

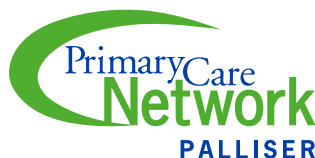
MEDICINE HAT'S

Vital CONVERSATIONS

exploring issues, opportunities and solutions

2019 REPORT

Back to the Community



What are Vital Conversations?

On October 4, 2018, community members joined together to start a series of conversations related to nine community pillars. We based the conversations on survey results, where we asked Medicine Hat residents to identify issues in our community. We then asked Vital Conversations participants to tell us more about the issues they identify in our community and to help brainstorm potential solutions.

The information and data gathered at Vital Conversations 2018 will help support the strategic planning and service delivery of many of our community's service providers and charities, as well as guide our Community Foundation for future granting priorities.

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Message from Co-Chairs

Welcome to the first, of what we hope to be many, Vital Conversations in the City of Medicine Hat. Our goal was to ignite a community conversation, recognize our collective existing strengths and identify opportunities for impactful change.

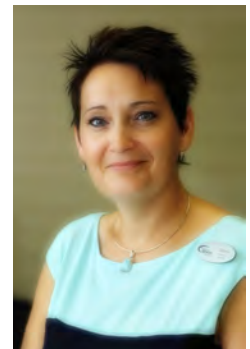
Vital Conversations sprang out of the conversations at our nonprofit Executive Directors Network. We recognized each of us had unique fragmented pictures of community needs, community strengths and opportunities for improvement. Not only were we duplicating our work in assessing the community, but we also were creating siloed potential solutions. The only thing we needed to make our vision of a community wide, non-sector specific needs assessment a reality, was innovation and hard work.

We anticipate that the report will enable organizations to build their strategic plans based on the whole community rather than a specific sector. The lived experiences captured in this report are informative and inspiring and should be used as a guidepost to making effective service decisions. It is hoped that our leadership will inspire our community to keep having conversations, think outside the box and build on the character that makes Medicine Hat unique.

All of us can help build strong, vibrant communities - individually and collectively. Our goal is that everyone will be inspired to take action that will result in positive impact and systemic change. Start where you are, use what you have, do what you can!



Chris Christie
CFSEA
Executive Director



Treena Klassen
Palliser PCN
Executive Director

How to Read This Report

Pillars

Vital Conversations explored community issues, opportunities, and solutions related to nine different pillars.

Survey Results:

360 Medicine Hat residents responded between August 23 and October 15, 2018.

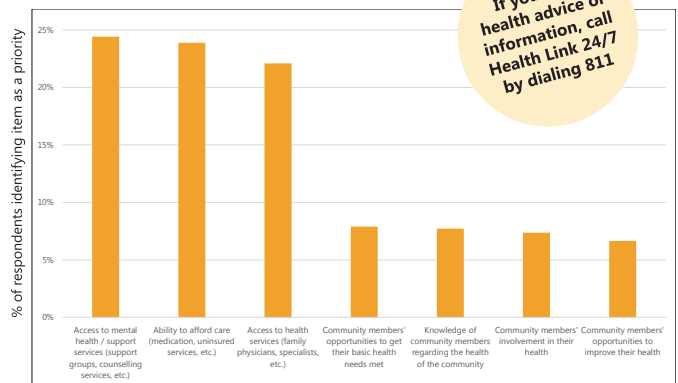
The survey was advertised along with the Vital Conversations event, shared on social media platforms, and promoted by the Vital Conversations planning committee. We thank the residents of Medicine Hat for providing their input.

The number of respondents provided us with a 95% confidence level, with a 6% margin of error.

HEALTH

Health is a state of complete physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

What We Heard



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What We Know

Facts relating to the survey results; this could include support services that may not be commonly known or information about what is being done to bridge gaps in our community.

Citizen Feedback

The lived experiences and perceptions shared by attendees at the Vital Conversations event on October 4, 2018.

What We Know

As of April 2019, eight physicians in Medicine Hat are accepting new patients.

The Alberta Ministry of Community and Social Services (Alberta Supports) may be able to provide either emergency and/or long-term assistance to those who have medications that they are unable to afford.

A list of support groups relating to various conditions can be found on the Palliser Primary Care Network website.

3 Things You Can Do

- Develop and maintain a good relationship with a family physician
- Make the healthiest lifestyle choices that you are able to (e.g., food, exercise, sleep)
- Support initiatives that help shape a healthy community (e.g., bike paths, walkable neighbourhoods, locally sourced food and supplies)

Citizen Feedback

It's unfortunate that so many people need to travel to Calgary for their specialist appointments. Increasing the access in Medicine Hat could save many residents the time and money that it takes to travel back and forth.

Mental health isn't a topic that we should shy away from - talk about it openly and help to remove the stigma.

Resources

- <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-supports.aspx>
- <http://palliserpcn.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Need%20a%20Family%20Doctor.pdf>
- <https://www.alberta.ca/emergency-financial-assistance.aspx>
- <http://palliserpcn.ca/Resources/Pages/Support-Groups.asp>
- <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>

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3 Things You Can Do

This section suggests a few ways anyone can make a difference.

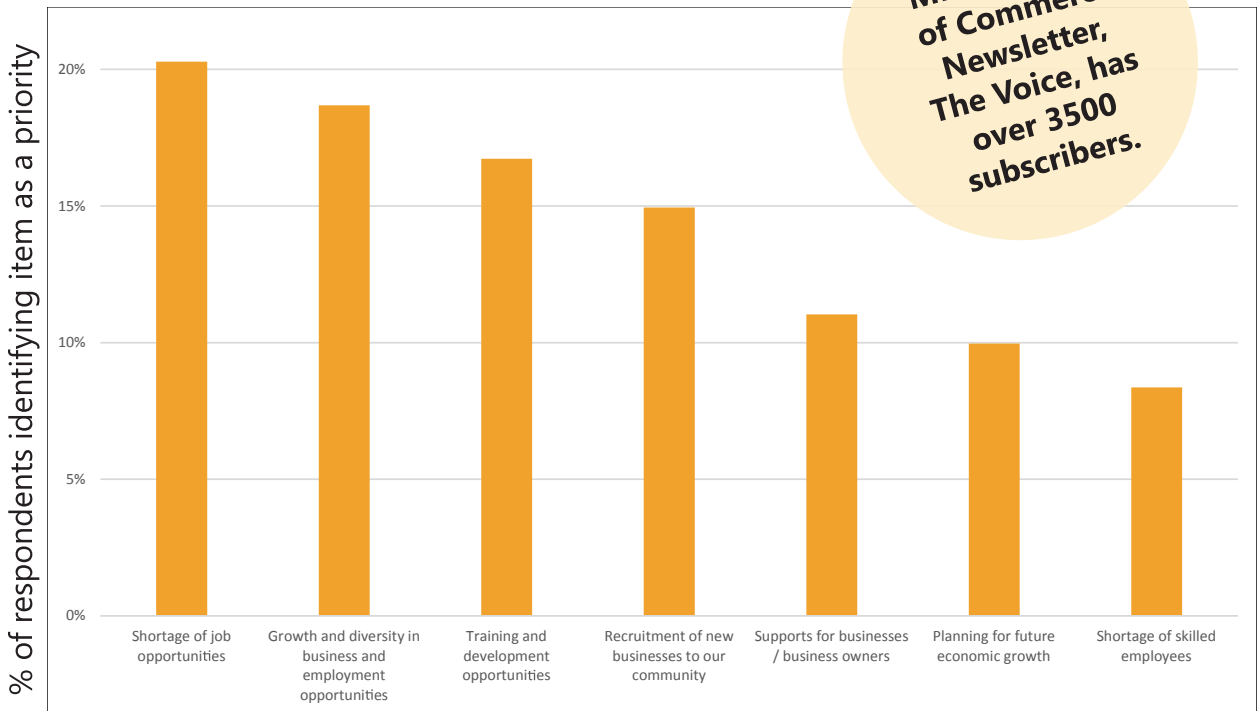
Resources

Some websites or other points of contact that provide more information about accessing services or getting more involved.

BUSINESS, EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMY

Our local business community is adaptive, resilient and a key driver in our economy, coupled with a workforce that is diverse, responsive and well-trained. We focus on all facets of our economy to build a sustainable, inclusive and diverse economy.

What We Heard



What We Know

The most recent labour statistics report shows the Lethbridge & Medicine Hat area's unemployment as 5.4%; this is below the provincial rate of 6.3%. From October to December 2018, 669 new online job postings were advertised.

Medicine Hat has many different types of industry either newly opened or planned, including solar power, cannabis/hemp and breweries/distilleries.

The local Chamber of Commerce had 117 businesses join in 2017-2018.

Medicine Hat has at least 10 organizations that offer business support services.

3 Things You Can Do

- Be a career mentor for young people
- Be an ambassador for our community, and talk to people when travelling about the opportunities in Medicine Hat
- Participate in conversations regarding future growth and community planning

Citizen Feedback

Students finishing high school or programs at the Medicine Hat College should be connected with local employers. It would not only help the graduates find a job in their field, but also encourage them to stay in our community.

It is important to encourage and support new businesses within our city. I try to shop local whenever possible.

Resources

<https://ca.indeed.com/Medicine-Hat-the-job>

<https://edalliance.ca/>

<https://investmedicinehat.ca/>

<http://www.entre-corp.com/>

<https://medicinehatchamber.com/pages/BusinessResources#business>

<https://www.alberta.ca/employment-training-services-directory.aspx>

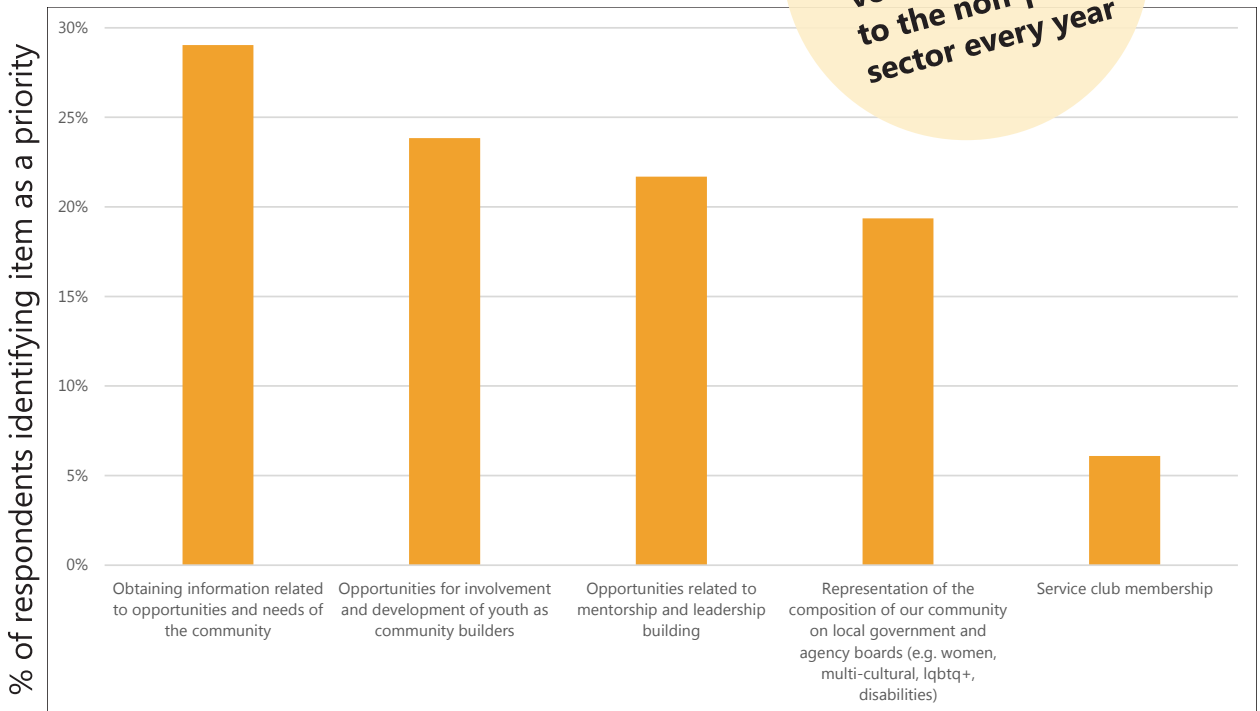
<https://www.monster.ca/career-advice/article/tips-on-how-to-become-a-mentor>

COMMUNITY BUILDERS

Community builders are those individuals in every sector who shape, help lead and enrich our city to create an inclusive community, respond to local need and prepare for the future.

What We Heard

1.4 million Albertans donate \$8.3 billion in volunteer labour to the non-profit sector every year



What We Know

There are fewer women on city council in 2019 (1) than there were 25 years ago (3). Organizations such as Women in Business are working hard to address these and other related issues.

Traditional service club membership is declining. However, people are still volunteering, but they have less time now so are looking for short-term, targeted and informal opportunities.

3 Things You Can Do

- Join a service club or volunteer on the board of a charity – it's a great way to meet people and develop your leadership skills
- Encourage employee volunteerism at your business
- Volunteer for a local political campaign – consider running yourself!

Citizen Feedback

If we want to get our city's youth interested in their community, we should go to them rather than wait for them to look for community experiences. Contact a high school, or set up at a sporting event or other teen activity to try to get kids involved.

Sometimes when people are looking to volunteer, they aren't sure where they are needed. It would be great if open positions could be listed all in one spot.

Resources

<https://cfsea.ca/we-inspire/charity-hub/>

<https://rotary7070.org/sitepage/top-50-ways-to-attract-new-members>

<https://www.alberta.ca/ready-for-her.aspx>

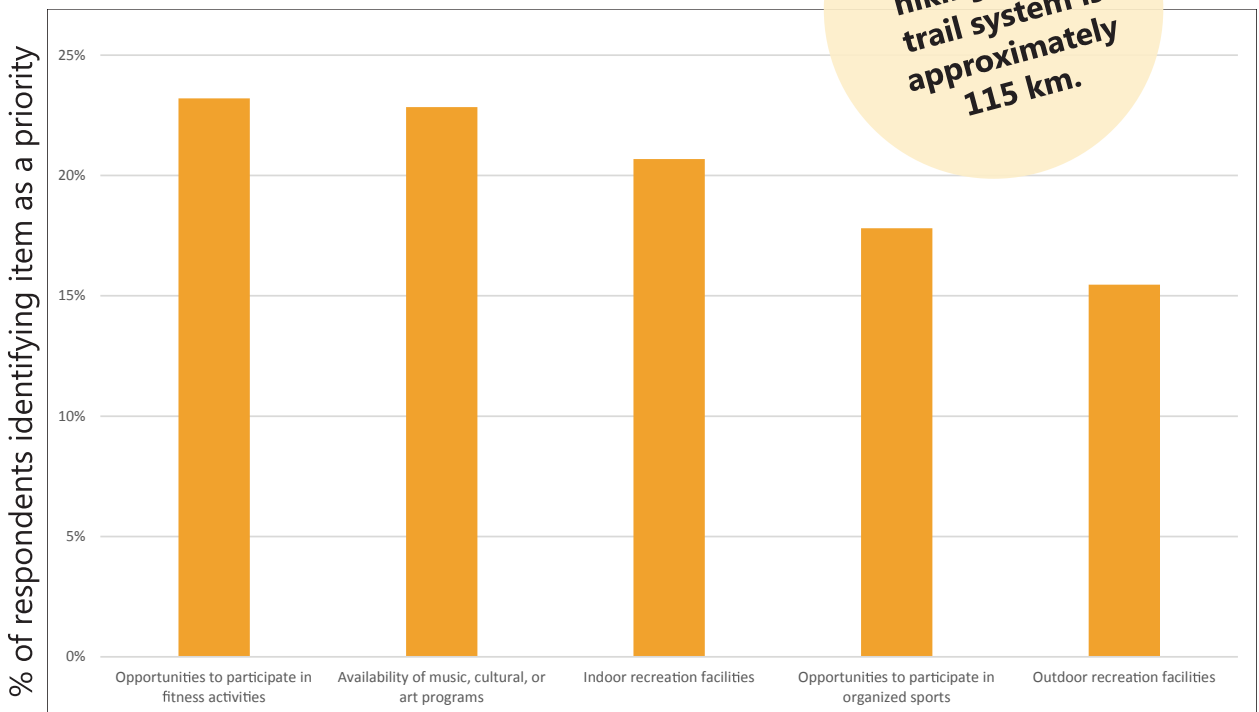
Follow "Volunteer Medicine Hat" on Facebook

CREATIVE & ACTIVE LIVING

Music, art, and culture bring vibrancy to a community. Living an active lifestyle encompasses structured sporting and recreational activities as well as simply walking through the city's trail system. All citizens should have access to some elements of a creative and active life.

What We Heard

Medicine Hat's hiking/biking trail system is approximately 115 km.



What We Know

Across the lifespan, participating in recreational and cultural activities is an essential part of healthy living. Medicine Hat has a wide variety of programs, facilities and opportunities - both indoor and outdoor - to be active and creative, many at no charge or with subsidy (especially for children).

Walking trails, swimming pools, organized team sports, fitness gyms and city parks are available year round. Opportunities to attend and/or participate in music, art and cultural events abound.

3 Things You Can Do

- Donate art supplies or musical instruments to local programs – better yet, volunteer to teach a class or assist with child care so young moms can attend
- With the use of your library card, you can borrow a Community Access Pass free of charge to the Esplanade, FLC, Medalta and Downtown YMCA
- Be a tourist in your own town! Take in the sites and experiences that visitors rave about

Citizen Feedback

People need to encourage their kids to get outside. Whichever area of the city you live in, you don't have to go very far to find a park.

Medicine Hat has rich history which is highlighted at our various museums and historical locations. You would be surprised at what you can learn if you pay them a visit.

Resources

<https://www.tourismmedicinehat.com/>

<https://medalta.org/>

<http://jumpstart.canadiantire.ca/en.html>

<http://esplanade.ca/>

<https://www.mhc.ab.ca/conservatory>

<http://www.kidsportcanada.ca/alberta/medicine-hat-and-redcliff/>

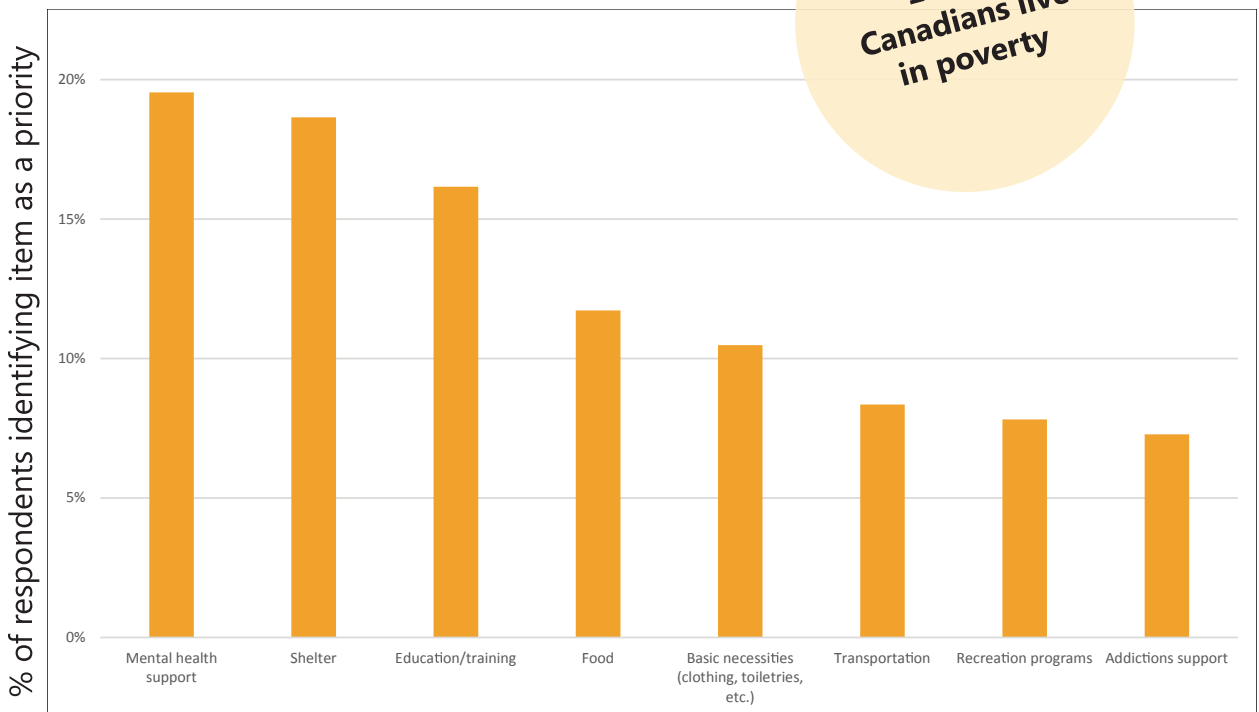
<https://www.medicinehat.ca/government/departments/parks-and-recreation>

GAP BETWEEN RICH & POOR

Narrowing the economic gap within all segments of society to ensure enough for all.

What We Heard

1 in 10
Canadians live
in poverty



What We Know

Poverty is the lack of resources and opportunities to achieve a standard of living that allows full participation in the economic, social, cultural, health, education and political spheres of society. Especially vulnerable populations include lone parent families, indigenous, racialized and LGBTQ2S+ communities. Everyone can play a role in addressing poverty.

The response to poverty needs to be multi-dimensional at the individual, family, community and system/policy levels. To alleviate poverty, we need a total shift in how we invest in community infrastructure and resources, deliver services and collaborate across sectors.

3 Things You Can Do

- Throughout the year, engage in random acts of kindness for individuals or families (e.g., buy a bag of groceries, donate movie tickets, buy a bus pass)
- Donate items to local good will stores (did you know that 100% of sales from The Post and the Salvation Army store are re-invested back into our community?)
- Volunteer for programs that seek to address poverty-related issues such as transportation, health and wellness, food security and housing

Citizen Feedback

Although we have services in Medicine Hat to support people in need, the target population is sometimes unable to access them. We need to work on bringing programs to the people who need them.

Resources

<https://helpseeker.org/>

<https://thepostonline.ca/>

<https://salvationarmy.ca/alberta>

<https://www.mhfoodbank.com/>

<https://www.thrivemh.ca/>

<https://canada.ca/reduce-poverty>

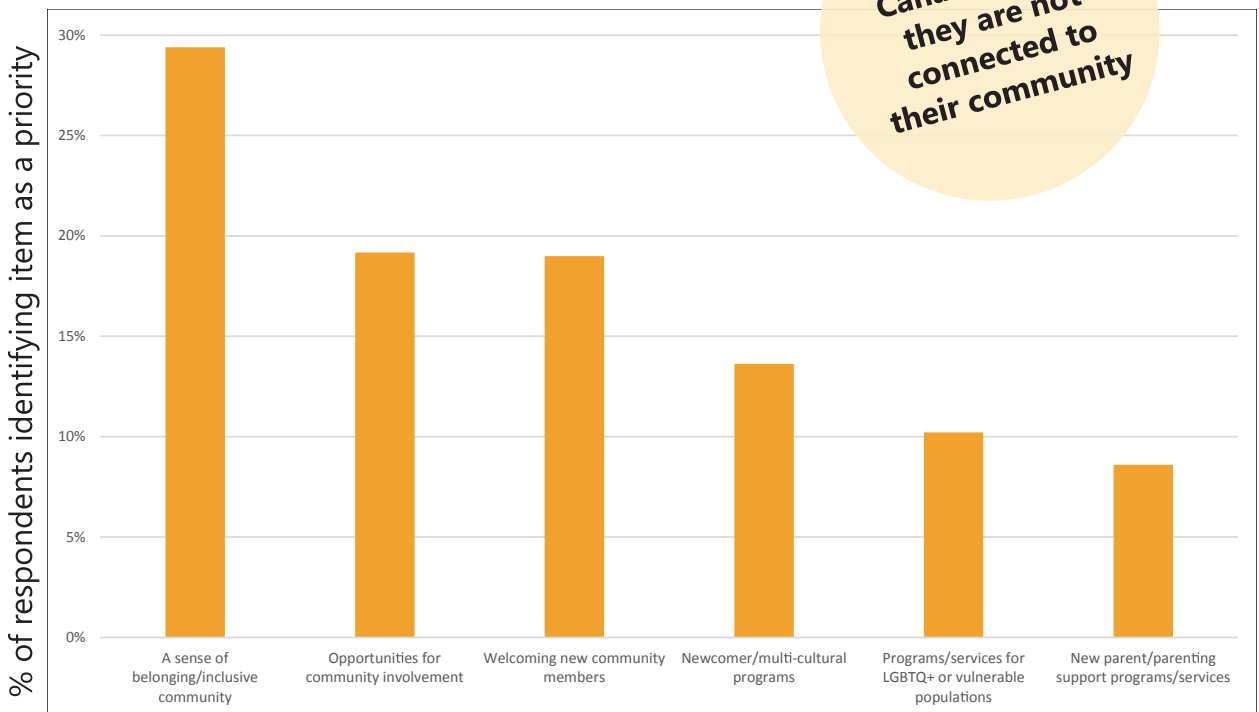
GETTING STARTED & BELONGING

(Encompassing new to our community & community supports)

Whether new to our community, or born and raised here, every citizen is connected to and knowledgeable about their community and feels a sense of belonging.

What We Heard

38% of Canadians feel they are not connected to their community



What We Know

Belonging is social participation - being part of a collective **we**. When people feel a strong sense of belonging, the more willing they are to contribute. Feelings of discrimination and social isolation are barriers to community participation.

Belonging and connection to community are essential for individuals to thrive and engage.

Community participation helps create a sense of identity and purpose, provides access to material and social support, improves knowledge and skills and develops a wider and stronger network of people.

3 Things You Can Do

- o Volunteer to tutor, drive or "adopt" a newcomer or family member from a different culture
- o Check in on your neighbours - little things can make a big difference
- o Share your cultural practices and discover common ground with others in your community

Citizen Feedback

Assisting newcomers with feeling welcome in our community can be as simple as offering a friendly greeting or helping hand. Positive integration is a years-long process and takes the strengths of the entire community.

A great way to get out and start making connections is to attend some of the many events that are held in our city - there are always community activities going on.

Resources

<http://www.saamisimmigration.ca/>

Welcome Wagon: 403.529.2131

<https://www.facebook.com/Miywasin-Friendship-Centre-119414834879699/>

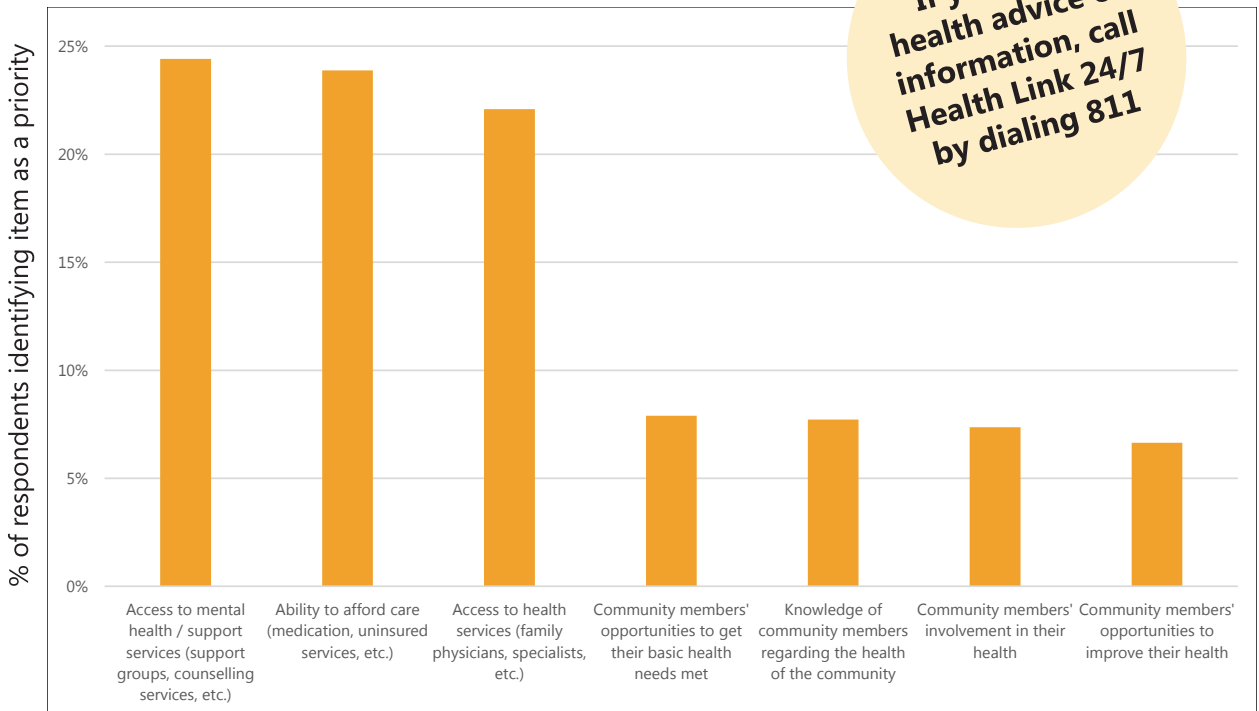
<https://www.inc.com/john-rampton/10-ways-to-give-back-to-your-community.html>

<https://stjohnsmedicinehat.ca/get-involved>

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What We Heard



What We Know

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<http://palliserpcn.ca/Resources/Pages/Support-Groups.asp>

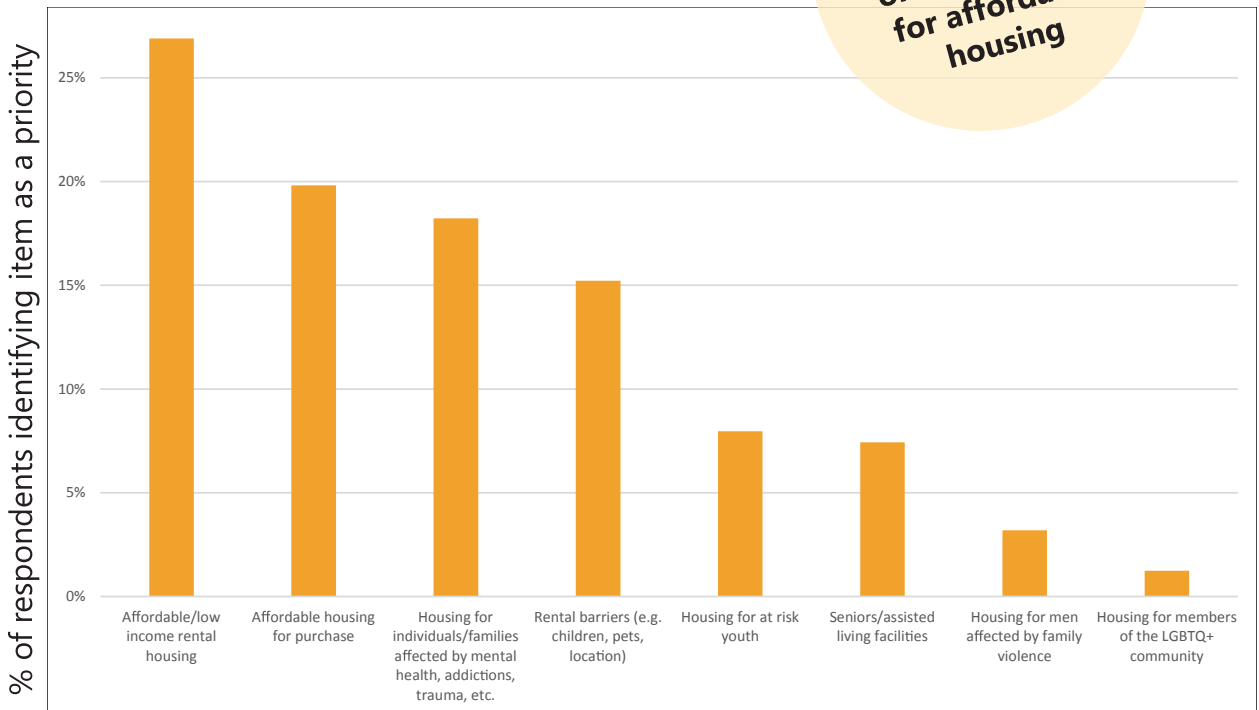
<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>

HOUSING

Housing includes emergency shelters, social housing, renting on the open market and purchasing a home. Every citizen should have an affordable place to call home.

What We Heard

401 eligible households are on the wait list for affordable housing



What We Know

Through the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society's Below Market Housing Program, low income households may be able to access rental housing at a significantly lower cost.

Individuals who struggle to maintain housing due to complex personal and health issues can now access Permanent Supportive Housing. 15 independent units have been operating with on-site professional support services since November 2017.

Since the onset of Medicine Hat's plan to end homelessness in 2009, over 1100 formerly homeless individuals have been housed and supported.

Citizen Feedback

It is encouraging to live in a city that is so focused on a plan to end homelessness. When people are in need, they can quickly access a roof over their head.

We need to continue to support landlords who participate in programs connecting people with affordable housing.

3 Things You Can Do

- Volunteer or donate items or money to organizations that help support those in need of housing (e.g., donate your clean usable surplus furniture to Hillcrest Church; add a few dollars onto your utility bill for the Community Warmth Program; volunteer at the Champion Centre or Salvation Army)
- Speak openly and respectfully about homelessness in the community to help reduce the stigma; there are many paths that lead to homelessness and each person has a different story
- Consider creating an affordable rental suite in your basement

Resources

<http://www.mhchs.ca/>

<http://championcentre.ca/>

<https://www.medicinehat.ca/government/departments/finance/customer-service/community-warmth-program>

<https://www.mnn.com/lifestyle/responsible-living/blogs/9-ways-you-can-help-the-homeless>

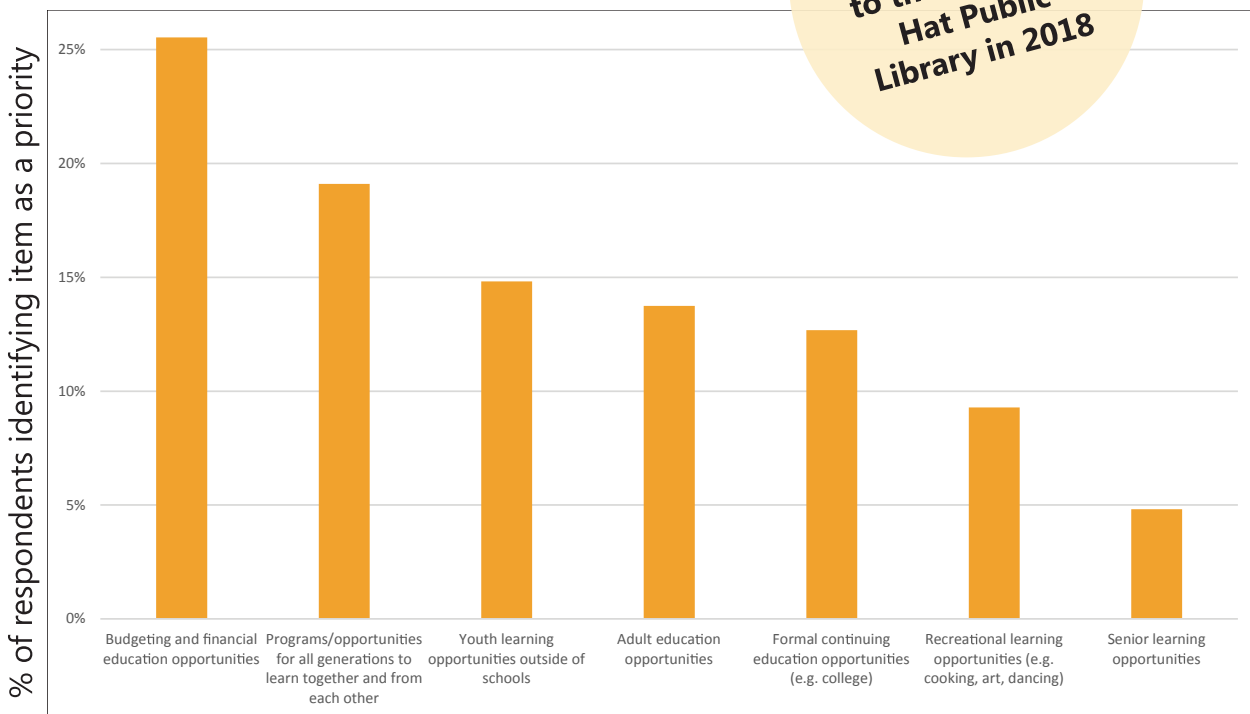
<https://www.alberta.ca/landlords-tenants.aspx>

LEARNING

Learning is a constant process across the lifespan and contributes to vibrant, healthy communities. Learning encompasses both our formal educational systems as well as the other ways we pursue knowledge for either personal or professional reasons.

What We Heard

There were over
1/4 million visits
to the Medicine
Hat Public
Library in 2018



What We Know

Literacy is one of the most important skills when it comes to our personal growth, culture and development.

Literacy and a commitment to learning is a protective developmental asset young people need to succeed. For everyone, life long learning provides us with more and better opportunities and can improve our quality of life.

65% of people entering Canadian correctional facilities have less than a Grade 8 education or level of literacy skills.

There are a number of organizations in Medicine Hat that offer free or subsidized learning opportunities, including budgeting and financial education.

3 Things You Can Do

- Replace 30 minutes of your child's screen time daily with reading
- Join the MH Public Library for \$5 (adult – kids are free!) – take a free online Gale Course or learn a second language (there are 80 to choose from)
- Provide professional development opportunities for the employees in your business (grants available)

Citizen Feedback

It would be great to reduce barriers for adult learners. Adult students being supported with things like finances, child care and transportation can make all the difference in reaching their goals.

Learning doesn't stop once we finish school. Experiences and skills picked up along the way serve us and can be shared with others for our entire lives.

Resources

<http://learn-council.ca/>

<https://www.parentlinkcentre.com/>

<https://www.alberta.ca/canada-alberta-job-grant.aspx>

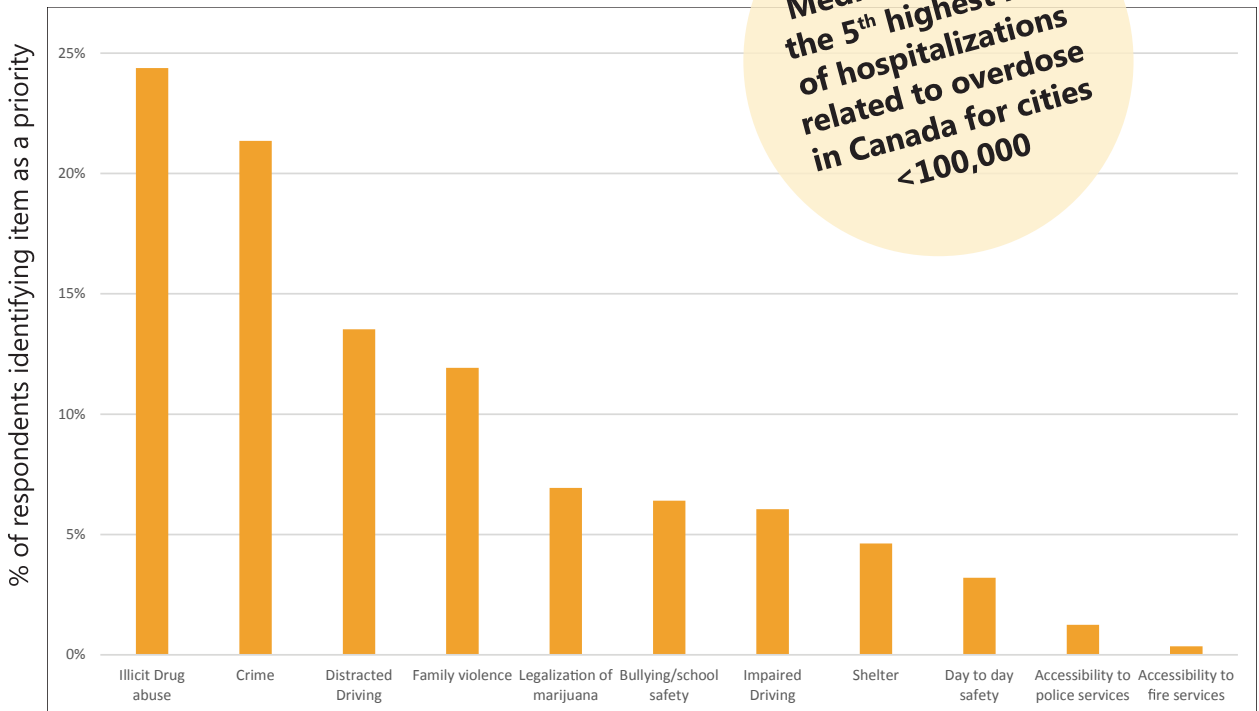
<https://mhpl.shortgrass.ca/books-and-more/online-resources/?p=online-courses>

<https://www.mhc.ab.ca/services/academicsupport/openlearningcentre>

SAFETY

Safety is our number one priority to ensure all our community members live, work and play safely.

What We Heard



What We Know

The MHPS is a member of ALERT (Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams). These teams fight gang activity, work against drug trafficking and confront domestic violence.

Distracted driving tickets have been declining in Medicine Hat (by 23% since 2015).

Crime prevention is a community effort. Neighbourhood Watch is one of the most effective and least costly ways to prevent crime and reduce fear. Neighbourhood Watch fights the isolation that crime both creates and feeds upon. It forges bonds among area residents, and helps serve as a springboard to address other community concerns.

Citizen Feedback

I used to walk frequently in our city's downtown. Now with the growing problem of drug abuse, I try to avoid going downtown by myself, especially in the evening.

Medicine Hat Police Service does a great job of getting the criminals off of our streets. The problem is, the judicial system usually lets them right back out again.

3 Things You Can Do

- Report a crime or suspicious behaviour in your neighborhood to MHPS by calling 911 in an emergency
- Be a role model by obeying the law (eg, do not text and drive, use your signal light)
- Secure (lock) your property, keep valuables out of sight and be mindful of what you post on social media

Resources

<https://www.mhps.ca/>

<https://www.cybersafebc.ca/resources>

<http://www.rcmp.gc.ca/detach/en/d/477>

<https://canadasafetycouncil.org/preventing-elder-abuse/>

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/findhealth/Service.aspx?serviceAtFacilityId=1110507>

<https://www.consumer.equifax.ca/personal/education/identity/how-to-protect-yourself-from-identity-theft/>

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