



2025

Social Needs Assessment

WHAT WE HEARD | At-a-Glance

| OVERVIEW

What is a social needs assessment?

A social needs assessment creates a snapshot of the strengths, social issues, and social needs of a community at a given moment in time, and identifies any barriers or challenges residents may face when seeking access to social services. It often uses a variety of approaches to gather input from residents on their perceptions of social issues, needs, service gaps, and barriers in their community.

This at-a-glance report provides a high-level summary of what we heard from residents. The information in this report is intended for use by decision-makers in the community, including Airdrie's City Council and those working with and for social service providers. It is meant to help identify the most effective approach to inform the prioritization of social issues, invest in social services, and guide the development and delivery of social programs.

How did we engage residents?

We offered a mix of quantitative and qualitative opportunities to residents to provide their input. The 2025 Social Needs Assessment began with an online survey to quantify residents' concerns with social issues, identify service needs, and understand barriers to accessing social services in Airdrie. This was followed by an open house to validate what we heard from the survey and capturing anything that may have been missed. Following this, we undertook a series of coffee chats – a less formal approach where we had conversations with residents at local community spaces and cafes about social issues, needs, and challenges.

WHAT ARE SOCIAL ISSUES?

>> Social Issues are **widespread problems** that impact the **entire community**.

We also conducted a series of targeted engagements with specific groups within our population. We began with both youth and seniors to better understand their unique perspectives on the social strengths, challenges, and service gaps in our community. We concluded our engagement process with a number of focus groups with equity-deserving groups in Airdrie (residents living with one or more disabilities, Indigenous residents, members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and racialized residents and newcomers) to gain a deeper understanding of their unique experiences, challenges, and needs.

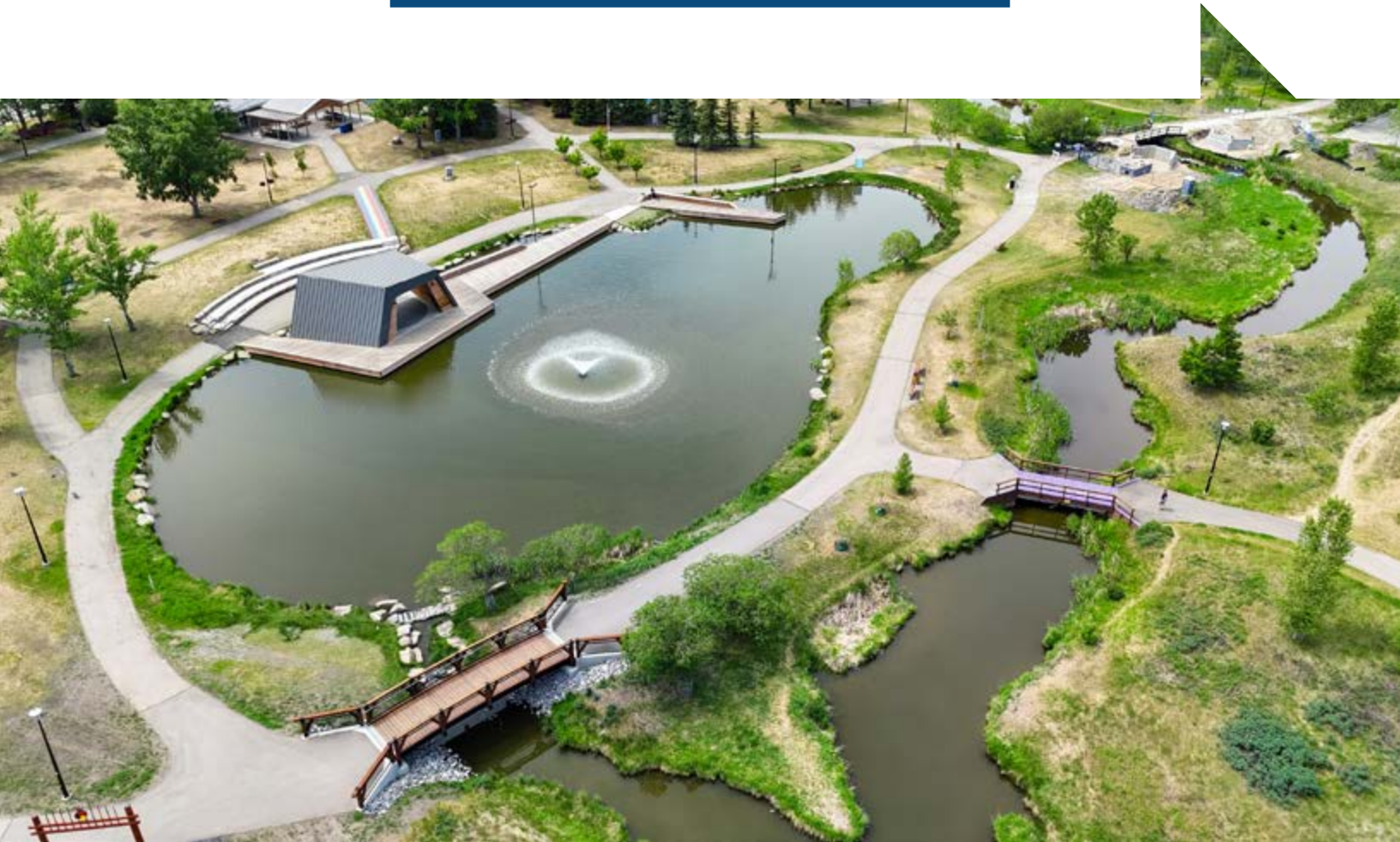
WHAT ARE SOCIAL NEEDS?

>> Social Needs are the **social services necessary to address social issues**.

The City used this wide variety of channels and approaches to gather input from community members to provide opportunities us to hear the perspectives of diverse voices. We used both quantitative approaches (like surveys) to capture patterns and help identify common issues and needs in the population, and qualitative techniques (like focus groups) to delve deeper into the “what,” “why,” “when,” “where,” “who,” and “how” of experiences of residents facing these challenges.

Participation Summary

General Engagement	546
Survey	474
Open House	25
Coffee Chats	47
Targeted Engagement	317
Youth Engagement	237
Seniors Engagement	47
Focus Groups	33
Total	863



HIGHLIGHTS

Residents provided us with a wealth of information on social strengths, challenges, and opportunities in Airdrie. Below are the key themes that arose from our engagement opportunities.



AIRDRIE'S STRENGTHS

Airdrie's **unique character**, its "small-town feel with big-city amenities."

Our **family-friendly culture**.

The great selection of **local businesses**.

Our great access to **recreation, cultural events, and natural spaces**.

Our **proximity to Calgary** and major transportation routes.



SOCIAL ISSUES IN AIRDRIE

Affordability is the greatest challenge residents are facing.

Both **mental health and youth well-being** are two of the other top social issues in Airdrie.

Difficulties faced due to **discrimination and a lack of inclusivity and accessibility** are also issues experienced in Airdrie.

SOCIAL NEEDS IN AIRDRIE

Affordable housing was one of the most reported social needs by residents.



There is a **lack of both healthcare and mental health services** in Airdrie.

Airdrie needs **more opportunities for youth after they graduate**.

There is a lack of **employment services and opportunities**.

We need better **information and communication about services** in Airdrie.

Airdrie needs **improvements to public transit**.

» **The biggest social issues impacting the lives of those who call Airdrie home are large and complex, and will take time and collaborative efforts to address.**



BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SERVICES IN AIRDRIE

Many social services are **not available here**.

Services in Airdrie often have **long wait lists** for people looking for support.

Both **financial barriers and transportation are obstacles** to accessing services in our community.



EQUITY-DESERVING GROUPS' HIGHLIGHTS

Beyond the concerns of the general population, **equity-deserving groups reported facing additional challenges**.

Equity-deserving groups reported **experiencing discrimination** and felt that there needs to be an **increase in inclusive and culturally appropriate social programming and services**.

Equity-deserving groups need **more information on what services** and programs are available, and **improved communication**, as this can help them find the services they need, identify safe spaces, and create a sense of belonging.



YOUTH HIGHLIGHTS

Bullying and mental health were the top issues for youth.

Youth were also concerned about **affordability**.

Youth reported needs for **employment services and opportunities**.

Affordable housing and social/recreational opportunities were highlighted as needs by youth.

Youth are concerned with the multiple **challenges they face at school**.

Transportation and public transit are areas youth feel need improvement.

SENIORS' HIGHLIGHTS

Seniors indicated there is a **lack of medical services** in Airdrie, including a **hospital**.

Seniors indicated a need for **transportation and public transit designed with them in mind**.

Seniors said they want a **central information hub** to improve information and communication about services, programs, and events in Airdrie, including printed options.

The need for **affordable housing and no-to-low-cost seniors' programs and services** was highlighted by seniors.

Seniors said they need a **voice in the community to affect change**.





SUMMARY

Overall, residents enjoy life in Airdrie and value the city's many strengths and amenities. That said, residents acknowledged several challenges, including growing social issues, gaps in essential social services and programs, and barriers to accessing existing supports (largely a result of limited availability and capacity). Beyond this, members of equity-deserving groups face additional challenges and cited a need for greater efforts towards inclusivity. Lastly, all residents also made it clear that there needs to be more information about available services, programs, and events, and that this information needs to be better communicated. We heard you, and we will use what you told us to inform our work going forward.

» This at-a-glance report presents a brief summary of key findings from the 2025 Social Needs Assessment. For more detail, including a breakdown of what we heard from each group we engaged, please see the full 2025 Social Needs Assessment What We Heard Report Back to the Community.

| NEXT STEPS

The information we gathered through listening to residents will be considered, along with existing information and demographic trends, to help inform future planning and decision-making by the City.

First, we will share what we heard with Council and local social service organizations to explore potential collaborative solutions.

Second, this information, along with demographic trends, will be used in our efforts to develop Airdrie's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, starting in 2026. We will work with key community interest holders and agencies to see that this plan is rooted in the realities of life in Airdrie and follows a holistic and proactive approach to fostering a healthier, safer, and more resilient community.

Third, we will identify additional priorities and propose potential solutions and actions to Council for consideration. While this list includes responses from the City of Airdrie, both on its own and in collaboration with the community, we hope and encourage community groups to use this report as a catalyst for actions within their domain as well.

While the 2025 Social Needs Assessment ultimately aims to enhance the lives of all Airdrie residents, it recognizes that social issues are often complex and multifaceted. We heard about many issues, more than we can tackle all at once or on our own. Building new programs and services takes time, whether these programs and services are developed by the City or service providers in the community. The input the community provided is valued, appreciated, and will help us shape the future of our community.

Thank you to everyone who shared their time and perspectives about social needs in Airdrie. Your input is extremely valuable and we now have a better understanding of social issues, service gaps, and barriers to accessing services in Airdrie. Also, thank you to the community organizations who supported us in connecting with residents. You do such valuable work in our community and without your assistance we would not have such diverse representation of voices from our community.