# What We Found:

Leveraging data & community insights
to prevent gender-based violence
in High River, Alberta

This report is dedicated to the survivors of gender-based violence—those whose strength, resilience, and voices inspire change every day. Your experiences illuminate the urgent need for justice, protection, and systemic transformation that works to prevent violence before it starts.

We honour your courage in the face of harm and silence, and we commit this work to advancing a world where dignity, safety, and equality are not aspirations, but guarantees for all.

## AUTHORS

Caroline Claussen  •  Lana Wells  •  Sharon Blackwell  •  Linette Soldan  •  Jillian Mah
Sarah Demedeiros  •  Sophie Barker  •  Stephanie Montesanti  •  Alina Turner

## COLLABORATORS

Ebony Rempel  •  Reave Macleod  •  Wanda McGinnis

*The Munroe Barn, the site of our community meetings and data walk, is located within Sheppard Family Park. This land was generously willed to the Town of High River in 1995 by Ruth Maccoy, with the hope that it would serve as a public park— a space where people could gather, connect, and enjoy the surroundings.*



*Each day, Ruth welcomed neighbours into her kitchen for tea and cookies, creating a place of warmth, community, and belonging. Today, the park continues her legacy. We honour Ruth for offering a space that not only celebrates the natural beauty and historical charm of High River but also supports our collective efforts in violence prevention and community well-being.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We at Rowan House Society acknowledge that we have an important responsibility to respect the air, water and land and to acknowledge the history and the people that have lived here for thousands of years.

In the spirit of reconciliation, today we honour and acknowledge the history of the original people of this land, which includes the traditional territory of the peoples of the Treaty 7 region in southern Alberta, including the Blackfoot Nation Tribes of Siksika, Pikani, Kainai, the Stoney-Nakoda First Nation Tribes of Chiniki, Bearspaw and Wesley, and the Tsuut'ina First Nation.

We acknowledge all nations, Indigenous and non-Indigenous that live, work, and play on this land and who honour and celebrate this territory.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

High River, Alberta, is a community defined by care, connection, and resilience. In 2025, this spirit came to life as residents, leaders, and organizations united to prevent gender-based violence and foster a safer, more inclusive town. Rowan House Society led this effort through the Made-in-Alberta Primary Prevention Project,[a] convening diverse voices to explore local risk factors such as population growth, aging demographics, financial pressures, and entrenched gender roles. These factors affect power dynamics and increase vulnerability, particularly among marginalized groups like temporary foreign workers. Lessons from past crises, including the 2013 flood and COVID-19, reinforced the importance of resilience-building and early intervention.

Community priorities for prevention included engaging youth, raising awareness, reducing stigma, and involving men and boys through tailored outreach, while meeting people where they are—in schools, faith communities, and local networks. These insights now form the foundation of a collaborative roadmap to stop violence before it starts and build a future of safety, dignity, and belonging in High River.



Building on these insights, the following section outlines the **key findings and community priorities** that emerged through this community engagement process. It highlights the factors shaping risk in High River, the strategies identified to address them, and the collaborative actions proposed to develop a primary prevention to stop violence before it starts.

## HIGH RIVER IS A COMMUNITY ON THE CUSP OF CHANGE.

From population growth and aging demographics to increasing diversity, the data highlights the complex social dynamics shaping the town. These trends have significant implications for violence prevention efforts in terms of areas of focus and factors that must be considered for meaningful community-driven change.

High River and the surrounding area's agricultural economy, changing financial stressors, and entrenched gender roles influence not only daily life, but also the distribution of power, potentially limiting choices within families and relationships. These intersecting realities can normalize control, reinforce the idea that violence is private or a social norm, which can also discourage help-seeking behaviour early on.

[a]This project is a collaboration between Rowan House Society, Big Hill Haven, YWCA Banff, and Shift/University of Calgary.

For prevention to be meaningful in High River and the surrounding area, it must be grounded in these economic and social conditions—and challenge the norms that allow gender norms and gender-based violence to persist.

The lessons learned from past crises (such as the 2013 flood or COVID-19) serve as a powerful reminder of the strength, compassion, and resilience that define High River and the surrounding area, offering valuable insights for future efforts in preventing violence. Proactive, upstream interventions that focus on building resilience, such as mental health supports, economic stability measures, and accessible social services, can help individuals and families better cope with adversity.

Community conversations reinforced and expanded these findings. Participants discussed how changing demographics and a shifting social fabric in High River and surrounding agricultural areas have made the community less integrated and cohesive than it once was.

Economic pressures and hardships, especially around housing affordability and the cost of living, further add to these challenges. For more vulnerable members of the community, such as temporary foreign workers, these pressures are exacerbated by the need to send money back home while still affording life in High River. Together, these factors create the potential for increased risk of gender-based violence.

Participants highlighted prevention opportunities in High River and surrounding areas. Community members pointed to the potential to engage children and youth through school-based prevention initiatives. They recognized the need to increase public awareness of gender-based violence, addressing the stigma and silence surrounding the issue. They also saw potential in using technology to reach people, especially men and boys.

Overall, community members stressed the importance of a broader prevention effort focused on men and boys, including tailored programs and male-led discussions. Additionally, they identified the need to "meet people where they are," connect with faith communities and social groups in High River, and better leverage both informal and formal community supports.

# NEXT STEPS:
## BUILDING A PRIMARY PREVENTION PLAN FOR HIGH RIVER AND AREA

High River and the surrounding communities are uniquely positioned to lead the way in preventing gender-based violence before it starts. With committed local leadership, engaged residents, and strong cross-sector partnerships, there is a foundation in place to co-create an effective, community-driven primary prevention plan focused on the following six recommendations:

**1**

### COLLECT MORE LOCAL DATA TO UNDERSTAND PATTERNS OF PERPETRATION TO INFORM PREVENTION EFFORTS

Gather more detailed and localized data—especially with RCMP and stakeholders—to better understand gender-based violence perpetration patterns. This will help inform targeted, effective prevention and early intervention strategies.

**2**

### DEVELOP & SUPPORT MALE-FOCUSED PREVENTION INITIATIVES

Develop programs that engage men in preventing gender-based violence perpetration by promoting emotional literacy, healthy relationships, and positive peer influence. Ideally, male champions should lead efforts in male-dominated spaces like sports teams and service clubs.

**3**

### IMPLEMENT A STRATEGIC, COORDINATED & WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Implement a coordinated gender-based violence prevention strategy across all school levels. This includes aligning efforts between schools and community services, and ensuring continuity, inclusivity, and parent/community engagement in violence prevention education.

**4**

### LAUNCH A TARGETED OUTREACH INITIATIVE TO ENGAGE FAITH, SERVICE CLUBS & OTHER GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY GROUPS IN GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Conduct proactive outreach to trusted community hubs (faith groups, service clubs, cultural groups, newcomers) to engage in gender-based violence efforts. Empower informal leaders and ensure culturally responsive support for newcomers is accessible.

**5**

### ENHANCE PUBLIC AWARENESS THROUGH CAMPAIGNS FOCUSED ON POSITIVE MESSAGING & DIGITAL OUTREACH

Increase awareness through uplifting, stigma-reducing campaigns that promote healthy behaviours and relationships. Use digital platforms and relatable role models to reach youth and the wider community effectively.

**6**

### PARTNER WITH FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES IN A PARALLEL PROCESS FOR PREVENTION

Build respectful, long-term partnerships with local First Nations to develop prevention strategies rooted in Indigenous knowledge and leadership. Embed reconciliation and cultural safety throughout all mainstream prevention initiatives.

To be effective, prevention strategies must not only be inclusive but also tailored to the unique needs and strengths of all those who live and work in High River and the area—including newcomers, temporary workers, Indigenous residents, young people, seniors, and people of diverse faiths.

By engaging with and learning from the lived experiences of those who call High River and the surrounding areas home, we can build a more inclusive, responsive, and resilient community where all feel welcomed, whether now or in the future and perpetration of violence is not tolerated.

" WE CAN BUILD A MORE INCLUSIVE, RESPONSIVE, AND RESILIENT COMMUNITY TO STOP VIOLENCE BEFORE IT STARTS. "

# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*For nearly four years, I have had the privilege of serving as Executive Director of Rowan House Society. During this time, I've come to love being a part of the resilient community of High River and its surrounding areas. Growing up in rural Alberta, I saw firsthand how small communities look out for one another, shaped by deep roots and a strong sense of belonging. High River and area is just like that. It's the perfect picturesque community in the Foothills, where **people care deeply about where they live, nurture local leaders, come together in a crisis and work to build a strong future for families across generations**.*

*This same spirit is what's needed to tackle gender-based violence—an issue that carries unique risks in rural settings and demands bold, community-driven solutions. We know that gender-based violence is shaped not just by individual actions, but by social norms, power dynamics, and community conditions. Real prevention means changing those conditions—so that safety, equity, and respect are part of everyday life. This is why I'm so encouraged by our involvement in preventing gender-based violence.*

*In Spring 2024, Rowan House Society joined YWCA Banff, Big Hill Haven in Cochrane and Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence/University of Calgary to launch a Made-in-Alberta primary prevention community initiative. **Together, we began by listening**—inviting community members to share stories, insights, and lived experiences. We also partnered with the University of Alberta's CARE Lab, the University of Calgary's Shift research hub, and HelpSeeker Technologies to better understand patterns of perpetration and the underlying social conditions driving these behaviours so we can identify community-led prevention solutions.*

*Following a Primary Prevention Primer Day on May 29, 2025, two community members courageously shared their personal story on the impacts of violence. Then on June 10, 2025, **community members came together to learn, contribute their insights and share bold ideas to reimagine what prevention could look like.** This report builds on that moment and is shaped by the voices, experiences, and knowledge of our community, grounded in the belief that everyone deserves to feel safe —emotionally, physically, and financially—and live without fear.*

***Violence is not inevitable—it is preventable.***

*By addressing root causes, we can lay the foundation for a future where healthy, respectful relationships are the norm. Change begins with us. Together, we can lead a community-led response to break the cycle of domestic violence and abuse.*

***With hope and determination,***

*Linette Soldan*
*Executive Director, Rowan House Society*
*September 2025*

ROWAN
HOUSE
SOCIETY

# INTRODUCTION

High River, Alberta, prides itself on being a people-first town—where neighbours help one another in good times and challenging times to ensure a resilient community. This focus on care and connection was demonstrated in June 2025, when people from across High River and other neighbouring communities came together to discuss ways to prevent gender-based violence [b] and build a safer, thriving community for all.

Rowan House Society is at the heart of this work—leading efforts to gather voices from across High River and surrounding areas to explore how we can change the community conditions that contribute to gender-based violence. These voices represent the full spectrum of local life: service providers, local government representatives, businesses, nonprofit organizations, law enforcement, and residents —all united by a shared belief that **violence is not inevitable—it is preventable.**

This report captures the bold ideas and forward-thinking spirit shaping a new path forward. High River and area are standing up against violence and standing with survivors to build a community rooted in safety, dignity, and belonging. On May 29, 2025, Rowan House Society brought community members from High River and surrounding areas together to deepen their understanding of the root causes of gender-based violence.

At this event, two individuals courageously shared their lived experiences of violence, offering powerful insight into how these root causes show up in everyday life. Their stories prompted meaningful reflection—reminding us that gender-based violence is often hidden, normalized, and people lack the skills to intervene or disrupt perpetration.

## TOGETHER, WE BEGAN EXPLORING THROUGH RESEARCH AND PEOPLE'S LIVED EXPERIENCES HOW WE CAN PREVENT VIOLENCE BEFORE IT STARTS.

Building on that conversation, Rowan House Society convened community members once again on June 10, 2025, to dive deeper into the local data and research linking community conditions to the perpetration of violence in High River and surrounding communities. Throughout the day, participants engaged in meaningful dialogue—reflecting on the findings and sharing ideas with colleagues, friends, and neighbours about what it would take to stop violence before it starts.

These two sessions, which included 37 community stakeholders, mark an important first step toward developing a community-led primary prevention plan. Using local data and lived experience, this report explores the factors influencing gender-based violence in High River and surrounding areas and highlights community-driven recommendations for action. It provides the foundation for a shared roadmap to build a safer, more equitable future—together.

[b] *Violence based on gender norms and unequal power dynamics, perpetrated against someone based on their gender, gender expression, gender identity, or perceived gender. It can take many forms, including physical, economic, sexual, as well as emotional (psychological) abuse. For this reason, we mainly use gender-based violence but also use domestic and family violence, in this report.*
*https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-violence/gender-based-violence-glossary.html#G*

# THE IMPERATIVE FOR PRIMARY PREVENTION

Over the past several years, Rowan House Society—alongside supporters and community members—recognized a hard truth: waiting until violence happens is too late. In response, Rowan House Society made a bold commitment to shift part of its focus upstream by joining the Made-in-Alberta Primary Prevention Project. This work is not just about increasing awareness—it's about transforming the community conditions that allow violence to occur, so we can stop it before it starts.

To help clarify those patterns, Rowan House Society presented data from 135 Danger Assessments[1] completed in the past year, reflecting male perpetration of violence—60 from women who stayed in the emergency shelter and 75 from those supported in the community. Some of the findings were deeply alarming:

## 34%
of women reported experiencing violence while pregnant

## 36%
had survived strangulation attempts (and nearly twice that number experienced repeated and severe strangulation)

Strangulation is a well-established predictor of lethal violence.[2] Its presence should be viewed as an urgent warning sign—not only of current danger but of the very real risk of femicide.[c]

Aggregate data from the Danger Assessments also highlights the pervasive use of **coercive control**—a pattern of manipulation, surveillance, isolation, and psychological abuse that erodes a person's autonomy and safety. Rowan House Society found:

## 80%
of women reported their partner used technology to monitor, track, or control them—what many now describe as a *silent weapon* of coercive control

## 78%
shared that their partner was violently and constantly jealous

[c]*Femicide is when a woman or girl is killed because she is female. This is often by someone she knows, like an intimate partner or family member. This is different from homicide, where the motivation is not gender related. Femicide is driven by discrimination against women and girls, unequal power relations, gender stereotypes or harmful social norms (UN Women, 2024 https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/explainer/five-essential-facts-to-know-about-femicide.*

These are not just numbers. They represent real people in High River and area—our neighbours, co-workers, friends, and family members. And they tell a story of growing and urgent risk. Coercive control doesn't just destabilize relationships—it creates a climate of fear, unpredictability, and danger, especially for women and children.

The causes of male perpetration of gender-based violence are complex, but one thing is clear: when we miss early opportunities to intervene, we risk entrenching the cycle of violence. That's why prevention must be a central focus—not just to respond after harm has occurred, but to create the conditions where violence is no longer seen as inevitable. Our work must begin long before a crisis leads to a call for help.

While Rowan House Society will continue to provide critical support services to those in crisis, upstream efforts are needed to prevent male perpetration of gender-based violence. This means we must better understand the unique social, economic, and demographic factors influencing violence in High River and surrounding communities. This report does not seek to assign blame but highlights opportunities for change.

The following sections examine local trends through a prevention lens to help identify strategic opportunities for change. The analysis combines research with insights from many individuals and organizations in our community, who have shown courage and dedication to exploring how we can stop violence before it starts and because we believe we can, and must, do better.

## WHEN WE MISS EARLY OPPORTUNITIES TO INTERVENE, WE RISK ENTRENCHING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE.

# THE DATA:
## EXAMINING COMMUNITY FACTORS RELATED TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence is a complex issue shaped by the broader conditions that surround individuals and families—social, cultural, economic, and environmental. Risk factors like social isolation, community tolerance of violence, financial stress, housing insecurity, and rigid gender norms can increase vulnerability to perpetrating violence.[1] **Understanding these conditions allows us to identify patterns, shift harmful norms, and strengthen protective factors that promote safety, equity, and respect.**

This section presents data from both the Town of High River and surrounding counties (e.g., Foothills County) to explore how local realities—such as population growth, shifting demographics, and economic and social disruptions—are influencing the risk of perpetrating gender-based violence. Simultaneously, the area's history of resilience in the face of crisis offers valuable lessons and a strong foundation for action.

By drawing on both open access data and community-lived experience, we are laying the groundwork for a safer, more inclusive community where violence is prevented before it starts.

## THE PEOPLE OF HIGH RIVER AND AREA

### POPULATION GROWTH

The town of High River has experienced steady, sustainable population growth over the past two decades. In the last 23 years, the town's population more than doubled from around 7,000 in 2001 to over 15,000 today.[3] Projections suggest this steady growth will continue, with the population potentially reaching 20,000 by 2044.[d]

[d]*To make these projections, HelpSeeker calculated the average annual population increase by subtracting the 2001 population (9608) from the 2024 population (15445), then dividing the 5837-person change by 23 years (≈ 253.8, rounded to 254). They then applied a straight-line projection by adding 254 people each year to the 2024 baseline. This method assumes constant yearly growth and matches the figures in the projection table.*

## POPULATION OF HIGH RIVER

Estimates of the number of people living in municipality, including Canadian citizens and immigrants as well as non-permanent residents.
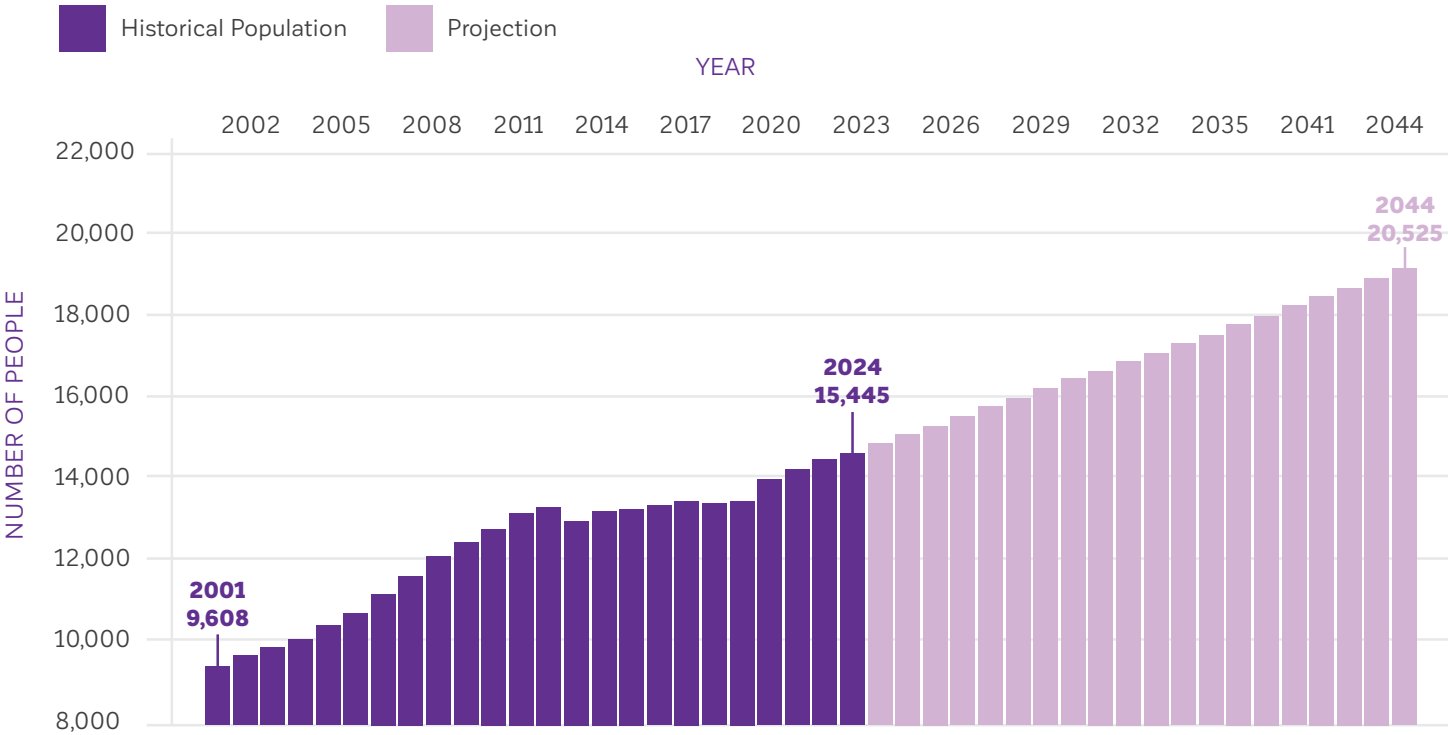


*Source: Office of Statistics and Information, Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, Projections from HelpSeeker Technologies (2025)*

This growth pattern is notable for its consistency, rather than sudden booms or busts. High River has seen measured increases each year.[4] This stable growth has made the town increasingly attractive to young families, working professionals, and seniors seeking a small-town lifestyle with access to urban amenities.

As the population of High River continues to increase and diversify, it is important to understand the current and projected demographic changes so that the town and community can plan for and respond to current and changing demands. This next section does a deeper dive into the demographic shifts.

### AGING DEMOGRAPHICS

High River's population is not only growing but also aging. Between 2014 and 2024, the town saw a significant demographic shift:[3]

- The 65+ population grew by 51% and now represents 27% of the community
- The younger end of the working-age population (20-44) remained relatively stable, but the older working-age population (45-64) increased by 14%
- The 0-19 age group decreased as a percentage of the total population.

## PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, HIGH RIVER

**PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION**

| Age Group | Percent |
|-----------|---------|
| 0-19 Years | 21% |
| 20 - 44 Years | 27% |
| 45 - 64 Years | 25% |
| 65+ Years | 27% |

**AGE OF RESIDENTS**
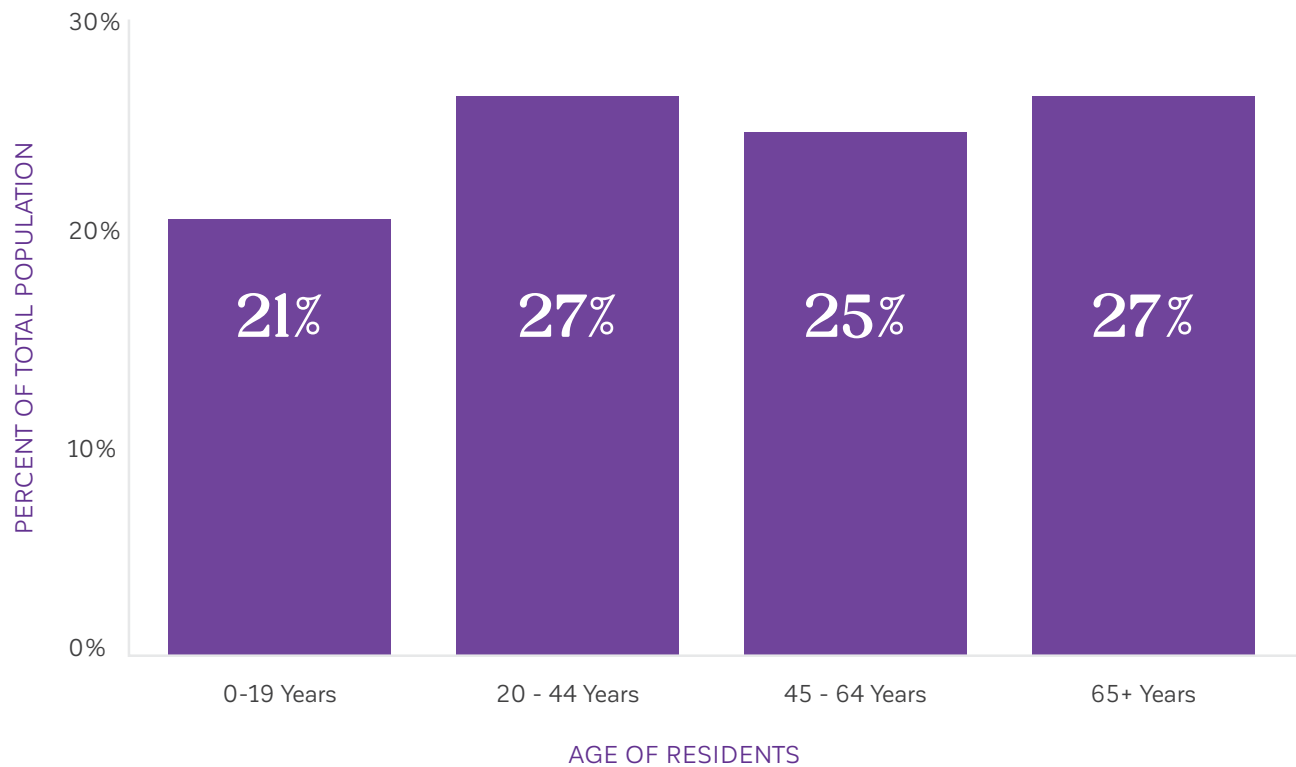
*Source: Office of Statistics and Information, Alberta Treasury Board and Finance (2024)*

This trend becomes even more evident when examining age distributions across genders. The data show a higher ratio of women to men in older age groups, especially among those 65 and older.[3] This gender imbalance aligns with national patterns, as women generally have longer life expectancies than men.[5]

Across the surrounding agricultural sector, data also point to the aging farm operator population. In Foothills County, nearly 70% of farm operators are aged 55 or older, while only 80 operators (less than 6%) are under the age of 35.[6]

## AGE OF FARM OPERATORS
*Foothills County, AB (CCS)*

| Age | Percent |
|-----|---------|
| Under 35 years | 5.4% |
| 35 - 54 years | 24.9% |
| 55 and over | 69.6% |

**PERCENT OF FARM OPERATORS**
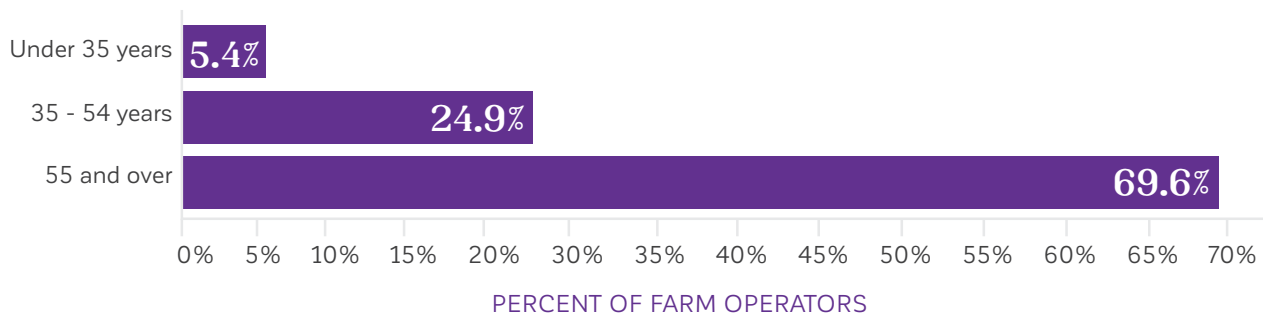
*Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Agriculture, 2021 Census of Population*

## INCREASING DIVERSITY

High River is becoming an increasingly diverse community, with growing populations of newcomers to Canada. Over the past 15 years, the town's newcomer population more than doubled, from 1,070 in 2006 to 2,650 in 2021.[5] New Canadians now make up 18% of High River's population, up from 10% in 2006.[5]

## NEWCOMER POPULATION COUNT & NEWCOMERS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION
*High River, 2006 - 2021*
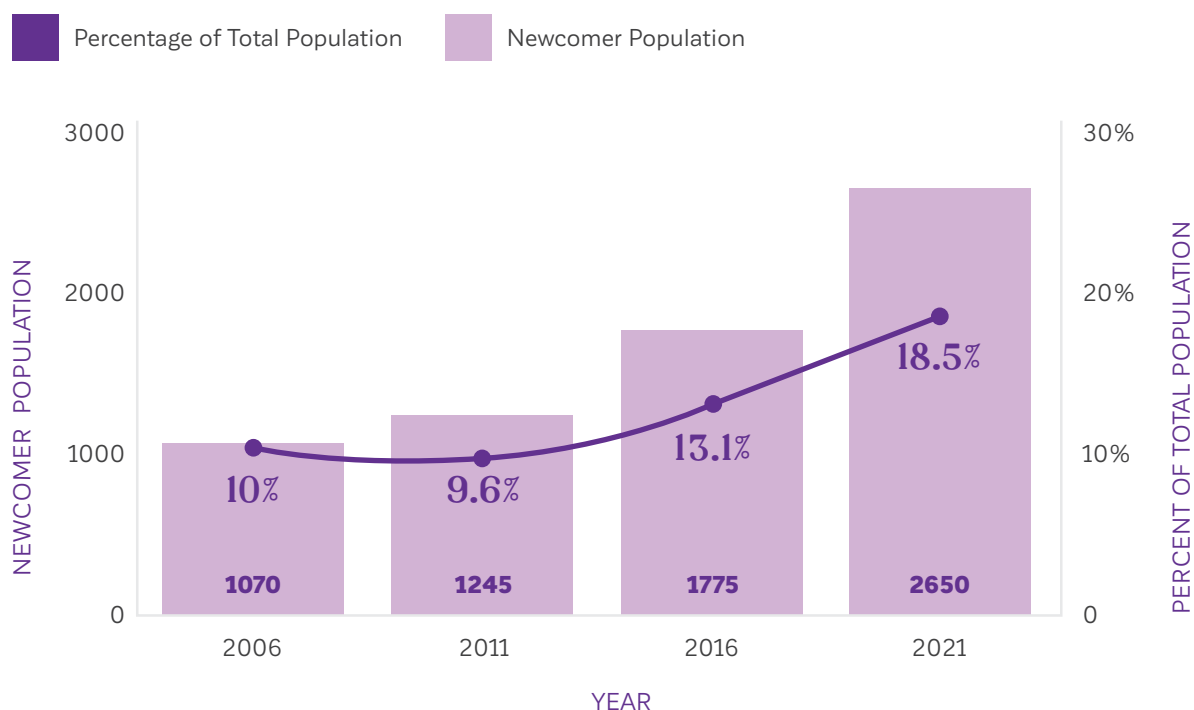


*Source: Statistics Canada Census of Population 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021+*
*Newcomer refers to immigrants to Canada*

Census data from 2021 shows that the most recent newcomers to High River primarily come from the Philippines (71.6%), with smaller proportions from India, Mexico, and other Asian and African countries.[5] This suggests established migration pathways for Filipino workers.[5] Many newcomers came to work at the Cargill meat processing plant, with the plant employing around 1,000 temporary foreign workers since 2007.[7]

## PERCENT OF RECENT IMMIGRANTS BY PLACE OF BIRTH

*High River, 2021*

- ■ Philippines
- ■ Mexico
- ■ India
- ■ United States of America
- ■ United Kingdom
- ■ Other places of birth in Asia
- ■ Other places of birth in Africa
- ■ Other places of birth in Americas



71.6%

3.4%
3.4%
3.4%
2.7%
2.7%
1.4%
1.4%
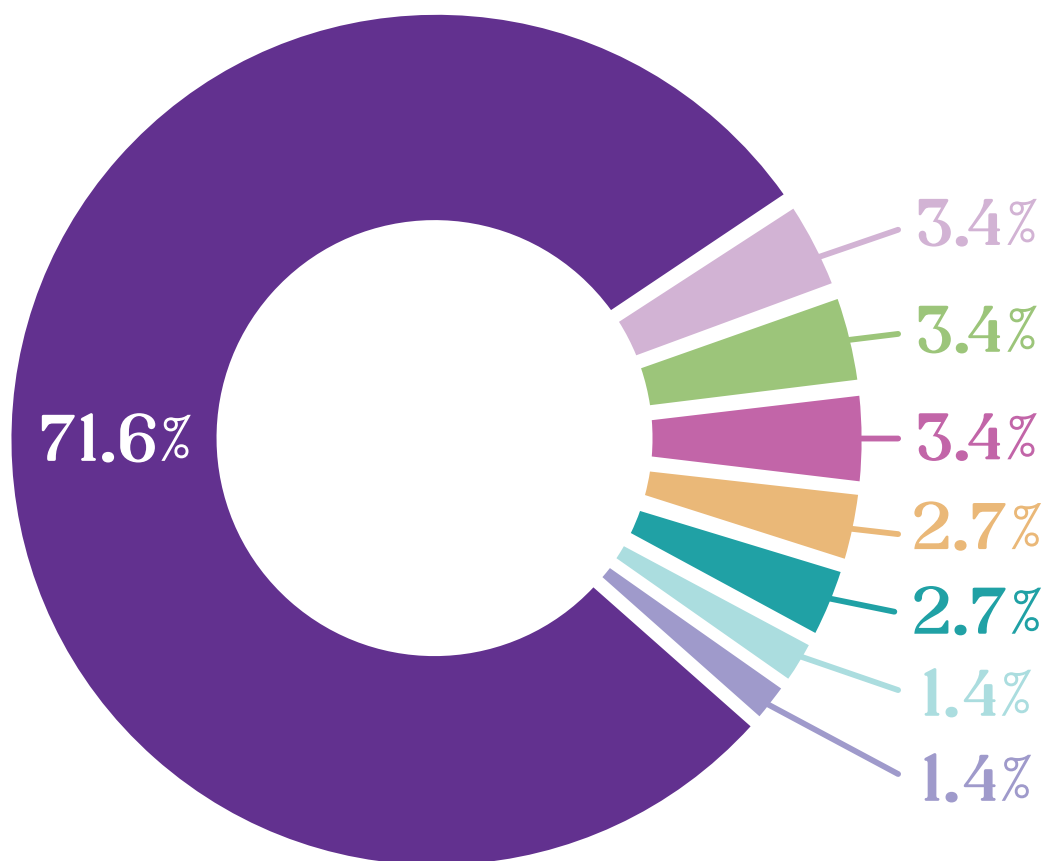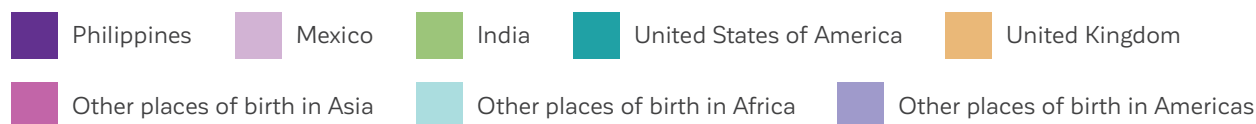
*Source: Statistics Canada Census of Population 2021*

*"Recent immigrant" refers to an immigrant who first obtained his or her landed immigrant or permanent resident status between January 1, 2016 and May 11, 2021. "Other places of birth" indicates a country of birth that is not in the list selected by Statistics Canada. The places of birth selected are the most frequently reported by recent immigrants at the Canada level.*

## RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

High River's growing diversity is also reflected in its evolving religious and cultural landscape. As of 2021, just under half (48%) of residents identified as Christian, while 40% reported having no religious affiliation.[5] High River has a higher proportion of people practicing Christianity compared to Alberta.[5]

## RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS

For the population in private households.

**Alberta**     **High River**



Bar chart — PERCENT OF POPULATION (y-axis, 0% to 60%):
- No religion & secular perspectives: Alberta 40.1%, High River 40.3%
- Christian: Alberta 48.1%, High River 57.1%
- Other religions: Alberta 19.1%, High River 2.6%
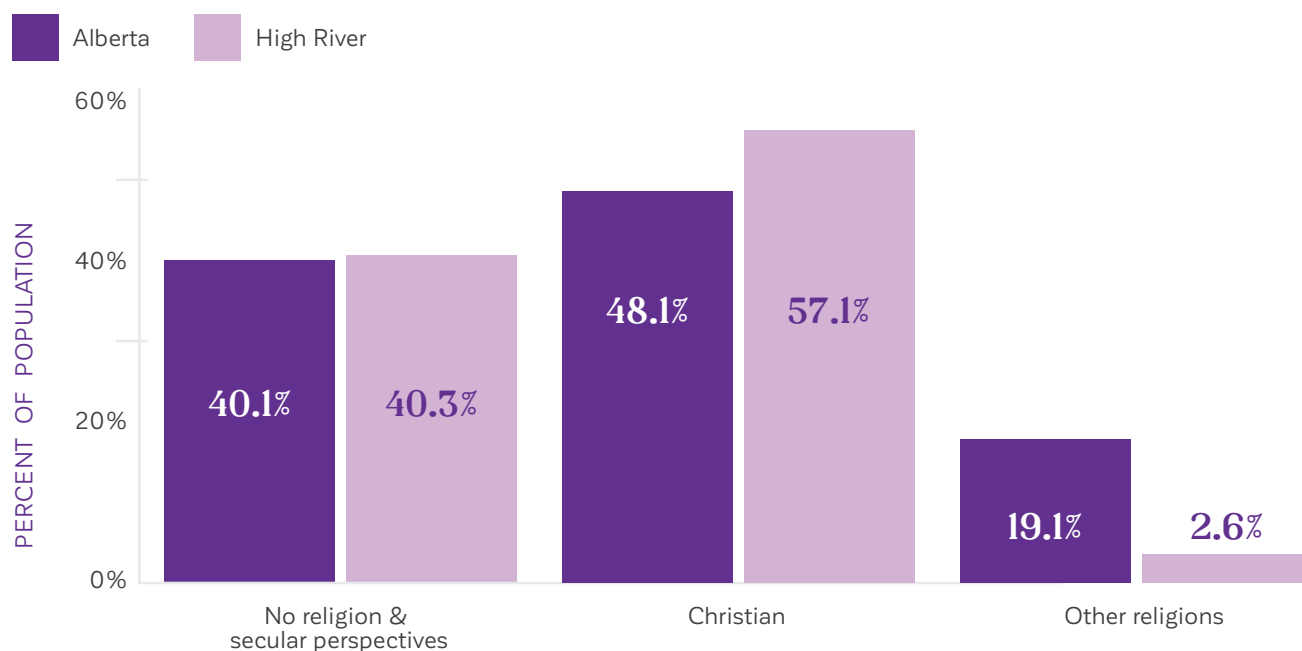
*Source: Statistics Canada Census of Population 2021*

*"Religion" refers to the person's self-identification as having a connection or affiliation with any religious denomination, group, body, or other religiously defined community or system of belief. Religion is not limited to formal membership in a religious organization or group. This variable shows the aggregated responses to the religion question. For infants or children, religion refers to the specific religious group or denomination in which they are being raised, if any. Persons without a religious connection or affiliation can self-identify as atheist, agnostic, humanist, or can provide another applicable response.*

*"Other religions" includes Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Traditional (North American Indigenous) spirituality, Buddhist, and other religions and spiritual traditions.*

The relatively high percentage of residents with no religious affiliation is noteworthy, as it suggests a shift towards secularism consistent with broader national trends. However, the data shows that Christianity remains the most common religion among residents, with several active churches and faith-based organizations in town.[5]

High River's Christian landscape is diverse, with representation from Catholic (22.3%), United Church (8.3%), and other traditions.[5] This may be due in part to immigration patterns—many newcomers from the Philippines, for example, traditionally practice Catholicism.

## INDIGENOUS POPULATION TRENDS

High River is situated on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, and the Métis Nation (Region 3). The town's location at the intersection of these territories highlights its historical significance as a gathering place for Indigenous peoples. Indigenous communities have long-standing connections with the land and bring distinct cultural and governance traditions that should be intentionally included in all conversations about community safety and change.

In recent years, High River's Indigenous population has experienced a notable decline in size. From a peak of 540 residents in 2011, the number of individuals identifying as Indigenous decreased to 465 by 2021. This represents a 14% drop over the decade.[5] Despite this drop, shelter data shows that of clients served between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025, 30% identified as Indigenous, indicating local services are still being accessed by this population group (Rowan House Society, Personal Communication, July 22, 2025).

## POPULATION WITH INDIGENOUS IDENTITY, HIGH RIVER
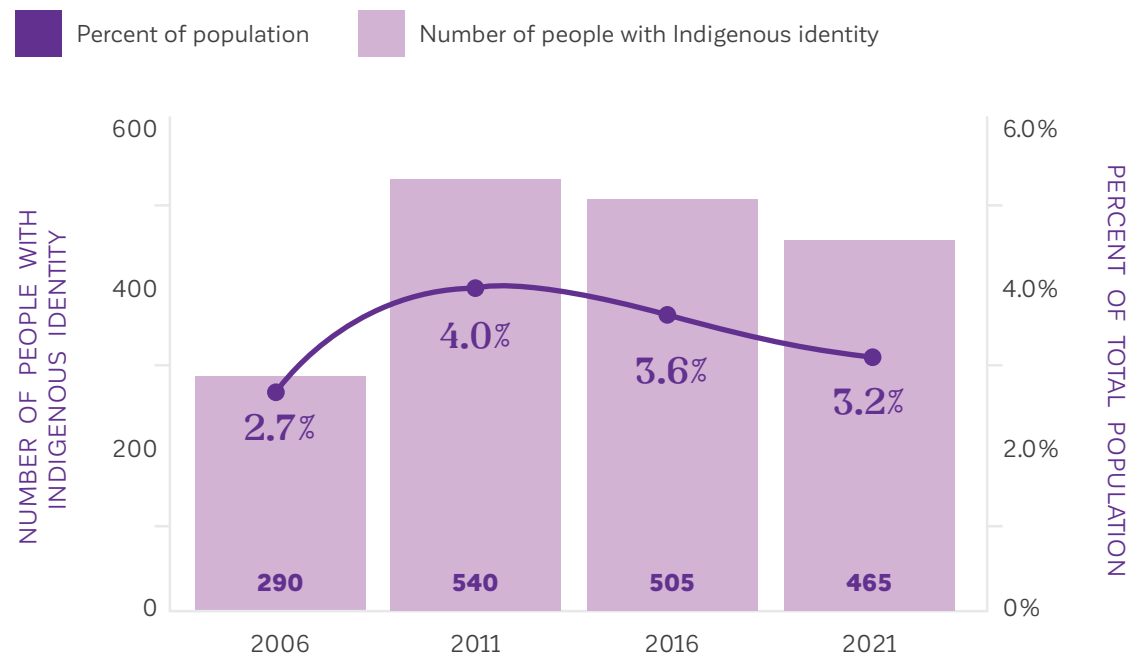


*Source: Statistics Canada Census of Population 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021*

## WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POPULATION GROWTH, SHIFTING DEMOGRAPHICS, AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION?

An aging population in rural areas presents challenges, as older adults often bear responsibility for sustaining farms, businesses, and civic life, with fewer younger people to share the load.[8] This can lead to chronic stress, isolation, and, in some cases, abusive behaviours within households, particularly emotional, financial, or coercive abuse.[9]

Older women are especially vulnerable to violence due to factors like frailty, retirement, and empty nests.[9-12] Abuse in later life often goes unreported, especially when victims are isolated. Tailored prevention efforts are needed, especially in communities like High River, where many residents are retirees.[13] Engaging older adults in prevention work can foster resilience and leverage their lived experience.

Immigrants and temporary foreign workers face unique risks related to domestic and family violence due to language barriers, isolation, legal vulnerability, and dependency on employers.[14] Many are hesitant to report abuse due to past negative experiences with authorities or fear of deportation.[15] Limited or culturally unresponsive services further increases risk.[16]

## PREVENTION STRATEGIES MUST BE INCLUSIVE, CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE, AND ACCESSIBLE.

As High River becomes more multicultural, there's an opportunity to promote inclusion and safety through equitable service access, cross-cultural dialogue, and education on Canadian laws and values.

Faith and culture can both support and complicate domestic violence prevention. While religious communities offer strength and support,[17] some traditions may unintentionally reinforce harmful gender norms or discourage help-seeking.[9,8,18] Dialogue with faith leaders can help promote healthy relationships and shift harmful attitudes.[17,19]

The decline in High River's Indigenous population underscores the importance of tackling systemic discrimination and intergenerational trauma that contribute to vulnerability.[20-22] Building a welcoming and supportive environment for Indigenous families and integrating Indigenous knowledge —particularly in healing and restorative practices—can enhance local violence prevention efforts.[23]

Indigenous knowledge in areas like healing, restorative practices, and supporting men and boys can meaningfully shape local violence prevention strategies.[23]

Ultimately, creating a High River where Indigenous residents feel safe, supported, and able to thrive will require a community-wide commitment to reconciliation, cultural humility, and relationship-building based on trust, respect, and a shared vision of wellness for all.

In the next section, we will examine how these demographic shifts intersect with the economic and social realities of life in the town, and what this means for gender-based violence prevention efforts.

# ECONOMIC & SOCIAL REALITIES

An effective primary prevention plan to prevent gender-based violence perpetration must account for the systems and structures that shape how people live, work, and relate to one another, because these directly influence the conditions where perpetration of violence can take root.

In High River and area, factors such as agricultural roots, local economy, and employment patterns all play a significant role in shaping opportunities, pressures, and power dynamics within families and the broader community. This section examines how these social and economic realities contribute to the risk of violence perpetration—and how they must be considered in designing meaningful, locally grounded prevention strategies.

## AGRICULTURAL HUB

Agriculture is deeply woven into the fabric of High River, shaping the community's identity, economy, and way of life.[24] Farming and ranching have long been the backbone of the region, with generations of families working the land and raising livestock, which has driven the manufacturing and food services economy.

High River is part of a thriving agricultural hub in southern Alberta. In the surrounding Foothills County, there are over 1,000 farms and ranches,[6] with a diverse array of operations:

- Cattle ranching and farming are the largest sectors, with 369 operations
- Grain and oilseed farming is also significant, with 226 operations
- Other crops (e.g., potatoes, vegetables, greenhouse plants) account for 210 operations
- Poultry, egg, sheep, goat, horse, & other livestock farming make up the remaining operations reported

## TOP SIX TYPES OF FARM OPERATIONS
*Foothills (CCS)*

Legend: ■ Animal farms   ■ Crop farms

| Farm type | Number of farms reporting |
|---|---|
| Cattle ranching & farming | 369 |
| Oilseed & grain farming | 226 |
| Other crop farming | 210 |
| Other animal production | 203 |
| Greenhouse, nursery, & floriculture | 26 |
| Sheep & goat farming | 22 |

NUMBER OF FARMS OF REPORTING
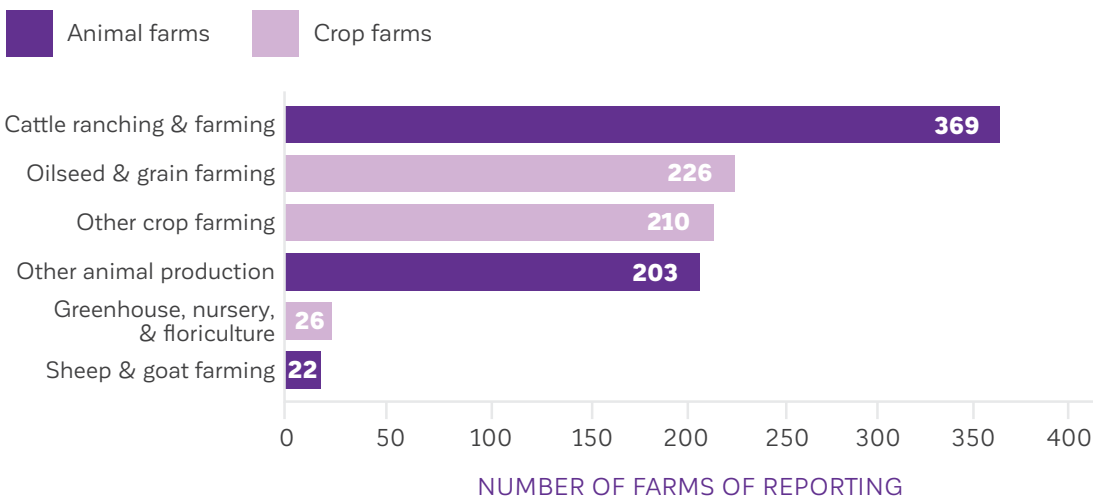
*Source: Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture 2021*

Different types of farms may face distinct challenges and stressors depending on their specific industry. For example, the beef sector, including large processors such as Cargill (which has a heavy presence in High River), is at heightened risk from U.S tariffs and trade uncertainty.[25]

Across these different types of farms is the reality of the aging of farmers, which also has implications for community well-being and family dynamics. The physical demands and financial pressures of farming can take a toll, particularly as operators age. Data shows that due to economic and social changes, the number of young farmers is decreasing.[26] Succession planning can be complex and emotionally fraught, with the potential for conflict and stress within families.[27]

## GLOBAL ECONOMIC PRESSURES

High River's agricultural economy is closely linked to global markets, making it susceptible to a variety of external economic pressures. From trade disputes and tariffs to fluctuating commodity prices and currency exchange rates, the success and stability of local farms and ranches can be influenced by forces far beyond the community's borders.

One key factor is High River's reliance on export markets. Alberta is a major exporter of agricultural products, with the United States, China, and Japan being the top destinations (Government of Alberta, 2025). In 2024, Alberta's agricultural exports to the US alone were valued at $9.3 billion, while exports to China and Japan were $2.4 billion and $1.4 billion respectively (Government of Alberta, 2025).[28]

## ALBERTA'S TOP INTERNATIONAL AGRI-FOOD EXPORT MARKETS IN 2024

EXPORT VALUE (CAD MILLIONS)

| | |
|---|---|
| United States | $9,300 M |
| China | $2,400 M |
| Japan | $1,400 M |
| Mexico | $570 M |
| India | $389 M |
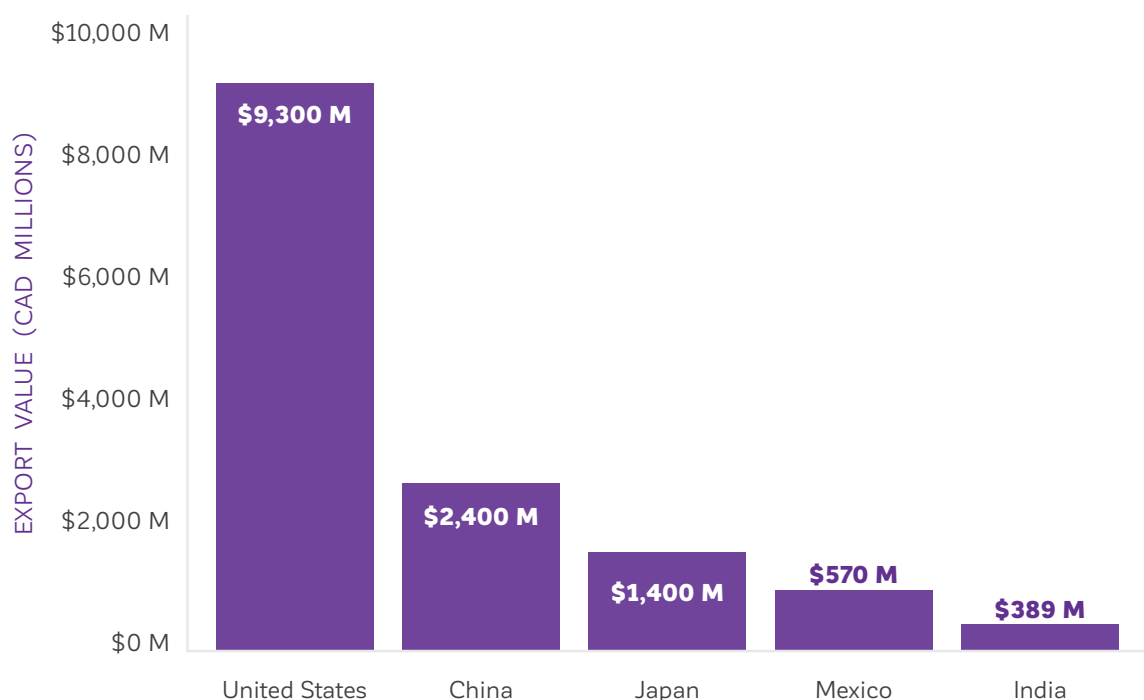
*Source: Government of Alberta (2025)*

This export-oriented economy means that local producers may be sensitive to disruptions in international trade relationships. This may be especially concerning given the reality that at the time of this report, the U.S and Canada have yet to reach a trade deal, resulting in the continuation of tariffs.[29]

Beyond trade policies, when commodity prices for livestock or grain fall due to oversupply, decreased demand, or other market forces, it can significantly impact the profitability and viability of local farms and ranches. This price volatility can make it difficult for producers to plan, invest in their operations,

## EMPLOYMENT & INCOME PATTERNS

Distinct gender differences in employment and income characterize the economic landscape of High River. These disparities may have significant implications for power dynamics within relationships and the risk of domestic and family violence.

One key trend is occupational segregation—the tendency for men and women to work in different fields. In High River, men are more likely to be employed in trades, transport, and equipment operation, as well as in natural and applied sciences. Women, on the other hand, are more prominently represented in sales and service, business and administration, education, law, social services, community work, and government jobs.[5]

This division of labour often reflects and reinforces traditional gender roles as well as income inequalities. Men's work in construction, trades, transport and farming, for example, is often associated with physical strength, technical skills, and outdoor labour.[27,32]

Women's work in service, education, and care-related fields, on the other hand, is often seen as an extension of their domestic roles as nurturers and caregivers.[33] The trend in High River and area is that women and men tend to be concentrated in the types of work that reflect traditional gender roles, which will shape how people see themselves and each other as it relates to traditional gender norms.

## OCCUPATIONS BY GENDER IN HIGH RIVER

Broad category - National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2021.

■ Men+   ■ Women+

### MEN+

| Occupation | Value |
|---|---|
| Sales & service | 760 |
| Trades, transport & equipment | 1,390 |
| Business, finance & administration | 190 |
| Manufacturing & utilities | 530 |
| Education, law, social, community & government | 155 |
| Health | 80 |
| Natural & applied sciences | 210 |
| Natural resources & agriculture | 180 |
| Art, culture, recreation & sport | 50 |
| Legislative/senior management | 30 |

### WOMEN+

| Occupation | Value |
|---|---|
| Sales & service | 1,200 |
| Trades, transport & equipment | 145 |
| Business, finance & administration | 720 |
| Manufacturing & utilities | 200 |
| Education, law, social, community & government | 495 |
| Health | 325 |
| Natural & applied sciences | 50 |
| Natural resources & agriculture | 35 |
| Art, culture, recreation & sport | 90 |
| Legislative/senior management | 0 |

PEOPLE IN LABOUR FORCE AGED 15 YEARS & OVER

*Source: Statistics Canada Census of Population 2021*

*Refers to the kind of work performed by persons aged 15 years and over, as determined by their kind of work and the description of the main activities in their job. The occupation data are produced according to the National Occupational Classification [NOC] 2021 Version 1.0.*

Income disparities between men and women in High River further compound these power imbalances. On average, women in the town earn significantly less than men. The median income for women is $35,200, compared to $50,400 for men—a gap of $15,200, or about 30%.[5]

## INCOME GAPS IN HIGH RIVER

| | Median total individual income in 2020 |
|---|---|
| Men+ | $50,400 |
| Women+ | $35,200 |
| Gap | $15,200 |

MEDIAN TOTAL INDIVIDUAL INCOME IN 2020
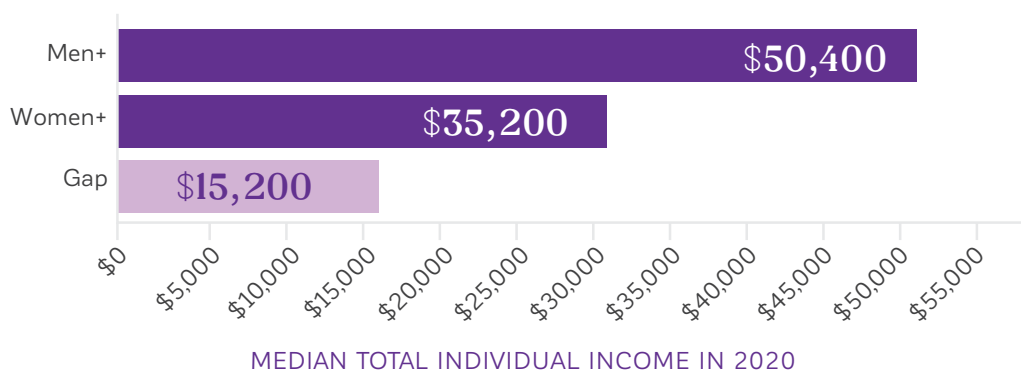
*Source: Statistics Canada Census of Population 2021*

This wage gap can be attributed to several factors, including women's overrepresentation in lower-paying fields, the undervaluation of women's work, and the impact of caregiving responsibilities on women's career trajectories.[34] In family farms especially, women's labour is often undervalued and unpaid, despite research suggesting they take on the greater part of the administration and financial recording work.[27]

## WHAT DOES THE DATA ON ECONOMIC & SOCIAL REALITIES MEAN FOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION?

Economic and social factors in agricultural communities can significantly impact domestic and family violence dynamics. In close-knit farming communities, where self-reliance is valued, seeking help can be stigmatized.[8] Leaving an abusive situation often means abandoning shared property, livestock, or a generational business, making it emotionally and financially difficult.[9] Economic uncertainty further heightens stress, increasing the risk of conflict and violence perpetration.[35]

Family-run businesses like farms blur personal and professional boundaries, creating conditions that can escalate harmful behaviours such as violence, substance abuse, and harassment.[35] This overlap can lead to a high-pressure environment where mental health struggles and family conflict worsen —especially when home and work are inseparable.[9]

Gendered employment patterns also contribute to domestic violence risk. In farming communities like High River, men are often the primary earners, while women's contributions may be unpaid or undervalued, creating economic dependence.[5,27] This imbalance limits women's ability to leave abusive situations or support themselves and their children.[36]

Economic abuse is a common control tactic in such dynamics, including withholding money, limiting access to finances, sabotaging employment, or demanding paychecks.[37] These patterns reinforce financial dependence and deepen vulnerability within abusive relationships.

Effective violence prevention must address the complex intersection of global economic forces and local realities. This is why violence prevention efforts—especially stopping perpetration before it starts—are deeply linked to economics.

# ECONOMIC CONDITIONS INFLUENCE OUR BEHAVIOURS, POWER DYNAMICS, AND HOW PEOPLE BEHAVE IN RELATIONSHIPS.

So as a community, it is important to go beyond simply offering services and move toward economic and social systems that reduce chronic stress and promote gender equity and dignity.

# RESILIENCE, DISRUPTION, & LESSONS LEARNED

The previous section explored the economic and social landscape of High River and area, highlighting the unique challenges and opportunities that shape the community's experience of gender-based violence. From the pressures of a globalized agricultural economy to the persistent gender disparities in employment and income, **these factors create a complex context in which violence can take root and resilience can be tested**.

But High River's story is about more than just challenges—it's also a story of extraordinary resilience in the face of adversity. Over the past decade, the community has weathered two major crises that have left an indelible mark on its identity and social fabric: the 2013 flood and the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this section, we'll take a closer look at High River and the surrounding community's experiences with the flood and the pandemic, and what they can teach us about building resilience and preventing violence in times of crisis. We'll examine the immediate and long-term impacts of these events, the factors that contributed to the community's ability to bounce back, and the opportunities to leverage these lessons for a safer future.

## THE 2013 FLOOD

In June 2013, High River experienced one of the most severe floods in its history. Heavy rainfall led to catastrophic flooding along the Highwood River, which runs through the heart of the town. The impact was widespread and devastating:

- Over 13,400 residents, representing an estimated 96%[e] of the population, were forced to evacuate their homes.[3,38]
- More than 5,000 homes were damaged, with many experiencing significant structural damage or total loss.[38]
- Key infrastructure, including roads, bridges, schools, and the hospital, was severely impacted, disrupting essential services and hampering initial response efforts.[39]

The immediate and long-term mental health consequences of the flood were significant. In the aftermath of the disaster, many residents experienced symptoms of post-traumatic stress, anxiety, depression, and grief. These impacts were particularly acute for those who lost their homes, possessions, or livelihoods.[40-42]

However, even in the face of this unprecedented challenge, the High River community showed strong resilience and unity. Neighbours helped neighbours to evacuate, provide temporary shelter, and begin the long process of cleanup and rebuilding.[39]
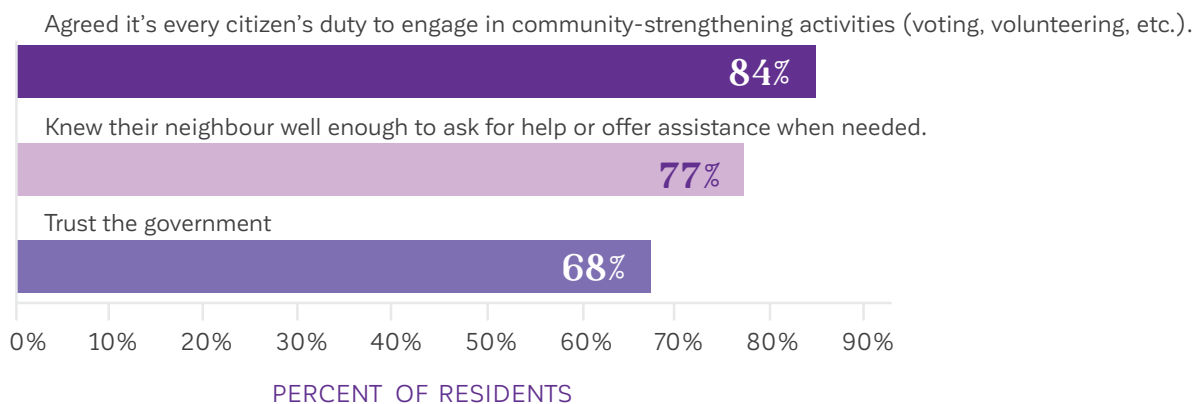
[e]*Calculated using the number of evacuees divided by the Town's population in 2013.*

In the months and years following the flood, High River's recovery was characterized by a spirit of determination, collaboration, and mutual support.[43] The town's strong social networks, sense of community pride, and proactive leadership were key factors in its ability to bounce back stronger than before.[39]

Some notable indicators of High River's post-flood resilience include:
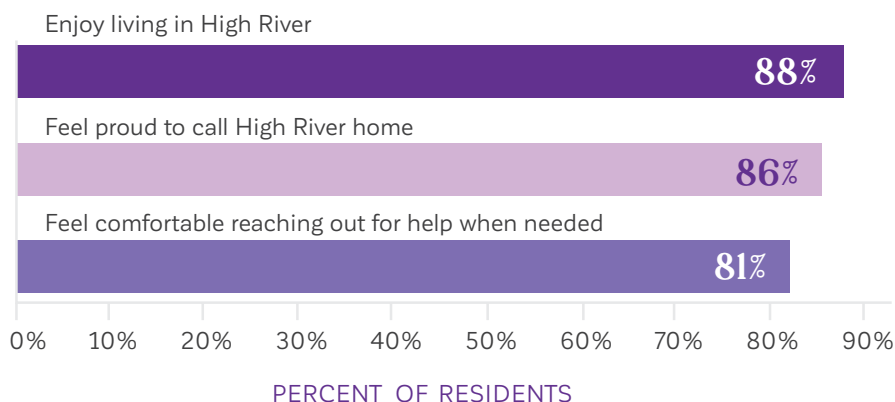
- A rapid and coordinated response from local government, businesses, and community organizations to assess damage, secure resources, and begin rebuilding.[39]
- High levels of citizen engagement and volunteerism, with residents contributing time, skills, and resources to support their neighbours and speed the recovery process.[39]
- Proactive measures to improve flood mitigation infrastructure and emergency preparedness, reducing the town's vulnerability to future disasters.[39]
- A focus on community-wide mental health support, with increased resources and programming to help residents cope with the emotional impacts of the flood.[44]
- Strong sense of community engagement, willingness to ask for help, and trust in institutions.[43]

## COMMUNITY COHESION INDICATORS THREE YEARS AFTER THE FLOOD

Agreed it's every citizen's duty to engage in community-strengthening activities (voting, volunteering, etc.).

**84%**

Knew their neighbour well enough to ask for help or offer assistance when needed.

**77%**

Trust the government

**68%**

0%  10%  20%  30%  40%  50%  60%  70%  80%  90%

PERCENT OF RESIDENTS

*Source: High River Vital Signs 2016*

## SOCIAL COHESION IN HIGH RIVER

Enjoy living in High River

**88%**

Feel proud to call High River home

**86%**

Feel comfortable reaching out for help when needed

**81%**

0%  10%  20%  30%  40%  50%  60%  70%  80%  90%

PERCENT OF RESIDENTS

*Source: Town of High River 2023-24 Social Wellbeing Assessment*
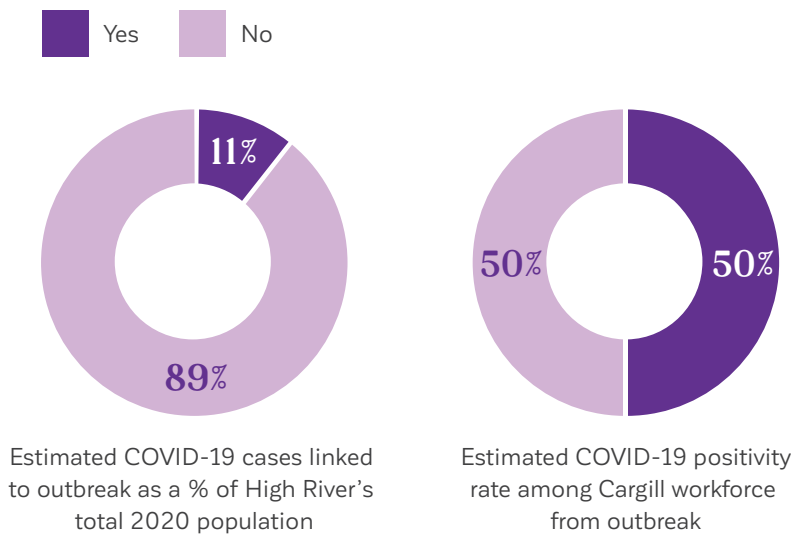*Base: All respondents (n=810)*

While the 2013 flood was a transformative event for High River, it also revealed the community's inherent strengths and capacity for resilience.

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Just seven years after the devastating flood, High River faced another major crisis: the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic affected communities around the world, High River found itself at the epicentre of one of Canada's largest early outbreaks.

In April 2020, the Cargill meat-processing plant, located in High River, experienced a rapid spread of COVID-19 among its workers. The outbreak quickly grew to over 950 cases, representing more than half of the plant's employees. Eventually, more than 1,500 cases were linked to the outbreak. This made it the largest workplace outbreak in Canada at the time.[45]

## CARGILL HIGH RIVER PLANT COVID-19 OUTBREAK STATISTICS

Yes   No

11%

89%

50%   50%

Estimated COVID-19 cases linked to outbreak as a % of High River's total 2020 population

Estimated COVID-19 positivity rate among Cargill workforce from outbreak

*Source: Scace (2024), population estimates from the Office of Statistics & Information, Alberta Treasury Board & Finance*

*This outbreak was not representative of all COVID-19 impacts in the community. Arbitrators have since confirmed that Cargill followed advice with what was known at the time. That said, the lasting impacts of COVID-19 on High River in the long term are still yet to be seen.*

The Cargill outbreak had significant ripple effects throughout High River and the surrounding region. Many of the plant's workers lived in High River or commuted from nearby communities, meaning the virus likely spread beyond the workplace and into homes and neighbourhoods.

The pandemic's impact was particularly acute for High River's most marginalized residents. Newcomer and temporary foreign workers, who made up a significant portion of the Cargill workforce, faced language barriers, precarious employment, and overcrowded housing conditions that increased their risk of infection and made it harder to access support.[46]

## POST-DISRUPTION REALITIES: COMMUNITY WELL-BEING TODAY

High River's experiences with the 2013 flood and the COVID-19 pandemic highlight the complex link between community crises and the risk of domestic and family violence. Disruptions to daily life, increased stress, and strained social support networks can create conditions that may lead to violence in the home. At the same time, High River's demonstrated resilience during these challenging times underscores the importance of strong community bonds and collective action in mitigating potential risks.

This ability to bounce back from disaster is evident in community perceptions today, as evidenced by:

- A lower crime rate per capita than the rest of Alberta.[47]
- A well-connected, resilient community with strong social cohesion.[47]
- Strong personal mental health evaluations.[47]

## WHAT DOES THE DATA ON DISRUPTION AND RESILIENCE MEAN FOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION?

One of the most consistent findings from disaster research is that the impacts of crises—whether floods, pandemics, or other emergencies—extend far beyond physical damage. These events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, often deepen the social and economic stressors that contribute to violence.[48-52] Evidence shows that rates of domestic and sexual violence frequently increase during crises and, in many cases, remain elevated long after the immediate threat has passed.[53,54]

Sexual violence is the only category of crime in Canada currently showing a sustained upward trend.[55] While localized data is limited, it is essential to recognize that communities like High River, which have experienced multiple large-scale disruptions in recent years, may be living with the longer-term impacts of these compounded challenges.

# SUMMARY: THE DATA

These three areas of data offer a window into the broader story of High River and surrounding areas —a small community south of Calgary with deep agricultural roots, now evolving into a larger, more diverse and vibrant community. High River and its surrounding areas are growing and changing, adapting by necessity to economic and social shifts. While these shifts bring new challenges, the data shows a community marked by strength and resilience.

Understanding these trends is essential. The data highlights where prevention efforts must begin —particularly in addressing economic and social inequities, planning for the service needs of a more diverse population, and ensuring every resident—regardless of age, background, or experience—can live free from violence. By acknowledging the social conditions shaping High River and area today, we can take meaningful steps to ensure all residents feel safe, supported, and included.

# COMMUNITY INSIGHTS: WHAT WE HEARD

To deepen our understanding of High River and area's unique social landscape, the university-gender-based violence collaborative partnered with local stakeholders to reflect on the data presented. This interactive approach invited participants to engage directly with community-level data, offering space for dialogue, interpretation, and shared learning.

Over two sessions held on May 29 and June 10, 2025, 37 community stakeholders gathered in High River, representing a diverse cross-section of the community, including the RCMP, municipal staff, non-profit and for-profit organizations, and engaged residents such as members of the Chamber of Commerce.

Together, they validated and expanded upon the data, grounding it in local context and lived experience. Their contributions provided crucial insights to guide future primary prevention efforts in High River and surrounding communities. While stakeholders discussed a range of issues and reflections, six key themes emerged in their discussions, capturing both the opportunities and the challenges of engaging in primary prevention efforts.

## THEME 1: SHIFTING DEMOGRAPHICS, GROWING DIVERSITY, AND IMPACTS TO COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

The community of High River is experiencing significant demographic shifts, characterized by an aging population, the growth of young families, and increasing community diversity. Some participants were surprised that the senior population was as high as the data indicated, despite observations that there seemed to be a decreasing "middle" population. High River has historically been an attractive retirement community, given the lower cost of living and proximity to a hospital.

*"We have a wait list for seniors housing here in High River… so we see the fact that [because] there's an assisted living/long-term care facility, [that] naturally drives up the demographics and affordability."*

Participants also noted that High River is becoming a more affordable option for young people to establish their homes and families, compared to larger centers like Calgary, and that this influx of younger residents will likely balance the growing senior population.

*"I think the High River community is becoming much younger... An affordable community to build their homes and start their families in comparison to Calgary."*

While the older 2021 census data highlighted a large Filipino population, primarily attributed to employment at Cargill, community members believe the diversity is now more varied, with newcomers arriving from an array of other countries (such as from Latin American countries and others). Given the data pointing to the increasing growth from seniors as well as newcomer populations, some participants questioned whether the community could support the needs of these two groups moving forward.

*"I'm interested to know, because the two highest [demographics] increasing are elderly and newcomers, which both require housing, low-income housing supports—and if it continues to grow from those two demographics, do we have enough supports for them in the future?"*

A notable trend discussed by participants is the difficulty in engaging diverse and newcomer populations in broader community programs. Many cultural groups, including the Filipino and Latino communities, tend to form their own internal support networks, often due to language barriers and cultural familiarity. This creates "communities within the community," which can be a source of strength but also presents a challenge for integration and accessing mainstream support services, given the limited availability of culturally specific support and the strong identification with culturally specific gender roles and norms. As described by one participant:

*"So, men rules is what the men said, and women are always to obey, but when they come to Canada, [the women] discover that they have protection from the law, have rights, and the children have rights. And as well inside the [greater] community there's a lot of support and violence in any kind is not acceptable. So, I think that we should start creating education that involves psychological impact because most are coming with not only the stigma, they came as well with [violence] impact from back home."*

The Indigenous population, despite the proximity to reserves, appears to be decreasing within High River itself, with many accessing services on reserve through outreach programs rather than coming into town. One participant commented:

*"Something that I was thinking about is with the Indigenous population declining here in High River, to me it's like, why are their families not staying? So, is there a lack of opportunity? A lack of welcoming? What's causing them to move? I don't know where they are moving to, but is there a lack of cultural resources here that they can't connect to programming?"*

With rapidly changing demographics, the potential for weakened community ties becomes more of a risk for gender-based violence perpetration. Close, supportive networks help protect individuals from perpetrating or experiencing harm, and providing opportunities to strengthen community connections across different groups and cultures is critical.

Based on the insights from the data walk participants, newcomers to High River may be "sticking to themselves", which could decrease overall community cohesion. To effectively serve High River's diverse population, prevention efforts must be culturally relevant and accessible to support fostering a community where all people, regardless of age, stage or culture, feel seen, supported and valued.

# THEME 2: ECONOMIC PRESSURES ON FAMILIES & NEWCOMERS

Financial hardship and the rising cost of living are significant stressors for families in High River and surrounding areas, impacting everything from housing to daily expenses. For some, the town of High River is still seen as affordable for young people in comparison to Calgary. For others, the lack of affordable and appropriate housing is a critical issue, forcing some individuals to return to abusive relationships or for multiple generations of families to live together, creating new tensions. This economic strain is felt broadly, from young people who feel they must choose between saving for retirement and owning a home, to businesses that see less disposable income in the community.

*"Financial hardship is huge and I think when we look at the gender gap between men and women, that's been that way forever."*

This financial inequality was noted as being especially relevant in farming operations, where women are often not compensated for the work they are doing.

*"Very often the female of the farming operation is the homemaker, the main hub of the whole operation, bringing meals out at suppertime, making sure the kids get raised, etc. The female doesn't get compensated most of the time—so to me this is also financially restricting..."*

For newcomer and temporary foreign worker populations, these financial pressures are compounded. Many temporary foreign workers, particularly from the Filipino community, have a cultural and financial responsibility to send money back to their families in their home countries. This obligation, coupled with rising local expenses and sometimes reduced work hours, creates significant emotional and financial stress. Furthermore, traditional gender roles within some cultures can lead to financial abuse, where the man controls the household income, leaving women with little financial independence or recourse.

Economic stressors are a significant risk factor for gender-based violence perpetration.[56] Addressing economic inequalities, along with financial abuse, is critical to preventing gender-based violence. Ensuring access to supports that reduce financial strain, such as financial safety planning, affordable childcare, and targeted expansion of employment opportunities for women, not only builds protective factors in the prevention of gender-based violence but also ensures that those who are in violent relationships are not trapped by being economically dependent.[57]

# THEME 3: OPPORTUNITY FOR PREVENTION EDUCATION & INCREASED PUBLIC AWARENESS TO PREVENT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Limited public awareness of gender-based violence surfaced as a significant barrier, not only in acknowledging that gender-based violence exists in the community, but also in identifying and addressing behaviours that can escalate into violence. Some High River stakeholders note that violence is often hidden or stigmatized in the community, making it difficult to intervene earlier with those at risk of perpetrating violence.

The need for greater education and awareness around the issue of gender-based violence was noted by data walk participants. For many, schools are viewed as a crucial venue for early intervention and prevention of gender-based violence. The consensus from participants is that education on healthy relationships, consent, and identifying abuse needs to begin at a young age to prevent the normalization of violent behaviors witnessed by children.

Participants believe this work could be expanded into a "whole school approach." This would involve not just educating students, but also connecting with and providing resources for parents, teachers, and school administration. By equipping the entire school community with knowledge and conversation tools, the impact of the prevention message can be reinforced at home and in the classroom.

*"I think connecting with the parents and connecting with the teachers and the school staff. Everybody."*

Participants reflected on the need to expand efforts to increase the awareness of gender-based violence in the community, pointing to the need for broad community awareness campaigns that shift the narrative around the prevention of violence perpetration. Participants strongly suggested that messaging should focus on promoting the positive behaviours and healthy relationships the community wishes to see.

Overall, community participants pointed to the need for campaigns to have a strong digital component, using social media to deliver short, engaging content.

*"I'd love to see the messaging, not just what not to do, but what to do and what [behaviours] we want to see. That's better. Ideally if we could promote the behaviour we want to see..."*

*"Maybe there's a digital [strategy]—well, I was just thinking that you can try and [get] in front of them as much as you can, but especially the younger generation, they're on their phones all the time."*

We know that one key primary prevention strategy is school-based approaches to preventing perpetration of gender-based violence.[58,59] School-based prevention has been shown to have promising outcomes and is considered an essential aspect of any primary prevention effort.[58,60] We know that adopting whole school approaches to prevention is critical, given that they are comprehensive (i.e., more than one-off workshop delivery), target multiple aspects of the school context (i.e., policies, staff, students and parents) and offer opportunities for skill building.[61]

Whole-school interventions work to demonstrate a commitment in promoting the emotional well-being of all members of the school community through the provision of a safe, supportive and caring environment.[62] These approaches are critical in building healthier, safer relationships across the school community.

Building broader community awareness of gender-based violence as a critical issue is another prevention of perpetration strategy noted in the literature. Examples of community public awareness campaigns exist, with some showing promising effects in positively shifting citizens' awareness and attitudes concerning gender-based violence, such as the Ontario social marketing campaign "Draw the Line" that aims to engage citizens in dialogue about preventing sexual violence.[63]

We know that increasingly, technology is being harnessed in efforts to prevent and address gender-based violence.[64] Around the world, governments and other organizations are innovating with technology to educate communities and build increased capacity for prevention efforts.

# THEME 4: THE URGENT NEED TO ENGAGE MEN & BOYS THROUGH TAILORED PROGRAMS AND MALE-LED CONVERSATIONS

A recurring theme was the urgent need to involve men and boys in conversations and programs aimed at preventing violence perpetration. Participants noted that many community events addressing these issues are attended almost exclusively by women, highlighting a significant gap. There is a recognized need for more "men's programs" and for more male role models or "champions" to lead these conversations within their own circles. The structure of these approaches is important: they need to be accessible and appealing to men, whether it's gathering for coffee, working on a project, or playing sports.

*"We need men champions to take it on. And go to these coffee dates and just start talking about it."*

The challenge lies in overcoming the stigma and traditional masculine norms, particularly in rural and farming communities, that discourage men from discussing emotions or seeking help.

However, there are positive signs of change, such as men recognizing their own need for support and a local radio announcer openly discussing his experience with counselling. Leveraging existing informal groups where men already gather is seen as a key strategy. The goal is to create safe spaces where men can learn about healthy relationships, emotional regulation, and the impact of violence, and to do so in a way that feels natural and supportive.

We understand that to prevent the perpetration of violence and promote healthy and safe relationships, men and boys need to be part of the solution.[65] When men and boys are supported to build healthy relationship skills and gain the skills needed to challenge harmful gender norms, gender-based violence can be prevented before it starts.[65] Engaging with men and boys from a place of compassion, creativity, and positivity is essential to creating a safer, equitable and violence-free community for all residents of High River and surrounding areas.

# THEME 5: FROM CRISIS TO COMMUNITY REBUILDING AFTER THE FLOOD & COVID-19

Participants noted that the community's resilience has been tested by two major, yet very different, traumatic events: the 2013 flood and the COVID-19 pandemic. The flood is remembered as an event that unified the community, fostering a "barn raising community" spirit where neighbours and surrounding towns came together to help one another. This crisis brought out a collective strength and desire to support each other.

*"And there was a whole Filipino community all of a sudden singing and chanting and they completely offloaded the entire truck, stacked it in the corner. They were missing family members, all that kind of stuff. But they were just happy to be here and be."*

In stark contrast, the COVID-19 pandemic was described as a divisive event that promoted isolation and weakened public trust. While some families benefited from spending more time together and government support offered financial relief, the overall effect was one of division. For many, being confined at home increased stress and household tensions.

Nonetheless, local moments of resilience appeared, such as a community soccer tournament that brought together hundreds of people from diverse immigrant groups, fostering connection and providing a much-needed outlet for stress.

*"It is about community. I don't think it is not impossible to do that [prevention]. The spirit is still there. I don't think you can clutter fire out of a community... It is a barn raising community."*

Natural disasters and traumatic community events can cause significant stressors within a community,[66] putting them at risk for increased rates of gender-based violence perpetration.[67]

Despite these risks, we know that many communities are highly resilient in the face of adversity, and to this, High River and the surrounding communities are no exception. By making resources available to all community members and fostering close connections, community resiliency is nurtured.[68] By drawing on its strengths and lessons learned from past adversity, High River is a community that can empower itself to actively create a community where the risks for violence are reduced and people feel safe, seen, and supported.

# THEME 6: UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF INFORMAL GROUPS AND NETWORKS

A significant strategy proposed for preventing violence is to "go to them"—to proactively engage people within the ethnocultural groups, community associations and faith communities where individuals already feel a sense of belonging. Faith communities are seen as a vital and largely untapped resource for this outreach. Given that a large portion of the community identifies with a faith, particularly the sizeable Filipino and Latino Catholic population, churches are where many people gather weekly and trust the leadership. Engaging pastors and faith leaders to share information and facilitate conversations could be a powerful way to reach those who might not attend a formal workshop.

Furthermore, an opportunity exists to engage trusted champions from various cultural groups, who are already doing this work in the community, and can act as cultural brokers to prevention work. This will ensure that culturally specific supports and services are accessible to newcomers.

This outreach strategy extends beyond churches and ethnocultrual groups to include service clubs like the Lions and Elks, sports teams, and other community groups. The idea is to raise awareness and provide education in these familiar settings, making the information more accessible, engaging and less intimidating. By presenting information on topics like healthy relationships and identifying abuse in these established groups, the community can begin to shift social norms and empower bystanders to have "courageous conversations." The messaging should focus not just on what not to do, but also on promoting the positive behaviours and healthy relationships the community wants to see.

*"Even taking that one step forward with groups, all the different [service] groups that are out there, like your Lions and your Elk, your service groups going to them and presenting [healthy relationship] information… "*

We recognize that community members have the potential to transform social norms and structures that are the root causes of domestic violence.[69] By engaging informal social networks, such as family, friends, neighbours, colleagues, and leaders from faith and service communities, social ties can be strengthened, enabling community members to support each other in fostering nonviolent and healthy relationships.

# SUMMARY: COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

Through conversation and reflection, community members highlighted a wide range of insights. The six shared above were those that the group felt not only increased the risk of gender-based violence in High River and surrounding areas but also presented opportunities for preventing violence perpetration from occurring. Participants shared that shifting demographics and increasing diversity can create challenges to community cohesion and integration.

Economic pressures and hardships are another risk factor for the community, creating situations where financial strain is becoming a reality for far too many young people and seniors. Changing community conditions and economic pressures are two community conditions that can increase the risks for gender-based violence perpetration.

**Community members also pointed to several areas where there is untapped potential for preventing gender-based violence.** Building healthy relationship skills and gender-based violence awareness through school and community-based education was viewed as essential, and participants pointed to the possibilities of harnessing digital media to reach men and boys with messages of prevention. Reaching out to men and boys with targeted programs and male-led conversations was also emphasized by community members, alongside opportunities to "meet people where they are at" by connecting with informal groups through grassroots outreach.

Finally, community members stressed that past experiences with disasters created lessons around community resilience and strength. Fostering community spirit and maintaining the sense of positivity and connectedness were noted as important foundations from which to build prevention efforts in High River and the surrounding areas.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT STEPS:
## BUILDING A PRIMARY PREVENTION PLAN

The insights gathered make one thing clear: High River and surrounding areas have a powerful opportunity to lead the way in preventing gender-based violence before it starts. With a strong foundation of community resilience and engaged residents, six interconnected areas of focus have emerged as essential building blocks for developing a community-led primary prevention plan.

### RECOMMENDATION 1: COLLECT MORE LOCAL DATA TO UNDERSTAND PATTERNS OF PERPETRATION TO INFORM PREVENTION EFFORTS

While initial data from danger assessments are valuable, more data is required to understand the scope of the problem . Working with local RCMP and other stakeholders to gather additional data is an opportunity to address the need for understanding patterns of perpetration. This information will help High River understand where risks are emerging, support the planning and design of early interventions, and guide the development of gender-based violence perpetration prevention initiatives that are tailored to High River's unique needs.

### RECOMMENDATION 2: DEVELOP & SUPPORT MALE-FOCUSED PREVENTION INITIATIVES

There is a strong opportunity to strengthen local efforts that engage and mobilize men in preventing gender-based violence. This includes creating dedicated programs and spaces where men can learn, reflect, and take action. Accessible supports such as counselling, fatherhood programs, and healthy relationship-building initiatives are essential—alongside spaces that promote emotional literacy and positive peer relationships. Ideally, these efforts would be led by male champions who can spark conversations in everyday settings where men already gather, such as sports teams, service clubs, and recreation spaces.

### RECOMMENDATION 3: IMPLEMENT A STRATEGIC, COORDINATED & WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Schools are seen as critical environments for early prevention education—for this reason, a strategic, coordinated approach to violence prevention programming for children and youth in High River should be explored. This strategic approach should ensure prevention continuity over grade levels, development of good prevention program design, strengthened partnerships with parents, and increased coordination between school-based and community-based programs and resources.

## RECOMMENDATION 4: LAUNCH A TARGETED OUTREACH INITIATIVE TO ENGAGE FAITH, SERVICE CLUBS & OTHER GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY GROUPS IN GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION

A core recommendation emerging from the community is to proactively "go to them" rather than waiting for community members to seek out services and support. Engaging people in the places where they already feel a sense of trust and belonging, such as faith communities, service clubs (e.g., Lions Club, Rotary, etc.), ethno-cultural and newcomer community groups, and other grassroots community groups that serve older adults, is a significant and untapped resource to preventing the perpetration of gender-based violence.

Cultivating informal leaders and champions to disseminate prevention messages and actions to their members would not only normalize accessing supports and services, but also broader conversations about violence. Working to develop culturally responsive services and support for newcomers to the community is an important aspect of any outreach initiative, ensuring that all individuals have access to the resources they need.

## RECOMMENDATION 5: ENHANCE PUBLIC AWARENESS THROUGH CAMPAIGNS FOCUSED ON POSITIVE MESSAGING & DIGITAL OUTREACH

There is an overall need for broader community awareness campaigns in High River that reduce stigma around help-seeking and shift the narrative about gender-based violence. Messaging should not only focus on promoting healthy and positive behaviours and actions, rather than just what to avoid, but also break down help-seeking barriers to ensure people receive the support they need as early as possible. This approach should utilize positive role models in its imagery and storytelling. Ensuring a strong digital component will allow these campaigns to reach younger generations more effectively.

## RECOMMENDATION 6: PARTNER WITH FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES IN A PARALLEL PROCESS FOR PREVENTION

Despite the notable decline of individuals identifying as Indigenous in High River, ensuring prevention strategies that are built on Indigenous knowledge and culturally safe are critical, given the town's location at the intersection of Indigenous territories. Through a parallel process, start building respectful, sustained relationships with local First Nations leaders and communities to explore working together on prevention strategies grounded in Indigenous knowledge, leadership, and cultural strengths. This includes creating space for Indigenous voices in planning processes, supporting Indigenous-led initiatives, and ensuring that reconciliation and cultural safety are embedded throughout High River's primary prevention efforts.

# CONCLUSION

High River and area are uniquely positioned to lead the way in preventing gender-based violence before it starts. With committed local leadership, engaged residents, and strong cross-sector partnerships, the community has the foundation in place to co-create an effective, community-driven primary prevention plan.

Rowan House Society is committed to continued engagement with community members and stakeholders, through meetings and other forms of consultation, to support efforts to implement these recommendations.

**THROUGH COMMUNITY COLLABORATION AND COMMITMENT, THERE IS A REAL OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A MODEL FOR HOW SMALL COMMUNITIES CAN LEAD POWERFUL, LASTING CHANGE TOWARD A FUTURE FREE FROM VIOLENCE.**

# REFERENCES

1. Campbell, J.C., Webster, D.W., & Glass, N. (2009). The danger assessment: Validation of a lethality risk assessment instrument for intimate partner femicide. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 24*(4), 653-74. doi: 10.1177/0886260508317180.

2. Glass, N., Laughon, K., Campbell, J., Block, C.R., Hanson, G., Sharps, P.W., & Taliaferro E. (2008). Non-fatal strangulation is an important risk factor for homicide of women. *Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 35(3), 329-35. doi: 10.1016/j.jemermed.2007.02.065.

3. Office of Statistics and Information, Alberta Treasury Board and Finance (2024). https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/high-river/population/#/?from=2020&to=2024 (accessed June 19, 2025).

4. Statistics Canada. (2021, September 29). *Annual demographic estimates: Canada, provinces and territories, 2021 – Analysis: Population by age and sex* (Catalogue no. 91-215-X). https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-215-x/91-215-x2021001-eng.htm

5. Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released November 15, 2023. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=high%20river&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&DGUIDlist=2021A00054806006&HEADERlist=0 (accessed June 19, 2025).

6. Statistics Canada. (2022a). *Census of Agriculture, 2021*. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/32-26-0004/322600042021001-eng.htm

7. Cargill. (2025). Careers: High River, AB. https://careers.cargill.com/en/highriver-ab

8. Jeffrey, N., Johnson, A., Richardson, C., Dawson, M., Campbell, M., Bader, D., Fairbairn, J., Straatman, A.L., Poon, J., Jaffe, P. (2019). Domestic violence and homicide in Rural, Remote, and Northern Communities: Understanding Risk and Keeping Women Safe. Domestic Homicide (7). London, ON: Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative. Retrieved from https://cdhpi.ca/sites/cdhpi.ca/files/Brief_7.pdf

9. Roberto, K.A., Brossoie, N., McPherson, M.C., Pulsifer, M.B., & Brown, P.N. (2013). Violence against rural older women: promoting community awareness and action. *Australasian Journal on Aging, 32*(1), 2-7. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-6612.2012.00649.x.

10. McLachlan, F. (2024). The rurality of intimate partner femicide: Examining risk factors in Queensland. *Violence Against Women, 30*(6-7), 1683-1707. doi: 10.1177/10778012231158105

11. Hightower, J., Smith, M. J. (Greta), & Hightower, H. C. (2006). Hearing the voices of abused older women. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work, 46*(3–4), 205–227. https://doi.org/10.1300/J083v46n03_12

12. Pathak, N., Dhairyawan, R., & Tariq, S. (2019) The experience of intimate partner violence among older women: A narrative review. *Maturitas,* 121, 63-75. doi: 10.1016/j.maturitas.2018.12.011.

13. Kaufman, B. (2017, May 3). High River holds the seniors' title in Alberta. Calgary Herald. Retrieved from https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/high-river-holds-the-seniors-title-in-alberta

14. Robillard, C., McLaughlin, J., Cole, D.C., Vasilevska, B., & Gendron, R. (2018). "Caught in the same webs"—Service providers' insights on gender-based and structural violence among female temporary foreign workers in Canada. *Journal of International Migration & Integration 19*, 583–606. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-018-0563-3

15. Canadian Council for Refugees. (n.d.). How immigration status can affect women in situations of violence or abuse. Retrieved from https://ccrweb.ca/en/how-immigration-status-can-affect-women-situations-violence

16. Litviniuc, A., & Wells, L. (2023). Recommendations for the Government of Alberta on advancing social inclusion to prevent violence against equity-deserving groups in Alberta. Calgary, AB: The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence.

17. Pertek, S. (2025, February). Integrating faith sensitivity into gender-based violence (GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE) work. Brief 45. Ontario: Learning Network, Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children. Retrieved from https://www.gender-based violencelearningnetwork.ca/our-work/briefs/brief-45.html

18. Wrathall, M., & Herron, R. (2021). Regional service providers' understandings of rurality and intimate partner violence. *The Journal of Rural and Community Development. 16*(2), 138-156.

19. Jones, A. S., Fowler, T. S., Farmer, D. F., Anderson, R. T., & Richmond, D. W. (2006). Description and Evaluation of a Faith Community-Based Domestic Violence Pilot Program in Forsyth County, NC. *Journal of Religion & Abuse, 7*(4), 55–87. https://doi.org/10.1300/J154v07n04_05

20. Burnette, C. E. (2016). Historical oppression and Indigenous families: Uncovering potential risk factors for Indigenous families touched by violence. *Family Relations, 65*(2), 354-368.

21. Burnette, C. E., & Renner, L. M. (2017). A pattern of cumulative disadvantage: Risk factors for violence across Indigenous women's lives. *British Journal of Social Work, 47*(4), 1166-1185.

22. Raponi, M. B. G., Condeles, P. C., Azevedo, N. F., & Ruiz, M. T. (2024). Prevalence and risk factors for intimate partner violence and indigenous women: A scoping review. I*nternational Journal of Nursing Practice, 30*(1), e13159.

23. McLeod, S., Mahegun Tails, Wells, L., & Litviniuc, A. (2022). Strong women's circle: Supporting Alberta's primary prevention framework by mapping root causes of violence and identifying policy recommendations to stop violence against Indigenous peoples before it starts. Calgary, AB: Shift The Project to End Domestic Violence, University of Calgary.

24. Town of High River. (2017, July 4). Agriculture in High River – Rooted in People [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6aYwA1j54D4]

25. Canadian Chamber of Commerce. (2025, June 19). Businesses brace for more uncertainty: Key findings from business insights quarterly (Q2 2025). Business Data Lab. https://businessdatalab.ca/publications/businesses-brace-for-more-uncertainty-key-findings-from-business-insights-quarterly-q2-2025/

26. May, D., Arancibia, S., Behrendt, K., & Adams, J. (2019). Preventing young farmers from leaving the farm: Investigating the effectiveness of the young farmer payment using a behavioural approach. *Land Use Policy. 82.* 317-327. 10.1016/j.landusepol.2018.12.019.

27. Glover, J.L. (2014). Gender, power, and succession in the family farm business. I*nternational Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship, 6*(3), 276-295. doi:10.1108/IJGE-01-2012-0006

28. Government of Alberta. (2025). *Agricultural trade services – For exporters.* Alberta.ca. https://www.alberta.ca/agricultural-trade-services-for-exporters

29. Crawley, M. (2025, July 25). U.S. and Canada might not reach trade deal, Trump says. CBC. Retrieved from https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/us-canada-trade-deal-tariff-1.7593904

30. AGDAILY Reporters. (2024, October 16). *Survey explores how farmers battle global price volatility*. AGDAILY. https://www.agdaily.com/news/survey-explores-how-farmers-battle-global-price-volatility

31. Vossler, G.-L. (2025, May 30). *Commodity markets experience volatility following U.S. Memorial Day.* HighRiverOnline. https://www.highriveronline.com/articles/commodity-markets-experience-volatility-following-us-memorial-day

32. Statistics Canada. (2022b, November 30). *Jobs in Canada: Navigating changing local labour markets* (The Daily). Catalogue No. 11-001-X. Retrieved from Statistics Canada website https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221130/dq221130b-eng.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

33. Pološki Vokić, N., Obadić, A., Sinčić Ćorić, D. (2019). Gender inequality: General areas of gender segregation. In *Gender Equality in the Workplace,* (pp. 7-36). Palgrave Pivot, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-18861-0_2

34. Das Sarkar, Olipreya, A Qualitative Literature Review of the Interlinkage between Gender Wage Gap and the Role of Household Characteristics (January 01, 2025). Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=5095044 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5095044

35. Cooper, J. T., Kidwell, R. E., & Eddleston, K. A. (2013). Boss and parent, employee and child: Work-family roles and deviant behavior in the family firm. *Family Relations: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies, 62*(3), 457–471. https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12012

36. Aizer A. (2010). The Gender wage gap and domestic violence. *American Economic Review, 100*(4):1847-1859. doi: 10.1257/aer.100.4.1847.

37. Canadian Center for Women's Empowerment. (2023). *The state of economic abuse in Canada: A Report.* Ottawa, ON: Government of Canada. Retrieved from https://ccfwe.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/The-State-of-Economic-Abuse-Report-ccfwe.pdf

38. Darwish (2014). HIGH RIVER Investing in flood defense infrastructure. Town of High River. Accessed via https://www.iclr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/3-High-River.pdf

39. Town of High River. (2014, July 28). *High River 2013 Emergency Response: After Action Report.* https://www.highriver.ca/uploads/2021/09/a2a7a8d79b20b22f3f476b2df7a79f8d.pdf

40. Heanoy, E. Z., Svob, C., & Brown, N. R. (2023). Assessing the long-term transitional impact and mental health consequences of the southern Alberta flood of 2013. *Sustainability, 15*(17), 12849. https://doi.org/10.3390/su151712849

41. Hayes, K., Poland, B., Cole, D.C., & Agic, B. (2020). Psychosocial adaptation to climate change in High River, Alberta: implications for policy and practice. *Canadian Journal of Public Health, 111*(6),880-889. doi: 10.17269/s41997-020-00380-9.

42. Drolet, J., McDonald-Harker, C., Lalani, N., & Tran, J. (2020). Impacts of the 2013 flood on immigrant children, youth, and families in Alberta, Canada. *International Journal of Social Work, 7*(1). https://doi.org/10.5296/ijsw.v7i1.16872

43. Town of High River. (2016). *High River Vital Signs®* Report. Retrieved from: https://docs.google.com/viewer?embedded=true&url=https%3A%2F%2Fcommunityfoundations.ca%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2019%2F08%2FReport_HighRiver_2016.pdf%23%3A~%3Atext%3D84%2CVOLUNTEER%252C%2520ATTEND%2520COUNCIL%2520MEETINGS%252C%2520ETC

44. Cox, R. S., Scannell, L., Heykoop, C., Tobin-Gurley, J., & Peek, L. (2017). Understanding youth disaster recovery: The vital role of people, places, and activities. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction, 22,* 249–256. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2017.03.011

45. Scace, M. (2024, June 19). *Cargill avoids damages for handling of early days of COVID-19 that left two employees dead, 951 with virus. Calgary Herald.* https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/cargill-avoids-damages-covid19-outbreak-high-river

46. National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health. (2023). *Learning from practice: Joint action for equity – Community-centred collaboration responds to Cargill outbreak.* St. Francis Xavier University. https://www.nccdh.ca

47. Town of High River. (2024, February). *2023–2024 Social Wellbeing Assessment: Summary Report.* Retrieved from: https://highriver.civicweb.net/filepro/document/50496/High%20River%20Wellbeing%20Assessment%202023-2024.pdf

48. Glenn, N., & Myre, M. (2022, November). *Post-flooding community-level psychosocial impacts and priorities in Canada: A preliminary report.* National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health. Retrieved from: https://ncceh.ca/documents/evidence-review/post-flooding-community-level-psychosocial-impacts-and-priorities-canada

49. Kourti, A., Stavridou, A., Panagouli, E., Psaltopoulou, T., Spiliopoulou, C., Tsolia, M., Sergentanis, T.N., & Tsitsika, A. (2023). Domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic: A Systematic review. *Trauma Violence Abuse, 24*(2), 719-745. doi: 10.1177/15248380211038690.

50. Montesanti, S., Thurston, W.E., & Turner, D. (2019). A First Nations framework for emergency planning: A community-based response to the health and social effects from a flood. *International Journal of Indigenous Health, 14*(1), 85-106.

51. Montesanti S. (2023). *Connecting the Social and Structural Determinants of Health and Primary Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence.* Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta, CARE Research Lab. bit. ly/carehealthdoc.

52. Woodhall-Melnik, J., & Grogan, C. (2019). Perceptions of mental health and wellbeing following residential displacement and damage from the 2018 St. John River Flood. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16*(21), 4174. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16214174

53. Thurston, A. M., Stöckl, H., & Ranganathan, M. (2021). Natural hazards, disasters and violence against women and girls: A global mixed-methods systematic review. *BMJ Global Health, 6*(4), e004377. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2020-004377

54. Enarson, E. (1999). Violence against women in disasters: A study of domestic violence programs in the United States and Canada. *Violence Against Women, 5*(7), 742–768. https://doi.org/10.1177/10778019922181464

55. Conroy, S. (2024). Recent trends in police-reported clearance status of sexual assault and other violent crime in Canada, 2017 to 2022. Catalogue no. 85-002-x. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

56. Schwab-Reese, L.M., Peek-Asa, C., & Parker, E. (2016). Associations of financial stressors and physical intimate partner violence perpetration. *Injury Epidemiology, 3*(1), 6. doi: 10.1186/s40621-016-0069-4.

57. Lin, H.F., Postmus, J.L., Hu, H., & Stylianou, A.M. (2023). IPV Experiences and Financial Strain Over Time: Insights from the Blinder-Oaxaca Decomposition Analysis. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues. 44*(2):434-446. doi: 10.1007/s10834-022-09847-y.

58. Kearney, S., Leung, L., Joyce, A., Ollis, D., & Green, C. (2016). Applying systems theory to the evaluation of a whole school approach to violence prevention. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia, 27*, 230-235. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1071/HE16046

59. Tutty, L., Bradshaw, C., Thurston, W. E., Barlow, A., Marshall, P., Tunstall, L., … Nixon, K. (2005). School based violence prevention programs: Preventing violence against children and youth (Rev ed.). Calgary, AB: RESOLVE Alberta.

60. World Health Organization/London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. (2010). Preventing intimate partner and sexual violence against women: Taking action and generating evidence. Geneva, World Health Organization. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/preventing-intimate-partner-and-sexual-violence-against-women-taking-action-and-generating-evidence

61. Vreeman, R.C., & Carroll, A.E. (2007).  A systematic review of school-based interventions to prevent bullying. *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, 161*(1), 78-88. doi: 10.1001/archpedi.161.1.78. PMID: 17199071.

62. Cefai, C., Cooper, P., & Vella, R.  (2013). A whole-school approach to positive behaviour in a girls' secondary school. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 17*(7), 700–713. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2012.708362

63. Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children (2014). Social marketing and prevention of violence against women. Issue 8: February. The Learning Network. Retrieved from https://www.gender-based violencelearningnetwork.ca/our-work/issuebased_newsletters/issue-8/index.html

64. Binder, G., & Poulton, C. (2021, February). Six ways tech can help end gender-based violence: Addressing the shadow pandemic. UNICEF. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/eap/blog/six-ways-tech-can-help-end-gender-based-violence

65. Wells, L., Pascoe., L & Litviniuc, A. (2022). Building a movement of men and boys committed to violence prevention and gender equality in Alberta: Informing the Alberta Primary Prevention Framework Collaborative Calgary, AB: University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence.

66. First, J. M., First, N. L., & Houston, J. B. (2017). Intimate partner violence and disasters: A framework for empowering women experiencing violence in disaster settings. *Affilia, 32*(3), 390-403. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109917706338

67. Parkinson, D., & Zara, C. (2013). The hidden disaster: Domestic violence in the aftermath of natural disaster. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management, 28*(2), 28-35.

68. Imperiale, A. J., & Vanclay, F. (2016). Experiencing local community resilience in action: Learning from post-disaster communities. *Journal of Rural Studies, 47*, 204-219. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2016.08.002

69. Shepard, M., & Zelli, D. (2008). Mobilizing communities to prevent domestic violence. Pennsylvania: National Resource Center on Domestic Violence. Retrieved from https://vawnet.org/material/mobilizing-communities-prevent-domestic-violence

# PHOTO CREDITS

*Page 2:* Munroe Barn - https://sheppardfamilypark.ca/historic-attractions
*Pages 1, 4, 5, 12, 19, 39:* Adobe Stock Photos
*Page 8:* Courtesy of Rowan House Society