

# Service Delivery Plan 2023-2024

Collaboration | Initiatives | Advocate



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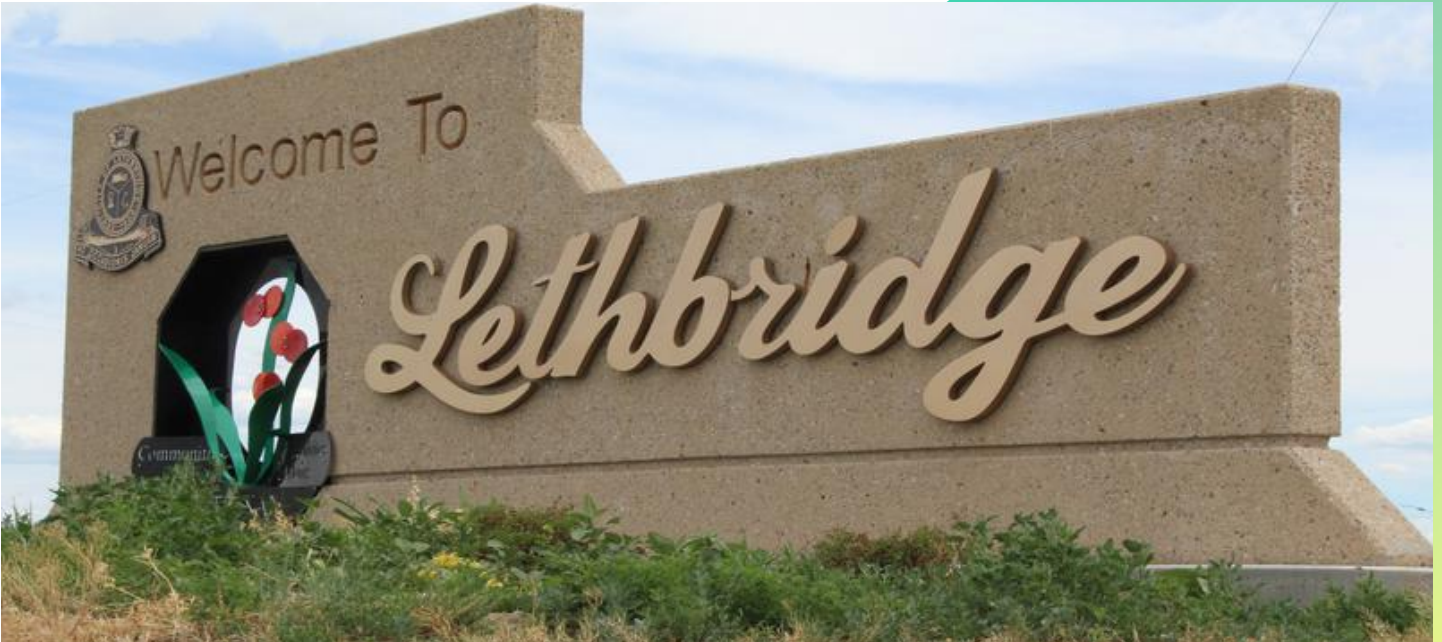


# *Treaty Seven*

## Land Acknowledgement

Lethbridge Housing Authority acknowledges Treaty 7 territory- the ancestral and traditional territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy: Kainai, Piikani and Siksika as well as the Tsuu T'ina First Nation and Stoney Nakoda First Nation. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for generations. We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us. We recognize the land as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on or are visiting.

# LHA as a CBO



As LHA undertakes the CBO role it will strive to leverage the power of true collaboration of all levels of government, our community leaders, and front-line service providers in our community.

Lethbridge Housing Authority (LHA) was established as a Management Body under Ministerial Order in 1995. Effective April 1st, 2023 the Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services has established LHA as the Community Based Organization (CBO) tasked with ending homelessness.

Outreach and Support Services Initiative (OSSI), is a program administered by the Alberta government to support community-based organizations (CBOs) in providing outreach and support services to vulnerable populations, including those experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges, and addiction issues.

Funding will be directed to housing with appropriate supports as well as to prevention, diversion, and outreach services. Collaborating with service providers adds fluidity to the service model with a recovery based focus.

**Using a recovery-based philosophy, LHA’s goal is to create systems, programs, and services that ensure a citizen’s experience of homelessness is brief and non-recurring.**

In the coming year (2023-2024) we will focus on a well-managed transition for the agencies that deliver services in the fight against homelessness in Lethbridge.

2023/24 will be a significant transition for LHA whose primary mission has been as the Housing Management Body responsible for property management and tenancy services for a portfolio of 859 units in the non-market sector. LHA’s experience provides an understanding of the cause-and-effect dynamics of homelessness, and the complexity of the issues facing vulnerable individuals.

LHA will play a critical role as the system planner to help to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of social services in our community, and ultimately support the well-being of vulnerable populations.

# At a Glance

As of March 2022, the unemployment rate in Lethbridge was 8.7%, which is higher than the provincial average of 6.4%. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on employment in Lethbridge and across the province, with many individuals and businesses facing financial uncertainty and challenges.

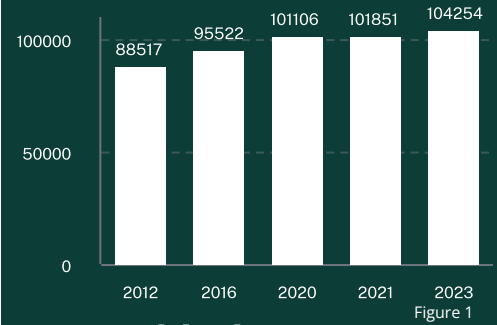
The Alberta Living Wage Network (ALWN) Nov 15, 2022 media release by United Way Southern Alberta and Social Health Equity Network of Lethbridge and Area (SHENLA), estimated the living wage for a family of four with two working adults in Lethbridge to be \$20.30 per hour. This estimate takes into account the costs of basic needs such as food, housing, childcare, transportation, and healthcare.

The Canadian Rental Housing Index found that 41%<sup>2</sup> of households in Lethbridge are spending more than 30% of their income on housing, which is considered unaffordable. A startling 16% are spending more than 50%. This high cost of housing can make it difficult for individuals and families to meet other basic needs, such as food, clothing, and healthcare.

Overall, while the employment situation in Lethbridge is challenging, with a higher than average unemployment rate, the living wage estimate provides a sense of the income necessary to meet basic needs, and the high cost of housing highlights the challenges that many households in Lethbridge face in balancing their expenses.

## Summary of Community Status

### Population Growth

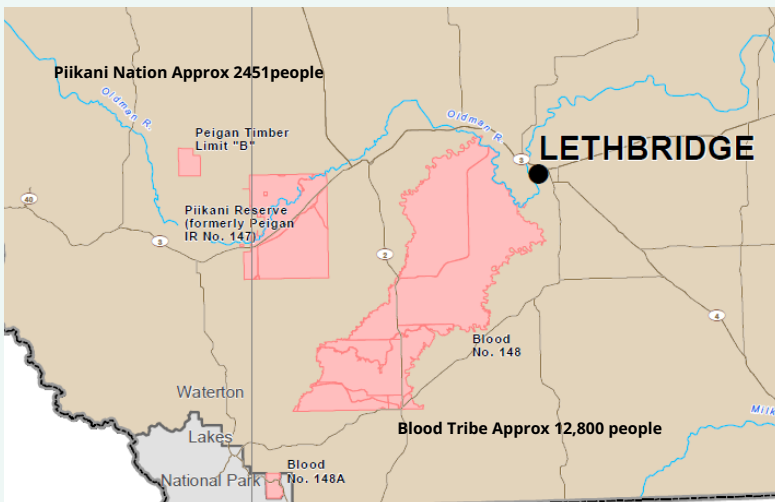


### Highlights

- 2.36%** Growth Rate
- 50.9%** Residents are female.
- 128.7** Crime Severity Index
- 79** Opioid Deaths in 2022
- 2.27%** Vacancy Rate
- 51.9%** Decline in Vacancy Rate
- 23%** Rental Price Increase
- 0%** Doctors Accepting New Patients

Figure 2

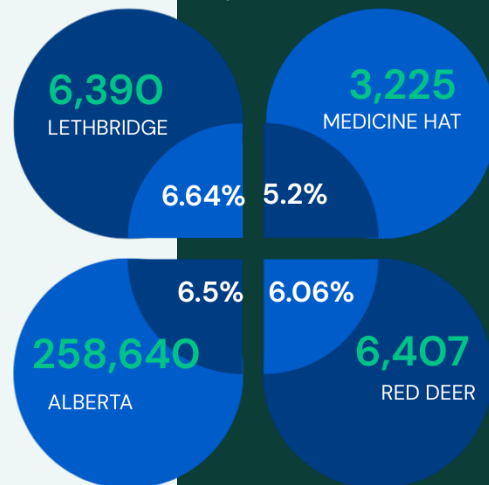
## Surrounding Communities



- First Nation Reserve
- Treaty 7 (1877)

Figure 4

## Indigenous Population; Lethbridge and Comparators 2021



% of total population identified as Indigenous, 2021

Figure 3

# Community Status

## THE HOUSING CONTINUUM



According to the National Rent Report for February 2023 from Rentals.ca, the average monthly cost of rent for a one-bedroom unit in Lethbridge is \$1,204, a spike of 20.5 percent compared to this time last year.

Homeless	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Supportive Housing	Community Housing	Affordable Housing	Market Housing
2022 PiT Count Observed	Blood Tribe Department of Health 91 Beds 30 Stabilization	Fresh Start 23	Street's Alive 44	LHA Housing 676	LHA Affordable 183	Avg. Price \$422,056
	YWCA Shelter 24 Beds	Southern Alcare Manor 25	SASHA 11	LHA RAB 535	LHA TRAB 102	Avg. Sales Price \$332,250
	Wood's Shelter 8 Beds	Street's Alive Parkside 18	YWCA Hestia 9	LHA Municipal Subsidy 107	Green Acres Foundation 171	Owner Occupied 24,195
			Family Ties Riverhouse 9	Treaty 7 Housing	Aboriginal Housing	Tenant Occupied 11,425
<b>454</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>1318</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>35,620</b>

Statistics Canada. 2017. *Lethbridge [Population centre], Alberta and Alberta [Province](table). Census Profile.* 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed April 26, 2023).

# Housing Trends

VACANCY RATES

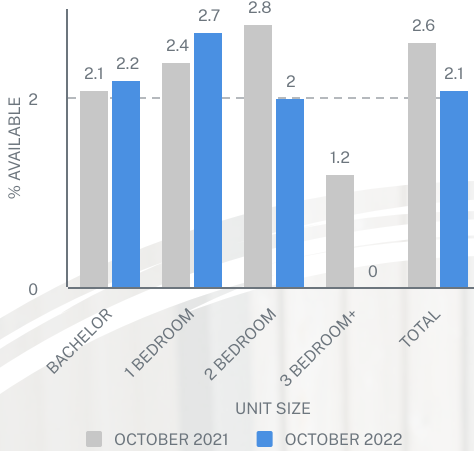


Figure 5

Housing trends and projections in Lethbridge show a steady increase in housing costs over the past few years. In 2021, the average cost of a home in Lethbridge was around \$324,000, up from \$300,000 in 2020<sup>3</sup>

This represents a year-over-year increase of approximately 8%.

One of the contributing factors to the increase in housing costs in Lethbridge is the city's growing population. As more people move to Lethbridge, demand for housing increases, which can drive up prices. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the housing market, with many individuals seeking larger homes or homes with more outdoor space as they spend more time at home.

Lethbridge housing market is seeing the increasing demand for rental properties across all types, but especially in large units of 3 bedrooms plus, as well as accessible units. In 2021, the average cost of rent in Lethbridge was approximately \$1,100 per month for a one-bedroom apartment, up from \$950 per month in 2020. This represents a year-over-year increase of approximately 16%<sup>4</sup>. This rate has continued to rise in 2023.

The latest national rent report from January shows rent for a one-bedroom apartment in the city increased 17.5 per cent compared to the previous year.

Two-bedroom unit pricing is 15.2 per cent higher over the same timeframe.

The growing demand for rental properties in Lethbridge is due in part to the city's growing student population, as well as an increase in the number of individuals who are choosing to rent rather than buy. Additionally, the pandemic has had an impact on the rental market, with many individuals seeking short-term rentals or more affordable rental options.

Projections suggest that housing costs in Lethbridge will continue to increase over the next few years, albeit at a slower rate than in previous years. The city's growing population and stronger economy are likely to continue to drive demand for housing, which could put upward pressure on prices.

The housing market in Lethbridge has seen steady increases in housing costs and rental prices year over year, with projections suggesting that this trend will continue into the future. This escalation is adding to the issues of affordable housing and suitability of placements for those seeking supported housing. As the city continues to grow and evolve, it will be important for policymakers and stakeholders to work together to ensure that all residents have access to safe, affordable housing.

RENTAL RATES

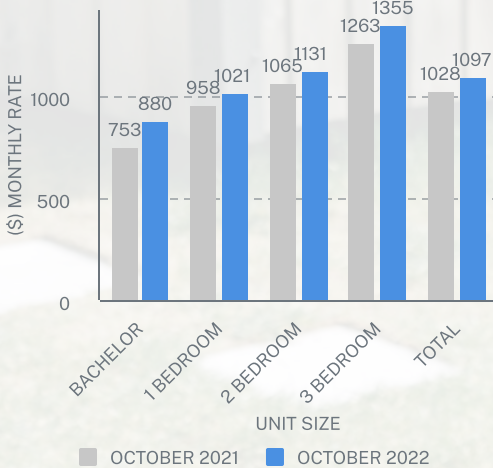


Figure 6

## Percent of households spending 30% or more of income on shelter cost by tenure, 2016 and 2021

### Alberta

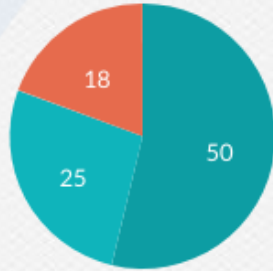
### Lethbridge

Renters		Owners		Renters		Owners	
2016	36%	2016	15.1%	2016	39.4%	2016	12.9%
2021	30%	2021	16%	2021	35%	2021	13.1%



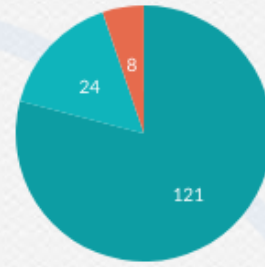
# Housing Supply By The Numbers

## Transitional Housing



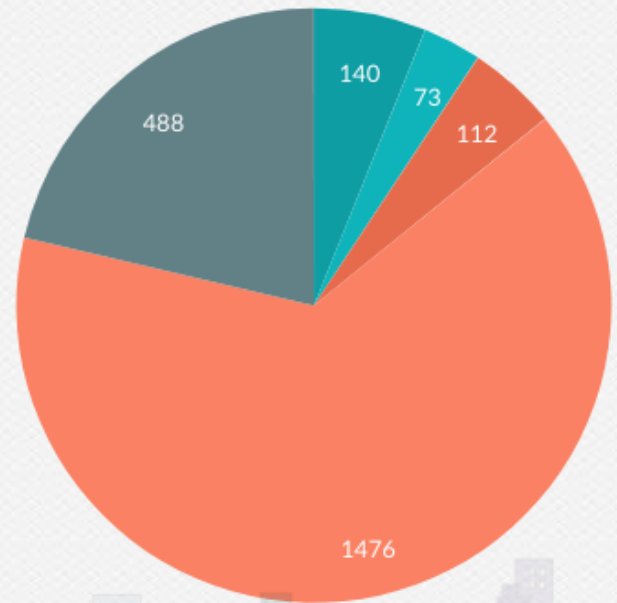
- Fresh Start Expansion (2023) (53.76%)
- Southern Alcare Manor (26.88%)
- Streets Alive (19.35%)

## Emergency Shelter

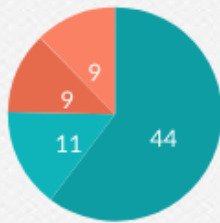


- Blood Tribe Department of Health (79.08%)
- YWCA Women's Shelter (15.69%)
- Wood's Homes Youth (5.23%)

## Lethbridge Housing Supply



## Supportive Housing

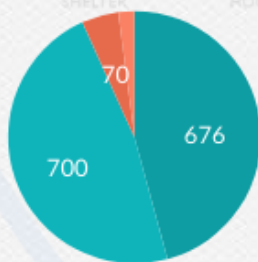


- Streets Alive (60.27%)
- Southern Alberta Self Help Association (15.07%)
- Riverhouse (12.33%)
- YWCA Hestia Homes (12.33%)

## Community Housing

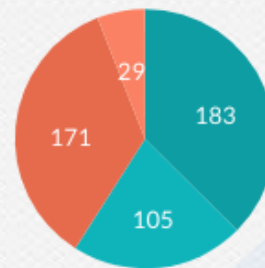


- Transitional Housing (6.12%)
- Supportive Housing (3.19%)
- Emergency Shelter (4.89%)
- Community Housing (64.48%)
- Affordable Housing (21.32%)



- LHA (45.8%)
- LHA Rent Assistance Benefit (47.43%)
- CBO Funded Rent Supplements (4.74%)
- Treaty 7 Housing (2.03%)

## Affordable Housing



- LHA (37.5%)
- LHA Temporary rental assistance (21.52%)
- Green Acres foundation (35.04%)
- Aboriginal Housing Society (5.94%)

# LHA/LRCHC Serving a Need

Lethbridge Housing Authority was established as a Housing Management Body by Ministerial Order in 1995. Under the Order, LHA was to provide affordable housing to seniors, individuals, and families through the operations and administration of a housing portfolio owned by the Province of Alberta. That property profile includes nearly 400 high-rise units, approximately 250 duplex/row house units, and over 30 single-family houses. The Order further assigned the responsibility of administering programs in Lethbridge as deemed appropriate by the Province.

The core of the Lethbridge Housing Authority in the years between its inception and today has been the management of the non-market housing assets of the Alberta Social Housing Corporation in Lethbridge.

In addition to managing the Alberta Social Housing Corporation assets in Lethbridge, LHA has established a wholly owned subsidiary (Lethbridge and Region Community Housing Corporation) to administer other housing activities and ventures that can fulfill the requirements for non-market housing in Lethbridge.

Within Lethbridge the provision of affordable housing is shared between several organizations:  
Green Acres Foundation  
Aboriginal Housing Society  
McMan Youth Family Community Services Association  
Habitat for Humanity  
YWCA  
and others

Under the umbrella of Lethbridge Housing Authority (LHA and LRCHC) 859 units are made available to families, individuals, seniors, and those with special needs. Directly managed by LHA, this housing is critical in the prevention of and diversion from homelessness. Criteria for access are intended for those in priority populations and an income under the threshold deemed by the Minister.

LHA also administers rent supplement programs on behalf of the Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services, and the City of Lethbridge. These programs take advantage of available market units through various supplements, making them affordable to clients. These programs include supports to private landlords, rental support to tenants, and eviction prevention.

Lethbridge Housing Authority is a key supplier of housing within the non-market housing sector, but it does not act alone in an effort to match the supply with the needs that exist.

## Priority Populations

As defined by the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services and as indicated in Social Housing Accommodation Regulation (Alberta Regulation 244/1994), under the Alberta Housing Act, Priority Populations for service are:

- Indigenous Peoples
- People with Disabilities
- Recent Immigrant or Refugee
- People who identify with diverse concepts of sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression
- Other Racialized Group
- Fleeing Domestic Violence
- Dealing with mental health and/or addiction
- Homelessness or transitioning out of homelessness supports
- Youth exiting government care
- Veteran

# 2022 Point-in Time Count

Homeless counts provide a community-wide measure of homelessness that supports systems and service planning. As in previous years, the 7 Cities of Alberta have coordinated their efforts to create a province-wide picture of homelessness through the alignment of methodology, analysis, and reporting.

In 2022 a Point in Time (PiT) count was conducted. PiT counts provide valuable information about the causes of homelessness in our community and the barriers people face in accessing safe, stable, and permanent housing. The methodology is guided by federal standards, Provincially the 7 Cities consortium coordinates specific elements of the count allowing for comparability between cities.

The PiT count is an important source of information about homelessness, but it is only a snapshot of a particular day. As such, it is only one source of information that informs the solution to end homelessness in Lethbridge. Point in time data is qualitative in that the numerical values may only be indicators and not finite quantities. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that the citizens of Lethbridge would likely report that the census reflects what they “see on the streets”.

**The 2022 PiT Count total of 454 people experiencing homelessness is nearly double the previous 2018 count of 233.<sup>5</sup>**

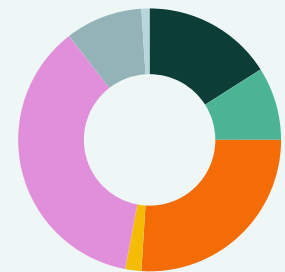


## Indigenous Inbalance

Of individuals surveyed in the 2022 Point in Time count report, 36% of those sheltered identified as Indigenous. Of the unsheltered individuals 72% identified as Indigenous. Only 14% of unsheltered individuals identified as Caucasian. Of those sheltered 41% identified as Caucasian.

This racial disparity is quite stark and highlights the over-representation of Indigenous individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Lethbridge, as the most recent census data shows that the Indigenous population in Lethbridge remains around 6%.

Facility Type



- Alberta Correctional Services Division (16%)
- Treatment (9%)
- Transitional Housing (26%)
- Alberta Health Services (2%)
- Emergency Shelters/Stabilization (36.5%)
- Violence Against Women Shelter (9.5%)
- LPS Holding Cell (1%)

Figure 7

Sheltered/UnSheltered Racial Identity

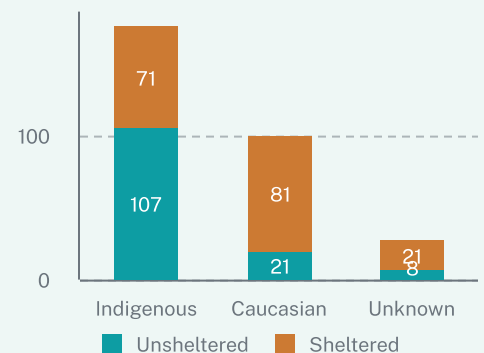


Figure 8

The proportion of sheltered males and females remained quite similar from 2021 to 2022, with males representing 59% in 2021 and 55% in 2022 and females representing 23% in 2021 and 30% in 2022.<sup>6</sup>

# 2022 Point-in Time Count

**Homelessness is associated with many health inequities that are the result of accumulated adverse social, economic, and health conditions.**

Figure 10. Reason for Most Recent Housing Loss

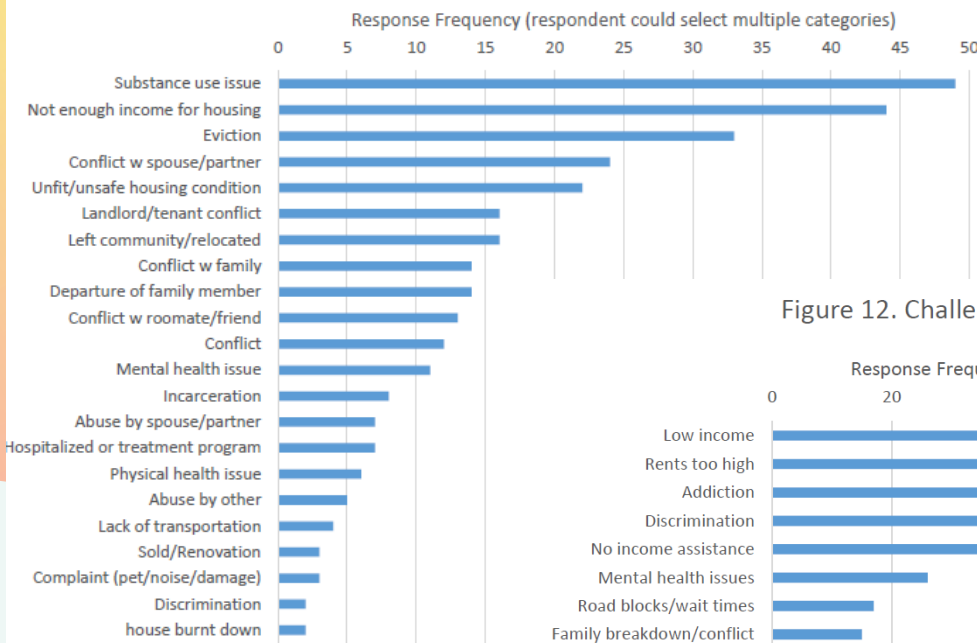


Figure 12. Challenges in Accessing Housing

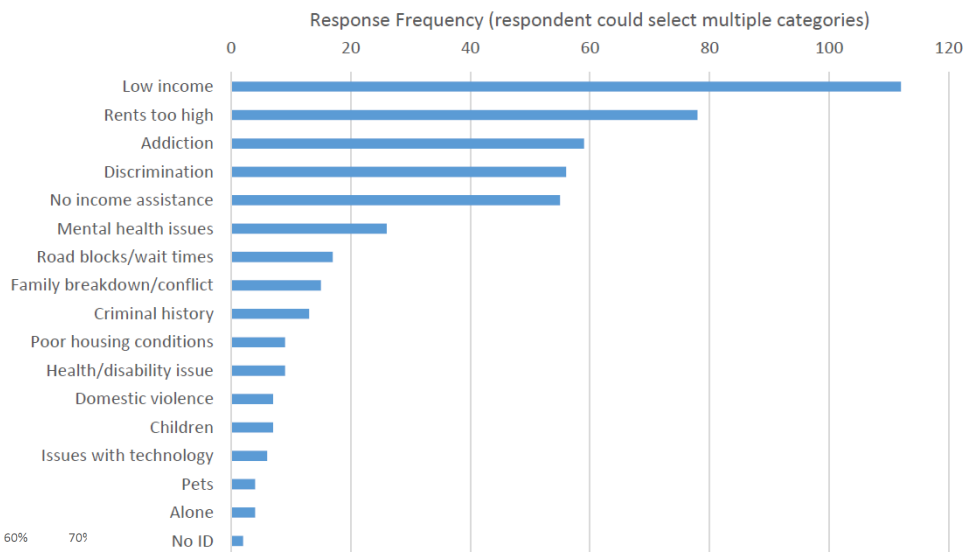
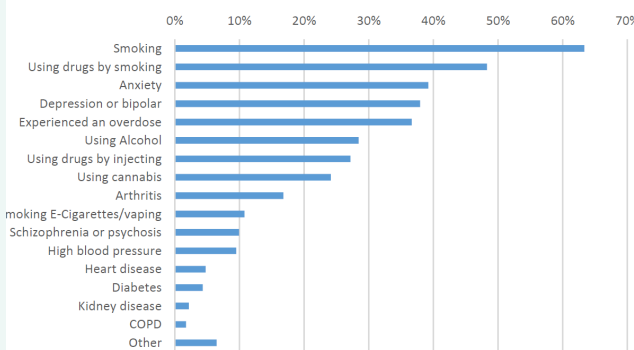


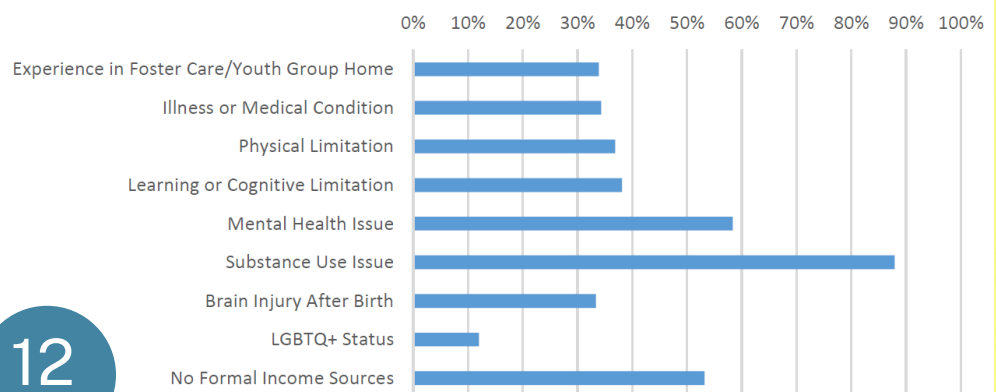
Figure 14. Current Health Challenges



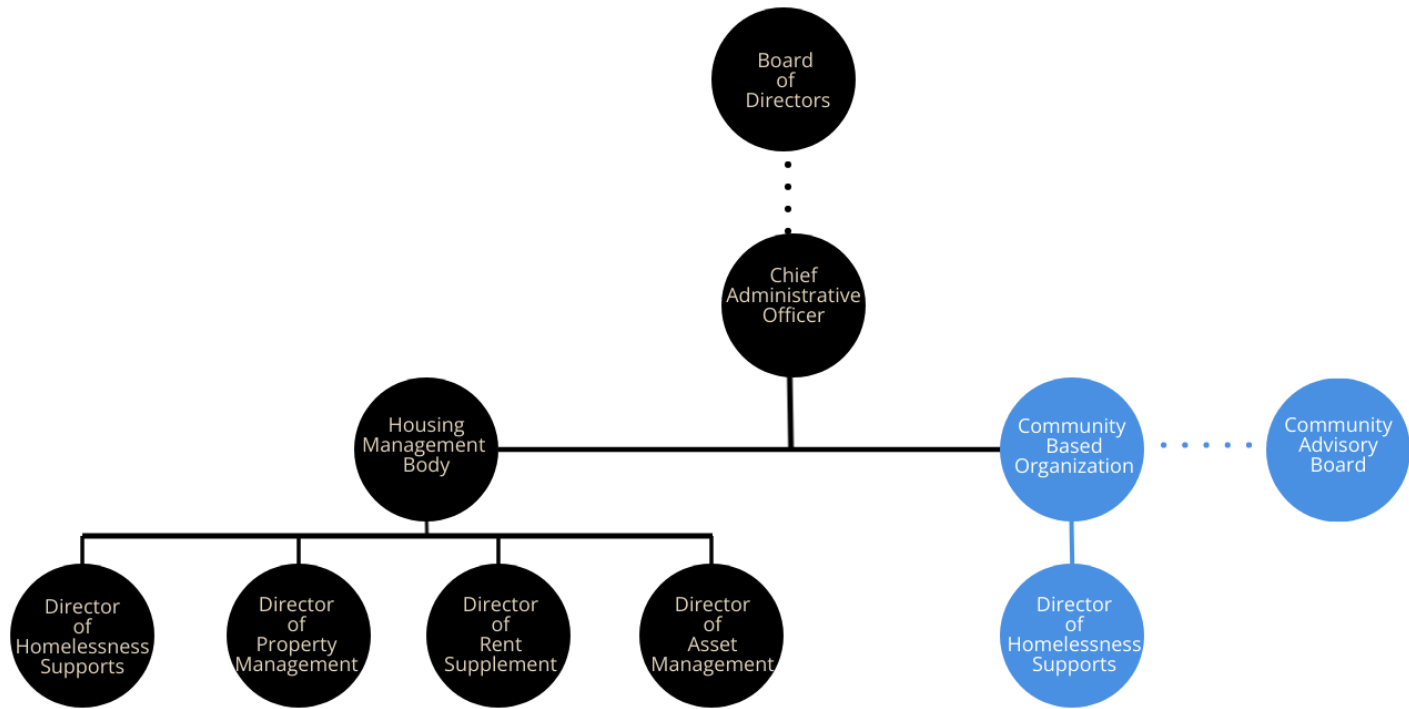
**Only seven individuals (2.7%) did not want or didn't know if they wanted permanent housing.<sup>8</sup>**

**Those that identified experiencing substance use and mental health challenges had a desire for access to wellness services. This indicates that with the appropriate choice and supports in place we can make a difference in the lives of these individuals and work towards our community goal of ending homelessness.**

Figure 13. Social Determinants of Homelessness



# Organizational Profile



## Community Advisory Board

Over the next six months, a series of workshops will engage community leaders and service providers in the development of the Community Advisory Board. LHA will rely on the input of this advisory board to identify program and service priorities for the investment of OSSI funding locally. The design of this board, including mandate, roles, responsibilities, and membership, will be conducted.

## LHA Board of Directors

The LHA Board of Directors is a governance board comprised of 9 members as prescribed in the Ministerial order. The Board provides policy direction to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Standing committees and working task committees support the work of the Board. The CAO is responsible for conducting and overseeing all aspects of the business of the LHA and reports directly to the Board of Directors.

## CBO Staffing

CBO filled 3 positions in March, 2023:

- Director of Homelessness Supports
- Grant Administrator
- Admin and Data Clerk

# CBO Key Roles



## SYSTEM PLANNER

Focusing on building capacity and a network with existing and new service providers. Collaborate with stake holders and community.



## FUND ADMINISTRATOR

Allocate funding to existing programs. Devise programs based on community needs and establish and fund new programing.



## LOCAL DECISION MAKER

Facilitate community decisions impacting community outcomes.



## DATA AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Maintain and manage data information system. Making decisions on data and ensure KPIs being met.



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community and stakeholder engagement, planning and reporting to the community. Providing Good Neighbor initiatives.

# CBO Decision Making Process

As the Community Based Organization, the LHA is tasked with allocating funding from governments and donors to agencies in the community, helping them to deliver housing, support services, and rent supplements. The processes used must demonstrate the resources allocated yield the highest impact and targeted outcomes for those experiencing homelessness. In preparing to assume the CBO role, LHA has conducted a review of its procurement processes and guidelines followed in its responsibilities as the Housing Management Body.

The Outreach Support Services Initiatives program introduces the need to design specific processes that ensure that projects can demonstrate the ability of a partnering agency to meet the goals of the Ministry as well as the specific needs of the community. As contracts are renewed or new programs and services are undertaken, LHA will award funding based on the quality of proposals received from different agencies that contribute to the Lethbridge system of care for the homeless.

Programs and projects will be funded through public, competitive, and accountable procurement methods such as a Request for Proposals (RFP), grant requests, and other public calls for application processes. LHA is sensitive to the importance of finding a balance in the procurement of services from its partners. The processes must demonstrate open and fair access to funds while honoring the capacity of providers in the not-for-profit sector to successfully bid for services and projects. The procurement effort cannot take away from the agencies' capacity to conduct their core businesses.

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## Highlights of Requests for Proposals

### Proponent Eligibility

Eligible recipients/proponents include:

Individuals

Not-for-profit organizations

Municipalities

Indigenous organizations

Public health and education institutions

For-profit organizations may be eligible for funding provided that the nature and intent of the activity is non-commercial; not intended to generate profit; based on fair market value; and supports the program priorities and objectives.

### Review Process

A proposal review committee assesses and ranks each proposal by assigning a score to each of the criteria for review which are outlined in the RFP. Proponents responding to the RFP cannot serve on the proposal review committee. The committee review will include a review by LHA of any past funding, contract, and performance information available for the applicants. Any information or issues will be included in the assessment and provided to the review committee.

The review committee will include a minimum of three members of the Community Advisory Board, with the Director of Homelessness Supports providing advice and guidance to the review committee. The Director will not rank, score, or vote.

The scoring of proposals and recommendations for the preferred proponent for the provision of services is then forwarded to the Community Advisory Board for consideration. The CAB will then vote and then provide a recommendation to the Director of Homelessness Supports. The Director will make the final decision on awarding the contracts and shall negotiate the terms and conditions of the contract with the selected proponent.

Late or incomplete proposals will not be evaluated.

# PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND RANKING PROCESS

## Application Screening

Applications are screened for completeness and to ensure that they are eligible for consideration. It is the proponent's responsibility to ensure that its application meets the specific requirements of the RFP.

Application screening will be completed by 2 members of the LHA staff.

Proposals that do not comply with the mandatory requirements will be disqualified.

## Point Scoring & Ranking

The proposal review committee will apply evaluation criteria as identified in the RFP to all eligible applications on a comparative basis. All criteria considered will be applied evenly and fairly to all proposals.



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## NEGOTIATIONS OF SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT AND AWARD



### Review Process

If awarded, the proponent selected shall be prepared to accept the terms they proposed for incorporation into an agreement resulting from the RFP.

LHA as the CBO may attempt to negotiate an agreement with the proponent selected on terms that it determines to be fair and reasonable and in the best interest of LHA, including the best interests of the population served by the agreement and the best interests of the Community.

If LHA is unable to negotiate such an agreement with the proponent, LHA reserves the right to without penalty and at its sole discretion to:

- Reject the proponent's proposal and select the next preferred proponent
- Take no further action to continue the award and/or execution of the agreement
- Reissue the RFP with any changes LHA and the Community Advisory Board deem appropriate.



# RFP APPEAL PROCEDURE

Respondents to an RFP may register a grievance or protest a decision made regarding their proposal.

Respondents wishing to appeal the final funding decision for an RFP must submit a written request by noon two days following the award. The request must include a clear description of the grievance and basis for appeal.

The request shall be signed by a person or persons authorized to sign on behalf of the proponent and designate a person to whom LHA should direct its correspondence. Upon the receipt of a written appeal, the Director of Homelessness Supports shall have 5 business days to respond in writing to the appeal request. The response shall include information sufficient to address the grievance and the basis for the funding recommendation.

The response shall be directed to the designate. The response shall also include information on further appeal options.

If the proponent is dissatisfied with the decision from the initial appeal procedure, they may appeal in writing to the LHA Chief Administrative Officer within 5 business days of the receipt of the decision.

The request shall be directed to the CAO of LHA.

The request for appeal shall include a clear description of the grievance and the basis for the appeal.

The request shall be signed by the designate.

The CAO shall have 5 business days from the date of receipt of the appeal request to respond in writing.

The response shall address the grievance and the basis for the funding recommendation.

The decision of the CAO is final.

## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUCCESSFUL PROONENTS

Upon the completion of a signed agreement with the CBO and the successful proponent, LHA will publish a release to the community online and through local media.

# CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

The RFP requires the proponent to acknowledge the “Conflict of Interest” section. This section requires that the proponent refrain from communications that might construe conflict of interest. “Conflict of Interest” is described as follows:

- The proponent presents, to the best of its knowledge, after diligent review, that no official or employee of its agency has a direct or indirect interest or benefit or receives or will receive any direct or indirect proceeds from this agreement. The service provider shall comply with the LHA policies regarding conflict of interest.
- The proponent shall ensure that it and its personnel take all necessary steps to avoid a conflict of interest between any of their individual interests and those of LHA. If the proponent or its personnel become aware of the possibility of any conflict of interest the proponent shall, subject to applicable privacy laws, promptly disclose to LHA the facts and circumstances of the conflict of interest.



# Rethinking the System of Care

The goal of eliminating homelessness (Absolute Zero) remains an aspirational goal but those who make up the system realize it is not realistic in practice without significant changes within system.

Homelessness is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive and recovery-oriented system of care that addresses the underlying causes of homelessness and supports individuals in their journey towards stable housing and full participation in society. A recovery-oriented system of care is based on the principles of empowerment, hope, and person-centered care, and it emphasizes the importance of addressing the social determinants of homelessness, such as poverty, mental illness, and addiction.

In a recovery-oriented system of care individuals are empowered to take an active role in their recovery journey. LHA is here to guide our service providers in providing them with access to a comprehensive range of services that are tailored to their unique needs and preferences, such as mental health services, addiction treatment, and housing supports. It means involving individuals with lived experience of homelessness in the design, implementation, and evaluation of services, to ensure that services are responsive to their needs.

Furthermore, a recovery-oriented system of care emphasizes the importance of hope, which is an essential ingredient in the recovery journey. This means providing individuals with the tools and resources they need in a timely manner to envision a future that is different from their present circumstances, and supporting them in their journey towards that future. This may involve providing them with access to educational and employment opportunities, social support, and other resources that promote recovery and resiliency, once housed.

Person-centered care is another key component of a recovery-oriented system of care for homelessness. Treating individuals with respect, dignity, and compassion, and recognizing that they are experts in their own lives. It also means working collaboratively with individuals to develop a recovery plan that is tailored to their unique needs and preferences, and supporting them in achieving their recovery goals.

A recovery-oriented system of care for homelessness is critical to addressing this complex issue. It is based on the principles of empowerment, hope, and person-centered care, and it emphasizes the importance of addressing the underlying causes of homelessness, such as poverty, mental illness, and addiction. By working collaboratively with individuals with lived experience of homelessness, healthcare providers, and community partners, it is possible to create a supportive and inclusive system of care that promotes recovery and resiliency for all.

## Collaboration

In the month preceding the transfer of CBO control from the City of Lethbridge, LHA initiated conversations with the homeless serving agencies to re-establish shared understanding of the system as it exists today in Lethbridge. What has become clear from the preliminary discussions is that the system framework must expand to include public systems such as AHS, Justice, Alberta Works, Enforcement, and Children's services. The not-for-profit agencies can, with the appropriate guidance and resources, provide some of the services or connections to clients who have failed to have their needs met through the primary public system.

## Active Planning

From April to December of 2023, LHA will undertake to develop a framework by which public systems, homeless-serving agencies, the public, the municipal government, and community leaders will utilize the knowledge gained in the past ten years.



# Recovery Orientated Data Driven

A recovery-oriented system of care is a person-centered, strength-based approach to ensuring every person's tomorrow is better than today. It will address the chronicity of addiction and mental health by focusing on long-term, measurable improvements in various aspects of life, supporting a community-led response.



There has been a dynamic shift in recent years towards using reporting and technology to track results and successes in the context of funding models for social services and programs. The use of technology and data can help to provide more accurate and timely information on the impact of social services and programs, allowing for more informed decision-making about funding allocation and program design.

Service Providers now use data collection and reporting software to track client progress and outcomes, such as employment outcomes, housing stability, and mental health improvements. This data can be used to inform program design and identify areas where improvements can be made, ultimately leading to better outcomes for clients.

LHA will work with Service Providers increasing productivity and ownership over their successes using a data-driven approach from reporting on program outcomes and impact as part of the funding process. This can include reporting on client outcomes, financial performance, and other key metrics. This shift towards data-driven reporting and decision-making helps to ensure that funding is being allocated effectively and efficiently, and that programs are achieving their intended outcomes.

The use of reporting and technology to track results and successes in the context of funding models for social services and programs is an important step towards ensuring that vulnerable populations receive the support they need. By using data to inform program design and funding allocation, organizations and funders can make better-informed decisions that lead to better outcomes for clients and more effective use of resources.

# Key Deliverables in a Recovery Based Program

As the understanding of the connection between service providers and funders increases, the goal is to map out consistent program categories, as well as common measures of success for agencies across the system.



## Graduated Movement

Appropriate program types and innovative models that align with the needs of priority populations that see individuals move through the housing continuum as their personal progress occurs.



## Transparent Process

A transparent process to identify system gaps and priorities for investment, engage community partners, and leveraging data and evidence-based research.



## Common Definitions

Program types across the homeless-serving system that use common definitions. Using common policies and protocols along with sharing information.



## Referral Process

Referral processes and eligibility criteria for homeless serving programs



## Formalized Eligibility

Reinstitute case management meetings, setting definitions for intake, graduations and formalized referrals in programs.



## Centralized Reporting

Common intake, assessment, referrals, and service coordination, with reporting through central data system

# Community Challenges

## Substance Use

According to provincial substance use surveillance data — which is publicly available online — 79 people died of unintentional opioid poisoning in the city last year. That's up from 67 deaths in 2021 and nearly double the 41 fatal overdoses in 2020. In February 2022 alone, 20 people reportedly died.

New data from the Alberta Substance Use Surveillance System shows 18 people died from drug poisoning in Lethbridge between December 2022 and January 2023.<sup>10</sup> Ten of them died in December and the other eight in January, according to the online tracking tool.

All the deaths are categorized under non-pharmaceutical opioids.

In the same time period across the province, there were 249 drug poisoning deaths reported, 139 in December and 110 in January.

The fourth quarter of 2022 shows more than half the deaths in Lethbridge happened in private residences. 73% of these happened behind closed doors with 36% of these deaths occurring in residences owned by the victim. 27% of the deaths in Lethbridge happened in public.<sup>11</sup>

**These numbers speak volumes to the need for a recovery-focused housing solution for the individual.**

## Mental Health

The mental health crisis in Lethbridge is a pressing issue that requires a recovery-oriented approach to ensure that individuals are supported in their journey towards wellness and full participation in society. LHA recognizes that mental health is an integral part of overall health, and it is committed to working with service providers to ensure accessible, timely, and high-quality mental health services that promote recovery and resiliency are available. A recovery-oriented approach emphasizes the importance of empowerment, hope, and person-centered care in mental health services. In Lethbridge, this means ensuring that individuals have access to a comprehensive range of mental health services that are tailored to their unique needs and preferences. This approach recognizes that recovery is a journey, and individuals need to be supported in their journey towards wellness, regardless of where they are in that journey.

One of the key components of recovery-oriented framework is the recognition that mental health is a spectrum, and mental health problems can affect anyone, regardless of their background, socioeconomic status, or ethnicity. We believe in a holistic approach to mental health services that addresses the social determinants of mental health, such as poverty, housing insecurity, and addiction.

LHA emphasizes the importance of community-based care and support and access to therapists to assist one along their journey. Collaborating with community partners to ensure that individuals have access to a range of support services that promote recovery and resiliency.

The mental health crisis in Lethbridge requires a recovery-oriented approach that promotes empowerment, hope, and person-centered care. LHA is committed to providing accessible, timely, and high-quality mental health services that promote recovery and resiliency for individuals living with mental health problems in Lethbridge. By working collaboratively with community partners, healthcare providers, and individuals with lived experience, it is possible to create a supportive and inclusive environment that promotes mental health and wellness for all.

## Community Challenges

According to 2016 census data, 11.2% or 12,755<sup>12</sup> people live in low-income in Lethbridge compared to 9.3% in Alberta and other cities of similar size (Grande Prairie and Red Deer). These rates were highest for single persons (27%), lone parents (26%), new immigrants (18%), Indigenous people (27%), and children (15%). Insufficient income was the second highest factor for both access to housing and loss of housing reported by individuals responding to the City Of Lethbridge 2022 Point in Time census. Entry into the rental market or the prevention of loss of housing must address the inability for individuals fill the gap between their income and rental rates.

**The focus needs to be on matching the right person to the right housing at the right time, based on income and current circumstances.**

Data from the 2022 Point in Time census confirms that substance use issues are the most frequently reported reason for the most recent housing loss by those responding to the survey.<sup>13</sup> The opioid crisis has continued to have a significant impact on our community. The number of opioid-induced deaths and reversals remains high within the increasing number of homeless in the community.

The Fresh Start Recovery Centre will add an additional 50 beds for the treatment of those with addictions. This is anticipated to relieve some of the pressures that continue to be experienced. However, it will be critical to work closely with the CBO and its partners to ensure that discharge from treatment is managed well and does not return individuals to their previous homeless state.

# Economic Factors

The current economic conditions in Lethbridge are complex, with a mix of positive and negative indicators. Lethbridge has experienced steady population growth over the past several years, with a population increase of 9.9% between 2016 and 2020<sup>14</sup>. Additionally, the city has a diversified economy, with a strong presence in agriculture, healthcare, and education.

However, vulnerable populations in Lethbridge continue to face significant economic challenges. The unemployment rate in Lethbridge was 8.7% in March 2022<sup>15</sup>, above the provincial average of 6.4%. This high unemployment rate can make it difficult for vulnerable populations to secure stable and well-paying employment, exacerbating issues of poverty and financial insecurity.

Additionally, the cost of living in Lethbridge is a significant challenge for vulnerable populations. According to data from the Canadian Rental Housing Index, more than 57% of households in Lethbridge are spending more than 30%<sup>16</sup> of their income on housing, which is considered unaffordable. This high cost of housing can make it difficult for vulnerable populations to secure stable housing and can contribute to issues of homelessness and housing insecurity.

Still affecting economies, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the economic conditions in Lethbridge, with many individuals and businesses facing financial uncertainty and challenges. The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations, including those who work in low-wage and precarious jobs, and those who may be at higher risk of contracting and experiencing severe illness from COVID-19.

Overall, while the economic conditions in Lethbridge have some positive indicators, vulnerable populations continue to face significant economic challenges, including high unemployment, unaffordable housing, and the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. To address these challenges, there is a need for increased investment in support and services for vulnerable populations, as well as policies to address the underlying issues of poverty and marginalization.

## Cost of Living Increases

Inflation and food scarcity have had a significant impact on vulnerable populations in Lethbridge, particularly those who are low-income, marginalized, or experiencing homelessness. According to data from the Lethbridge Food Bank, demand for their services increased by 25% in 2020<sup>17</sup> compared to the previous year, with more than 6,000 individuals accessing their services.

Additionally, Statistics Canada data from 2019 shows that 12.3%<sup>18</sup> of households in Lethbridge experienced food insecurity, with Indigenous households and those with children being particularly vulnerable. This data suggests that food insecurity is a persistent issue in Lethbridge, with significant implications for the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

Inflation has also played a role in exacerbating food insecurity in Lethbridge. According to Statistics Canada, the average cost of food in Alberta increased by 3.7% between 2019 and 2020<sup>19</sup>. This increase in food prices has put additional financial strain on vulnerable populations who are already struggling to make ends meet.

Overall, the combination of inflation and food scarcity has had a profound impact on vulnerable populations in Lethbridge, particularly those who are low-income, marginalized, or experiencing homelessness. These challenges are particularly acute for Indigenous households and those with children, who are at greater risk of experiencing food insecurity. To address these challenges, there is a need for increased investment in food security initiatives and support for vulnerable populations, as well as policies to address the underlying issues of poverty and marginalization that contribute to food insecurity.

## Demand of PSH

In late 2020, Alberta Health Services and the City of Lethbridge collaborated to establish a Permanent Supportive Housing Consortium. Under the auspices of the Outreach and Support Services Initiative (OSSSI), each PSH project receives clinical oversight and programming from Alberta Health Services. The OSSSI is a multi-agency initiative that aims to provide supportive housing and wraparound services to people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.

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**The Office of the Minister for Alberta Seniors, Community and Social Services Health Services, has approved capital grant funding to LHA for 25 Permanent Supportive Housing units in Lethbridge. This \$10.2 million bilateral agreement between CMHC/National Housing Strategy and the Alberta Government, demonstrates the positive moves forward for Lethbridge with LHA.**

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With Alberta Health Services taking on the role of clinical oversight, the PSH Consortium is equipped to provide a range of services, including health care, social services, and other support services that are essential to the well-being of residents. However the program is limited by the availability of beds and demand far out pacing availability. By working together, the Consortium is committed to providing safe and secure housing for vulnerable people and ensuring that they have access to the care and services they need to thrive.

# Indigenous Experience in Homelessness

Indigenous people represent a disproportionately high percentage of the homeless population in Lethbridge. According to the 2022 Point-in-Time Count, Indigenous individuals made up approximately 36% of the total homeless population in the city, despite accounting for only 6.4% of the overall population.

This overrepresentation of Indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness is reflective of broader systemic issues, including intergenerational trauma resulting from residential schools, ongoing discrimination and marginalization, and the ongoing impacts of colonization.

Indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness in Lethbridge face unique challenges and barriers to accessing services and supports. For example, many may not feel comfortable accessing mainstream services due to past experiences of racism or discrimination. Additionally, many Indigenous individuals may require culturally specific supports and services that are not always readily available in mainstream service settings.

To address the overrepresentation of Indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness in Lethbridge, there is a growing recognition of the need for culturally appropriate and trauma-informed services and supports. This includes the need for more Indigenous-led and -operated services, as well as services that are grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing and healing.

Overall, the statistics and point-in-time count data highlight the urgent need for more targeted and culturally appropriate services and supports for Indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness in Lethbridge. By addressing the root causes of homelessness and working towards reconciliation, we can help to build stronger and more resilient communities for all.

## STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARED

APRIL 17, 2023

Incidents of increased fatalities due to drug poisonings, increased evictions of housing units due damages and criminal activity, waitlists for detox and treatment programs, child development concerns seen from educators, disconnection from culture, mental health of community members, the need for grief and loss supports.

On April 17th, Blood Tribe Chief and Council announced it will provide more than \$1.5 million of Tribe sourced revenue to combat the drug trafficking crisis on the Blood Reserve in the upcoming year. Makiinima, Chief Roy Fox, addressed the community in a two-hour livestream which included immediate actions the leadership decided will be the best course of action for the short and long term. A Band Council Resolution (BCR) was signed at a special council meeting prior to the announcement that outlined the immediate actions leadership committed to for the short and long-term.

The policies and practices of colonialism had the objective of stripping Indigenous communities of their social safety nets, including their family structures and cultural traditions, which were essential for their personal and communal well-being. The Canadian government replaced these safety nets with a deliberate system of "poverty by design" that employed tactics such as starvation, displacement from land, residential schools, child welfare policies, and insufficient funding from government institutions. This historical legacy is still visible today in the high levels of poverty experienced by Indigenous people in Lethbridge and its surrounding areas.

Although non-Indigenous individuals living in low-income situations encounter poverty at significantly lower rates, the experiences of Indigenous individuals with poverty are distinct, diverse, and not uniform.

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**Research has shown that poverty is inextricably linked to high rates of incarceration, unemployment, lower rates of educational attainment, and health issues.**

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In Lethbridge, Indigenous households have a median income of \$24,384, which is lower than the median income for both Alberta (\$29,522) and Canada (\$25,526).<sup>1</sup> This income disparity is similar to what is observed among immigrant populations, where the median income for Indigenous households is well below that of the general population. The income gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous households is a result of the historical trauma inflicted upon Indigenous communities and ongoing discrimination, which continue to create significant barriers for Indigenous individuals.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has called for annual reports to be published on the income attainment of Indigenous households compared to non-Indigenous households. This is necessary to better understand the economic poverty experienced by Indigenous communities both on and off reserves.

## PSH Supply

There is a growing demand for supportive housing in Lethbridge as more individuals struggle with mental health and addiction issues, as well as homelessness. Supportive housing provides individuals with a safe and stable living environment, along with access to on-site supports and services to help them maintain their housing and work towards recovery.

Many individuals who require supportive housing in Lethbridge face significant barriers to accessing and maintaining housing, such as a lack of income, criminal records, and difficulty securing employment. As a result, many individuals end up cycling through shelters, emergency rooms, and the criminal justice system, which can exacerbate their mental health and addiction issues.

Supportive housing can help to break this cycle by providing individuals with a stable and supportive living environment, along with access to a range of services such as counselling, healthcare, and employment supports. This can help individuals to address the root causes of their challenges, build life skills, and work towards recovery.

There is a growing recognition in Lethbridge and across Alberta that supportive housing is an essential part of the solution to ending homelessness and addressing mental health and addiction issues. In recent years, there has been increased investment in supportive housing initiatives, with a focus on developing supportive housing units that meet the specific needs of different populations, such as women, Indigenous individuals, and those experiencing chronic homelessness.

Overall, the demand for supportive housing in Lethbridge highlights the critical need for investment in supportive housing initiatives and services that are tailored to the unique needs and experiences of different populations. By working together to address the root causes of homelessness and mental health and addiction issues, we can help to build stronger and more resilient communities in Lethbridge and beyond.

LETHBRIDGE & REGION COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION | LETHBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY

### LHA/LRCHC Rent Supplement Portfolio

\*As of January 1, 2023

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**650**

Landlords

\*Based on each Subsidized Unit

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**510**

Seniors Self Contained  
Wait List

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**144**

L&RCHC (partnership)  
Wait List

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**257**

Rent Supplement  
Wait List

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**911**  
**WAIT LIST**  
**TOTAL**



# Service Areas of Focus

As the transition of responsibilities of the CBO proceeds, LHA is committed to maintaining existing service agreements for 2023.



## Supportive and Transitional Housing

Expansion of the supply of Permanent Supportive Housing units and the operational funding required to provide the necessary services. This initiative will be coordinated with the PSH consortium. Additionally, the identification of housing for those displaced by the withdrawal of the YWCA provision of women's housing units will be a priority.

## Mental Health and Addictions

Building on the model of success experienced with the PSH consortium and the specific goal set by the ministry to incorporate a recovery-oriented system of care, LHA will support the development of a similar effort to develop a collaboration of agencies and partners to deal with the problems of addiction and mental health in the homeless sector.

## Service Provider Support and Development

Ensure the best techniques and methodology are available to service providers within the CBO. The focus will be on effective case management for the client including motivational interview techniques with a recovery focused lens.

## Pursue Indigenous Partnerships

Acknowledging the reality of the disproportionate number of homeless from an Indigenous background and responding to the challenges requires a collaborative, Indigenous led approach to recovery. Our goal initially is to build knowledge and understanding within our organizations regarding the marginalization of Indigenous people and to enhance relationships with Treaty 7 leaders, Elders, and the urban Indigenous community. In doing so, we will become more effective in aligning service providers to meet the needs of their Indigenous program participants.

## Housing Expansion

Identify gaps in the housing continuum and initiate the development of models to resolve the gaps. This will include leadership of the new development of 25 units of Supportive Housing approved by the Office of the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services.

# The Next 90 Days

The Lethbridge Housing Authority (LHA) is looking forward to our role as the newest CBO in Alberta. LHA will serve as a system planner for addressing homelessness and promoting recovery in Lethbridge. As a CBO, LHA will work in partnership with other organizations, government agencies, and stakeholders to design and implement strategies and programs to address the root causes of homelessness and support individuals in achieving stability and well-being.

In order to effectively carry out its role as a system planner, LHA is engaging in a number of tasks, and establishing common language and goals focused on recovery and ending homelessness.

Some of these tasks include:

**Conducting research and analysis:** LHA conducts research and analysis to better understand the root causes of homelessness, as well as the factors that contribute to recovery and well-being. This involves collecting data on homelessness and related issues, analyzing trends and patterns, and identifying gaps and opportunities for intervention.

**Developing policies and strategies:** Based on its research and analysis, LHA is developing policies and strategies to address homelessness and support recovery. This may involve developing plans for additional affordable housing, coordinating with other organizations to provide support services, and advocating for policy changes to address systemic issues.

**Implementing programs and services:** LHA is using wrap around supports to guide programs and services to support individuals and families experiencing homelessness, including housing programs, case management, and other support services. These programs and services are designed to help individuals achieve stability, improve their health and well-being, and ultimately transition out of homelessness.

**Monitoring and evaluating outcomes:** Finally, LHA monitors will rely heavily on data to evaluate the outcomes of its programs and services, in order to accurately measure their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. This may involve tracking data on housing stability, employment, and other outcomes, and using that information to refine programs and strategies over time.

LHA plays an important role as a system planner in addressing homelessness and promoting recovery in Lethbridge. By engaging in these tasks and working in partnership with other organizations and stakeholders, the LHA will create a more coordinated and effective system of support for individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Lethbridge. LHA recognizes that a high level of integration across sectors is essential for success. Shared data and coordinated services require a collaborative, high-trust culture. System planning demands a facilitative type of leadership at the community level to leverage the capacity of the service ecosystem to deliver results.

LHA will collaborate with local service providers, partners in government, and other CBOs in Alberta to explore and execute innovative approaches for a more effective system of care for those in Lethbridge experiencing homelessness. All communities have unique challenges, and understanding problems faced by those who experience homelessness in Lethbridge will require a change to the current systems and programs.

This is an opportunity to address current issues and collaborate with current and new partners.



# Guiding the Transition

LHA is committed to the fight against homelessness. Its long-standing role in the below-market housing sector has established the skills of partnering with other agencies and levels of government. Collaborating with those agencies and funders to create the systems, programs, and services to meet today's challenges will require changes within the organization and within the system of care for those at risk of homelessness or those who are in fact homeless.

This is a new and broader purpose for LHA but the support that has already emerged from the service providers, colleagues throughout the province and government partners has given us optimism. The next year will be a challenge to guide the change while maintaining the services for those in need of safe and affordable homes. Our priorities through the transition are:

## Build Knowledge and Understanding

Shared knowledge is key to determining the resources needed to tackle homelessness and how to distribute these for maximum impact. LHA will manage the Homeless Management Information System, collecting system-wide data for real-time reporting on the number of people who are experiencing homelessness, the length of their homelessness, and their demographic characteristics.

## Mobilize the Community

Homelessness affects the community at large not just those who are without a home. A community-level issue deserves a community-wide response. LHA and its partners seek to inspire the entire community to engage in the fight against homelessness.

## Galvanize Public and Political Will

LHA will advocate with all levels of government to invest in the efforts of the local system of care to match the right person with the right housing at the right time.

## Allocate resources for the highest impact and outcomes

### Build knowledge and understanding



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The SDP 2023-2024 is available online  
as a PDF in English.