. A dedicated Youth in Transition Worker will be readily available to provide support as they navigate the challenges of living independently.
- **Young adults in transition** is for young adults who are involved with Children's Services and are seeking assistance in independent living. The program will help in developing crucial life skills, managing finances, conducting job searches, honing employment skills, and pursuing educational goals. Additionally, support will be offered in navigating the social aspects of life, such as identifying community networks where the individual can foster positive relationships with peers and mentors.

[YMCA Red Deer:](#) YMCA delivers two housing programs called Homeward Bound and Housing First. Homeward Bound and Housing First programs focus on ending homelessness by providing permanent housing and follow-up support. Homeward Bound helps individuals and families who are facing homelessness and are provided with housing, followed by comprehensive support to:

1. Overcome obstacles and search for suitable housing options.
2. Foster positive relationships with landlords, including mediating conflicts when necessary.
3. Access necessary resources and effectively manage housing allowances.

4. Aid in the setup of their new apartment, including obtaining furniture, household items, and groceries.

Follow-up support workers are dedicated to helping participants access resources that promote community integration, enhance their quality of life, and encourage independent living. They work towards establishing a robust support network that fosters the development of life skills, supports mental health requirements, facilitates access to medical services, and addresses various other needs that may arise.

A1.4 Examples in Other Communities

[Choices for Youth by Thrive](#): Choices for Youth helps youth to secure stable housing, education, and employment, while working toward family stability and better health through innovative programming and social enterprise.

[Dans La Rue](#): The agency provides a host of youth support services. The focus of these services is providing youth with access to various forms of barrier-free housing. Additionally, outreach services aimed at supporting youth and their natural supports are offered.

[Directions Youth Services by Family Services of Greater Vancouver](#): Directions Youth Services offers low-barrier support to youth under 25 who are in crisis or experiencing homelessness due to abuse, neglect, substance use, or mental health challenges.

[GAP Youth Outreach by Brandon Friendship Centre](#): GAP Youth Outreach supports youth ages 16 - 26 who may be at risk of homelessness or are within their first year of experiencing homelessness. The program is equipped with a small case management team that can provide intensive support for 6-to-30-months while prevention foundations and tenancy skills develop and/or holistic teams of natural and community-based supports are established.

[Resource Assistance for Youth \(RaY\)](#): RaY offers a wide range of youth support services for youth 29 years of age and younger. Services include drop-in support, basic needs support, street outreach, housing, primary care, mental health and addictions, education and training, and cultural supports.

A2. OUTREACH-BASED PROGRAMS

A2.1 The Issue

Outreach-based programs are valuable when it comes to helping high-risk youth for several reasons:

- *Accessibility*: Outreach-based programs are designed to reach out directly to high-risk youth in their own communities. These programs proactively engage with young people who may be difficult to reach through traditional means, such as those who are homeless, involved in gangs, or disconnected from supportive networks. By meeting youth where they are,

outreach programs ensure accessibility and create opportunities for engagement and support.

- *Trust and relationship building:* Outreach workers in these programs build trust and establish relationships with high-risk youth. They create a non-judgmental and supportive environment, fostering open communication and rapport. This trust is crucial for engaging young people who may have experienced trauma, feel marginalized, or have had negative experiences with authority figures. Establishing positive relationships helps outreach workers understand individual needs, concerns, and aspirations of youth, which in turn allows for more effective support.
- *Tailored and individualized support:* Outreach-based programs recognize that each young person's circumstances and needs are unique. By directly engaging with youth, these programs can provide personalized and tailored support. Outreach workers can assess the specific challenges and risks faced by each individual and develop strategies to address them. Whether this involves connecting youth to housing, education, employment, healthcare, or counseling services, outreach programs adapt their interventions to meet the unique needs of high-risk youth.
- *Crisis intervention and harm reduction:* High-risk youth often face immediate crises and engage in risky behaviours. Outreach workers are trained to provide crisis intervention and harm reduction strategies to minimize the immediate harm and risks associated with street life, substance abuse, or gang involvement. They offer practical assistance, such as emergency shelter, access to healthcare, or information on safer practices, while working towards long-term solutions.
- *Linkages to services and resources:* Outreach programs act as bridges, linking high-risk youth to a wide range of services and resources. They collaborate with other organizations, agencies, and community partners to connect youth with housing programs, educational opportunities, vocational training, counseling, mental health services, and legal support. These linkages help young people access the necessary resources to address their immediate needs and work towards long-term stability and personal growth.
- *Empowerment and positive development:* Outreach-based programs focus on empowering high-risk youth to make positive choices and take control of their lives. Through mentorship, life skills training, and personal development programs, these initiatives help youth develop resilience, self-confidence, and a sense of purpose. They encourage young people to set and achieve goals, build healthy relationships, and explore alternative paths to success, reducing their reliance on negative influences like gangs or street life.

A2.2 Fit with the Target Groups

Outreach-related programs are relevant to adolescents (13–17-year-olds), and older youth (18–24-year-olds).

A2.3 Existing Programs in the Community

[Outreach School](#): St. John Paul II Catholic Outreach warmly welcomes high school students in grades 10 to 12. The school provides a flexible, friendly, and informal learning environment, offering a wide range of core courses and Career Technology Studies (CTS) courses. Students have the opportunity to advance through their high school curriculum independently, free from the constraints of a traditional school's structure and program. The dedicated staff at St. John Paul II Catholic Outreach possesses the capability to tailor programs according to each learner's needs, providing customized education while employing flexible delivery methods.

[Hope Mission Outreach Centre](#): The outreach centre's vision is to support people with programs that inspire hope. Their mission is to connect with community members to provide skills and supports to safely move people forward in their lives with dignity. The mandate is to help people overcome the effects of domestic violence, suicide, homelessness and poverty through effective partnerships, education, and programming.

[Safe Harbour Society](#): The Outreach Services offer a comprehensive and coordinated approach to connecting with community members facing risk, aiming to address non-emergency situations. The primary objective is to minimize the need for law enforcement and medical interventions. The Outreach team actively engages in street outreach efforts, establishing connections with individuals experiencing homelessness and living in temporary encampments. The aim is to conduct intake assessments, facilitate the transition into stable housing, and encourage participation in support services.

[Street Ties Youth Outreach](#): The drop-in centre provides support and resources for youth at risk of sexual exploitation and addiction. It offers a welcoming environment and numerous services to minimize the risks faced by youth on the street. Clients are youth between the ages of 13 and 21. At the drop-in centre, there are two youth outreach workers and a program coordinator who build relationships by providing crisis counselling and a wide range of supports. These include both practical supports such as access to showers, food, and clothing, and educational supports such as resume writing and job search help. On Fridays, the team is in the community offering educational presentations to schools and agencies. Street Ties outreach sessions inform youth and the community about the risks of a street lifestyle and strategies young people can employ to protect themselves.

A2.4 Examples in Other Communities

[EGADZ Downtown Youth Centre:](#) EGADZ provides a host of youth-directed programs and services to youth and their families that improve their quality of life and meet their unique needs. Specific programs offered include youth drop-in support, residential services, outreach services, day and school support, and employment services.

[So Adolescents Stay Home \(S.A.S.H\) Outreach Program:](#) S.A.S.H. is an outreach program focused on high-risk youth who may routinely stay away from home and engage in high-risk behaviours. The program focuses on safety, stabilization, and prevention. A critical component is developing a connection and a relationship with a trusted adult. The workers actively reach out to at-risk youth in an effort to develop relationships and work with them to develop safety plans. The youth are supported in reconnecting to family and social support/community networks.

[Youth Outreach Program by Rexdale Community Health Centre:](#) The goal of the Youth Outreach Program is to engage hard-to-reach, at-risk youth between 12 and 21 years old who have not yet successfully connected with school, employment, and/or other community services and supports. Youth Outreach Workers engage youth and connect them with needed services, as well as collaborate with other community resources to coordinate their activities within identified neighborhoods.

[Young People Support Branch:](#) This branch of the Edmonton Police service consists of School Resource Officers, the Community Assertive Services Team (CAST) who work in partnership with Alberta Health Services, the DIVERSIONfirst Unit, One80 Unit, and Y:Five-O Unit. Each unit has a specific, yet supporting, mandate to reach out to youth with both preventative and intervention programs. CAST is similar in function to ACT teams to support youth experiencing mental health or addiction concerns. DIVERSIONfirst follows restorative justice principles as an alternative to criminal charges. The One80 Unit and Y:Five-O are intervention programs that use collaborative partnerships to build intervention and stabilization plans for at-risk youth including the most violent and prolific offenders.

[Youth at Risk Development \(YARD\) Program:](#) The Youth at Risk Development (YARD) program is a community-based, early intervention program that supports youth ages 10-17 that are currently at risk, affiliated with a gang, or involved in gang activity. The five YARD teams, which include an Indigenous-focused team, consist of a police officer and a registered social worker who work closely with the youth client, their families, schools, and community agencies. Additionally, YARD has the benefit of a clinician provided through Alberta Health Services for those clients with more acute mental health needs. YARD develops an individualized case plan for each youth, based on their unique circumstances, to assist them in avoiding or leaving the gang lifestyle. The program is client-driven in that youth, with the support of their team, develop and work on goals in the following areas: improving interpersonal relationships, improving mental health and wellness, increased life skills, and increased prosocial activities. Participation in the YARD program is voluntary.

A3. FASD AND DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS

A3.1 The Issue

Specialized services for youth with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD), and other conditions requiring intensive supports are needed for several important reasons:

- *Understanding and willingness to accommodate unique needs:* Complex needs, such as with FASD and PDD, often present unique challenges and impairments that require specialized knowledge and expertise. Specialized services ensure that professionals working with youth understand the specific needs, limitations, and strengths of individuals with these conditions. This understanding allows for tailored interventions, support strategies, and accommodations to maximize the individual's potential and enhance their quality of life.
- *Individualized approach:* Youth with FASD, PDD, and other conditions requiring intensive supports may have complex and diverse needs. Specialized services recognize the importance of individualized approaches, considering the specific strengths, abilities, and challenges of each young person. By providing personalized interventions, therapies, and supports, these services address the unique profiles of individuals and strive to meet their specific developmental, cognitive, social, and emotional needs.
- *Behaviour management and skill building:* Youth with FASD, PDD, and related conditions often experience difficulties with behaviour regulation, social skills, communication, and independent living skills. Specialized services focus on teaching effective behaviour management strategies, social interactions, coping skills, and adaptive behaviours. These services help youth develop the skills necessary to navigate daily life, establish healthy relationships, and participate in their communities to the best of their abilities.
- *Multidisciplinary approach:* Specialized services typically employ a multidisciplinary team of professionals, including psychologists, therapists, social workers, educators, and medical specialists. This collaborative approach allows for comprehensive assessments, treatment planning, and ongoing support. The team can address various aspects of the young person's development, including cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and physical well-being, ensuring a holistic approach to care and support.
- *Family support and education:* Specialized services recognize the critical role of families in the lives of youth with FASD, PDD, and similar conditions. These services offer support and education to families, providing them with information, strategies, and resources to better understand and support their child. Family involvement is crucial for the overall well-being and success of the young person, and specialized services foster a collaborative partnership between professionals and families to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach.

- *Transition planning:* As youth with FASD, PDD, and related conditions transition to adulthood, specialized services play a vital role in facilitating this process. They aid in developing transition plans that address areas such as education, employment, independent living, and ongoing support services. Specialized transition planning ensures a smooth and supported transition into adult life, minimizing disruptions and optimizing the individual's potential for success.

A3.2 Fit with the Target Groups

FASD and developmental programs are relevant to pre-adolescents (8–12-year-olds), adolescents (13–17-year-olds), older youth (18–24-year-olds), and natural supports.

A3.3 Existing Programs in the Community

[Central Alberta Fetal, Alcohol, Spectrum Disorder Network \(FASD\):](#) The Central Alberta FASD Clinic is for individuals ages 7 years and older who are experiencing difficulties that are suspected to be a result of prenatal exposure to alcohol. Confirmation of prenatal alcohol exposure may come from one of the following sources: birth mother (if alive and able to be contacted), reliable/verifiable witnesses, and/or from agency or medical file documentation. In terms of costs, there are various options for fully funded assessments based on eligibility requirements such as Children's Services and the clinic. In order to provide comprehensive support during the assessment process, individuals are requested to have a designated representative who will assist them throughout. This designated representative will serve as the main point of contact for the clinic and will act as the primary support for the individual. The responsibilities of the designated representatives encompass various tasks including assisting with the referral process for assessment, acting as the main contact person while the individual completes the assessment, confirming attendance to scheduled appointments, and much more.

[Family Support for Children with Disabilities \(FSCD\):](#) The FSCD program works with eligible families to provide support and services based on each child and family's needs. The FSCD program offers a range of supports for eligible families. These include providing information on government programs, community resources, and local supports. The program also assists in coordinating and accessing necessary services, offers counselling, and helps with costs related to clothing, footwear, and transportation for medical appointments. Families can receive respite services, support from aides for personal care and developmental needs, and assistance with medication, specialized services, and medical supplies. The FSCD worker remains consistent for families with multiple eligible children. The program also aids in planning transitions during significant life events for the child, such as diagnosis, returning home from the hospital, starting new programs, or preparing for adulthood. Additionally, the Red Deer & District Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) provides funding to not-for-profit organizations, school boards, and playschools for social programs that focus on child and youth development, mental health, strong communities, and family connections. Examples of funded projects include Books on the Bus and Small Acts Matter.

[Persons with Developmental Disabilities \(PDD\)](#): The Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) program in Alberta supports adults with developmental disabilities to live independently in their community. The program provides coordination, planning, and access to services for eligible individuals. Through the PDD program, individuals can receive support tailored to their needs. Alberta residents can contact Disability Services offices or Family Resource Centres for assistance in accessing disability supports and services. Additionally, the Advocate for Persons with Disabilities is available to provide advocacy support for navigating government and community resources. The program aims to enhance the independence and quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities in Alberta.

A3.4 Examples in Other Communities

[McMan LifeSpan Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder \(FASD\) Program](#): The McMan LifeSpan FASD Program provides one-on-one supportive mentorship and intensive case management for youth transitioning to adulthood and adults affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). This includes assisting in the areas of employment, education, living skills, advocacy and building natural and community supports. The Outreach portion of the project provides education, information, supports, resources, mentoring services, coaching and advocacy to parents and/or caregivers of persons with FASD. Another aspect of the Outreach is education and information sharing. This includes presenting to the community at large on FASD, as well as schools and other social service agencies in order to work collaboratively with mutual clients.

[Youth Action for Prevention by the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute](#): YAP is a youth engagement program that aims increase the knowledge of Saskatchewan youth (aged 14-24) about alcohol-related harms, including FASD. Through the YAP Program, youth are supported to foster positive change in their communities by developing personal skills, as well as creating and participating in projects that build awareness of alcohol-related harms.

[Youth Justice Program by the Southern Alberta FASD Network](#): The Youth Justice Program is a partnership between the South Alberta FASD Network and the Lethbridge City Police. It was created to increase awareness and management of FASD within the Youth Justice System. The main objectives of the programs are to influence case management for youth affected by FASD, divert youth from the justice system when appropriate, and identify high-risk youth and families and connect them with services and supports.

A4. EDUCATION AND LIFE-SKILLS BUILDING

A4.1 The Issue

Educational programs and programs that help youth build important life skills are essential for several reasons:

1. *Facilitating academic success:* Educational programs provide young people with the knowledge and skills necessary for academic success. They offer structured learning environments, qualified teachers, and age-appropriate curricula, ensuring that youth receive a quality education. By developing strong foundational skills in subjects like math, language arts, and science, educational programs prepare youth for higher education, future employment, and lifelong learning.
2. *Empowerment and self-confidence:* Educational programs empower youth by equipping them with knowledge, critical thinking skills, and the ability to express themselves effectively. Education promotes self-confidence, as young people gain a sense of competence and proficiency in various subjects. This confidence extends beyond the classroom, enabling youth to tackle challenges, make informed decisions, and advocate for themselves in various aspects of life.
3. *Expanded opportunities:* Education is often considered a pathway to expanded opportunities. By acquiring knowledge and skills, young people increase their chances of accessing higher education, scholarships, and vocational training programs. Educational programs open doors to diverse career paths and enable youth to pursue their interests and passions. They help level the playing field by providing equal access to education, regardless of socioeconomic background or other barriers.
4. *Critical thinking and problem-solving:* Educational programs foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills in youth. Through interactive learning activities, discussions, and projects, young people develop the ability to analyze information, evaluate different perspectives, and propose solutions. These skills are invaluable in navigating real-life challenges, making informed decisions, and contributing to their communities in meaningful ways.
5. *Life skills development:* Programs that help youth build important life skills complement formal education by addressing practical skills necessary for successful adulthood. These programs teach essential skills such as communication, teamwork, time management, financial literacy, decision-making, and goal setting. Life skills programs empower youth to navigate independent living, establish healthy relationships, manage their finances, and cope with stress effectively.

6. *Personal responsibility and social development:* Educational programs and programs that build life skills contribute to personal and social development. They provide opportunities for youth to develop their identity, explore their interests, and cultivate their talents. These programs foster positive social interactions, promote empathy and understanding, and nurture values such as respect, responsibility, and inclusivity. Additionally, they often offer extracurricular activities, clubs, and mentorship opportunities that enhance social connections and promote holistic development.
7. *Prevention of risky behaviours:* Educational programs and life skills programs serve as preventive measures against risky behaviours such as substance abuse, violence, and criminal activity. By providing youth with knowledge about the consequences of their actions, promoting positive decision-making skills, and offering alternatives to harmful behaviours, these programs reduce the likelihood of youth engaging in risky behaviours.

A4.2 Fit with the Target Groups

Education and life skills building programs are relevant to pre-adolescents (8–12-year-olds), adolescents (13–17-year-olds), and older youth (18–24-year-olds).

A4.3 Existing Programs in the Community

[Employment and Support Services \(EPSS\):](#) Employment and Support Services (ESS) in Red Deer for youth focuses on providing targeted assistance and resources to young individuals as they navigate the transition from school to the workforce. These programs are designed to equip youth with the necessary skills, knowledge, and support to find and maintain employment. Red Deer Employment Services offers a comprehensive array of employment supports designed to aid adults seeking to enter or re-enter the job market. Individuals can receive personalized assistance from an employment specialist who will guide them through the process. Moreover, the program provides access to an employer liaison who establishes regular communication with local employers to gather job leads. For job seekers, there is a dedicated job search resource centre equipped with the necessary tools, such as computers and photocopiers, to update their resumes and conduct efficient job searches. Additionally, the resource centre offers a wealth of information on educational and training opportunities, as well as up-to-date job and community resource boards for individuals to explore.

[YMCA of Northern Alberta:](#) The YMCA of Northern Alberta provides 3 programs to help unemployed and underemployed individuals including Bridging the Gap (BTG), Career Mentorship Program, and Employment Link.

For younger individuals seeking employment (aged 15 to 30), the YMCA presents Bridging the Gap, an employment readiness program spanning 20 weeks. This program focuses on skill enhancement through hands-on training and includes a twelve-week work placement opportunity. Bridging the

Gap is available in the Grande Prairie, Wood Buffalo, and Red Deer regions, providing valuable support to young job seekers in those areas.

The Career Mentorship Program provides internationally trained immigrants and refugees in the Wood Buffalo region with a valuable opportunity to connect with mentors. These mentors play a crucial role in assisting mentees with various aspects of their career development journey. Through the program, mentees receive guidance in developing effective networking strategies, gaining a better understanding of Canadian work culture, and enhancing their overall readiness for employment. Mentors and mentees collaborate closely to establish goals and determine the activities to be pursued throughout the mentoring relationship. The program requires a commitment of approximately 15 hours, to be completed within a 3- to 6-month timeframe. The format of mentorship interactions can be tailored to the preferences of the individuals involved, accommodating both face-to-face and virtual meetings.

YMCA Employment Link is dedicated to supporting numerous individuals each year in the Wood Buffalo Region by offering a wide range of valuable services. These services include assisting French-speaking Canadians and immigrants in connecting with suitable employment opportunities, providing personalized guidance in resume development, cover letter writing, and effective job search strategies. Additionally, the program facilitates the International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) to help individuals assess and validate their international qualifications. Labour market information, along with information and referrals to relevant resources, are also provided to program participants. Workshops are conducted to enhance job search skills, and a professional mentoring program is available to further support individuals in their career journeys. Eligibility for the program is open to individuals who are 18 years of age or older, including French-speaking Canadian citizens, immigrants, new Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and protected persons who have the legal authorization to work in Canada. By catering to the specific needs of these individuals, YMCA Employment Link aims to empower them with the necessary tools and resources to succeed in their employment endeavors.

[Solstice House](#): Solstice House provides a safe and stable transitional environment for teens who are preparing for independent living. This shift to adult life can be challenging, but skills gained through Solstice, such as conflict resolution, budgeting, employment skills, and emotional well-being, give them a strong foundation on which to succeed. Through their stays, they are also supported in developing and maintaining stable connections with their families and the community. A significant benefit of the program is the length of time youth may reside at Solstice. Because they can stay for a year and a half, they develop a sense of comfort and feel this is their home. As a result, they can better internalize the habits and skills they need to excel on their own. The program provides stability for young people who would otherwise experience multiple transitions.

Upon completion of their stay at Solstice, youth may have an opportunity to move into the attached independent living suite. Youth in this program have demonstrated, through their ability to manage money, to maintain employment, or to regularly attend school, that they are able to handle increased

privileges and freedoms. Through existing Solstice relationships, they receive continued guidance and support to ease the transition to independence.

A4.4 Examples in Other Communities

[High-Risk Youth Justice by Options Community Services](#): High-Risk Youth Justice is one of Surrey's Anti-Gang Family Empowerment (SAFE) programs funded by the National Crime Prevention Strategy. This program brings together community agencies at the Children and Youth At Risk Table (CHART) to deliver life skills training for children and youth in and out of school time, including evenings. The program offers one-to-one support such as pro-social activities, health, employment, and education. The focus is primarily on children and youth with gang affiliation or a family history of gang involvement.

[Youth Engagement Services \(YES\)](#): The YES program meets the basic needs of youth who cannot live in their parent or caregiver's home. It provides skills and support to help transition to adulthood and independence. The program covers three pillars: education, employment, and permanence. Clients work with a Youth Engagement Services social worker who acts as their champion and advocate, engaging the youth as an active participant in the planning and direction of their lives. The program focuses on helping the young person develop a sense of responsibility and learn diverse skills.

[Youth in Transition by Boys and Girls Club of Airdrie](#): Youth In Transition serves and supports youth aged 12-24, and its core focus is to help youth gain independence, strengthen coping skills, develop life skills, become more resistant to crisis, and provide them with the knowledge, skills, tools, and necessary resources to successfully transition to adulthood. This program focuses on areas such as interpersonal and transferrable skill development, self-discovery, community involvement, career pathways, providing resources for youth to build their future through financial literacy and successful life skill development, personal management to make healthy life choices, and making a successful transition into adulthood.

A5. ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

A5.1 The Issue

Access to mental health services is crucial for youth for the following reasons:

- *Increased prevalence of mental health issues*: Mental health issues among youth have become increasingly prevalent in recent times. Factors such as academic pressure, societal expectations, social media influence, and personal challenges contribute to a higher risk of conditions like anxiety, depression, eating disorders, self-harm, and substance abuse. The COVID-19 pandemic also served to intensify these issues. Access to mental health services ensures that youth can receive timely support and interventions to address these issues before they escalate.

- *Early intervention and prevention:* Early intervention is key to preventing mental health issues from worsening and impacting a young person's overall well-being. Mental health services provide opportunities for early identification, assessment, and treatment of mental health concerns in youth. By addressing these issues proactively, mental health services can prevent long-term negative consequences and support youth in developing healthy coping mechanisms and resilience.
- *Academic and personal success:* Mental health significantly influences academic performance and personal success. When youth are struggling with mental health challenges, their ability to concentrate, learn, and achieve their full potential is compromised. Access to mental health services ensures that youth can receive appropriate support, therapy, and counseling, enabling them to manage their mental health effectively and thrive academically and personally.
- *Emotional well-being and quality of life:* Mental health services play a crucial role in promoting emotional well-being and improving the overall quality of life for young people. By addressing mental health concerns, these services help youth develop effective strategies to manage stress, regulate emotions, and enhance their overall emotional resilience. Access to mental health services allows young people to build positive self-esteem, develop healthy relationships, and experience greater life satisfaction.
- *Suicide prevention:* Tragically, suicide rates among young people have been on the rise. Access to mental health services is vital for identifying and supporting at-risk individuals. Mental health professionals can provide counseling, therapy, and crisis intervention to help prevent suicide and offer ongoing support for youth struggling with suicidal thoughts or tendencies. Early identification and timely interventions through mental health services can save lives.
- *Support for trauma and adversity:* Many young people face traumatic experiences or adverse circumstances that can significantly impact their mental well-being. Mental health services provide a safe space for youth to address and heal from trauma, abuse, grief, loss, and other challenging life events. These services offer evidence-based therapies and interventions designed to support young people in processing their experiences and building resilience.
- *Destigmatizing mental health:* Accessible mental health services help combat the stigma surrounding mental health issues. By providing readily available support and resources, society sends a message that seeking help for mental health concerns is a normal and necessary part of maintaining overall well-being. Accessible mental health services contribute to fostering a culture that encourages open conversations about mental health and promotes help-seeking behaviours among youth.

A5.2 Fit with the Target Groups

Access to mental health services is relevant to pre-adolescents (8–12-year-olds), adolescents (13–17-year-olds), and older youth (18–24-year-olds).

A5.3 Existing Programs in the Community

[Alberta Health Services \(AHS\)](#): AHS offers several programs and services specifically designed to support the health and well-being of youth in Alberta. Some of these programs include mental health services, addiction and substance abuse services, youth mental health hubs and peer support programs. AHS programs include initiatives and services tailored to the health and well-being of youth and adolescents. These programs address mental health, sexual and reproductive health, substance abuse prevention, and other issues relevant to this age group.

The mental health services that AHS provides includes mental health assessment, treatment, and support services for youth facing mental health challenges. This includes individual counseling, group therapy, crisis intervention, and access to specialized psychiatric services. AHS also offers programs to address substance abuse and addiction among youth, including counseling, support groups, and treatment options tailored to their specific needs.

Youth mental hubs were established in various communities that offer integrated mental health services for youth. These hubs provide easy access to a range of mental health professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, and counselors. AHS facilitates peer support programs where youth can connect with others who have had similar experiences. These programs provide a safe space for sharing and receiving support and can focus on various issues, such as mental health, addiction, or specific health conditions.

[Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health \(CASA\)](#): The goals of CASA Mental Health’s programs and services are to offer accessible, effective services to Alberta children and families and to promote knowledge and skill around children’s mental health. CASA House is a live-in program for teens who need support with significant mental health and/or addiction challenges. Teens stay at CASA House for an average of four months. The program involves parents and caregivers as active participants in treatment. Treatment includes individual, group and family therapy, social and life skills training, and on-site schooling in small classroom settings. CASA House is for youth in grades seven to 12 who have not responded as expected to previous therapy. The program serves youth with various needs including severe mental health challenges, addiction issues, complex learning needs, family problems or social issues.

[The Canadian Mental Health Association \(CMHA\)](#): The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) in Red Deer is a local branch of the national CMHA organization. CMHA Red Deer is dedicated to promoting mental health, preventing mental illnesses, and supporting individuals living with mental health challenges.

CMHA Red Deer offers a variety of programs specifically designed for youth to support their mental health and well-being. These programs aim to address the unique needs of young individuals and provide them with valuable tools, resources, and support. One of the key programs is Youth Mental Health Promotion, which involves delivering tailored mental health promotion initiatives and educational programs. These initiatives raise awareness, reduce stigma, and equip youth with the necessary knowledge and skills to enhance their mental health.

CMHA Red Deer also recognizes the importance of peer support for youth and may offer dedicated Peer Support programs. These programs create a safe and understanding space for young individuals to connect with others who share similar experiences. Through peer support, youth can openly discuss challenges, seek guidance, and provide mutual support, fostering a sense of belonging and reducing feelings of isolation.

To further cater to the mental health needs of youth, CMHA Red Deer provides individual counseling services. Professional counselors offer a confidential environment where youth can express their thoughts and emotions, develop effective coping strategies, and explore ways to improve their mental well-being. In situations of crisis, CMHA Red Deer may have specialized Youth Crisis Intervention services. These services offer immediate support to youth facing crisis situations, providing compassionate listening, de-escalation techniques, and connecting them with appropriate resources for additional assistance.

Additionally, CMHA Red Deer organizes various workshops, events, and awareness campaigns specifically focused on youth mental health. These activities cover a range of topics including stress management, self-care practices, coping skills, building resilience, and promoting positive mental well-being among young individuals. Through these workshops and events, CMHA Red Deer strives to educate and empower youth with essential skills and knowledge to support their mental health journey.

[Step Up Step Down](#): Step Up Step Down is a program for youth aged 13 to 17 who have significant mental health challenges, and who already receive care from a clinician but need additional support. The program includes a high level of caregiver participation to help youth succeed at home, in school, and in their communities. Step Up Step Down includes a five-bed, full-time, live-in treatment program for youth, with the involvement of family/caregivers and the guidance of a multidisciplinary team, including nursing staff, a social worker, psychologist, occupational therapist, recreational therapist, and family therapist. Step Up Step Down also includes an intensive outpatient program, designed to offer mental health programming, treatment planning and goal development to youth and their family/caregivers, supplementing the mental healthcare they are already receiving. Group sessions, family therapy, school supports, connection to community services, and recreational therapy augment the care of program participants.

A5.4 Examples in Other Communities

[Directions Youth Services](#): Directions Youth Services offers low-barrier support to youth under 25 who are in crisis or experiencing homelessness due to abuse, neglect, substance use, or mental health challenges.

[The ZONE Youth Drop-In](#): The ZONE is a supportive, counselor-facilitated positive mental health drop-in program for youth with a focus on social activities, skill-building, and connecting youth to resources in their community. They have therapeutic activities including art, sports, and games that focus on positive coping skills and facilitate healthy relationships. On-site counseling is available to all youth.

[Youth Outreach Workers Program](#): The Youth Outreach Workers Program is designed to link youth in the community with a worker who can help them access programs, services, and opportunities for healthy development. Workers meet youth where they are in life and help them connect with employment, education, legal, housing, and health services.

Appendix 2: Profile of Programs in Other Jurisdictions

Programs in Other Jurisdictions

A pan-Canadian environmental scan was conducted to identify agencies that offer programs designed to address the priorities identified during this project. The table below provides information about the agencies and programs identified during this scan.

Agency, Program, Location, and Website	Priorities Addressed	Target Populations Supported	Program Description and Key Outcomes
Family Services of Greater Vancouver Directions Youth Services, Vancouver, British Columbia https://www.directionsyouthservices.ca/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Outreach • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8-12 year olds) • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	Directions Youth Services offers low-barrier support to youth under 25 who are in crisis or experiencing homelessness due to abuse, neglect, substance use, or mental health challenges.
PLEA Community Services Youth Programs Vancouver, British Columbia https://www.plea.ca/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Outreach • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8-12 year olds) • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	PLEA Community Services provides a diverse array of programs for youth. These programs include addictions, counseling, independent living, mentoring, peer support, residential care, justice, and outreach services for youth of all ages.
Options Community Services High-Risk Youth Justice Surrey, British Columbia https://www.options.bc.ca/safe-programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8-12 year olds) • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) • Natural supports 	High-Risk Youth Justice is one of Surrey’s Anti-Gang Family Empowerment (SAFE) programs funded by the National Crime Prevention Strategy. This program brings together community agencies at the Children and Youth At Risk Table (CHART) to deliver life skills training for children and youth in and out of school time, including evenings. The program offers one-to-one support such as pro-social activities, health, employment, and education. The focus is primarily on children and youth with gang affiliation or a family history of gang involvement.

Agency, Program, Location, and Website	Priorities Addressed	Target Populations Supported	Program Description and Key Outcomes
Purpose Society Burnaby Youth Hub Burnaby, British Columbia http://www.burnabyyouthhub.org/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	The Burnaby Youth Hub offers drop-in support services to at-risk youth. The Hub provides a safe and welcoming environment for youth to learn about community resources, access crisis, and goal-orientated counseling, or talk to a youth worker about relevant issues such as alcohol and drug misuse, family conflict, relationships, and school.
Calgary Police Service Youth at Risk Development Program (YARD) Calgary, Alberta https://www.calgary.ca/cps/youth-programs-and-resources/youth-intervention/gangs-and-youth-at-risk-development-program.html	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8-12 year olds) • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) 	The Youth at Risk Development (YARD) program is a community-based, early intervention program that supports youth ages 10-17 that are currently at risk, affiliated with a gang, or involved in gang activity. The five YARD teams, which include an Indigenous-focused team, consist of a police officer and a registered social worker who work closely with the youth client, their families, schools, and community agencies. Additionally, YARD has the benefit of a clinician provided through Alberta Health Services for those clients with more acute mental health needs. YARD develops an individualized case plan for each youth, based on their unique circumstances, to assist them in avoiding or leaving the gang lifestyle. The program is client-driven in that youth with the support of their team develop and work on goals in the following areas: improving interpersonal relationships, improving mental health and wellness, increased life skills, and increased prosocial activities. Participation in the YARD program is voluntary.
Edmonton Police Service Young People Support Branch Edmonton, Alberta https://www.edmontonpolice.ca/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8-12 year olds) • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) 	This branch of the Edmonton Police service consists of School Resource Officers, the Community Assertive Services Team (CAST) who work in partnership with Alberta Health Services, the DIVERSIONfirst Unit, One80 Unit, and Y:Five-O Unit. Each unit has a specific, yet supporting, mandate to reach out to youth with both preventative and intervention programs. CAST is similar in function to ACT teams to support youth experiencing mental health or addiction concerns. DIVERSIONfirst

Agency, Program, Location, and Website	Priorities Addressed	Target Populations Supported	Program Description and Key Outcomes
			follows restorative justice principles as an alternative to criminal charges. The One80 Unit and Y:Five-O are intervention programs that use collaborative partnerships to build intervention and stabilization plans for at-risk youth, including the most violent and prolific offenders.
Southern Alberta FASD Network Youth Justice Program Lethbridge, Alberta https://safasd.ca/fasd-programs/youth-justice/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FASD • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8-12 year olds) • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) • Natural supports 	The Youth Justice Program is a partnership between the South Alberta FASD Network and the Lethbridge City Police. It was created to increase awareness and management of FASD within the Youth Justice System. The main objectives of the programs are to influence case management for youth affected by FASD, divert youth from the justice system when appropriate, and identify high-risk youth and families and connect them with services and supports.
McMan LifeSpan Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Program Lethbridge, Alberta https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/cntrng-crm/crm-prvntn/nvntr/dtlls-en.aspx?i=10110	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FASD • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8-12 year olds) • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) • Natural supports 	The McMan LifeSpan FASD Program provides one-on-one supportive mentorship and intensive case management for youth transitioning to adulthood and adults affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). This includes assisting in the areas of employment, education, living skills, advocacy, and building natural and community supports. The Outreach portion of the project provides education, information, supports, resources, mentoring services, coaching, and advocacy to parents and/or caregivers of persons with FASD. Another aspect of the Outreach is education and information sharing. This includes presenting to the community at large on FASD, as well as schools and other social service agencies in order to work collaboratively with mutual clients.
Boys and Girls Club of Airdrie Youth in Transition Airdrie, Alberta https://bgcairdrie.com/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8-12 year olds) • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	Youth In Transition serves and supports youth aged 12-24, and its core focus is to help youth gain independence, strengthen coping skills, develop life skills, become more resistant to crisis, and it provide them with the knowledge, skills, tools, and necessary resources to

Agency, Program, Location, and Website	Priorities Addressed	Target Populations Supported	Program Description and Key Outcomes
			successfully transition to adulthood. This program focuses on areas such as interpersonal and transferrable skill development, self-discovery, community involvement, career pathways, providing resources for youth to build their future through financial literacy and successful life skill development, personal management to make healthy life choices, and making a successful transition into adulthood.
EGADZ Downtown Youth Centre Youth Programs Saskatoon, Saskatchewan https://www.egadz.ca/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Outreach • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8-12 year olds) • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	EGADZ provides a host of youth-directed programs and services to youth and their families that improve their quality of life and meet their unique needs. Specific programs offered include youth drop-in support, residential services, outreach services, day and school support, and employment services.
Regina Street Culture Kidz Project Regina Connected Youth Program Regina, Saskatchewan https://streetcultureproject.ca/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	The program supported sentenced offenders to help them reintegrate into the community and rehabilitate. Specifically, the program was aimed at offenders of both genders, between the ages of 15 and 24, who lived in Regina and were facing barriers to reintegration and rehabilitation. The young people were assessed as having a significant risk of reoffending. They were also assessed as having some degree of gang affiliation but were not fully immersed in the gang lifestyle.
Saskatchewan Prevention Institute Youth Action for Prevention (YAP) Regina, Saskatchewan https://skprevention.ca/youth-action-for-prevention/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FASD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	YAP is a youth engagement program that aims to increase the knowledge of Saskatchewan youth (aged 14-24) about alcohol-related harms, including FASD. Through the YAP Program, youth are supported to foster positive change in their communities by developing personal skills, as well as creating and participating in projects that build awareness of alcohol-related harms.
Michif Child and Family Services So Adolescents Stay Home (S.A.S.H) Outreach Program Winnipeg, Manitoba https://www.michifcs.com/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8-12 year olds) • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) 	S.A.S.H. is an outreach program focused on high-risk youth who may routinely stay away from home and engage in high-risk behaviours. The program focuses on safety, stabilization, and prevention. A critical component is developing a connection and a

Agency, Program, Location, and Website	Priorities Addressed	Target Populations Supported	Program Description and Key Outcomes
			relationship with a trusted adult. The workers actively reach out to at-risk youth in an effort to develop relationships and work with them to develop safety plans. The youth are supported in reconnecting to family and social support/community networks.
Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY) Youth Support Services Winnipeg, Manitoba https://rayinc.ca/get-help/get-help-now/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Outreach • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8-12 year olds) • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	RaY offers a wide range of youth support services for youth 29 years of age and younger. Services include drop-in support, basic needs support, street outreach, housing, primary health care, mental health and addictions, education and training, and cultural supports.
Brandon Friendship Centre GAP Youth Outreach Brandon, Manitoba https://brandonfriendshipcentreinc.ca/gap-youth-outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	GAP Youth Outreach supports youth aged 16 – 26 who may be at risk of homelessness or are within their first year of experiencing homelessness in Brandon. The program is equipped with a small case management team that can provide intensive support for 6-to-30-months while prevention foundations and tenancy skills develop and/or holistic teams of natural and community-based supports are established.
John Howard Society of Toronto Helping Individuals Plan Positively (HiPP) Toronto, Ontario https://johnhoward.on.ca/toronto/services/youth-services/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	HiPP is a youth-centered program for those aged 16 years and older who are at risk of becoming engaged in pro-criminal behaviours. This program focuses on helping these young people build the skills to meet educational, employment, and personal goals thereby reducing the likelihood of conflict with the law. HiPP strives to find proactive solutions to solve the problems of youth violence in neighborhoods and families.
Rexdale Community Health Centre Youth Outreach Program Etobicoke, Ontario https://www.rexdalechc.com/health-care-services-youth-and-family-services-programs/youth-outreach-program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) • Natural supports 	The goal of the Youth Outreach Program is to engage hard-to-reach, at-risk youth between 12 and 21 years old who have not yet successfully connected with school, employment, and/or other community services and supports. Youth Outreach Workers engage youth and connect them with needed services, as well as collaborate with other community resources to

Agency, Program, Location, and Website	Priorities Addressed	Target Populations Supported	Program Description and Key Outcomes
			coordinate their activities within identified neighborhoods.
YouthLink Youth Outreach Workers Program Scarborough, Ontario https://youthlink.ca/services/our-programs/community-outreach/youth-outreach-workers/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Outreach • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	The Youth Outreach Workers Program is designed to link youth in the community with a worker who can help them access programs, services, and opportunities for healthy development. Workers meet youth where they are in life and help them connect with employment, education, legal, housing, and health services.
Youturn Youth Support Services Ottawa, Ontario https://youturn.ca/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	Youturn provides intensive services and supports to youth (aged 12 to 24) and their families who are in conflict with the law or at risk of becoming involved in the justice system. Youturn's goal is to support clients to actively participate in society and make choices that will help them to avoid conflict with the law and succeed in their lives.
Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre The ZONE Youth Drop-In Ottawa, Ontario. https://wocrc.ca/program/the-zone-youth-drop-in/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	The ZONE is a supportive, counselor-facilitated positive mental health drop-in program for youth with a focus on social activities, skill-building, and connecting youth to resources in their community. We have therapeutic activities including art, sports, and games that focus on positive coping skills and facilitate healthy relationships. On-site counseling is available to all youth.
Government du Québec Youth in Difficulty (YID) Services Montreal, Québec https://www.quebec.ca/en/family-and-support-for-individuals/childhood/services-youth-difficulty-families/outreach-services-troubled-youth-families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8-12 year olds) • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) • Natural supports 	YID services contribute to the health and well-being of youth in difficulty and their families. They combine services intended for youth from early childhood to adulthood. These services concern, among other things, problems associated with development or behaviour, violence, parental support, family relations, and spousal separation.
Dans La Rue Youth Support Services Montreal, Québec https://danslarue.org/en/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8-12 year olds) • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) • Natural supports 	A host of youth support services are available through Dans La Rue. The focus of these services is providing youth with access to various forms of barrier-free housing. Additionally, outreach services aimed at

Agency, Program, Location, and Website	Priorities Addressed	Target Populations Supported	Program Description and Key Outcomes
			supporting youth and their natural supports are offered.
Youth Impact Jeunesse Outreach Programs Moncton, New Brunswick https://youthimpact.org/what-we-do/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	Since the late 1990's, Youth Impact Jeunesse identified that there was a gap in services for youth 16 years of age and older. The programs needed by these youth were community-based and outreach-oriented. The outreach programs offered are delivered to youth in settings that are most comfortable to them.
Government of New Brunswick Youth Engagement Services (YES) New Brunswick https://socialsupportsnb.ca/en/program/youth-engagement-services-yes-program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	The YES program meets the basic needs of youth who cannot live in their parent or caregiver's home. It provides skills and support to help transition to adulthood and independence. The program covers three pillars: education, employment, and permanence. Clients work with a Youth Engagement Services social worker who acts as their champion and advocate, engaging the youth as an active participant in the planning and direction of their lives. The program focuses on helping the young person develop a sense of responsibility and learn diverse skills.
City of Halifax Youth Advocate Program Halifax, Nova Scotia https://www.halifax.ca/parks-recreation/youth/youth-advocate-program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) 	The Youth Advocate Program is a crime prevention program that works with youth engaging in or at high risk of engaging in criminal activity by strengthening connections and reducing barriers to create safer communities. The Youth Advocate Program goals are to increase the capacities of youth, families, and communities. They do this through advocacy, connections to community resources, and service provision. They offer intensive and integrated interventions to prevent youth from being charged with future crimes.
Phoenix Centre for Youth Youth Outreach Program Halifax, Nova Scotia https://phoenixyouth.ca/programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Outreach • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) • Natural supports 	The Phoenix Youth Outreach Program provides support to youth within their family and community context. Areas of support include mentorship, advocacy and accompaniment, housing,

Agency, Program, Location, and Website	Priorities Addressed	Target Populations Supported	Program Description and Key Outcomes
			employment and education, arts and recreation, health services, and family support.
Government of Prince Edward Island Coping and Support Training (CAST) Program Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-pei/cast-program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) 	The CAST program is an evidence-based group skills program that helps at-risk youth with substance misuse (drinking or using drugs), mental well-being, and school performance. The program has been proven to have a positive and lasting impact on youth and how they cope with stressors.
Thrive Choices for Youth St. John's, Newfoundland https://www.thrivecyn.ca/directory-of-services/housing/choices-for-youth/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Outreach • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	Choices for Youth helps youth to secure stable housing, education, and employment, while working toward family stability and better health through innovative programming and social enterprise.
Government of the Northwest Territories NWT Youth Corps Yellowknife, Northwest Territories https://www.maca.gov.nt.ca/en/services/nwt-youth-corps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) 	NWT Youth Corps provides funding to target non-mainstream, at-risk, and out of school youth in the Northwest Territories. The program is designed to improve the outlook and opportunities for youth and help them choose to become healthy, educated people who are able to make responsible personal choices.
Government of the Yukon Youth Achievement Centre Whitehorse, Yukon https://yukon.ca/en/legal-and-social-supports/supports-youth/find-programs-youth-risk-or-youth-justice-system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach • Mental health • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescents (8-12 year olds) • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • 	The Youth Achievement Centre provides day and after-school programs that promote trust, respect, and responsibility. These programs are for youth at-risk and young people in the youth justice system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day programs, such as education outreach, fitness and nutrition, woodworking, and other life-skills programs. • After-school programs, such as pottery, woodworking, community service work, and recreational opportunities. • Prevention programs, such as frustration management, alcohol and drug awareness, and self-esteem.

Agency, Program, Location, and Website	Priorities Addressed	Target Populations Supported	Program Description and Key Outcomes
Government of Nunavut Elders and Youth Programs Nunavut https://www.gov.nu.ca/culture-and-heritage/information/youth-programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach • Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents (13-17 year olds) • Older youth (18-24 year olds) • Natural supports 	Elders and Youth_Programs provides a range of programs and services to support the needs of youth across Nunavut. The Community Programs division provides support in the development of youth committees. Elders and Youth works to promote better communication between youth, recognize role models and leadership, and provide creative and collaborative opportunities for youth.