



CHESTERMERE

# Social Needs Assessment

**Submitted to: City of Chestermere**

Drafted By:  
HelpSeeker Technologies



HELPSEEKER  
TECHNOLOGIES

## Land Acknowledgement

As we live, work, and play on this land, we wish to pay our respects to the traditional lands of Treaty 7. We extend our gratitude to our neighbours and friends of the traditional Blackfoot Territory and the **Blackfoot Confederacy**, which includes **Siksika Nation, North & South Piikani Nations**, and the **Kainai Nation**. In addition, we acknowledge the other members of **Treaty 7** First Nations, including the **Tsuut'ina Nation** and the **Īyāǰé Nakoda** (Stoney Nakoda) comprising the **Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley** First Nations. Our acknowledgement also extends to the home of the Métis people of **Region 3 of the Métis Nation of Alberta**.

For generations, these lands have been cared for and inhabited by the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. We are grateful for the traditional **Knowledge Keepers** and **Elders** who have guided us and those who have passed on. Our acknowledgement is an expression of **reconciliation** and appreciation to those who call this territory home, or to those who are visiting.

# Introduction

This Social Needs Assessment for the City of Chestermere aims to provide a comprehensive view of the municipality's current social landscape. Acknowledging the changing nature of the community, and how Chestermere has adapted after the COVID-19 pandemic, this assessment identifies existing resources, highlights gaps in service provision, and pinpoints areas that require attention. The purpose of the assessment is to help city planners, policymakers, and community partners make well-informed decisions about social infrastructure planning.

## Importance

Effective resource allocation is essential for both distributing funds and delivering support services. When these resources are not well-placed, it can heighten existing social challenges and result in community dissatisfaction. Adopting a data-based approach to planning helps meet diverse community needs and allows for the possibility of fresh, innovative solutions. This ensures that planning decisions are grounded in thorough analysis, balancing both proven strategies and emerging needs.

## Relevance to the Municipality's Social Framework

The Social Needs Assessment serves as a foundation for the City of Chestermere to develop its social framework over the coming months. The assessment provides critical insights to guide the development of programs, services, and policies tailored to the unique needs of the community. An evidence-driven baseline will help the City track changes over time, adjust strategies as required, and provide a data-based account of how decisions are made.

# Executive Summary

Chestermere is experiencing dynamic demographic changes that present unique challenges and promising opportunities.

Chestermere is experiencing population growth, with its population projected to reach 37,305 by 2041. One immediate need is to expand public transit and neighbourhood planning, as the city's population density per square kilometre continues to increase. Alternatives to commuting in a personal vehicle are gaining traction, so upgrades to public transit systems should be a priority.

While Chestermere is growing, its economic landscape is in flux. The number of businesses has varied considerably in the professional services and construction sectors. The increase in remote work may highlight the need for a more robust digital infrastructure and amenities that support working from home.

The senior and newcomer populations are also increasing. This means current services should include more elder support and culturally inclusive amenities. A steady rise in school enrolment points to an urgent need to invest in educational infrastructure, including potential school expansions.

Housing is another critical concern. Housing is being added, but the rate of new construction is not keeping up with population growth. This limited supply of housing contributes to rising shelter costs, while median incomes remain stagnant. Consequently, financial support programs for residents are increasingly needed.

Health, safety, and wellbeing remain critical issues. Rising rates of chronic diseases and persistent mental health concerns underscore the need for improved healthcare infrastructure and stronger social support systems. Although crime rates have generally declined, crime severity suggests that community safety must remain an ongoing focus.

Chestermere's social support network must respond to these changes. Strategic allocation of resources should focus on addressing the evolving needs of at-risk groups, supporting multicultural integration, and reinvigorating the economy, so that community members have the opportunities they need. A proactive approach to planning and resource allocation will be key to Chestermere's long-term sustainability and wellbeing.

## Key Findings

During the development of this needs assessment, a number of challenges and opportunities were identified for Chestermere's social infrastructure planning. Five findings among many others particularly stood out. These five findings would have an important impact on the community's growth and wellbeing.

### **Chestermere's population is ageing, and its ethnic diversity is increasing, though there is a decline in the number of Indigenous residents.**

Chestermere is experiencing sustained population growth, reflected in a 34.15% increase between 2011 and 2016, and a projected population of 37,305.5 by 2041. There is an upward trend in population density and in the proportion of immigrants in the total population, now making up 27.8% in 2021. There has been large growth in the 65 and over age group, as well as in various racial communities, with a small decline in the Indigenous population.

These population changes can affect policies and services, as the city will have to adapt to the needs of its expanding and increasingly diverse population.

### **Chestermere experienced considerable construction and private property growth, alongside demographic changes and increased housing concerns.**

From 2001 to 2021, Chestermere experienced non-stop construction, leading to a surge in the number of dwelling ownerships, particularly in single and semi-detached properties. There was also a minor reduction in the size of households, although the size of families and homeownership percentages saw slight increases. Citizens aged 55-84 were the most affected by these changes. The need for affordable housing is growing because of higher shelter costs, an increase in dwellings that do not meet acceptable housing standards, and a substantial decrease in both rental properties and two-bedroom properties for sale.

This suggests a need for more housing options that are affordable and suitable, particularly for seniors and modest-income families.

### **Chestermere's income trends indicate a dip in market income, a rise in government transfers, and minor increases in after-tax income, in the face of a rising cost of living.**

From 2016 to 2021, the city of Chestermere reported a downward trend in market income and an increase in government transfers. During the same period, more people reported an after-tax annual income exceeding \$20,000. The cost of living increased across all product groups, particularly for transportation and shelter costs. These higher costs outpaced those for Calgary. Chestermere's living wage rate equalled Calgary's and was higher than that for several other Alberta communities, but lower than for Canmore and Fort McMurray.

This suggests that, despite more government support and a slight rise in after-tax income, there is an economic strain for Chestermere's residents, primarily due to the escalating cost of living. Strategies are needed to reduce the financial burden on residents.

### **Chestermere faces rising chronic diseases and health risks; hypertension tops the list, with mental health and substance abuse concerns looming.**

In Chestermere, hypertension stands out as the most prevalent chronic disease, but rising concerns loom around mental health and substance abuse. While some conditions like ischemic heart disease and COPD show declines, diabetes continues its upward trajectory. The period between 2016-2018 and 2019-2021 saw a significant surge in deaths related to neoplasms. Although emergency visits for certain ailments have decreased, there's a notable uptick in influenza cases. Coupled with this, reductions in Mood and Anxiety Disorders and Substance Abuse cases underline the growing mental health concerns. Persistent lifestyle challenges, particularly inadequate physical activity and poor nutrition, highlight the pressing need for targeted interventions.

Targeted preventive health policies and interventions that promote exercise, healthy eating, and strong mental health, while addressing chronic diseases would be beneficial.

### **Chestermere's varied demographic shifts spotlight the needs of diverse population segments.**

Societal changes and the strain on community infrastructure affect some demographic groups more than others. Lower-income families, new immigrants, seniors, and Indigenous community members are more likely to experience challenges relating to affordable housing shortages and a lack of culturally diverse and age-friendly programming. The rise in working remotely is adding pressure on the housing picture. The increase in the percentage of the population with chronic and acute physical and mental health needs is putting more pressure on healthcare and the social safety net.

These needs require that policies and allocation of resources be responsive and inclusive to support the community's social and economic health.

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## Demographics<sup>1</sup>

### Population

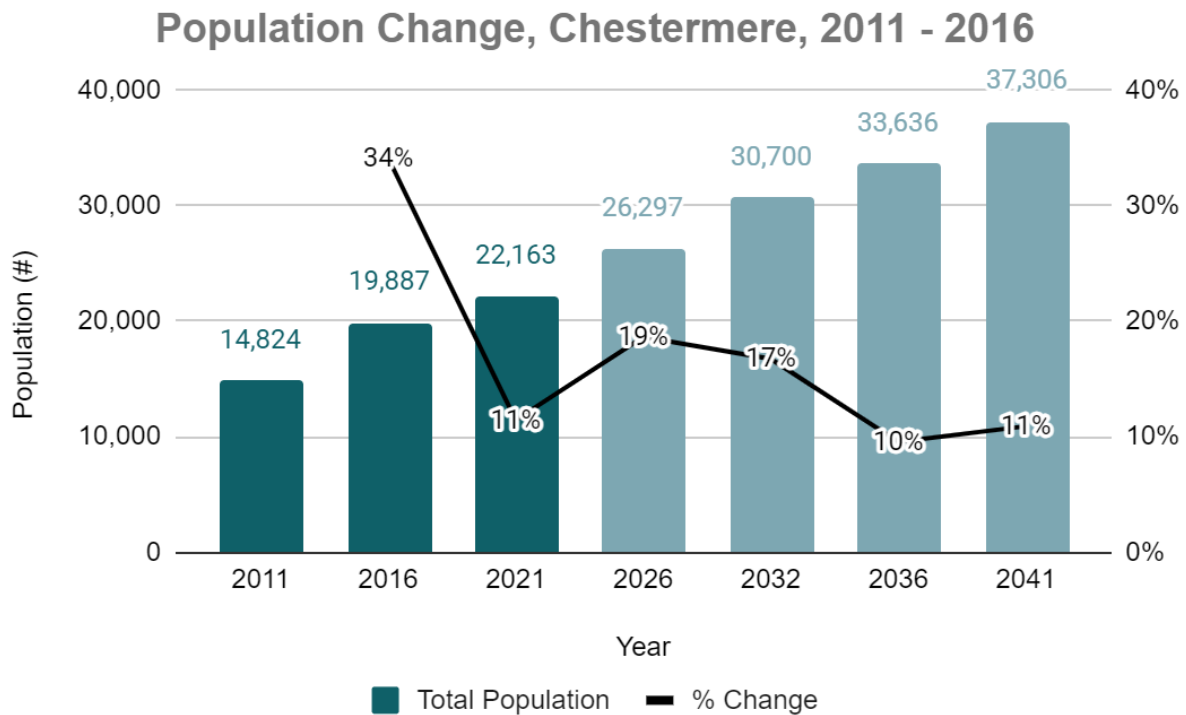
Interpreting population trends aids a municipality by identifying current demands and pointing toward future challenges. Such trends include population increases and decreases, demographic shifts, migration patterns, and ageing patterns, all of which have implications for infrastructure needs, service demands, economic development, and overall community health. Monitoring and responding to these trends allows municipalities to prepare for and meet their residents' changing needs.

The population of Chestermere has increased from 14,824 in 2011 to 22,163 in 2021 and is projected to reach 37,306 in 2041. The highest percentage change was recorded between 2011 and 2016 (34%) while the lowest is predicted to occur between 2032 and 2036 (10%).

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<sup>1</sup> Note that according to Statistics Canada, to ensure confidentiality in the census count, the values, including totals, are randomly rounded either up or down to a multiple of '5' or '10.' To understand these data, you must be aware that each individual value is rounded. As a result, when these data are summed or grouped, the total value may not match the individual values since totals and subtotals are independently rounded. Similarly, percentages, which are calculated on rounded data, may not necessarily add up to 100%.

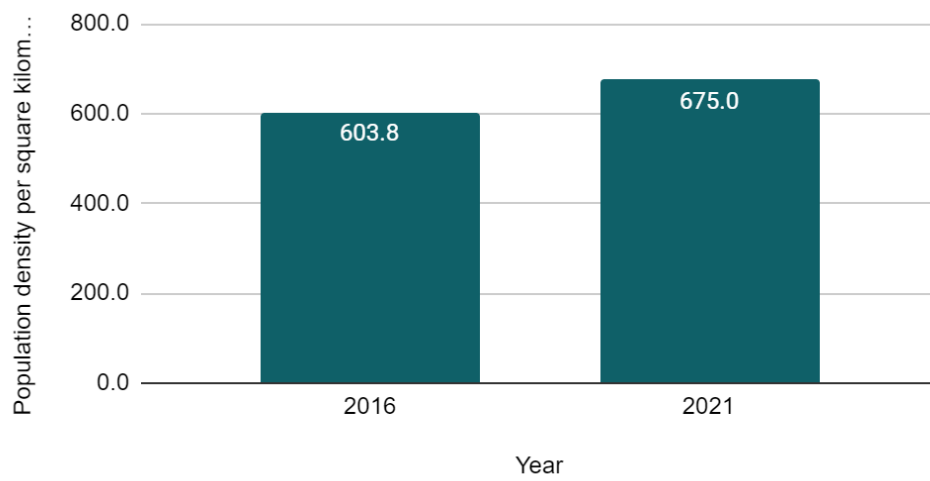




## Population Density

From 2016 to 2021, Chestermere experienced a notable increase in its population density. Within this five-year span, the density rose from 603.8 to 675 residents per square kilometre. This growth underscores a trend of rising population or decreased land area available for expansion, suggesting that Chestermere is becoming more populated or developed in its existing boundaries. This could have implications for infrastructure planning, service provision, and urban development strategies in the coming years.

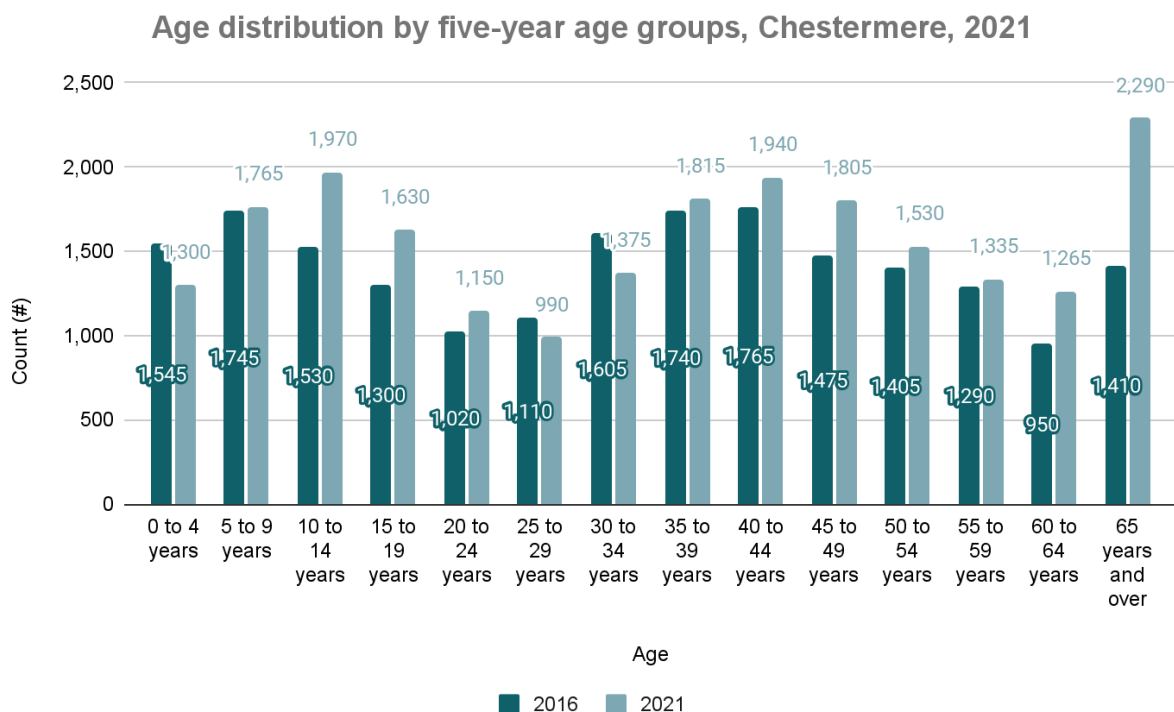
### Population density per square kilometre, Chestermere, 2016- 2021



## Age

Understanding age trends for a municipality provides insight into the existing demand for specific social services and also helps anticipate emerging needs. Identifying demographic shifts a community is likely to experience aids in directing funding, resources, and policy initiatives before a need becomes acute. This data-driven approach ensures that social services align with the evolving needs of the population, from early childhood education to elder care, and everything in between.

The total population of Chestermere increased from 19,890 in 2016 to 22,160 in 2021. Both the average and median ages increased, indicating an aging population. The age group with the largest proportional increase was 65 years and over, with a 62% increase, compared to 5% for those aged 0 to 14, and 9% for the 15 to 64 years age group. The population of most age groups increased modestly, though the population dropped in the 0 to 4 (-16%), 25 to 29 (-11%), and 30 to 34 (-14%) age groups.

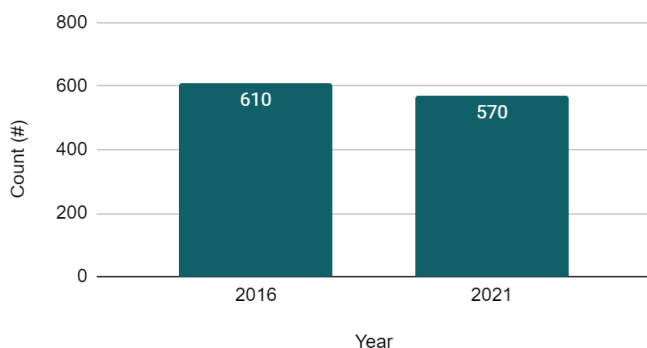


## Indigenous Residents

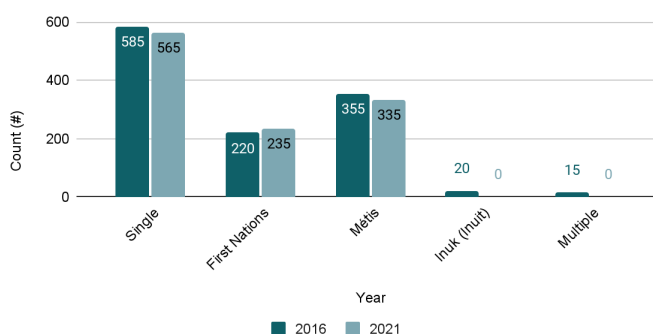
Understanding the distinct cultural, societal, and economic circumstances of the Indigenous community is the foundation for strategies and policies that are culturally sensitive, equitable, and empowering, to support quality of life, equity, and social development. A full understanding of Indigenous population trends can help to identify future needs and challenges.

From 2016 to 2021, the Indigenous population in Chestermere decreased from 610 to 570. There has been a decrease in Métis and single Indigenous responses, an increase in First Nations (North American Indian) population, and the Inuk (Inuit) and Multiple Indigenous responses have dropped to zero.

Indigenous identity, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021



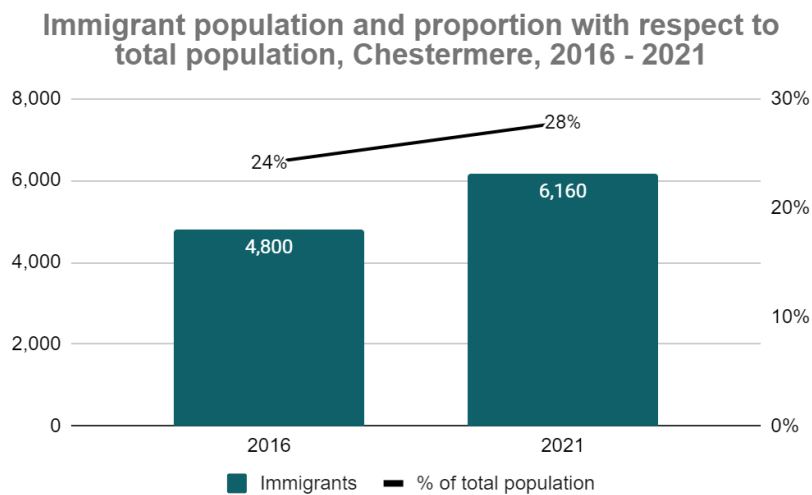
Indigenous identity by responses and identity, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021



## Immigration

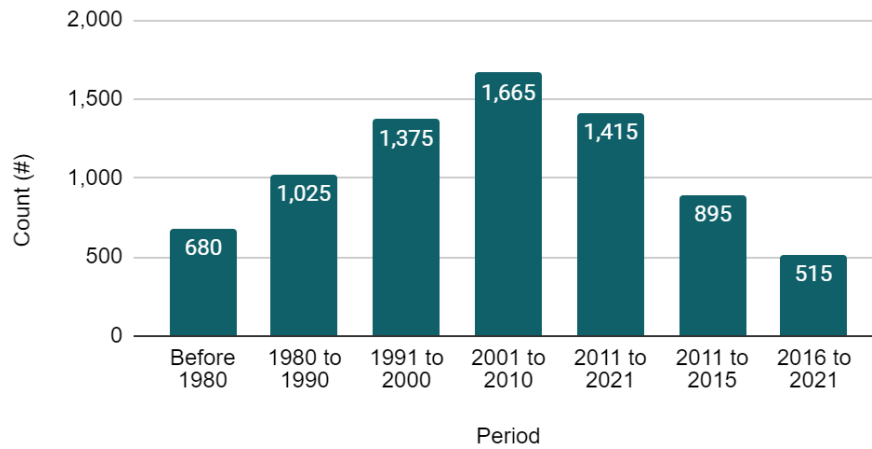
Tracking immigration trends helps municipalities determine the specific social services, both type and quantity, required by these new residents. This can offer insight into both the present demand and emerging needs.

The number of immigrants in Chestermere increased from 4800 in 2016 to 6160 in 2021. The percentage of the total population made up of immigrants also increased from 24% in 2016 to 28% in 2021.

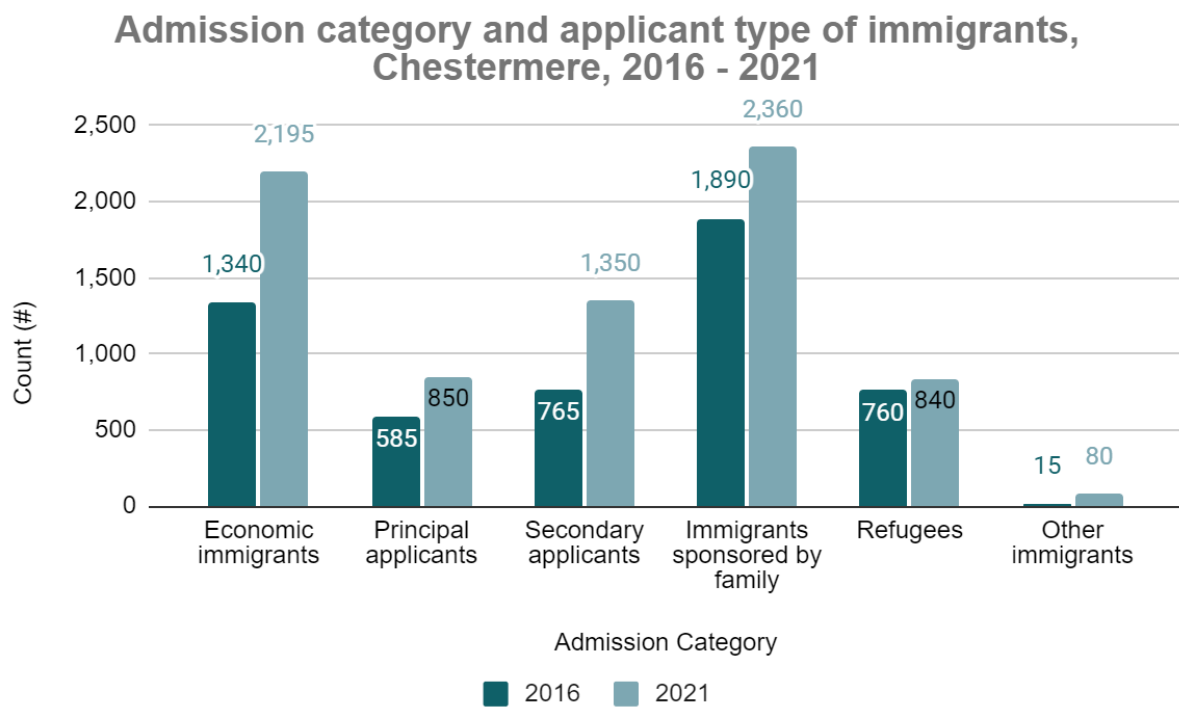


From 1980 to 2021, the period with the most immigration to Chestermere was from 2001 to 2010, with 1665 people. Most recently, from 2011 to 2021, there were 1415 immigrants, with most arriving between 2011 and 2015.

### Distribution of immigrants by period of immigration, Chestermere, 2021



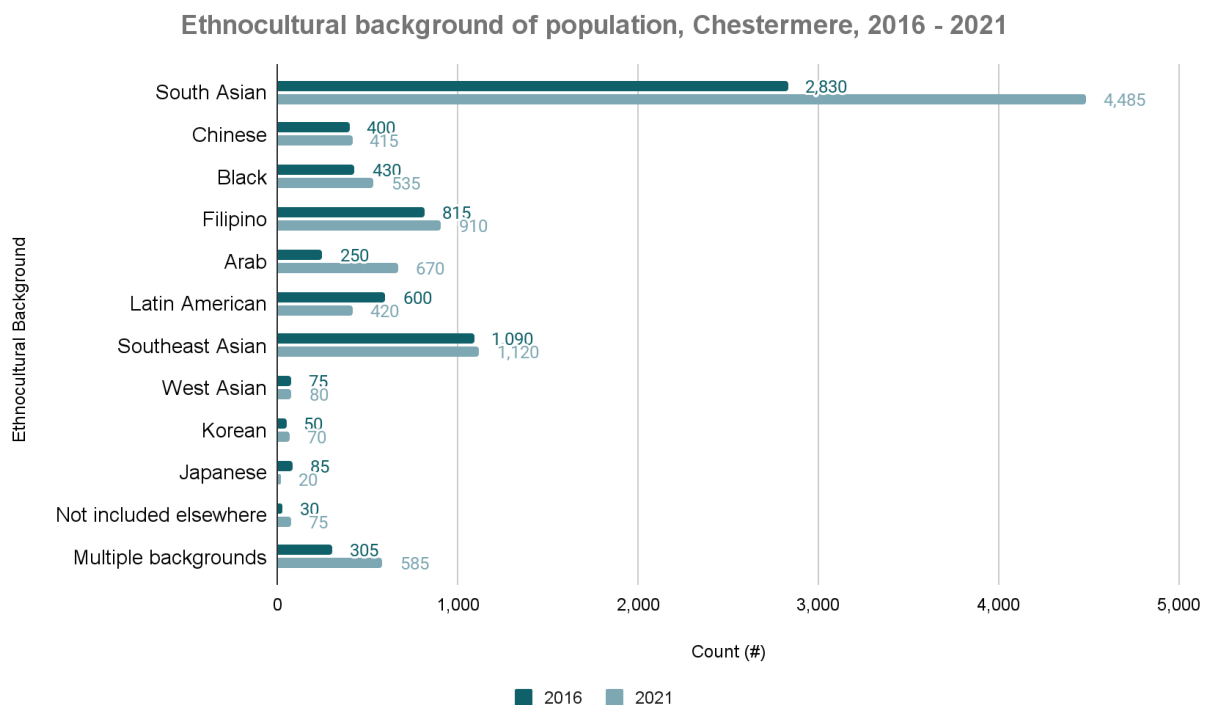
From 2016 to 2021, the number of immigrants in Chestermere increased in all categories. The largest increases were economic immigrants (64%, from 1340 to 2195) and secondary applicants (76%, from 765 to 1350).



## Ethnocultural Background

Insights into ethnocultural patterns in a community provide the basis for culturally responsive policies that address the unique needs of various groups. Policies based on understanding these needs ensure flexible, fair resource allocation while fostering inclusivity and reducing disparity in service access.

The population of most ethnocultural backgrounds increased in Chestermere from 2016 to 2021. The only backgrounds whose populations dropped were Latin American (-30%, from 600 to 420) and Japanese (-76%, from 85 to 20) ethnicities. The largest increases were for the South Asian (58%, from 2830 to 4485), Arab (168%, from 250 to 670), and multiple visible minorities (92%, from 305 to 585) categories.





## Implications for Social Planning



**Infrastructure Demand:** The consistent population growth, especially the substantial rise between 2011 and 2016, indicates increased demands on infrastructure, utilities, and services.



**Urban Planning:** The escalating population density underscores the need for effective urban planning, which could involve expanded public transit, green spaces, and community centres.



**Services for Seniors:** The notable growth in the 65 and over age group points to a growing demand for services for seniors, including healthcare and age-friendly infrastructure.



**Diverse Integration Programs:** The rise in the number of immigrants, especially economic immigrants and refugees, suggests a need for comprehensive integration programs, language courses, and cultural sensitivity training for staff.



**Cultural Diversity:** The growth in racial groups in the population, mainly South Asian and Arab, calls for inclusive cultural events, and possibly community centres, spaces, or programs.



**Support for Indigenous Populations:** The decrease in the Indigenous population might suggest this community is experiencing challenges in Chestermere, possibly warranting targeted support and programs.



**Housing and Settlement Services:** With rising immigration, there may be an increased demand for settlement services, affordable housing, and programs that assist new residents in navigating the city's resources.



**Education and Outreach:** The increasing diversity of the population means schools and institutions may need to adopt multicultural curricula, and community outreach initiatives should be multilingual and culturally sensitive.



**Economic Opportunities and Employment:** Varied immigration categories may mean varying needs in terms of employment opportunities, skills training, and recognition of foreign credentials.

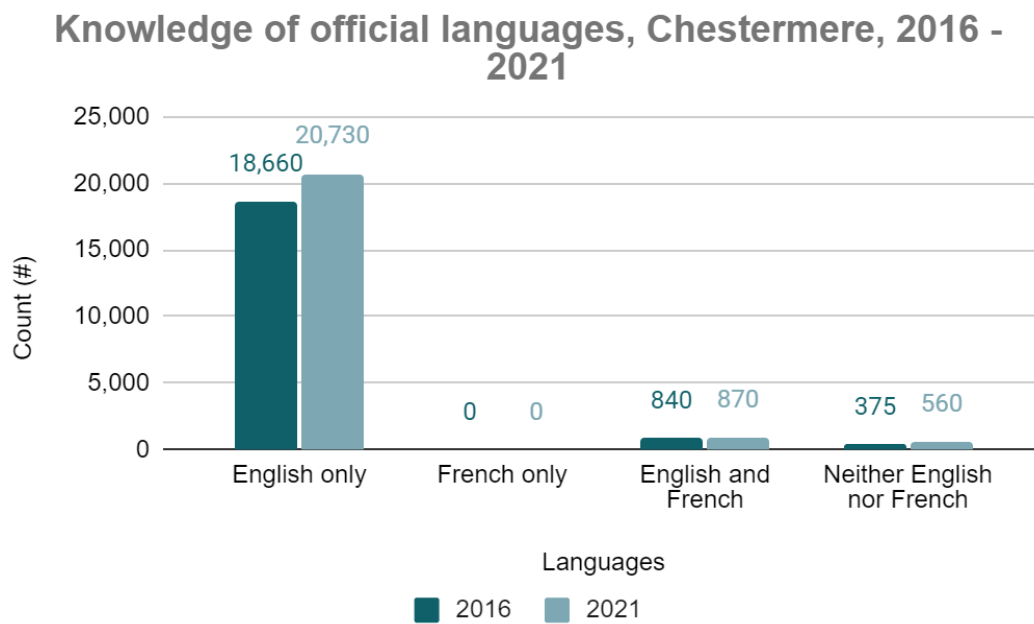


**Community Building:** As Chestermere becomes more diverse, there is an opportunity to foster community events or platforms that celebrate this diversity, promoting understanding, unity, and mutual respect among residents.

## Languages

Considering language trends in a municipality can help inform education, health and social service policies. Understanding language trends allows municipalities to meet current demand, and foresee and prepare for possible trends and challenges. This can assist in improving social inclusion, service delivery efficiency, and overall community cohesion and harmony.

The majority of Chestermere residents speak only English, with this number increasing from 18,660 in 2016 to 20,730 in 2021. A small portion speaks both English and French, and there has been an increase in residents who speak neither English nor French, from 375 to 560. No residents speak solely French.



## Implications for Social Planning



**Prevalence of English-only Speakers:** The dominance of English as the only language of most residents may lead to a unilingual cultural environment, possibly making newcomers who don't speak English feel isolated or marginalized.



**Bilingualism Opportunities:** The increase in bilingual residents suggests a potential for fostering English-French integration programs, and offers opportunities for dual-language events or initiatives.



**Support for Non-English/Non-French Speakers:** The increase in the number of residents who speak neither English nor French indicates a need for translation services, as well as programs, like ESL (English as a second language) classes, designed to support linguistic minorities, especially if this trend continues.



**Potential Access and Integration Barriers:** Residents who do not speak English or French may face difficulties in accessing services, finding employment, or integrating socially. City, emergency, and healthcare services must be equipped to support those who speak neither English nor French.



**Communication Strategy:** Public communication or outreach aimed to reach the whole community might need to consider multi-language approaches.



**Workforce Implications:** Businesses and employers might need to consider being open to language diversity in their hiring practices and workplace training, to accommodate and benefit from the talents of the broader community.



**Community-Building:** Fostering community events or platforms where residents can share their cultures and first languages can strengthen community bonds and promote mutual understanding.

## Mobility<sup>2</sup>

Understanding mobility trends is part of assessing social services needs, city planning, infrastructure, public policy, and the local economy. Mobility has implications for such factors as public transportation usage, traffic patterns, accessibility, and environmental impacts.

### Within the last year

From 2016 to 2021 in Chestermere, the number of non-movers within the last year increased from 16,870 to 19,570, while the number of movers decreased from 2705 to 2380. This reduction in movers includes most categories, including non-migrants (from 1065 to 845), intraprovincial migrants (from 1370 to 1210), and external migrants (from 155 to 65). However, the number of interprovincial migrants increased from 120 to 260.

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<sup>2</sup> In this section, **non-movers** are persons who, on census day, lived in the same residence as they did on the same date 1 year or 5 years earlier. **Movers** are persons who, on census day, did not live in the same residence as they did 1 year or 5 years earlier.

**Non-migrants** are movers who lived in the same census subdivision on census day as they did on the same date 1 year or 5 years earlier.

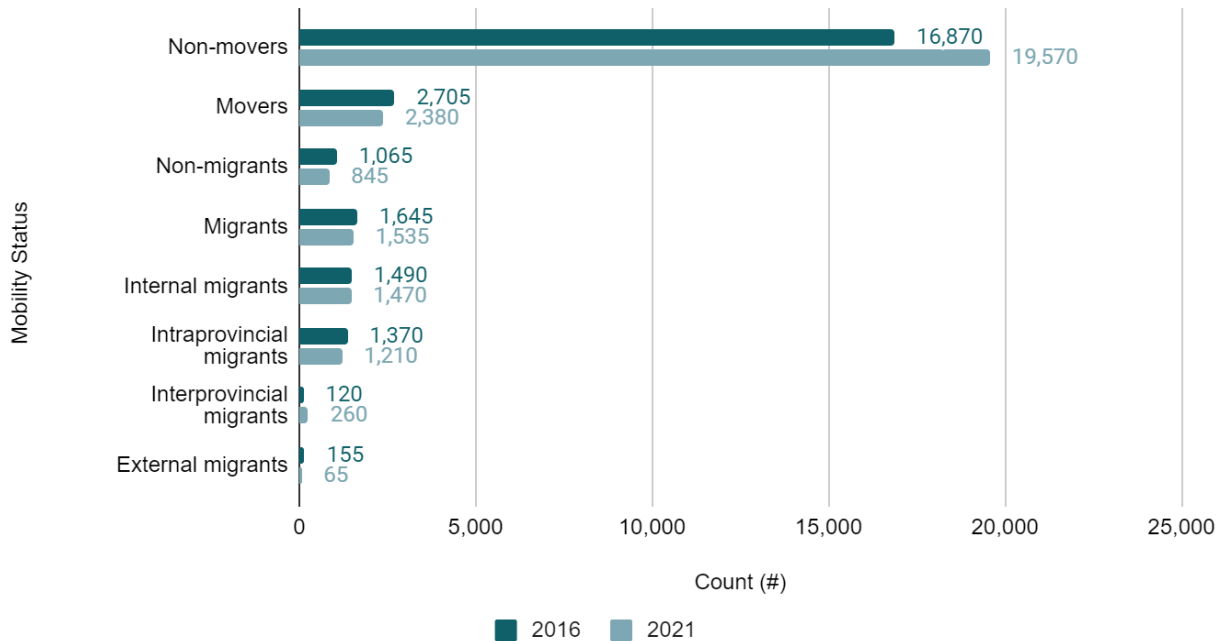
**Migrants** include internal migrants and external migrants.

**Internal migrants** include migrants who lived in Canada 1 year or 5 years ago. This includes persons who moved to a different city, town, township, village, municipality or reserve within Canada.

**Intraprovincial migration** represents movements from within the province or territory to another municipality in the same province or territory, involving a change in usual place of residence.

**Interprovincial migration** represents movements from one province or territory to another, involving a change in usual place of residence.

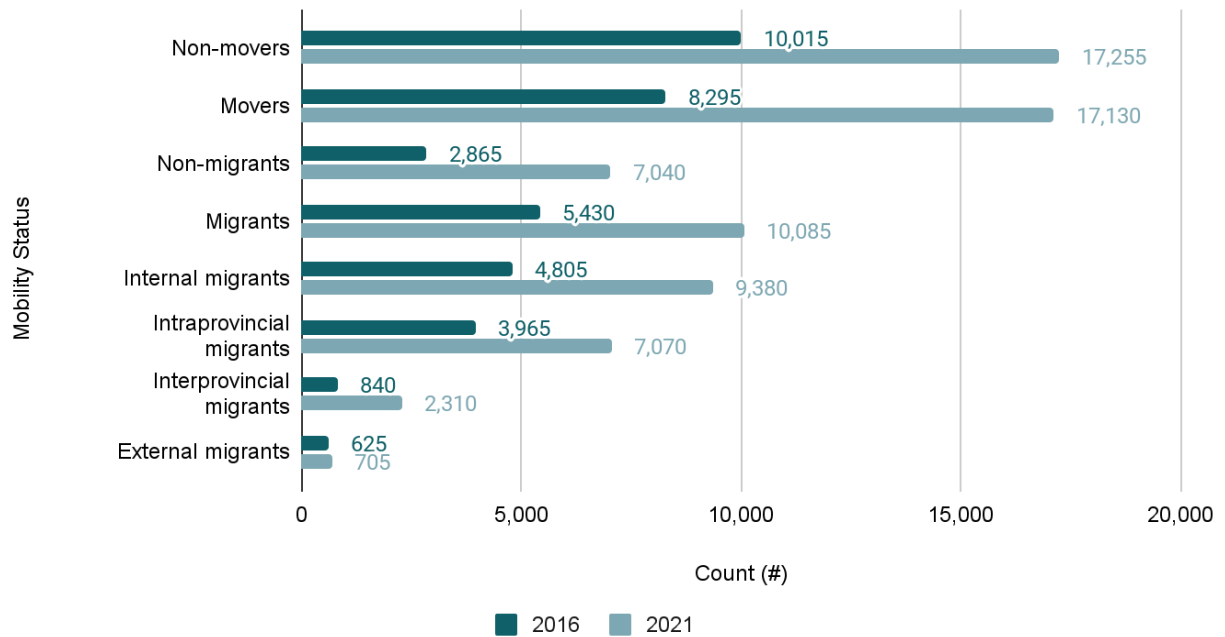
## Mobility status 1 year ago for the population, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021



### Within the last 5 years

From 2016 to 2021 in Chestermere, the number of non-movers within the last 5 years increased from 10,015 to 13,220, while the number of movers decreased from 8295 to 7615. This reduction in movers includes non-migrants (from 2865 to 1685), interprovincial migrants (from 840 to 710), and external migrants (625 to 390). However, the number of intraprovincial migrants increased from 3965 to 4830, resulting in an overall increase in migrants from 5430 to 5930.

## Mobility status 5 years ago for the population, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021



## Implications for Social Planning



**Stable Communities:** An increase in the proportion of non-movers may indicate community stability, potentially strengthening neighbourhood ties and local support networks.



**Housing Demand:** With a decrease in movers, the housing demand might be more stable or even decrease, possibly affecting the local real estate market and reducing pressure on housing policies.



**Local Economy:** The increase in non-movers and decrease in movers might indicate contentment with local employment opportunities and services; conversely, it may indicate that economic barriers prevent relocation.



**Interprovincial Attraction:** The rise in interprovincial migration suggests Chestermere may be increasingly appealing to people from other provinces, perhaps due to economic opportunities, lifestyle, or provincial policies.



**Service Demand:** The overall increase in migrants to Chestermere, both internal and total, signifies a potential surge in demand for settlement services, community integration programs, and public services.



**Transport & Infrastructure:** An increase in interprovincial migrants might necessitate improved transport links with other provinces and within the province.



**Diverse Needs:** An increase in migrants from all categories means a broader range of needs and backgrounds, requiring varied social services programs and community outreach initiatives.



**School Enrolment:** With changes in migration patterns, schools may experience fluctuating enrolments, affecting resource allocation and planning.



**Community Integration:** A balance between non-movers and new migrants emphasizes the need for community-building initiatives that integrate newcomers while reinforcing community ties.



**Economic Integration:** Employment and entrepreneurial opportunities catering to both the settled population and the newcomers are necessary.

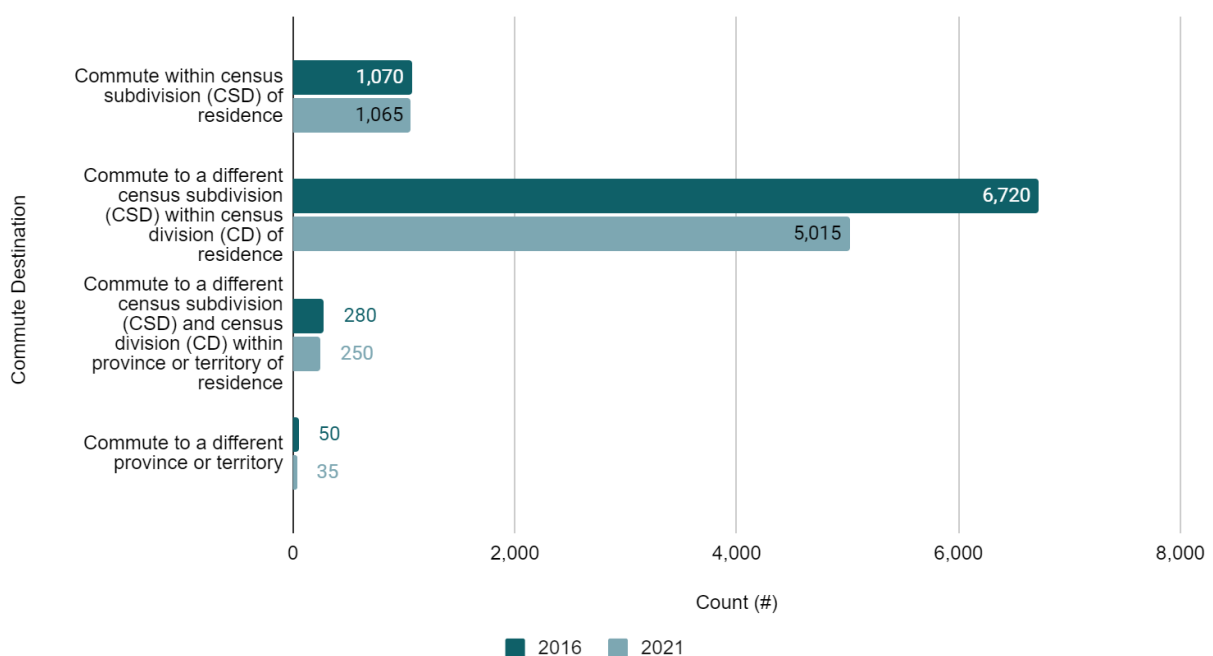
## Commuting

Tracking changes in commuting patterns is an important part of urban planning and policymaking, with implications for public transit, childcare, neighbourhood planning, and environmental impact. Commuting in Chestermere has shown an overall decrease, with the largest drop for those who formerly travelled to another census area within the municipality. Commuters are also leaving for work later in the morning than in the past, and the commute time has decreased overall.

The nature of these trends also presents implications for residential lifestyles, economic activities, and environmental impacts, which embellishes its significance in the broader social landscape.

From 2016 to 2021, the number of Chestermere residents commuting decreased from 8120 to 6365. The majority of this decrease was in residents commuting to different regions within the same division, from 6720 to 5015.

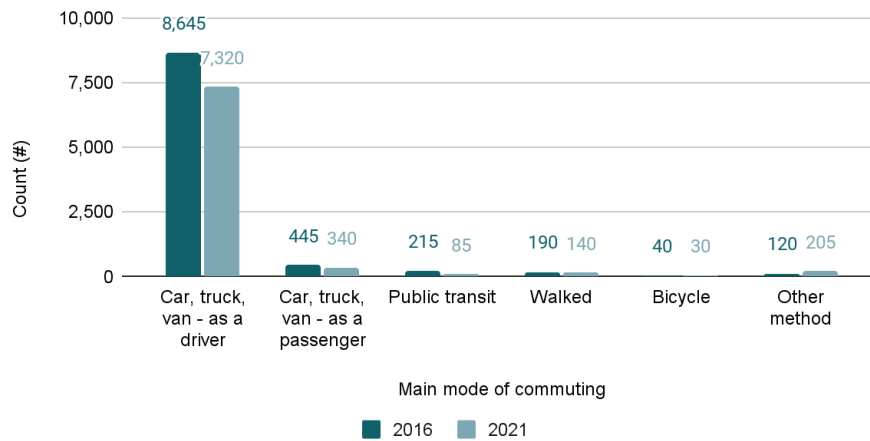
Commuting destination for the employed labour force, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021



From 2016 to 2021, the number of commuters in Chestermere decreased for every major mode of commuting, with the largest decrease in people driving cars, trucks, or vans, from 8645 to 7320. However, the number of people commuting using the “other method” increased from 120 to 205.

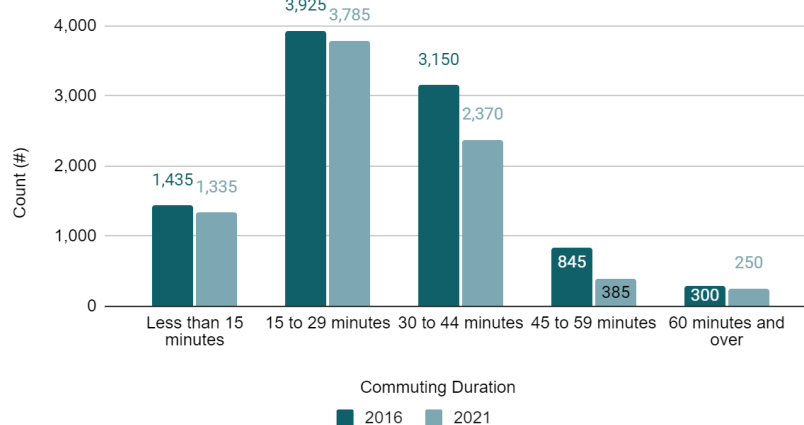


**Main mode of commuting for the population, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021**

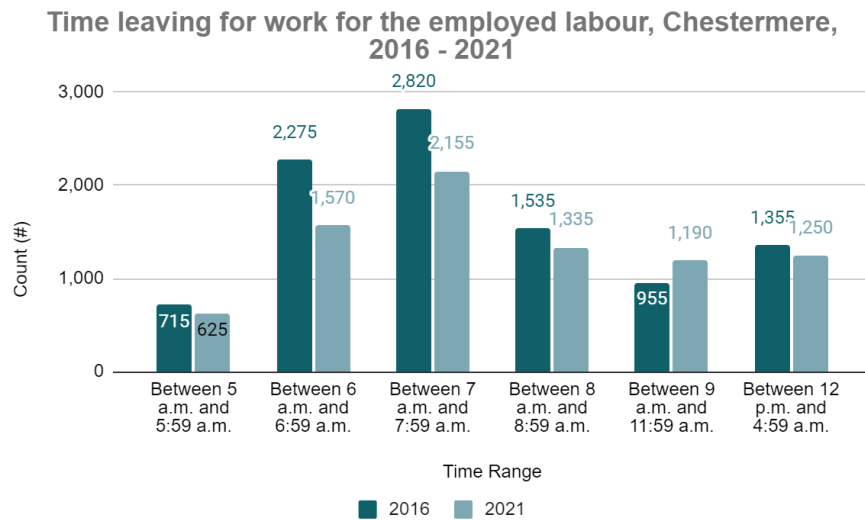


The overall reduction in the number of commuters from 2016 to 2021 is reflected in every category for commute duration. The largest drops are for commuting durations of 30 to 44 minutes (-25%, from 3150 to 2370) and 45 to 59 minutes (-54%, from 845 to 385). Most commuters in Chestermere have a commuting duration of 15 to 44 minutes.

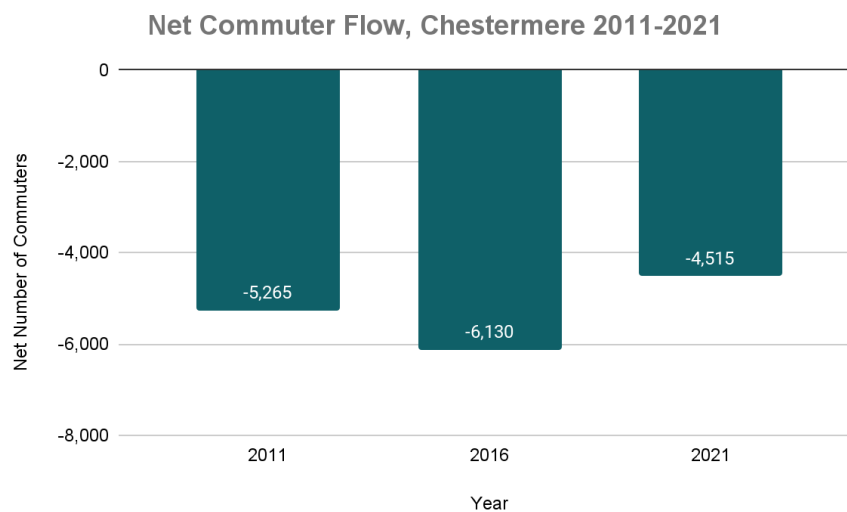
**Commuting duration for the employed labour force, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021**



Between 2016 and 2021, the number of people in Chestermere leaving for work in the early morning hours decreased—including 5 a.m. to 5:59 a.m. (from 715 to 625), 6 a.m. to 6:59 a.m. (from 2275 to 1570), 7 a.m. to 7:59 a.m. (from 2820 to 2155), and 8 a.m. to 8:59 a.m. (from 1535 to 1335)—while the number leaving in the late morning between 9 a.m. and 11:59 a.m. increased from 955 to 1190. The number leaving for work at other times of day decreased from 1355 to 1250.



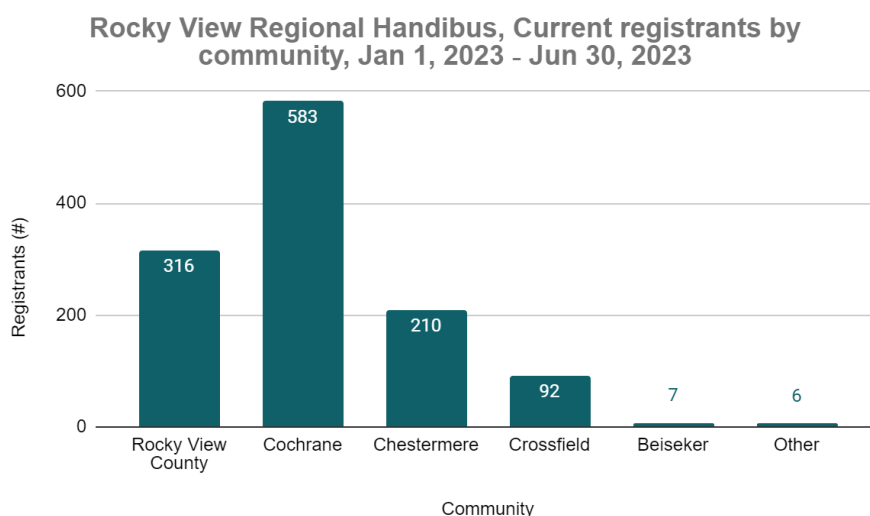
The net commuter flow in Chestermere has been negative from 2011 through 2021, indicating more people commute out of the city for work than commute in. The magnitude of the negative commuter flow increased from -5265 in 2011 to -6130 in 2016 but decreased to -4515 in 2021.



### Rocky View Regional Handibus<sup>3</sup>

The Rocky View Regional Handibus offers specialized transit services catering to people with unique transportation requirements in the Rocky View district and its vicinity. Serving the rural Calgary region, this community transportation system operates wheelchair-friendly buses across seven areas, spanning a region of 4,000 sq km beyond Calgary's borders. Some users of this service include elderly people seeking to maintain their independence on family farms when driving is no longer an option, and rural families accessing healthcare facilities in nearby towns.

Between January 1, 2023, and June 30, 2023, Chestermere, with a population of 22,163, had 210 current registrants for the Rocky View Regional Handibus service, lower than Cochrane (583) or Rocky View County (316), but higher than Crossfield (92), Beiseker (7), and other areas (6). Note that, despite the lower number of registrants, the Chestermere service area (37 sq km) is larger than Cochrane's (31 sq km).

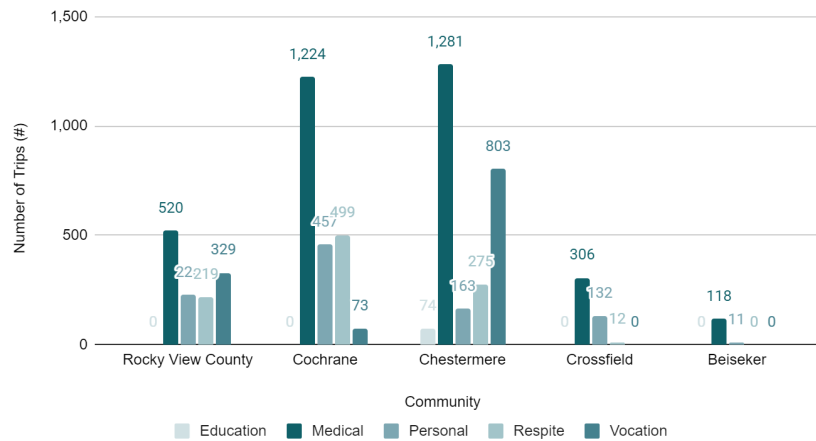


Chestermere has a higher number of total trips in 2023 (2596) than the other communities, with the majority being for medical (1281) and vocation (803) purposes. The vocational trips in Chestermere represent two-thirds of all vocational trips in the region.

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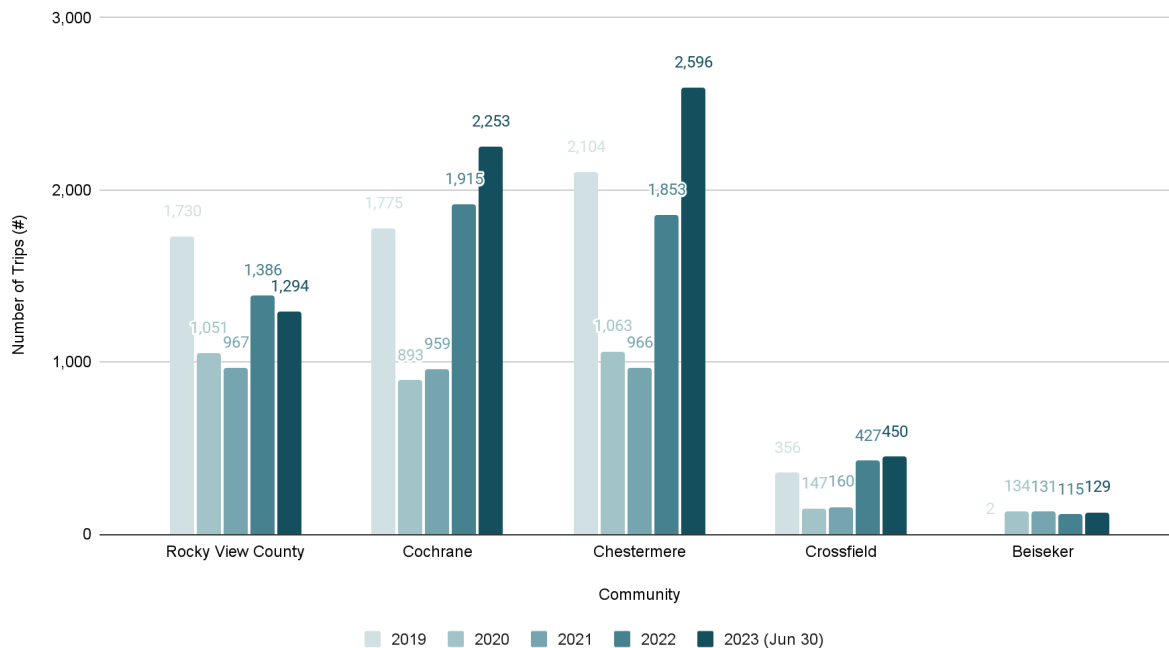
<sup>3</sup> The information presented in this section was provided directly by the Rocky View Handibus Society.

Rocky View Regional Handibus, Trips by purpose and community, Jan 1, 2023 - Jun 30, 2023



While Chestermere had the highest number of total trips compared to other communities in 2019, during the peak of the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, the total trips in Chestermere dropped to parity with Rocky View County and Cochrane. The number of trips rebounded after 2021, increasing by 91.8% from 2021 to 2022, and by 40.1% from 2022 to the first half of 2023.

Rocky View Regional Handibus, Trips by year and community, 2019 - 2023



## Implications for Social Planning



**Shift in Lifestyle:** The decrease in commuting within Chestermere, especially early morning commutes, suggests a potential shift in work patterns, possibly due to increased work-from-home opportunities or flexible hours.



**Sustainability:** The drop in driving as a commuting method and rise in alternative methods indicates a move towards more sustainable transport options, which could be influenced by environmental awareness, economic factors, or improved public transport services.



**Public Transport:** The increased use of the Rocky View Regional Handibus service suggests a rising dependency on public transportation, especially among those who require specialized transport services, like the elderly or disabled.



**Medical and Vocational Needs:** The surge in medical and vocational trips indicates a potential gap in local services in Chestermere, pushing residents to travel outside for these needs.



**Community Resilience:** The rapid recovery and growth in total trips post-pandemic underline the community's resilience and adaptability in the face of challenges.



**Comparative Demand:** Despite its smaller population, Chestermere's higher registration and usage of the Handibus service compared to Crossfield and Beiseker but lower than Cochrane suggest distinct community needs and potential gaps in other transport services.



**Pandemic Impact:** The drop in trips during the pandemic underscores the widespread impact of such events on local mobility and the economy, emphasizing the need for robust crisis management and recovery strategies.



**Future Planning:** With projections indicating that Chestermere will maintain a high number of trips into 2023, transport and infrastructure planning should be geared to cater to this growing demand.



**Safety Measures:** The consistent use of public transport, especially specialized services, warrants rigorous safety and hygiene measures, particularly in a post-pandemic scenario.

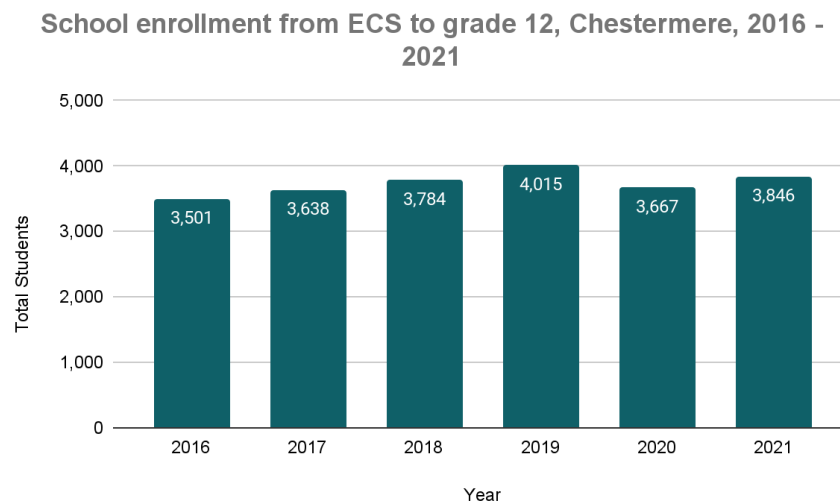


**Local Services:** The data may highlight an opportunity to further develop or promote local medical and vocational services, reducing the need for residents to travel outside Chestermere for these purposes.

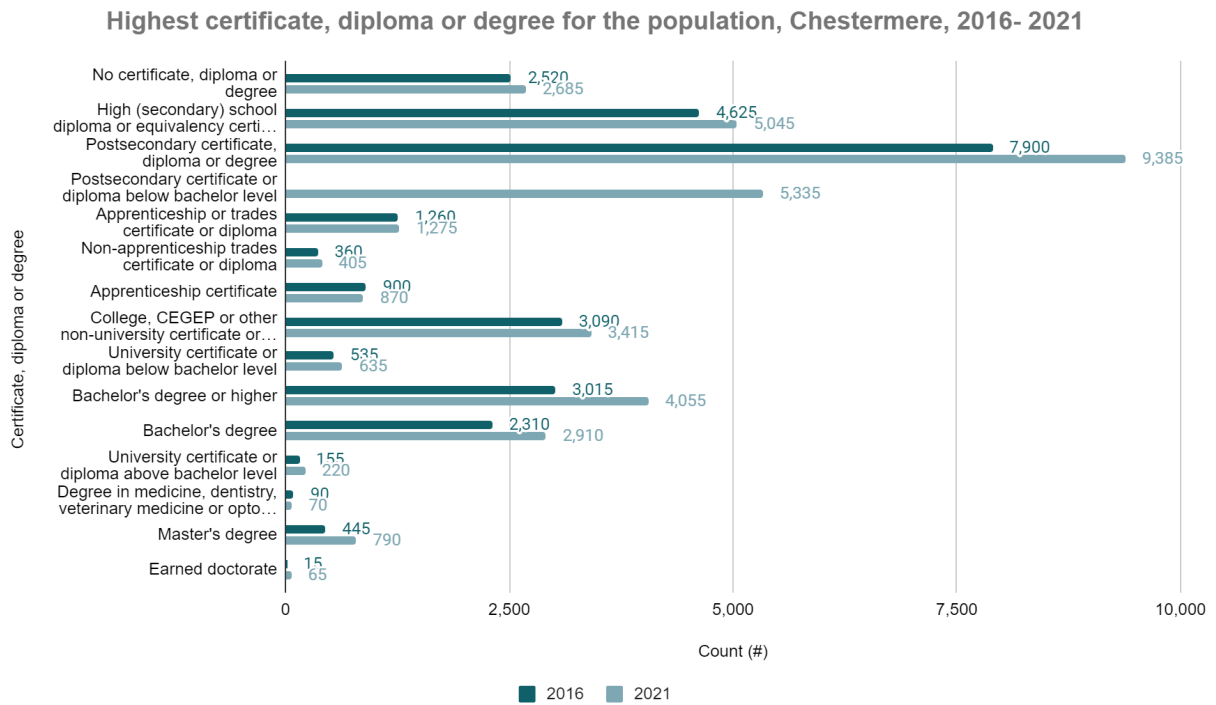
## Education

Evaluating trends in enrolment in education, from primary to postgraduate, helps meet the current needs of students and helps future-proof a community. Chestermere shows an overall increase in school enrolment and more community members with post-secondary educational attainments. However, enrolment in grades 10, 11, and 12 is down, as is participation in trade apprenticeships. In order to respond effectively to these findings, it is important for Chestermere to assess these trends, to determine whether they represent local opportunities and gaps, or broader societal shifts in education.

The total school enrolment in Chestermere increased from 2501 students in 2016 to 3845 students in 2021. Of note, the highest enrolment was in grade 5, with a total of 2183 students enrolled between 2016 and 2021. The lowest enrolments are in high school, with enrolment in grades 10, 11, and 12 between 2016 and 2021 totalling 731, 552, and 599 respectively.

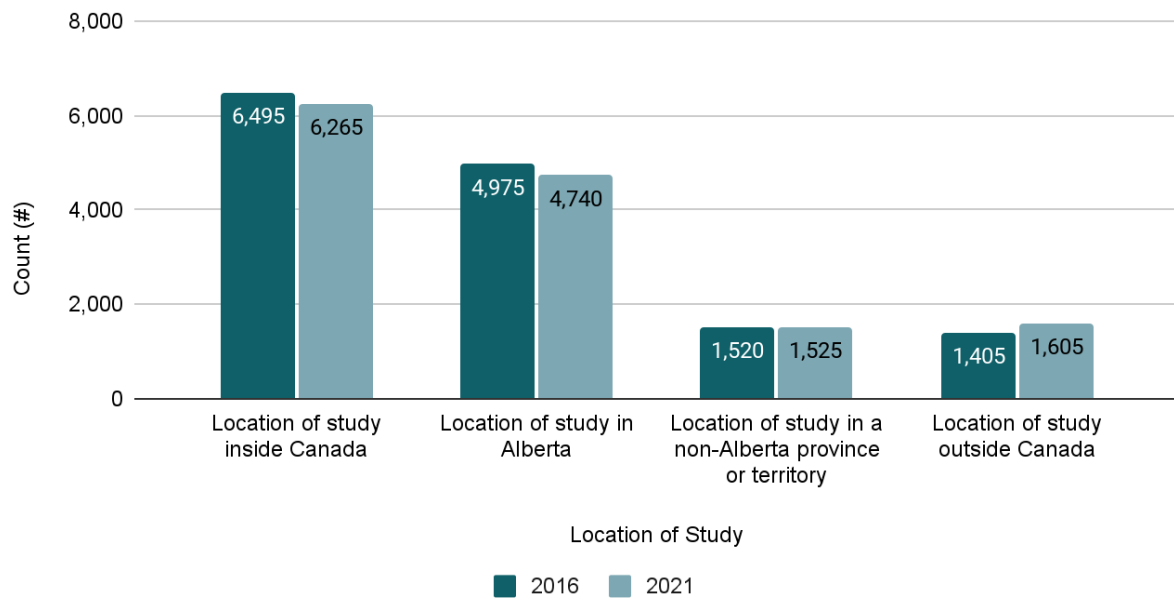


From 2016 to 2021, The number of Chestermere residents with a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree increased by 18.8%, from 7900 to 9385, a larger increase than the number of high school diplomas or equivalency certificates (9.1%, from 4625 to 5045) or residents with no certificate, diploma, or degree (6.5%, from 2520 to 2685). This rise in postsecondary graduates includes one-third more bachelor's degrees (from 3015 to 4055), nearly twice as many master's degrees (from 445 to 790), and over three times as many doctorates (from 15 to 65). However, there was a reduction in the number of apprenticeship certificates (from 900 to 870) and degrees in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, or optometry (from 90 to 70).



The number of students from Chestermere decreased slightly between 2016 and 2021, from 7900 to 7870. While fewer students were studying in Alberta (from 4975 to 4740), this was offset by more students studying outside Canada (from 1405 to 1605). The number of students studying in a province or territory other than Alberta remained stable, from 1520 in 2016 to 1525 in 2021.

### Location of study compared with province or territory of residence with countries outside Canada, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021





## Implications for Social Planning



**Youth Population:** The rise in school enrolment indicates a growing youth population, which requires enhanced educational infrastructure and resources for current and future growth.



**Drop in Senior Grades:** The lower enrolment in grades 10 to 12 may indicate higher rates of dropping out, more students transitioning to specialized programs or family relocation, so further investigation is merited to ensure these critical years of education are planned for and supported.



**Higher Education:** The increase in residents holding higher education degrees, especially master's degrees and doctorates, and the increased diversity of educational qualifications indicates increased skills and knowledge in the community, potentially supporting economic growth, but also requiring career opportunities that match these higher and more varied qualifications.



**Community Economic Aspects to Diverse Education:** The shift in educational trends might influence economic factors. For example, a rise in people with higher education degrees might attract companies looking for specialized skills, potentially boosting the local economy.



**Vocational Training:** The decrease in apprenticeship certificates may signify a shift in interest in vocational training or inadequate apprenticeship opportunities. Vocational training programs should be reviewed to ensure they align with current job market demands.



**Global and Domestic Study Patterns:** The rise in students studying outside Canada suggests a more globally oriented student cohort, who may bring diverse perspectives and skills upon their return. However, the decline in students studying in Canada might point towards perceived better opportunities abroad or dissatisfaction with domestic institutions or programs. This requires further investigation.



**Educational Outreach:** Trends in education highlight the importance of continuous outreach and counselling for students, ensuring they are aware of domestic and international opportunities, and helping them make informed decisions.

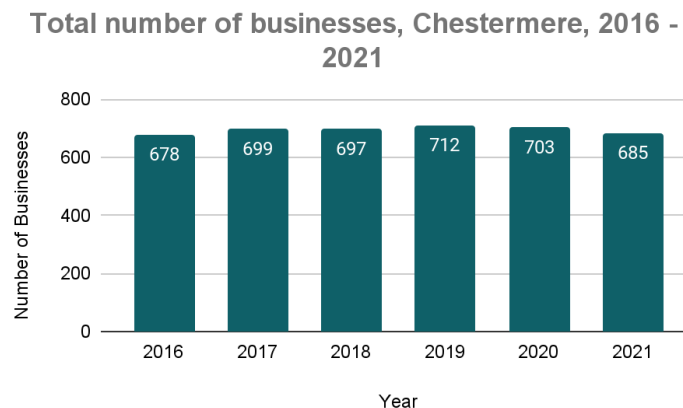


**Long-Term Planning:** Educational insights should inform long-term planning on all aspects of education for community members, from school expansions or curriculum adaptations to local economic development strategies that capitalize on the skill sets of residents.

## Economy and Labour

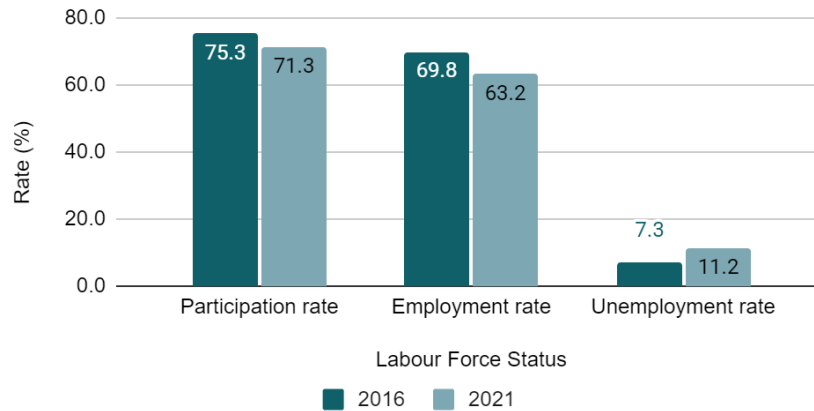
Between 2016 and 2021, Chestermere experienced fluctuations in employment participation and opportunities, with implications for the economic stability and resilience of the city. Some of these changes related to shifts in job openings in various sectors, with growth in some and declines in others. These employment sector changes, as well as the rise in working from home, are trends that have implications for municipal planning, economic development, and public policy.

The total number of businesses in Chestermere remained relatively stable from 2016 to 2021, ranging from 678 in 2016 to 712 in 2019. On note, these businesses primarily fell into the small size category (1-49 employees), although there was a perceptible increase in the number of medium-sized businesses (50-199 employees) over this period. The industry with the most businesses throughout these years was consistently "Construction," followed by "Professional, scientific and technical services," and "Transportation and warehousing."



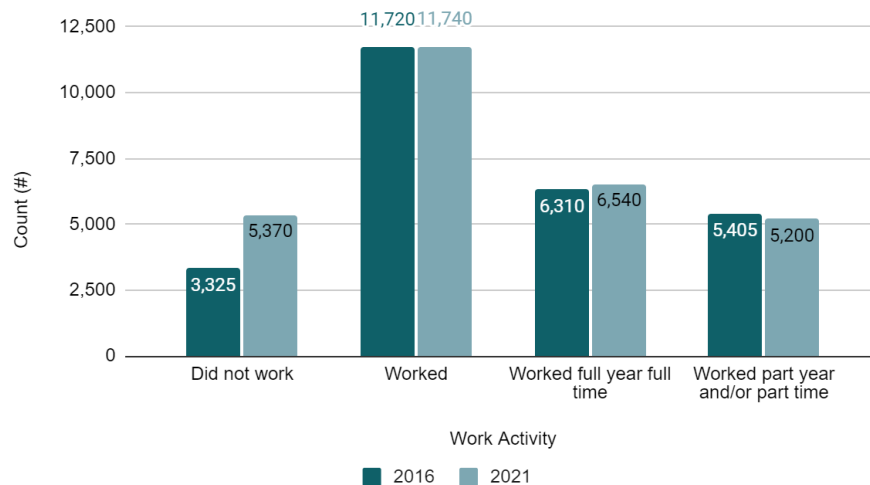
From 2016 to 2021 in Chestermere, the participation rate decreased from 75.3% to 71.3%, the employment rate decreased from 68.8% to 63.2%, and the unemployment rate increased from 7.3% to 11.2%.

### Population aged 15 years and over by labour force status, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021



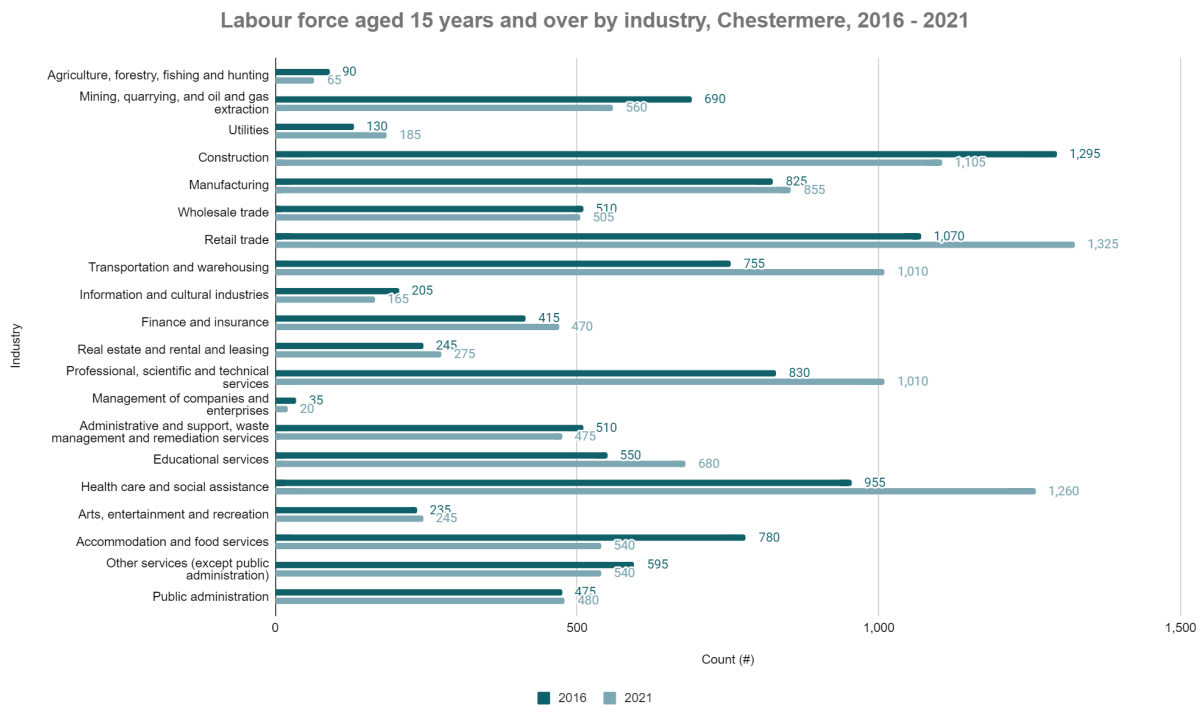
From 2016 to 2021, the number of people not working in Chestermere increased from 3325 to 5370. The number of people working full-time for the full year increased from 6310 to 6540, while the number of people who worked part-time or for only part of the year dropped from 5405 to 5200. This resulted in the total number of people who worked staying relatively stable, from 11,720 in 2016 to 11,740 in 2021.

### Work activity during the reference year, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021



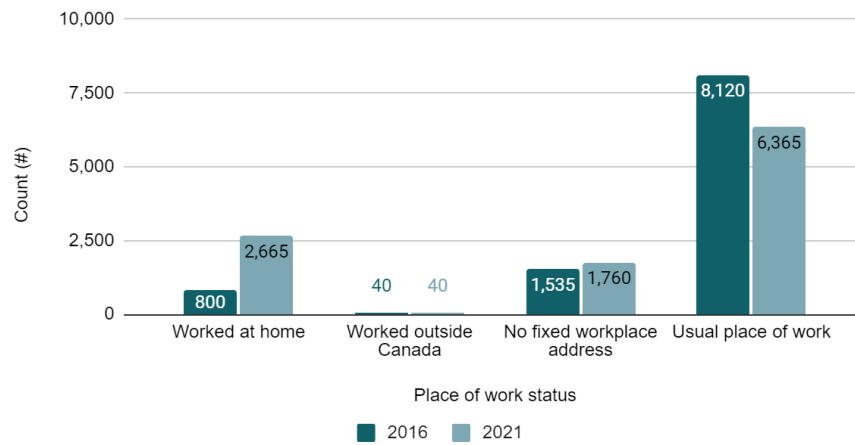
Between 2016 and 2021 in Chestermere, the number of workers decreased in some industries and increased in others. The largest labour force reductions were in the industries of mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (from 690 to 560), construction (from 1295 to 1105), and accommodation and food services (from 780 to 540), with the largest proportional reduction in

management of companies and enterprises (-43%, from 35 to 20). The largest labour force increases were in the industries of retail trade (from 1070 to 1325), transportation and warehousing (from 755 to 1010), professional, scientific, and technical services (from 830 to 1010), and healthcare and social assistance (from 955 to 1260), with the largest proportional increase in utilities (42%, from 130 to 185).



The number of people working from home in Chestermere increased from 800 in 2016 to 2665 in 2021. Correspondingly, the number of people working at their usual place of work decreased from 8120 to 6365. The number of employed people with no fixed work address increased from 1535 to 1760, while the number of people working outside Canada remained stable at 40.

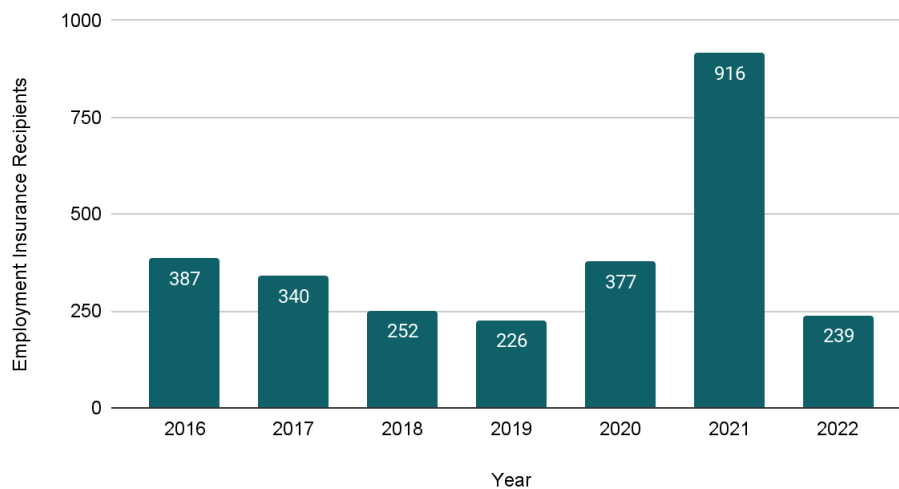
**Place of work status for the employed labour force aged 15 years and over, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021**



## Employment Insurance

The number of employment insurance recipients in Chestermere normally ranged from 226 to 387 between 2016 and 2022, with a spike in 2021 to 916 recipients. As of 2022, the number of recipients has decreased to 239.

**Employment Insurance recipients, Chestermere, 2016 - 2022**



## Implications for Social Planning



**Economic Stability:** Fluctuations in the number of businesses, with a drop in 2021 (possibly due to COVID-19), may indicate instability in the local economy. Intervention to foster a more resilient local economy may be warranted.



**Small Business Ecosystem:** The predominance of small businesses underscores the importance of creating a supportive ecosystem for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), including access to finance, training, and market opportunities.



**Evolving Business Size:** The rise in medium-sized businesses suggests business growth, bringing with it a need for planning that supports such business expansion, and addresses associated infrastructure requirements.



**Industry Focus:** The prominence of sectors like Construction, Professional Services, and Transportation and Warehousing may make it helpful to create support mechanisms tailored to these industries.



**Workforce Challenges:** Falling participation and employment rates highlight potential workforce challenges, necessitating job creation strategies and workforce retraining.



**Sectoral Shifts:** The decline in some sectors contrasted with growth in others, like retail and healthcare, suggests a transitioning economy. This calls for skills development programs aligned with sectors that are growing.



**Work Trends:** The increase in working from home underscores the importance of digital infrastructure and rethinking urban planning to accommodate home-based businesses and employees.



**International Employment:** The stability in the number of people working outside Canada suggests that challenges and changes in local employment are not currently affecting those who work outside the country.



**Support Systems:** The higher rate of those depending on employment insurance benefits in 2021 (likely driven by COVID-19) reinforces the need for a robust social safety net and support systems for residents facing employment challenges.

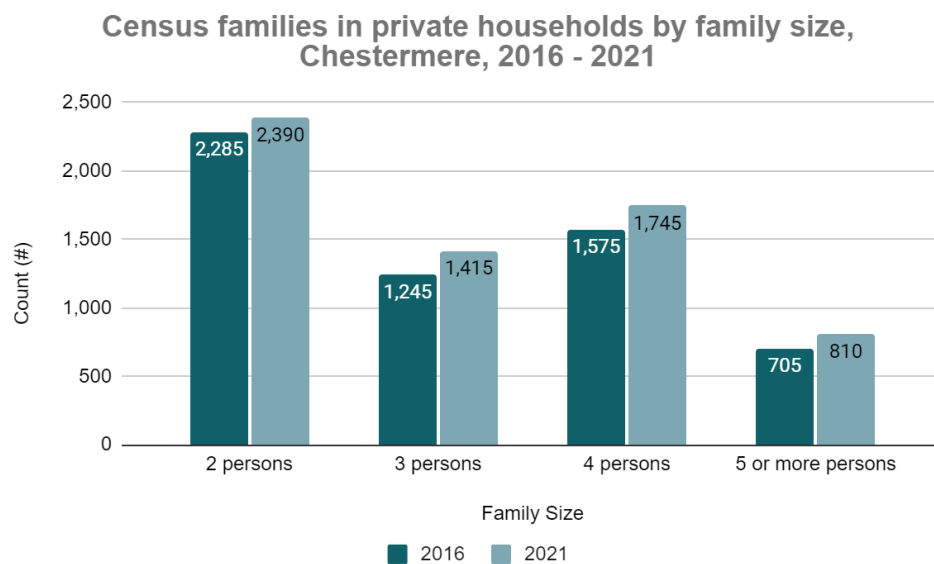


**Future Preparedness:** Employment trends should inform future economic and social planning. Insights could guide business support initiatives, infrastructure development, educational programs, and welfare strategies, ensuring Chestermere's residents and businesses thrive in a changing economic landscape.

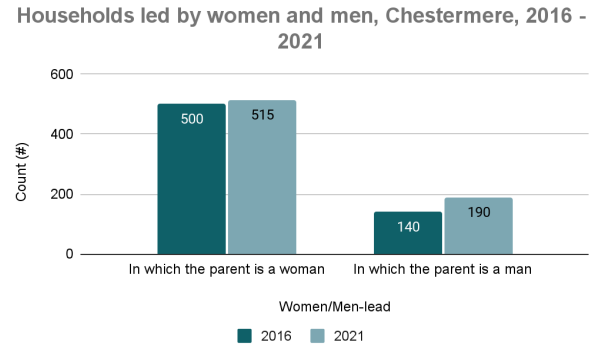
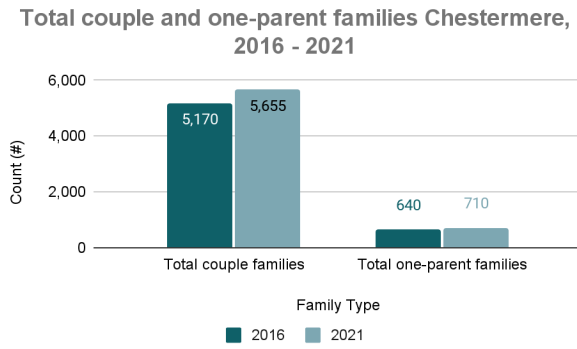
## Family Characteristics

Trends in family sizes and composition have implications for planning. There was an increase in the number of families of all sizes in Chestermere from 2016 to 2021, with a slight increase in single-parent families led by men.

The number of families in Chestermere increased across all categories from 2016 to 2021. The average size of census families remained stable at 3.2, while the average number of children in census families with children was 1.9.



Between 2016 and 2021, the number of couple families in Chestermere increased from 5170 to 5655, and the number of one-parent families increased from 640 to 710. While the number of one-parent families led by women increased marginally from 500 in 2016 to 515 in 2021, the number of one-parent families led by a man increased from 140 in 2016 to 190 in 2021.



In 2021, there were 715 people living alone in Chestermere.



## Implications for Social Planning



**Family Support:** The total increase in all family categories indicates the city's attractiveness for families. This growth may require enhanced community services, parks, recreational areas, and schools.



**Stable Family Sizes:** The stable average family size might suggest types and size of houses will remain consistent.



**Childcare Services:** An average of 1.9 children in families with children, suggests there may be a steady demand for childcare services, schools, and pediatric health services.



**Single-Parent Support:** The increase in single-parent families, particularly those led by men, signifies a need for tailored support services, including flexible working hours, targeted counselling, and childcare facilities.



**Loneliness and Community Integration:** With 715 people living alone in 2021, and given the ageing population, programs that reduce loneliness and social isolation and facilitate community integration, mental health services, and communal activities could be considered.



**Housing Diversity:** A variety of family types, from people living alone to larger families, indicates a need for diverse housing options.



**Engagement Programs:** Community engagement programs geared to the needs of different family types can help foster social engagement in Chestermere.



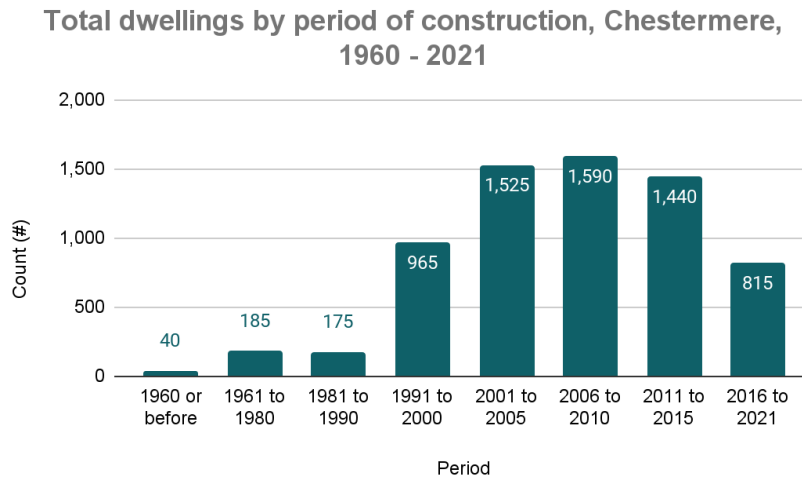
**Education:** Family data can aid in school planning, understanding family involvement in school activities, and the development of extracurricular programs that cater to a broad range of family dynamics.

# Household and Dwelling characteristics

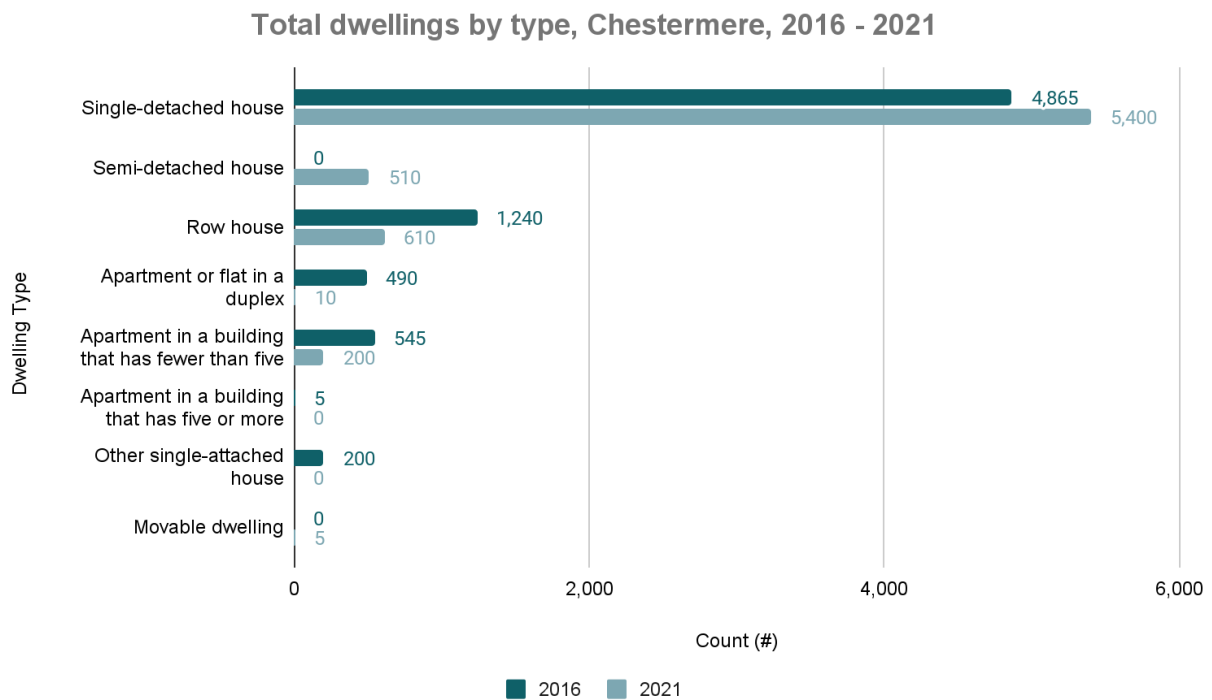
Examining current housing types, age, affordability, and availability helps a municipality consider existing housing against current and future housing needs, which may be affected by changes in population size, family size, housing type, and trends in desired accommodation. Gathering this information allows a municipality to adapt its housing strategies accordingly, ensuring supply meets demand and inequalities in housing options are addressed.

## Dwellings

A total of 80% of the dwellings in Chestermere were built from 2001 onwards. 1525 dwellings were constructed from 2001 to 2005, 1590 from 2006 to 2010, and 1440 from 2011 to 2015. The rate of construction dropped post-2015, with 815 dwellings constructed from 2016 to 2021.



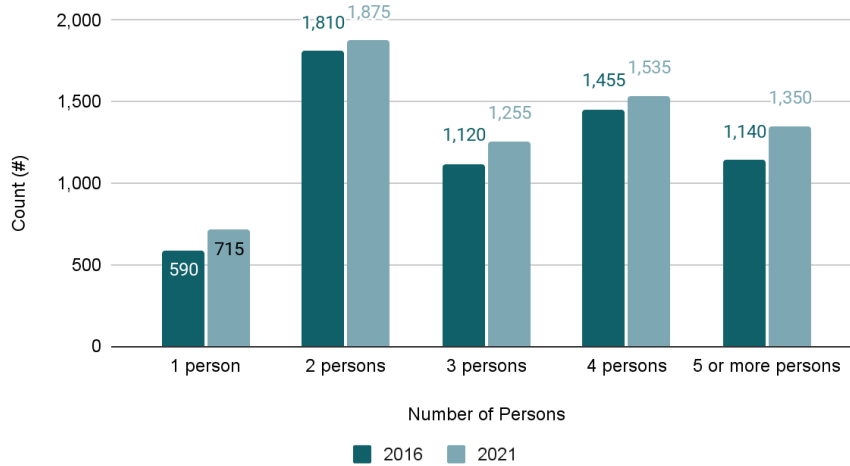
Between 2016 and 2021, the total number of dwellings in Chestermere decreased by 8%, from 7345 to 6735. The number of single-detached houses increased from 4865 to 5400, and the number of semi-detached houses increased from 0 to 510. However, the number of row houses decreased from 1240 to 610, the number of single-attached houses dropped from 200 to 0, and the total number of apartments dropped from 1040 to 210.



From 2016 to 2021, the number of private households in Chestermere increased across all sizes. The largest increases were in households with 1 person (21%, from 590 to 715) and households with 5 or more people (18%, from 1140-1350). On note, the average household size<sup>4</sup> decreased slightly, from 3.3 to 3.2 people per household.

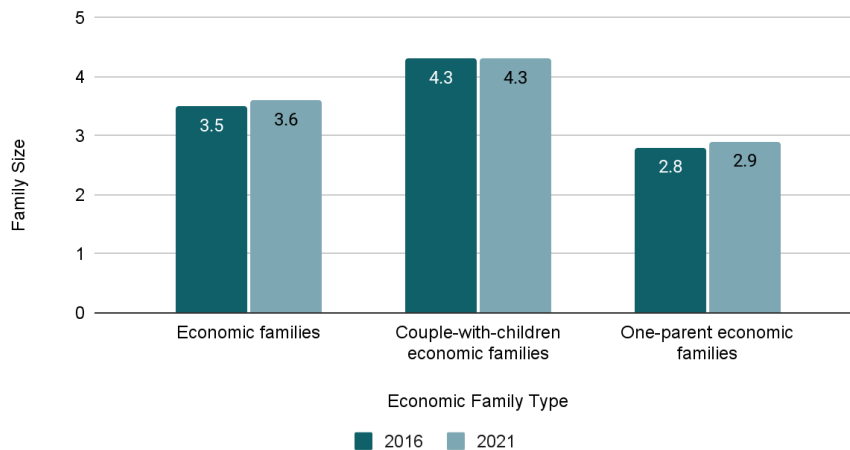
<sup>4</sup> According to Statistics Canada, household size refers to the number of persons in a private household. Private household refers to a person or group of persons who occupy the same dwelling and do not have a usual place of residence elsewhere in Canada or abroad.

Private households by household size, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021



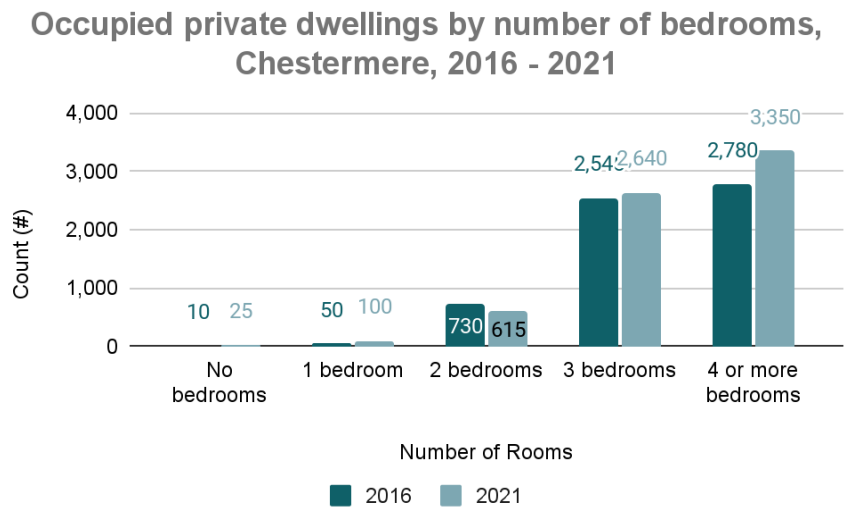
The average economic family size<sup>5</sup> in Chestermere increased slightly between 2016 to 2021, from 3.5 to 3.6 people. The average size for couple-with-children economic families remained steady at 4.3, while the average size of one-parent economic families increased slightly from 2.8 to 2.9.

Average family size by economic family type, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021

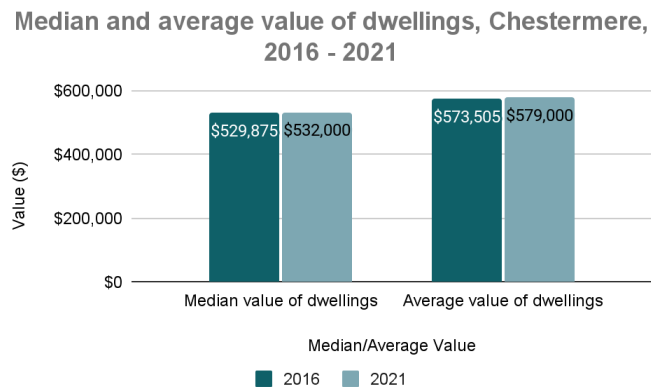


<sup>5</sup> Family size refers to the number of persons in the family. Economic family refers to a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law union, adoption or a foster relationship

The number of occupied private dwellings in Chestermere increased from 2016 to 2021. The largest increase was in dwellings with 4 or more bedrooms, from 2780 to 3350. The only number of bedrooms to decrease was dwellings with 2 bedrooms, from 730 to 615.

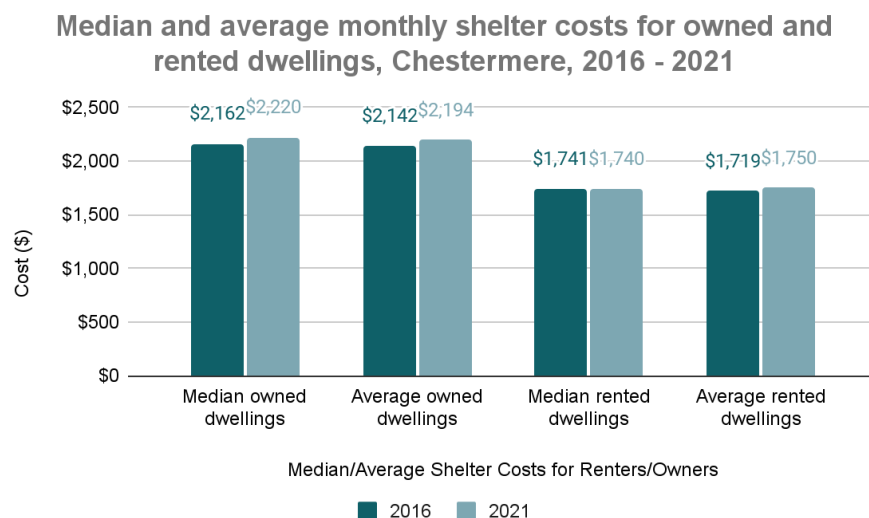


Both the median and average value of dwellings in Chestermere increased between 2016 and 2021. The median value increased from \$529,875 to \$532,000, and the average value increased from \$573,505 to \$579,000.<sup>6</sup>



<sup>6</sup> Note that when looking at the value of homes, if the average and median prices are close, it usually means the prices are spread out evenly, suggesting a balanced housing market without many extremely high or low prices. On the other hand, if the average and median prices are quite different, it indicates that the market is skewed. This could be because there are a few homes that are either very expensive or very cheap, affecting the average price and showing that there are significant differences in home prices within the market.

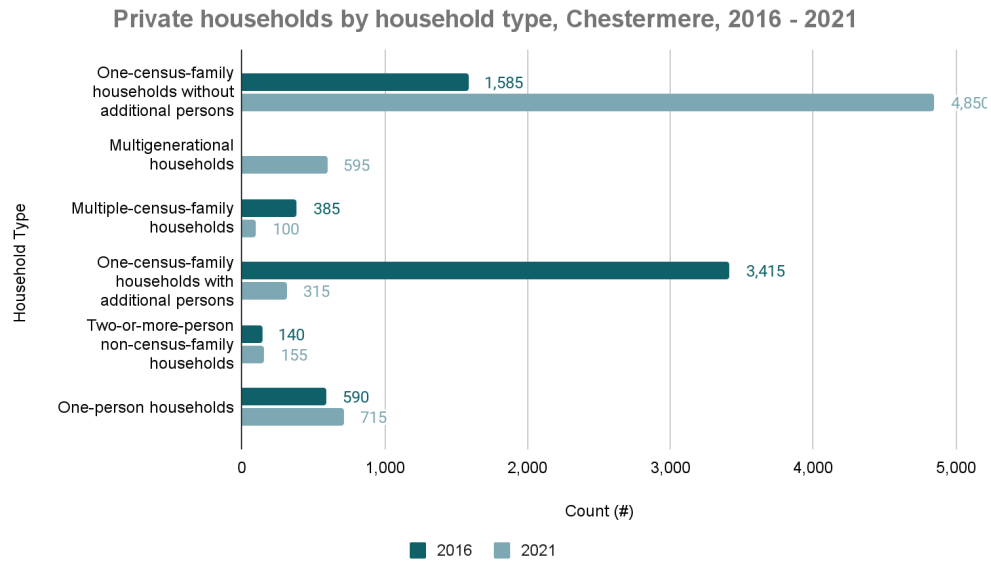
From 2016 to 2021, the median and average shelter costs<sup>7</sup> in Chestermere increased slightly for owned dwellings, with the median increasing by 2.7% from \$2,162 to \$2,220, and the average increasing by 2.4% from \$2,142 to \$2,194. The change in shelter cost for rented dwellings was even smaller, with the average increasing by 1.8% from \$1,719 to \$1,750 and the median remaining steady.



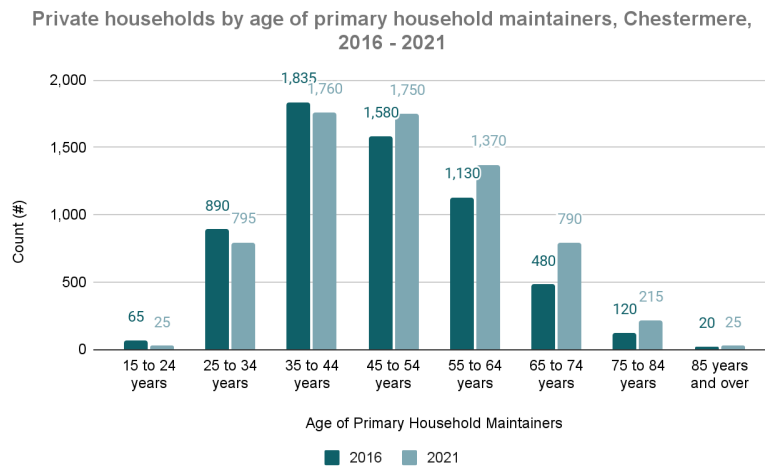
## Households

From 2016 to 2021, the number of one-census-family households without additional people more than tripled, from 1585 to 4850. There was also a 91% drop in the number of one-census-family households with additional people, from 3415 to 315, and a 74% drop in the number of multiple-census-family households, from 385 to 100. No multigenerational households were recorded in 2016, but there were 595 in 2021. The number of two-or-more-person non-census-family households increased from 140 to 155, and the number of one-person households increased from 590 to 715.

<sup>7</sup> When evaluating shelter costs, if the average and median costs are close, it generally indicates that these costs are fairly evenly distributed, suggesting a stable and balanced market with fewer extremes in pricing. However, if the average and median shelter costs are significantly different, it points to a skewed market. This disparity could arise from the presence of either exceptionally high or low shelter costs, which would impact the average cost, indicating notable variations in shelter expenses within the market.

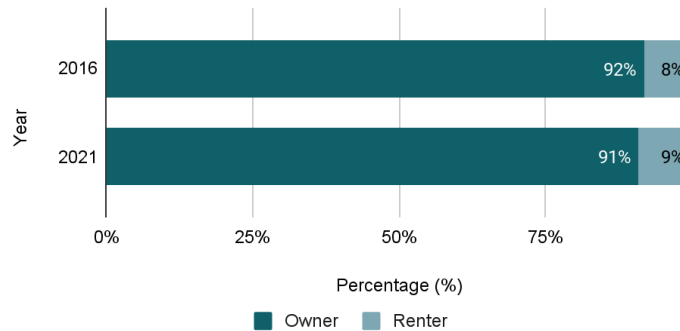


Between 2016 and 2021, the number of primary household maintainers in Chestermere decreased for ages from 15 to 44 and increased for ages 45 and over. The largest increases are between 65 and 74 years (from 480 to 790), between 55 and 64 years (from 1130 to 1370), and between 45 and 54 years (from 1580 to 1750).



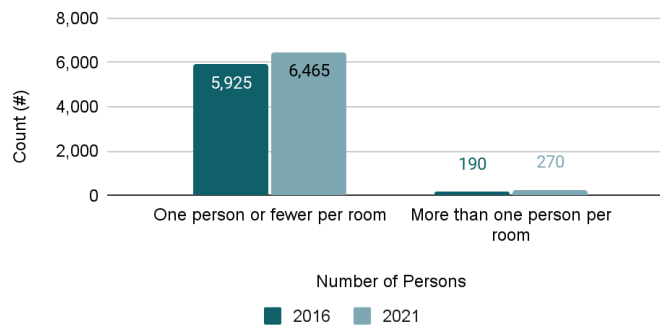
The number of households in Chestermere has increased from 6115 in 2016 to 6735 in 2021. The majority of residents are homeowners, although the proportion of homeowners has decreased slightly from 92% in 2016 to 91% in 2021.

Household characteristics by tenure, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021



Most private households in Chestermere have one person or fewer per room, with the number increasing from 5925 in 2016 to 6465 in 2021. The number of households with more than one person per room increased from 190 in 2016 to 270 in 2021.

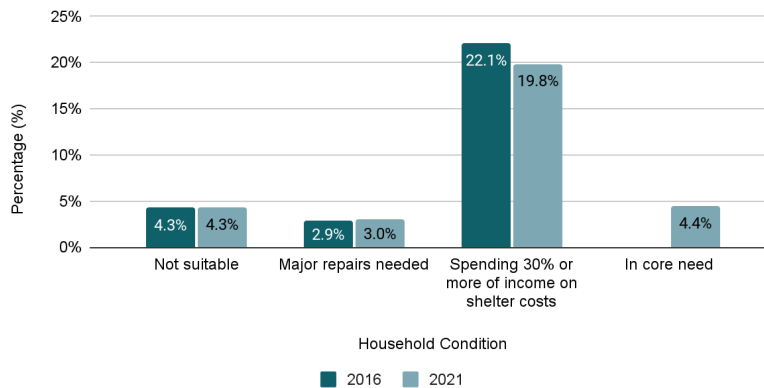
Private households by number of persons per room, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021



From 2016 to 2021, the number of households living in unsuitable housing in Chestermere was steady at 4.3%. The number of households whose housing required major repairs increased slightly from 2.9% to 3.0%. The number of households spending 30% or more of their income on shelter costs decreased from 22.1% to 19.8%. The proportion of households in core housing need was not available for 2016 but was 4.4% in 2021.

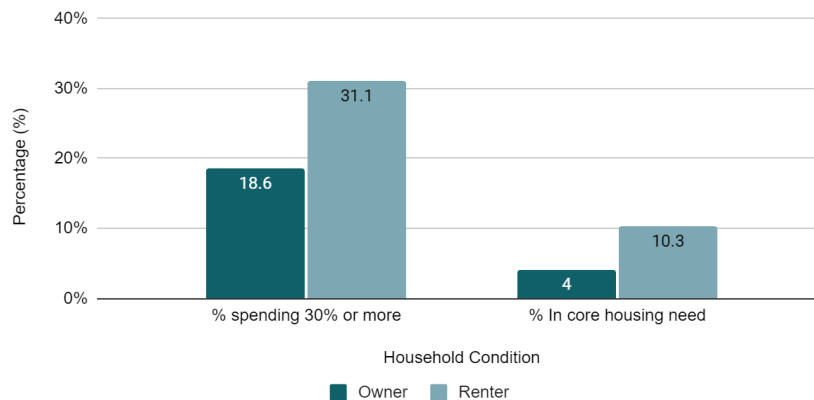


**Proportion of households living in unsuitable, inadequate, unaffordable and in core housing need, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021**



In Chestermere in 2021, 18.6% of homeowners and 31.1% of renters were spending 30% or more of their income on shelter costs, and 4.0% of homeowners and 10.3% of renters were in core housing need.

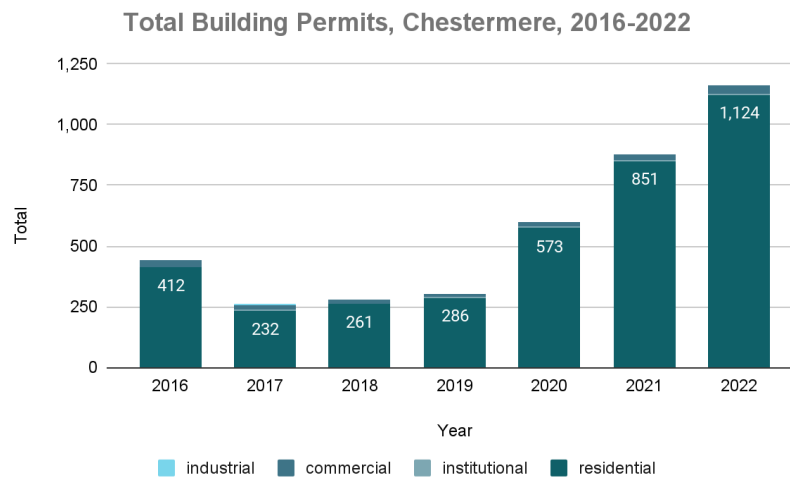
**Proportion of households spending 30% or more of its income on shelter costs and in core housing need by tenure, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021**



## Building Permits

Since 2016, the number of building permits in Chestermere has generally increased, from 444 in 2016 to 1165 in 2022. The number of permits dropped to 263 in 2017, but increased substantially after 2019, from 302 in 2019 to 598 in 2020, 875 in 2021, and 1165 in 2022. Of note, the largest

increase was seen in the residential sector, rising from 412 permits in 2016 to 1124 in 2022. Commercial permits increased from 30 in 2016 to 35 in 2022.



## Implications for Social Planning



**Housing Boom:** Considerable construction between 2001 and 2010 suggests Chestermere is a desirable place to live. This growth suggests the city may require infrastructure upgrades to accommodate the increasing population and avoid strain on services.



**Homeownership versus Renting:** The increase in owned dwellings alongside the decrease in rented properties suggest a trend towards long-term settlement in Chestermere. This has the potential to raise home prices due to demand.



**Diverse Housing Needs:** The rise in single and semi-detached houses indicates a demand for larger dwellings. Planning might need to ensure diverse housing options to cater to all residents' needs, especially with diverse family sizes.



**Ageing Population:** The significant increase in primary household maintainers aged 55 to 84 years demonstrates an ageing population. An increase in senior-friendly services and supports may be indicated.



**Household Spacing:** An increase in the number of households with fewer people per room could indicate a higher standard of living or changing family structures, though the rise in dwellings deemed unsuitable or requiring major repairs suggests the quality of housing stock may need attention.



**Affordability Challenges:** The fact that many homeowners and renters spend more than 30% of their income on shelter costs is concerning, pointing toward core housing need to be addressed.



**Infrastructure and Services:** The increase in building permits in both residential and commercial sectors signifies urban growth, and may necessitate improvements in roads, utilities, public services, and public spaces.



**Housing Repair and Maintenance:** More homes categorized as needing major repairs suggest a need for home improvement programs, services, or incentives.



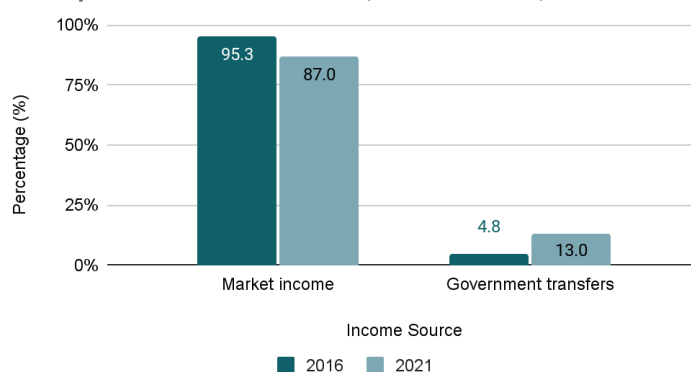
**Urban Planning:** The shifts in dwelling types and the decrease in certain types of households, like multi-census families, might require recalibrations in zoning laws and development plans.

# Income

In conducting a municipal needs assessment, tracking income trends is important. Socioeconomic shifts can affect whether market income, government transfers, or median incomes are rising or falling. Such changes can significantly influence the demand for social services and public policy decisions. For instance, an increase in government transfers might suggest increased financial distress among residents.

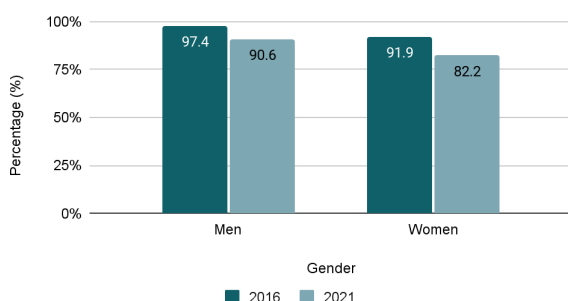
Market income made up a lower proportion of total income in Chestermere in 2021 than in 2016, decreasing from 95.3% to 87.0%. This corresponds to a proportional increase in government transfers, from 4.8% to 13.0%.

Composition of total income, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021

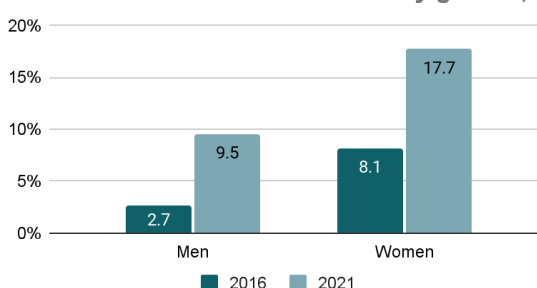


Between 2016 and 2021 in Chestermere, market income as a proportion of total income decreased from 97.4% to 90.6% for men, and from 91.9% to 82.2% for women. This corresponds to a proportional increase in government transfers, from 2.7% to 9.5% for men and from 8.1% to 17.7% for women.

Market income by gender, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021

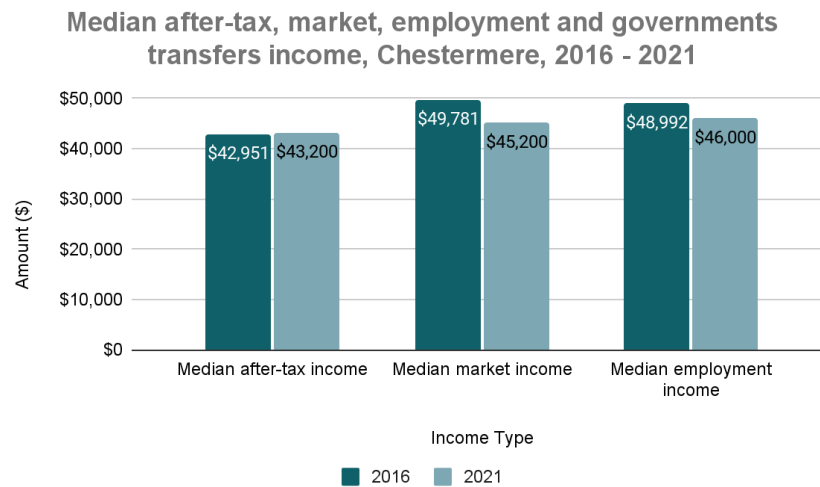


Government transfers income by gender,

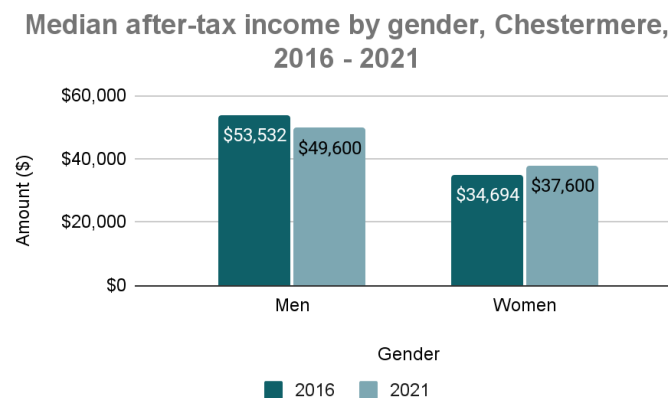


From 2016 to 2021 in Chestermere, median after-tax income increased slightly from \$42,951 to \$43,200. However, both median market income and median employment income decreased, from

\$49,781 to \$45,200 and from \$48,992 to \$46,000 respectively. Of note, the median government transfers significantly increased from \$3,202 to \$7,000.

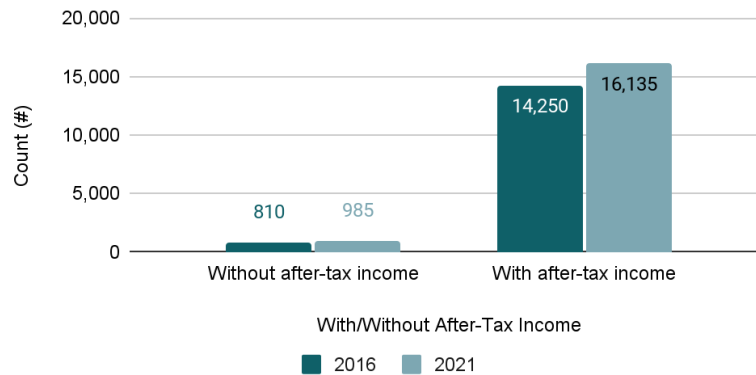


Between 2016 and 2021, the median after-tax income in Chestermere decreased from \$53,532 to \$49,600 for men and increased from \$34,694 to \$37,600 for women.



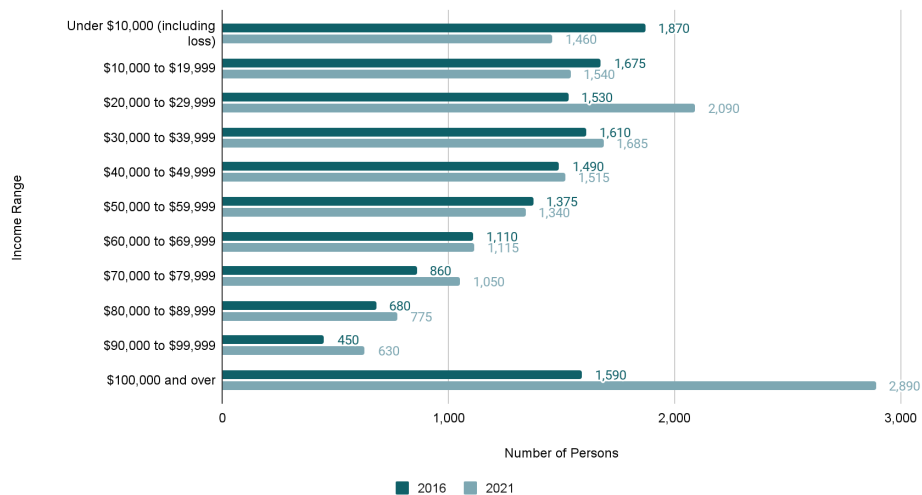
The number of people without after-tax income in Chestermere increased from 810 in 2016 to 985 in 2021. The number of people with after-tax income increased from 14,250 in 2016 to 16,135 in 2021.

**Number of individuals with and without after-tax income recipients, Chestermere, 2016 - 2021**

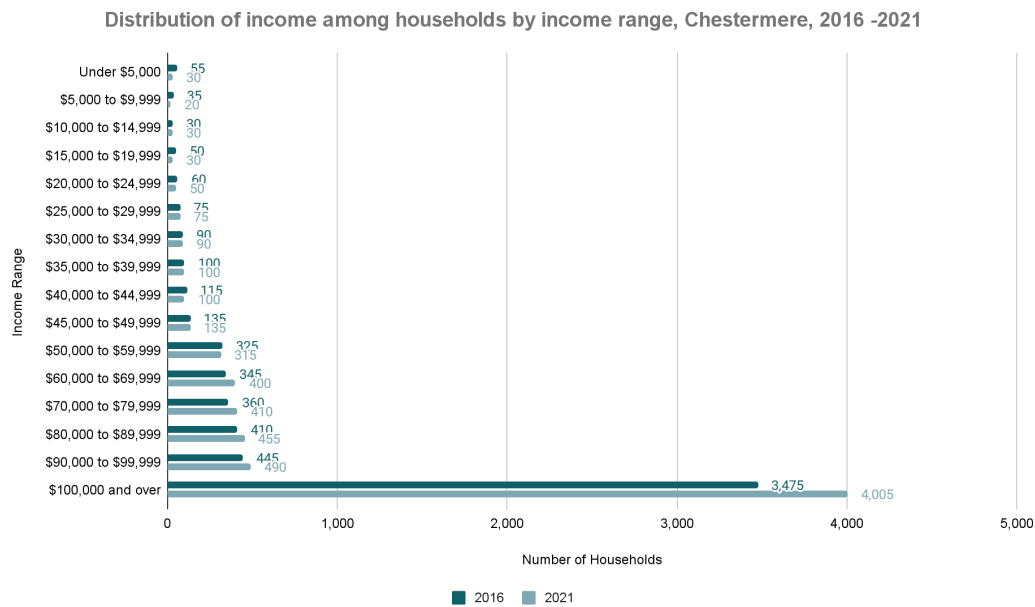


The number of people in Chestermere with an income below \$20,000 decreased from 2016 to 2021, by 22% for incomes under \$10,000 and by 8% for incomes between \$10,000 and \$19,999. The number of people increased in most higher income brackets, with only incomes from \$40,000 to \$69,999 remaining steady. The largest increases were in the \$20,000 to \$29,999 income range and the \$100,000 and over range, from 1530 to 2090 and from 1590 to 2890 respectively.

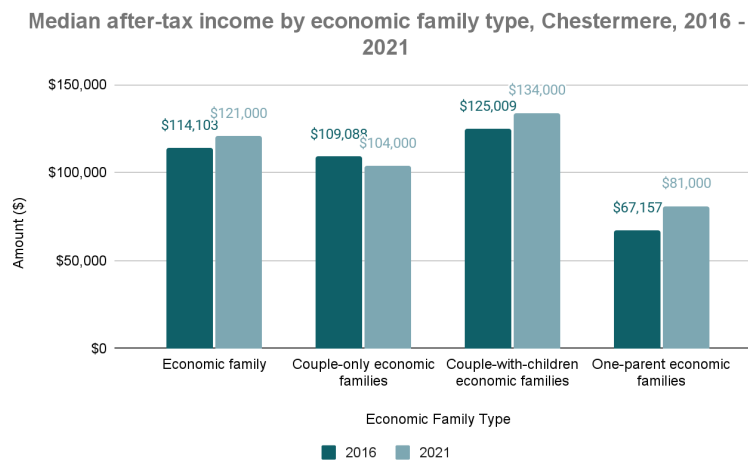
**Distribution of income among individuals by income range, Chestermere, 2016 -2021**



The overall number of households in Chestermere with an income below \$60,000 decreased by 7% from 2016 to 2021, with all component income ranges either decreasing or holding steady. The number of households increased in each income range from \$60,000 or above, with the largest increase in the \$100,000 and over range, from 3475 to 4005.

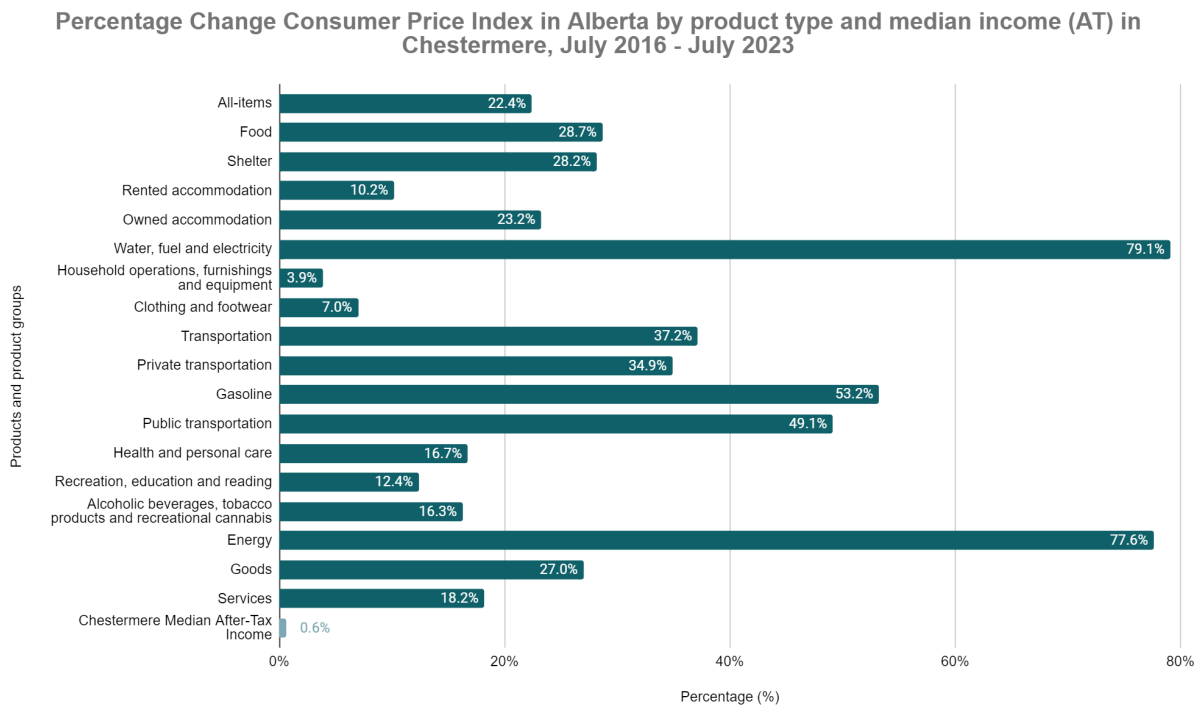


The median after-tax income for economic families in Chestermere increased from \$114,103 in 2016 to \$121,000 in 2021. Income increased for both couple-with-children economic families (from \$125,009 to \$134,000) and one-parent economic families (from \$67,157 to \$81,000). However, the median after-tax income of couple-only economic families decreased from \$109,088 to \$104,000.



## Alberta Consumer Price Index

Between July 2016 and July 2023, the price of all product groups increased in Chestermere, with the highest percentage changes occurring in water, fuel and electricity (79.1%) and energy (77.6%), followed by gasoline (53.2%) and public transportation (49.1%). The lower price increases were for household operations, furnishings, and equipment (3.9%) and clothing and footwear (7%). Median after-tax income increased by only 0.6% over this period.



## Living Wage<sup>8</sup>

The living wage represents the necessary earnings required to meet the real-life expenses in a specific community. It's based on the premise that every adult works a full-time job, clocking in 35 hours a week. Beyond just accounting for fundamental needs like food, clothing, and housing, it also factors in unforeseen expenses, modest educational pursuits, childcare, and community involvement. In Alberta, the cost of living varies from one community to another. Contrary to the uniform minimum wage across the province, the living wage differs for each community, reflecting its unique cost of living.

The living wage for a family of four (two working adults and two children) in Chestermere is \$18.60 per adult, with both adults working 35 hours a week. This wage covers all necessary

<sup>8</sup> Alberta Living Wage Network. (2021). Living Wage Report for Alberta 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.livingwagealberta.ca/reports>



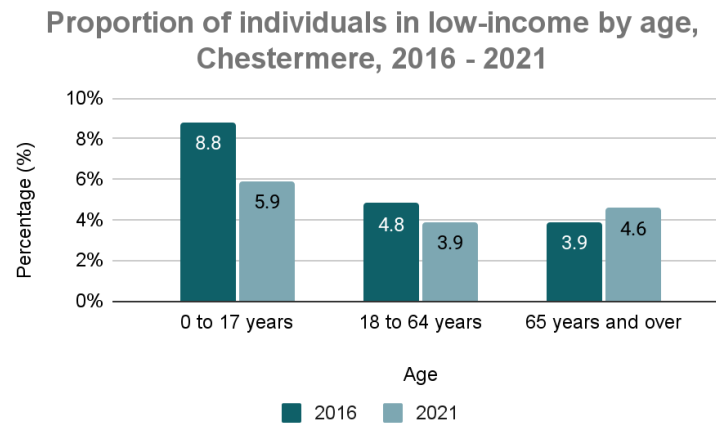
household costs, including food, clothing, shelter, transportation, childcare, and health care, without any money left for savings.

Chestermere's estimated living wage is the same as Calgary's and is intermediate compared to other communities in Alberta. The living wage estimate in Chestermere is higher than in Edmonton (\$18.10), Rocky Mountain House (\$18.05), Stony Plain (\$17.20), Red Deer (\$17.15), and Strathcona County (\$16.80), but lower than in Lethbridge (\$19.00), Drumheller (\$19.70), Cochrane (\$22.60), Fort McMurray (\$27.35), and Canmore (\$37.40).

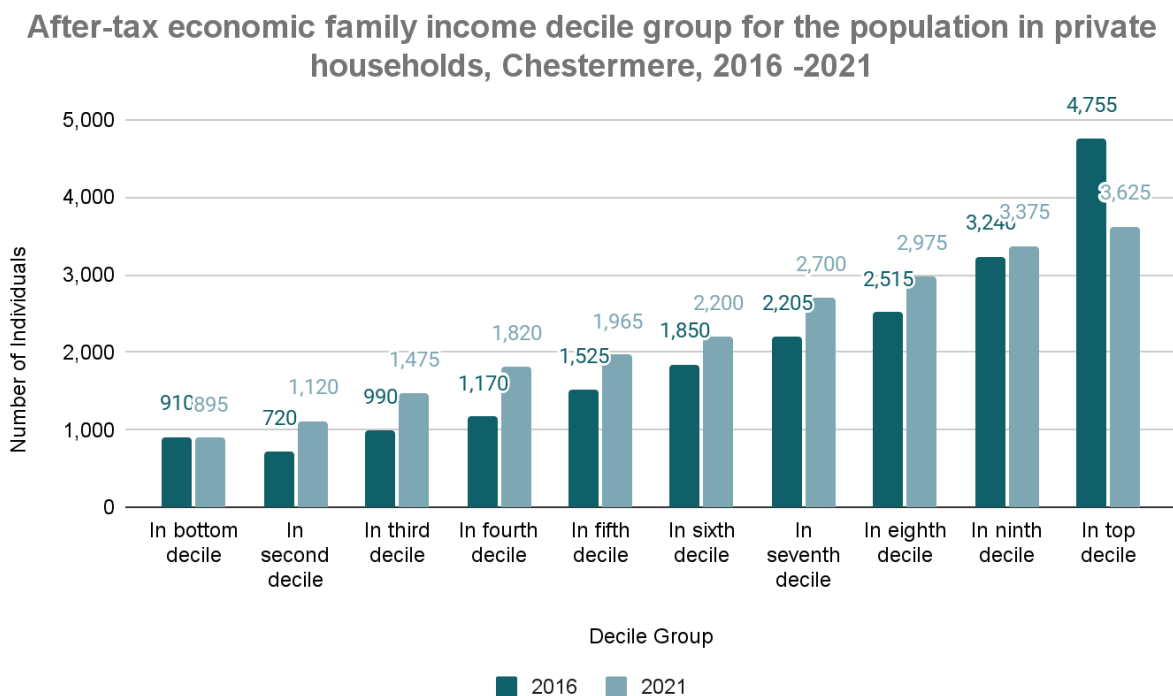


## Low-Income and Inequality

From 2016 to 2021, the proportion of low-income people in Chestermere decreased for residents aged 0 to 17 years (from 8.8% to 5.9%) and 18 to 64 years (from 4.8% to 3.9%). However, the low-income rate increased from 3.9% to 4.6% in the 65 years and over age group.



From 2016 to 2021, the number of families in each income decile increased in Chestermere, except for a slight decrease in the bottom decile (from 910 to 895) and a decrease in the top decile (from 4755 to 3625). The biggest proportional increase was in the fourth decile, from 1170 to 1820 families.



## Implications for Social Planning



**Dependency on Government:** The rise in government transfers and the decrease in market income can be influenced by various factors such as greater unemployment, reduced wages, a higher cost of living, or more retirements because of an ageing population.



**Income Disparities:** The increase in an after-tax annual income of more than \$20,000 and a decrease for those earning \$10,000 or less signals a reduction in income disparity (likely driven by COVID government support).



**Reduction in Low-Income Households:** The decline in the number of low-income households is a positive sign and is largely influenced by the increase in government transfers during COVID-19.



**Family Dynamics and Income:** The decrease in median after-tax income for couple-only families, in contrast with the general increase for families, might hint at varied financial challenges or benefits among different family structures.



**Rising Cost of Living:** The increase in the cost of living across all product groups, with only a marginal rise in after-tax income, suggests residents may be encountering difficulties meeting expenses even if they have a higher income.



**Comparative Costs:** With higher transportation and shelter costs than Calgary residents, despite having the same living wage rate, Chestermere residents may benefit from housing and transportation solutions.



**Economic Diversification:** The general decrease in market income might signal a need for Chestermere to diversify its economic base, promote local businesses, and attract external investments to create jobs and opportunities.



**Social Support Programs:** Given the increase in government transfers, city planners may wish to consider the specific needs and challenges of residents. Tailored support programs may be indicated, especially if the trend continues.



**Affordability Strategies:** Discrepancies in costs and incomes emphasize the need to consider strategies like housing incentives, local transportation solutions, and initiatives to promote higher-paying local job opportunities.

## Food Bank Usage

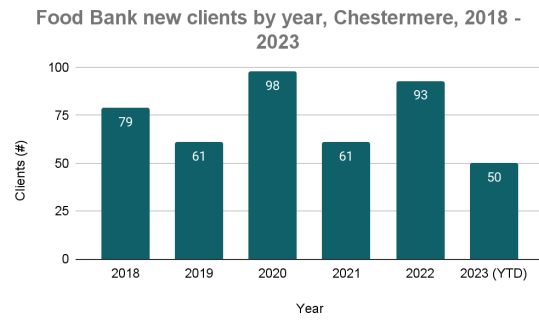
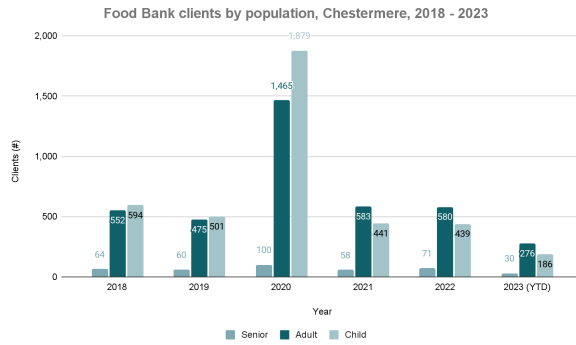
The Chestermere Regional Food Bank Foundation has been in operation since September 2007 and is run by a group of dedicated volunteers. The Food Bank serves the City of Chestermere and the surrounding rural areas.

The Chestermere Regional Food Bank offers a variety of community support programs:

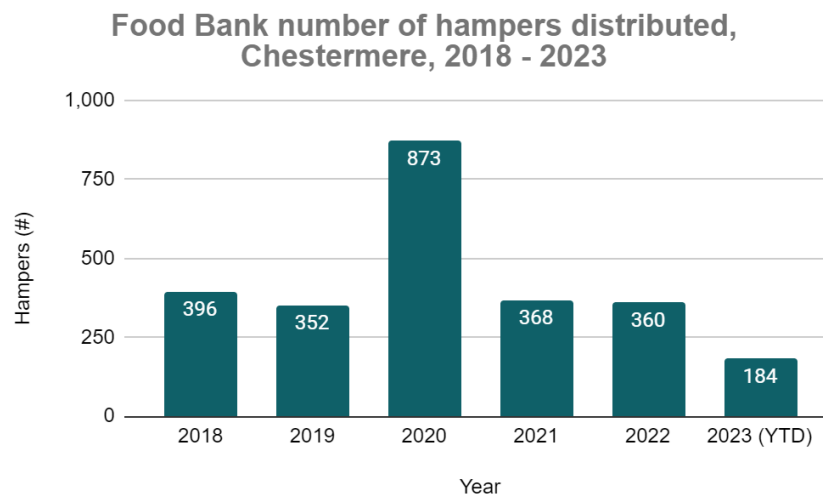
- **After The Bell**, initiated by FOOD BANKS CANADA, ensures young people receive food packs during summer months when school meal programs are inactive.
- The **Backpack Program** provides essential school supplies to students in need, ensuring they're equipped for academic success.
- The **Before and After Care** program offers snacks for children, while "Bread & Extras" allows clients to collect excess food items.
- The **Breakfast Program** ensures children receive nutritious morning meals.
- **Community Garden** project offers fresh vegetables to clients.
- The **Good Food Box** program provides affordable fresh produce.
- **Hampers** initiative offers both perishable and non-perishable foods to families.
- **Jacket Racket** distributes winter clothing to those in need, "Meals on Wheels" delivers heart-healthy meals.
- **Snack Attack** ensures children receive adequate nutrition at school.

The number of food bank clients in Chestermere rose 232% during the COVID-19 pandemic, from 1037 clients in 2019 to 3444 clients in 2020. The demographic with the largest increase was children, increasing by 275% from 501 in 2019 to 1879 in 2020. The number of clients decreased after 2020, with 1082 clients in 2021 and 1090 clients in 2022. As of June 30, 2023, the number of clients is 492.

The number of new clients also peaked in 2020 at 98, 61% higher than in 2019 or 2021 (both 61). The number of new clients increased again in 2022, to 93, with 50 new clients in 2023 to date.



The number of hampers distributed in Chestermere also increased in 2020, from 352 in 2019 to 873 in 2020 (an increase of 148%). The number of hampers dropped back to pre-2020 levels after 2020, with 368 hampers distributed in 2021 and 360 in 2022, with 184 in 2023 to date.



## Implications for Social Planning



**Immediate Impact of the Pandemic:** The large increase in the Food Bank's client base during 2020 signifies the immediate financial and social strain that the COVID-19 pandemic had on Chestermere's residents.



**Vulnerable Populations:** The substantial rise in child clients in 2020 indicates that families with children were especially affected. This might require tailored programs or additional resources aimed specifically at supporting these families.



**Sustained Demand:** Even though client numbers decreased post-2020, they have remained consistently above pre-pandemic levels.



**Fluctuation in New Clients:** The fluctuating numbers of new clients each year might indicate continuing economic instability or a changing demographic of residents in need of services.



**Persistent Need in 2023:** The fact that the client count in 2023 remains substantial, despite being lower than peak numbers, suggests that many residents are still facing challenges even as the crisis of the pandemic subsides.



**Resource Distribution:** The number of food hampers being distributed is consistent with client numbers, which means the response is consistent with the need. It remains important to determine if the contents of the hampers meet the diverse needs of the clientele.



**Diverse Needs:** The mention of "diverse distribution trends across various categories" hints at differing needs among the client base. This could mean that specific groups or demographics have unique food requirements to be addressed.



**Community Resilience and Preparedness:** The sharp increase in use in 2020 highlights the need for community systems that are robust and adaptable, ready to cater to sudden spikes in demand in times of crisis.



**Affordability Strategies:** Discrepancies in costs and incomes emphasize the need to consider strategies like housing incentives, local transportation solutions, and initiatives to promote higher-paying local job opportunities.

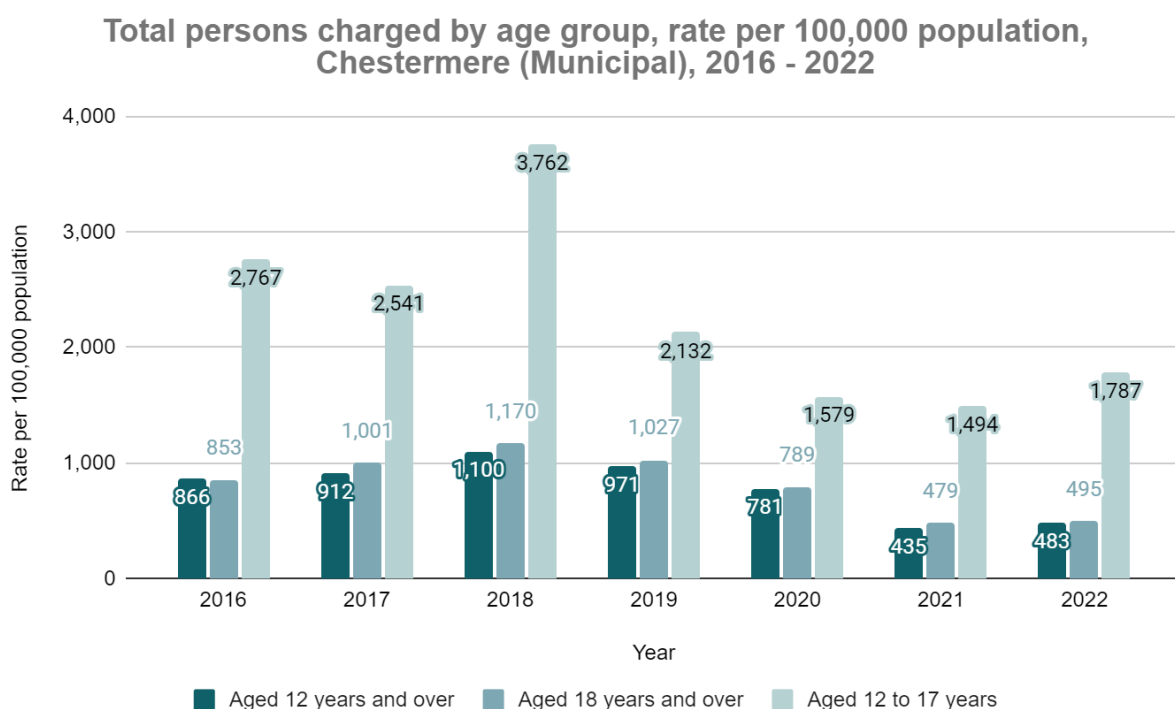


**Feedback and Evaluation:** Given the fluctuations in client numbers, regular feedback from clients and external evaluation of services provided would be valuable.

## Crime

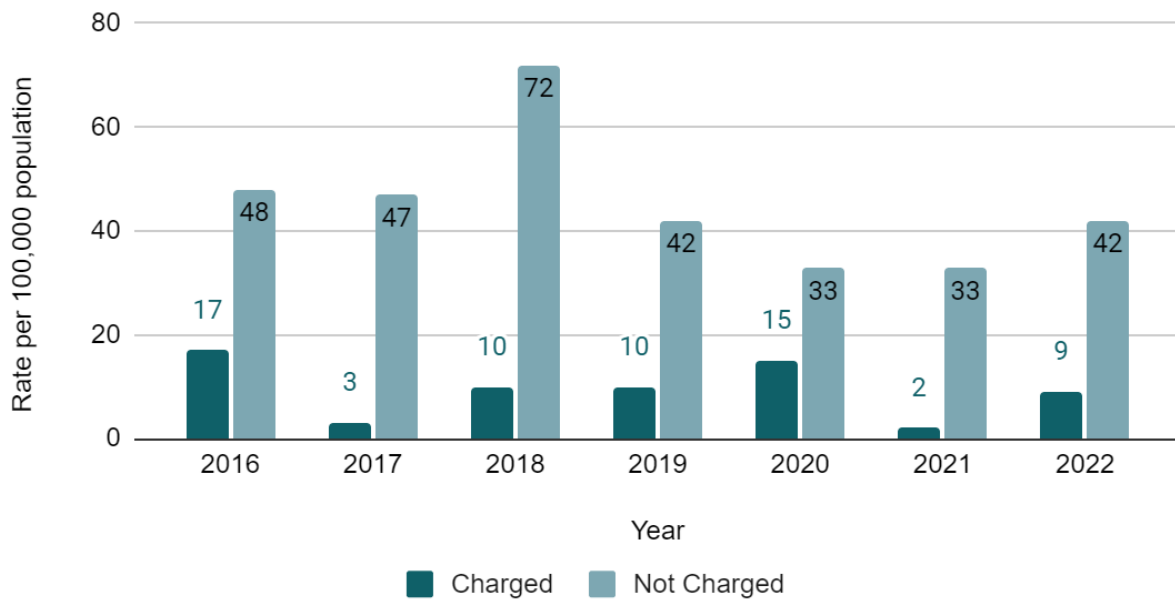
Monitoring crime trends provides a lens through which to identify and address social services needs and allow for tailored interventions for different age groups and types of crimes. Identifying patterns in criminal code violations over time informs public safety measures and proactive approaches to crime prevention and reduction.

Between 2016 and 2022, the total number of people charged per 100,000 population in Chestermere decreased from 4486 to 2765. In each year, the highest rate was in the 12 to 17 years age group. After peaking in 2018, the rates for all age groups dropped in 2019, 2020, and 2021, followed by an increase in all age groups from 2021 to 2022.



In Chestermere, the rate of youths charged per 100,000 population aged 18 years and over decreased overall from 17 in 2016 to 9 in 2022. The lowest rates were 3 per 100,000 in 2017 and 2 per 100,000 in 2021, but each was followed by an increase (10 in 2018 and 9 in 2022). The number of youths not charged was highest in 2018, at 72 per 100,000, and lowest in 2020 and 2021, at 33 per 100,000.

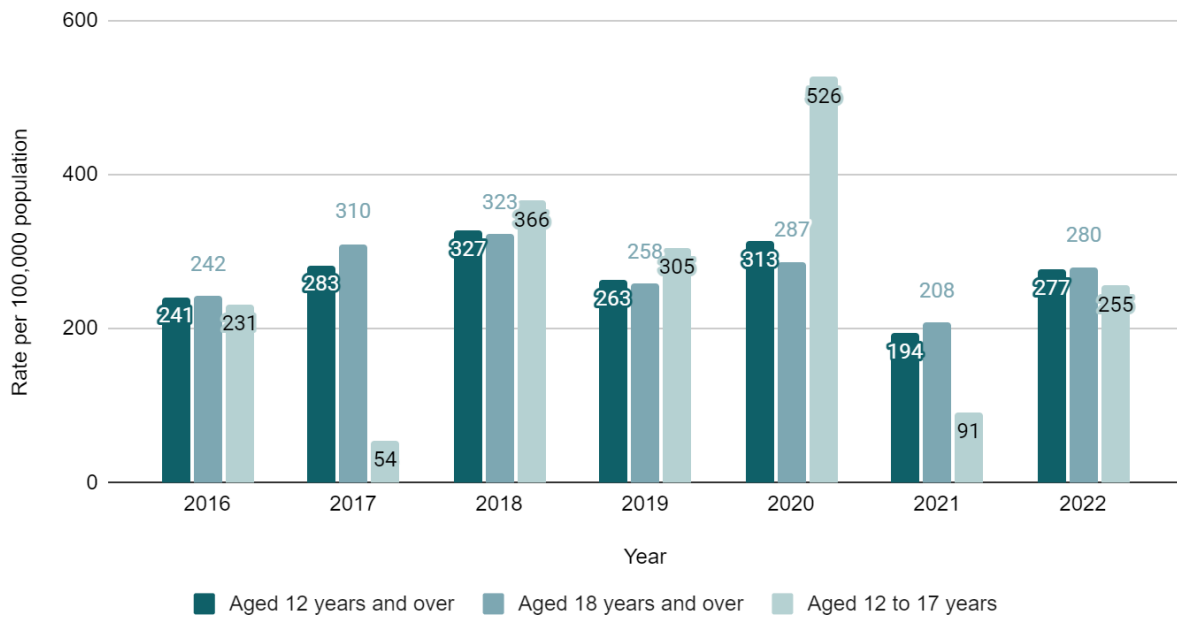
### Youth charged and not charged, rate per 100,000 population, Chestermere (Municipal), 2016 - 2022



The total violent criminal code violations in Chestermere per 100,000 population varied between age groups from 2016 to 2022. For the 12 years and over and 18 years and over age groups, the highest rate was in 2018, at 327 and 323 respectively, and lowest in 2021, at 194 and 208 respectively. For the 12 to 17-year-old age group, the highest rate was 526 in 2020, and the lowest rates were 54 in 2017 and 91 in 2021.

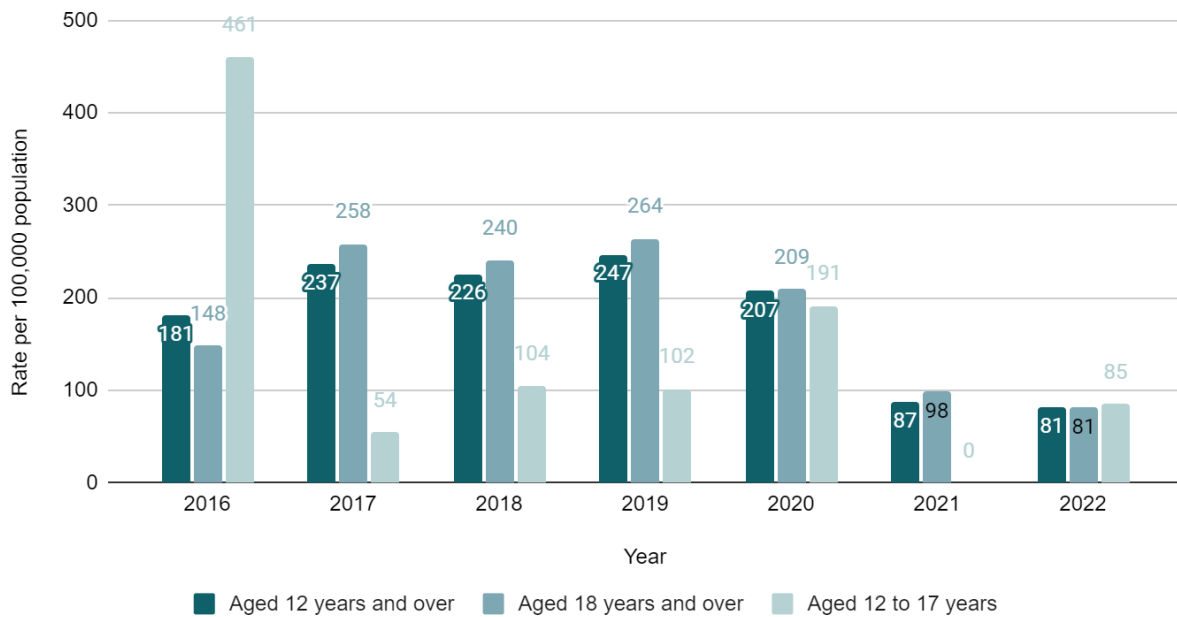


### Total violent criminal code violations by age, rate per 100,000 population, Chestermere (Municipal), 2016 - 2022



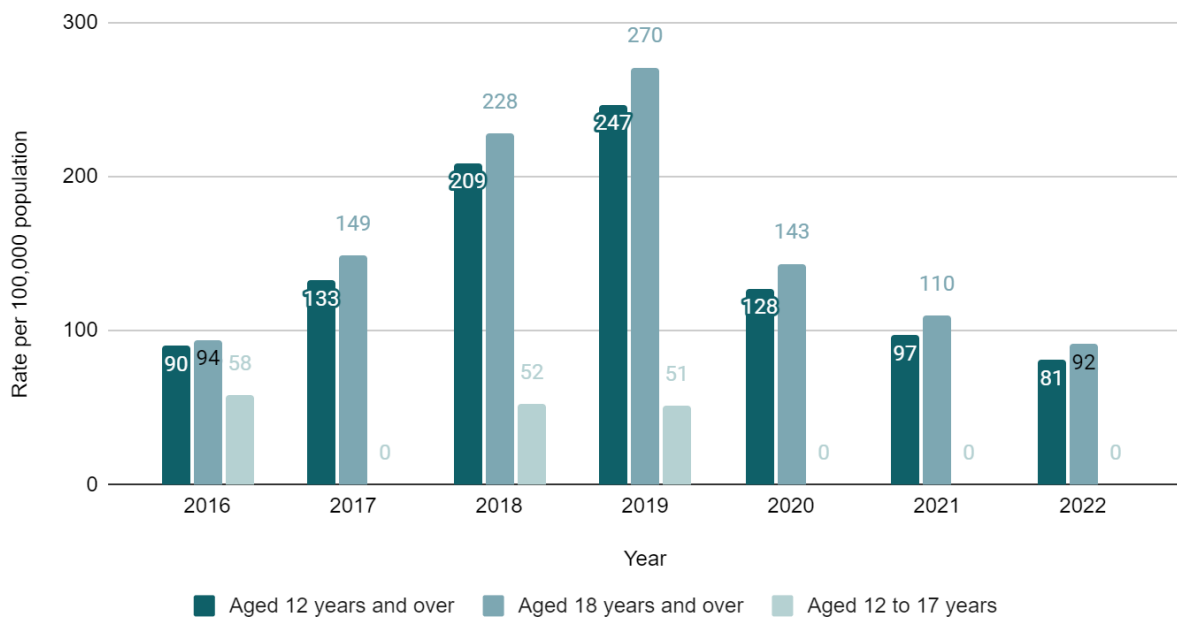
The total property criminal code violations in Chestermere per 100,000 population also varied between age groups from 2016 to 2022. For the 12 years and over and 18 years and over age groups, the highest rate was in 2019, at 247 and 264 respectively, and lowest in 2022, at 81 each. The rate in the 12 to 17 years age group varied widely, peaking at 461 per 100,000 population in 2016, and with nearly no recorded violations in 2021.

**Total property crime violations by age, rate per 100,000 population, Chestermere (Municipal), 2016 - 2022**



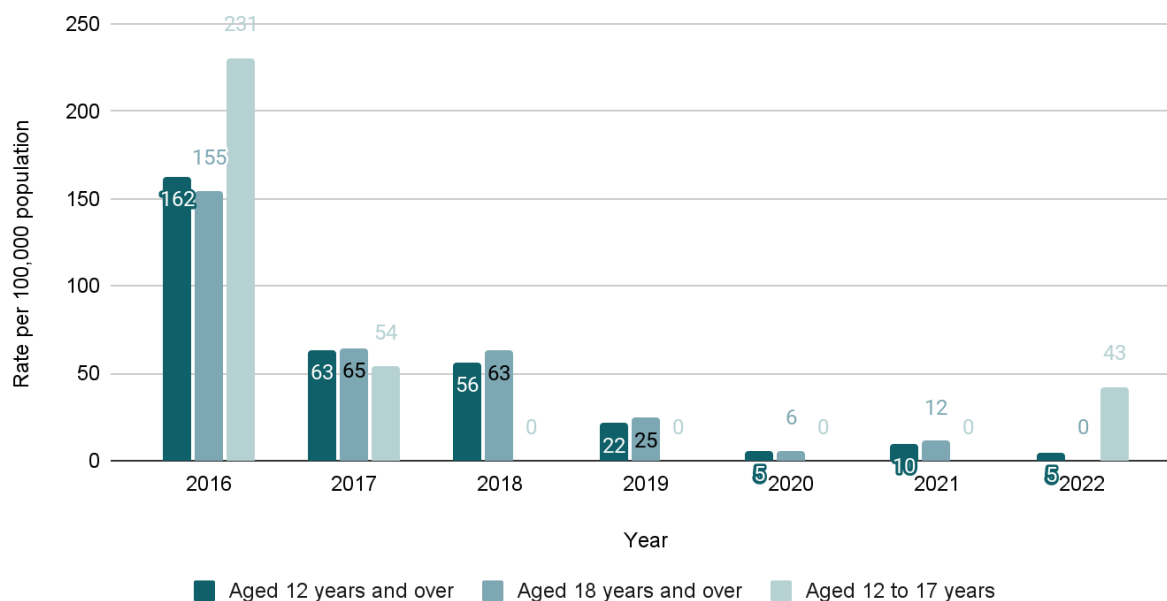
The total number of other criminal code violations per 100,000 population in Chestermere peaked in 2019. For both the 12 years and over and 18 years and over age groups, violations rose from 2016 (90 and 94, respectively) to 2019 (247 and 270, respectively), and then decreased from 2019 to 2022 (81 and 92, respectively). For the 12 to 17 years age group, the only years with non-zero rates were 2016, 2018, and 2019, at 58, 52, and 51 respectively.

**Total other criminal code violations by age, rate per 100,000 population, Chestermere (Municipal), 2016 - 2022**



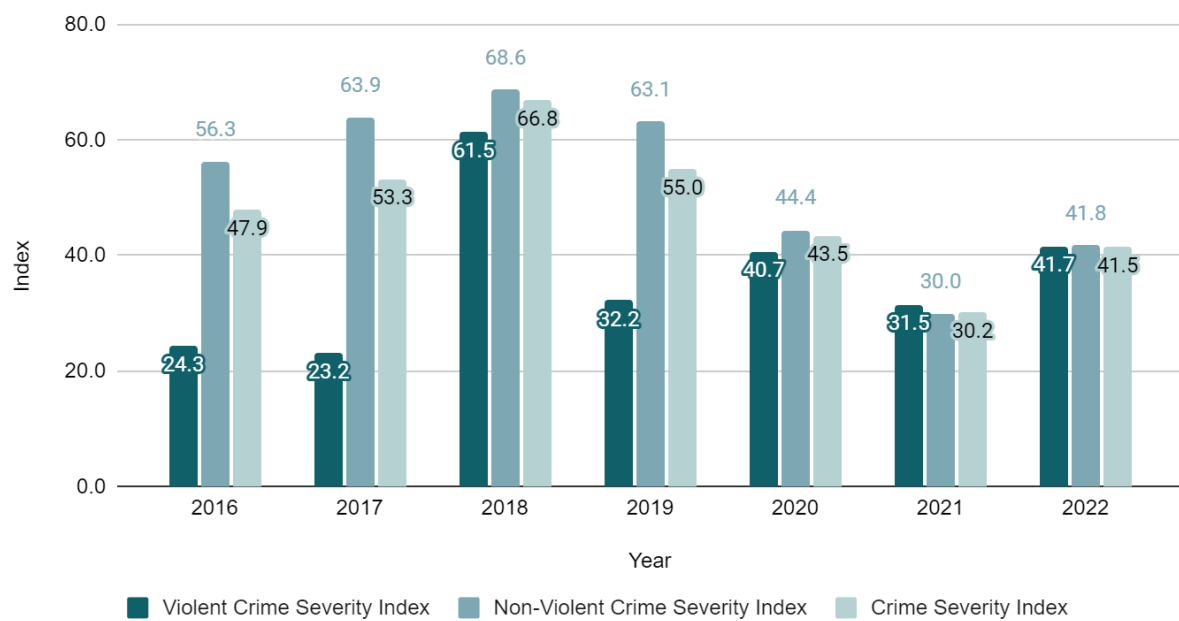
Drug violations in Chestermere have generally been decreasing from 2016 to 2021 across all age groups. However, there was a slight increase in violations for those aged 12 years and over, and 18 years and over in 2021 compared to 2020. Violations for those aged 12 to 17 years dramatically decreased to zero in 2018 and saw its first increase again in 2022.

**Total drug violations by age, rate per 100,000 population, Chestermere (Municipal), 2016 - 2022**



The Crime Severity Index in Chestermere increased from 47.9 in 2016 to a peak of 66.8 in 2018, decreased to 30.2 in 2021, and rebounded slightly to 41.5 in 2022. Both the violent and non-violent crime severity indexes follow a similar trend, though with a drop in violent crime in 2019.

### Violent Crime Severity Index, Non-Violent Crime Severity Index and Crime Severity Index, Chestermere (Municipal), 2016 - 2022



## Implications for Social Planning



**Overall Improvement:** The general decrease in crime rates suggests that law enforcement initiatives, community programs, or other socioeconomic factors may be contributing positively to the safety and of the community.



**Short-term Peaks:** The noticeable peaks in crime rates for 2018 and 2019 across different age groups might have been related to specific local or broader events. A closer look is needed to clarify this.



**Post-2019 Improvement:** The significant drop in crime rates from 2020 onward could be due to multiple factors, including law enforcement measures, community interventions, or even external factors like the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have restricted movement and opportunity for certain crimes.



**Youth and Adult Engagement:** The decreased crime rate in younger groups could suggest effective youth engagement and preventive programs.



**Specific Crime Categories:** Changes in violent criminal code violations and property crimes may relate to a reduction in community stressors or law enforcement focus areas.



**Severity Index:** The peak in the Crime Severity Index in 2018, followed by a decline, shows that the number and seriousness of crimes decreased, a positive sign for community safety.



**Drug Trends:** The overall decrease in drug violations is encouraging, but the upward trend in 2021 for certain age groups suggests a potential area of focus for interventions and community education.



**Policy and Program Response:** As trends in criminal activities shift, initiatives targeting specific crimes or age groups can be enhanced or adjusted based on these trends.



**Community Engagement and Awareness:** Engaging the community in awareness campaigns, neighbourhood watches, or collaborative programs may be contributing to the decline in crime rates. Continuing and enhancing such measures could further support community safety.



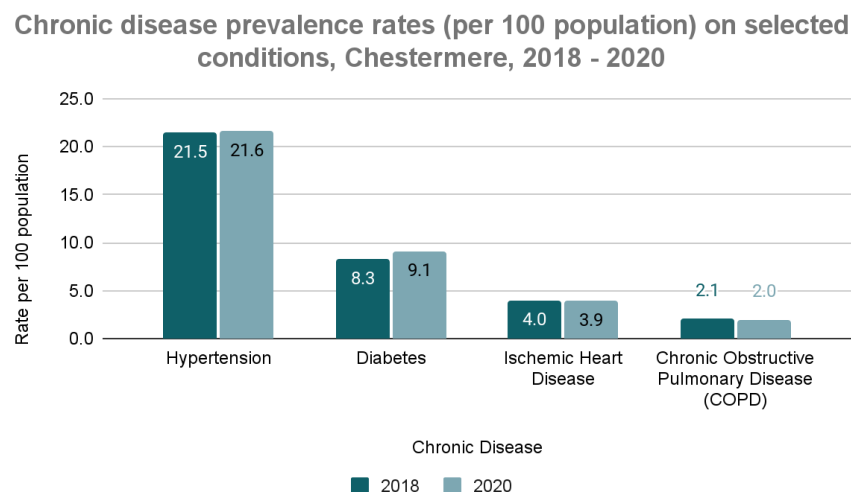
**Continued Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regular monitoring of crime rates and patterns can help identify emerging challenges and adjust strategies promptly, ensuring that Chestermere remains a safe place for its residents.

## Health<sup>9</sup>

Assessing the health conditions and risks in Chestermere provides invaluable insight into the pressing health demands and prospective hurdles the municipality may face.

### Chronic Disease Prevalence

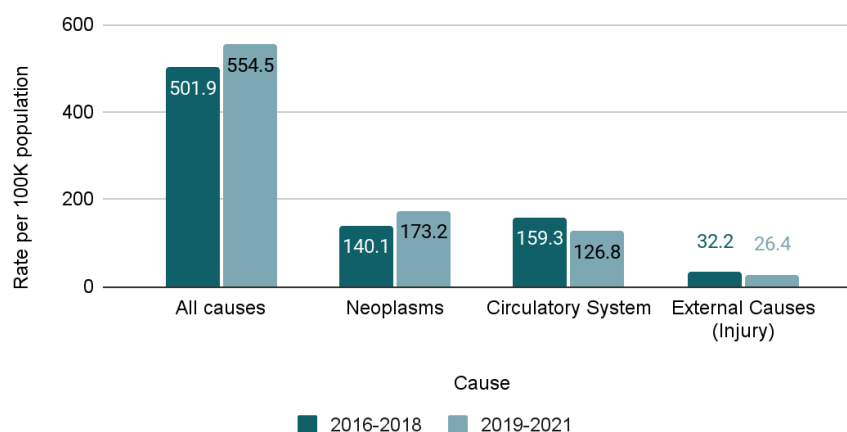
Between 2018 and 2020, Chestermere witnessed subtle shifts in the prevalence of various chronic diseases. The rate of hypertension marginally increased from 21.5 to 21.6 per 100 population. Similarly, diabetes experienced a rise from 8.3 to 9.1. On the other hand, ischemic heart disease saw a minor decline from 4.0 to 3.9, and the prevalence of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) decreased from 2.1 to 2.0 per 100 population.



The data indicates that from 2016-2018 to 2019-2021, the overall mortality rate in Chestermere increased from 501.9 to 554.5 per 100,000 population. The mortality rate due to neoplasms increased significantly from 140.1 to 173.2. However, mortality rates from circulatory system issues and external causes such as injury decreased from 159.3 to 126.8 and 32.2 to 26.4 respectively.

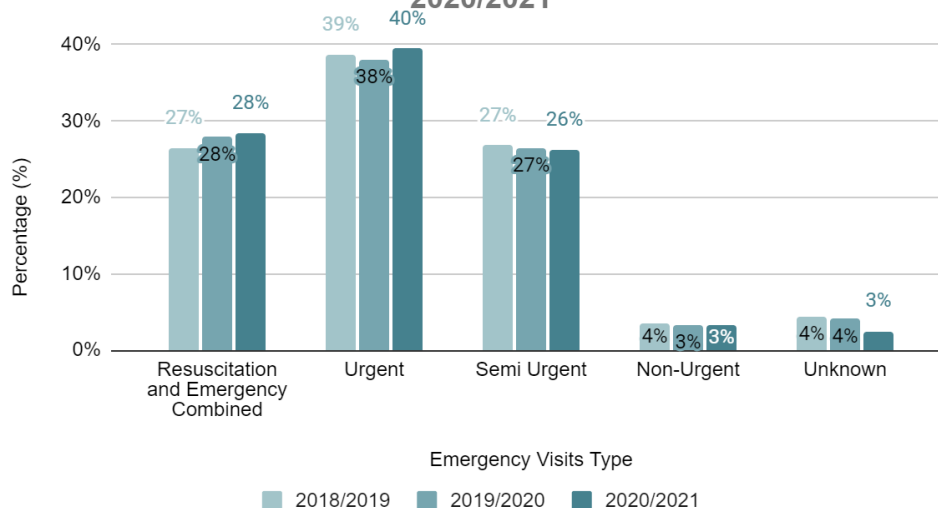
<sup>9</sup> Data for this section was primarily taken from: Government of Alberta. (August, 2022). Alberta Health, Community Profile: Chestermere, and Government of Alberta. (December, 2019). Alberta Health, Community Profile: Chestermere. Information retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/community-profile-chestermere#summary>

**Mortality rates (per 100K population) for three-calendar-year period, Chestermere, 2016-2018 / 2019-2021**



From 2018 to 2021, the most prevalent type of emergency visit in Chestermere was urgent visits (38-40%), followed by resuscitation and emergency combined (27-28%) and semi-urgent visits (26-27%). The proportion of visits belonging to each category was stable across those years.

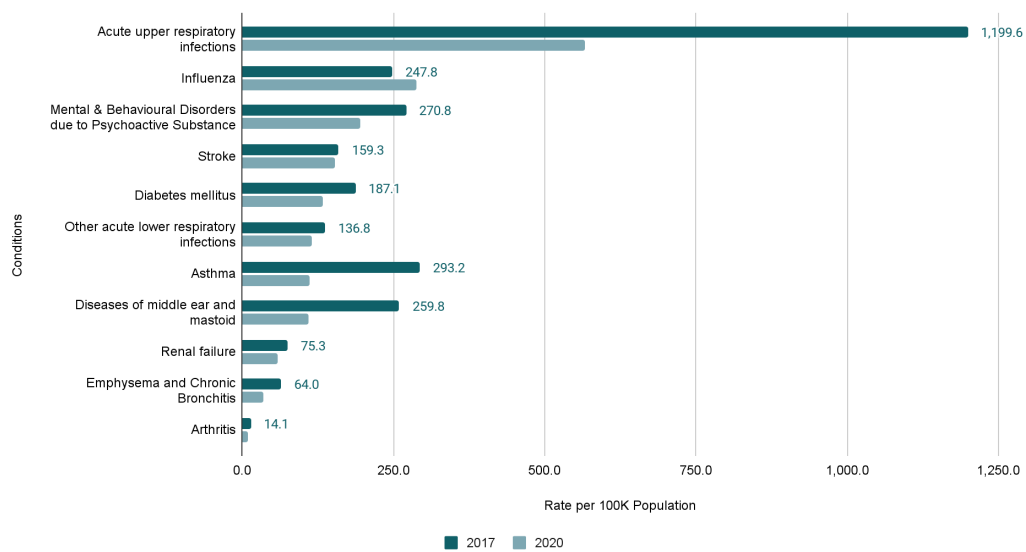
**Emergency visits for the fiscal years, Chestermere, 2018/2019 - 2020/2021**



From 2017 to 2020, the rate of emergency visits for almost all selected conditions in Chestermere significantly decreased. However, the rate of emergency visits due to influenza increased slightly. Cases due to acute upper respiratory infections saw the largest drop, more than halving from 1199.6 to 567.3 per 100,000 population.

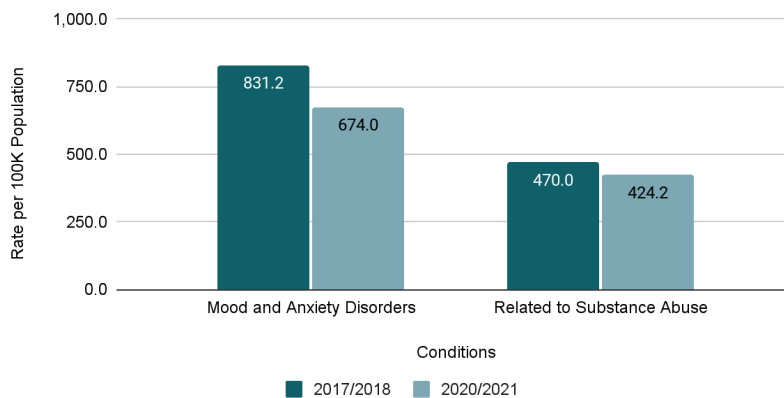


Emergency visit rates (per 100K population) for selected conditions, Chestermere, 2017 - 2020

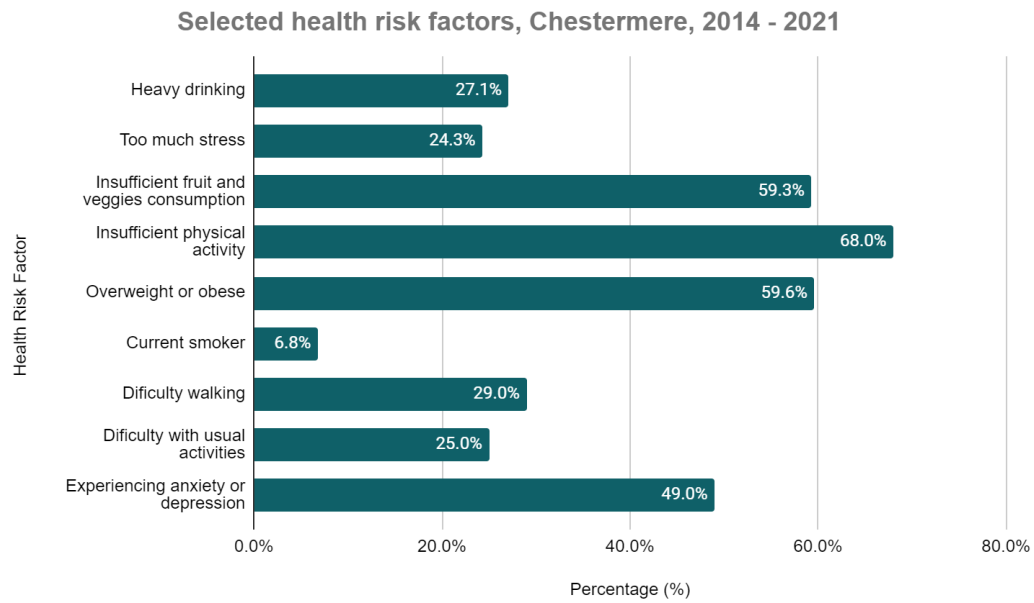


The data shows a decline in cases for both categories in Chestermere from 2017/2018 to 2020/2021. Mood and Anxiety Disorders decreased from 831.2 to 674, while cases Related to Substance Abuse decreased from 470 to 424.2.

ED visits related to mood, anxiety disorders and substance abuse, rate (per 100K population), Chestermere, 2017-2018 / 2020-2021



From 2014 to 2021, the primary health risk factors in Chestermere were insufficient physical activity (68.0%), being overweight or obese (59.6%), insufficient fruit and vegetable consumption (59.3%), and anxiety or depression (49.0%). The least prominent health risk factor was being a current smoker, at 6.8%.



In terms of access to health care services, Chestermere residents predominantly accessed ambulatory care services at facilities outside of Chestermere. In the fiscal year 2017/2018, such visits constituted 100.0% (or 39,148 visits) of all ambulatory care visits, with the majority (17.7% of all external visits) directed to the Peter Lougheed Centre in Calgary. This trend continued into the 2020/2021 fiscal year, wherein all of these visits, amounting to 100% or 36,509 in total, were to external facilities. Once again, the Peter Lougheed Centre in Calgary was the primary health facility, accommodating 18.8% of all external visits.

## Implications for Social Planning



**Healthcare Prioritization:** With hypertension and diabetes as prominent chronic diseases, the healthcare infrastructure should be geared towards managing and preventing these conditions. Clinics may need to ensure they have adequate resources and personnel specializing in these areas.



**Cancer Awareness and Screening:** The fact that cancer is the leading cause of death highlights the importance of early screening, awareness campaigns, and possibly the establishment of or partnership with specialized cancer-care facilities.



**Mental Health Initiatives:** The notable number of visits related to mood, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse underscores the need for strong mental health support systems, counselling centres, and community awareness initiatives.



**Health Education and Wellness Programs:** The main health risk factors point toward lifestyle choices. Initiatives that promote physical activity, healthy eating, and general wellness can help address these risk factors. Examples might include community fitness programs, a farmers market, and nutritional education in schools.



**Collaborative Community Programs:** Collaborations between schools, community centres, and health institutions can help promote health awareness, especially for prevalent risk factors.



**Healthcare Accessibility:** Ensure that healthcare services, especially those catering to the most prevalent diseases and conditions, are easily accessible, physically and in terms of affordability, to all community members.



**Regular Health Surveys:** Regular community health surveys can help monitor trends, identify emerging health issues, and guide health interventions and policies.



**Disease Prevention Campaigns:** Campaigns focusing on hypertension, diabetes, respiratory infections, and mental health can make the community more aware, leading to early diagnosis and better outcomes.

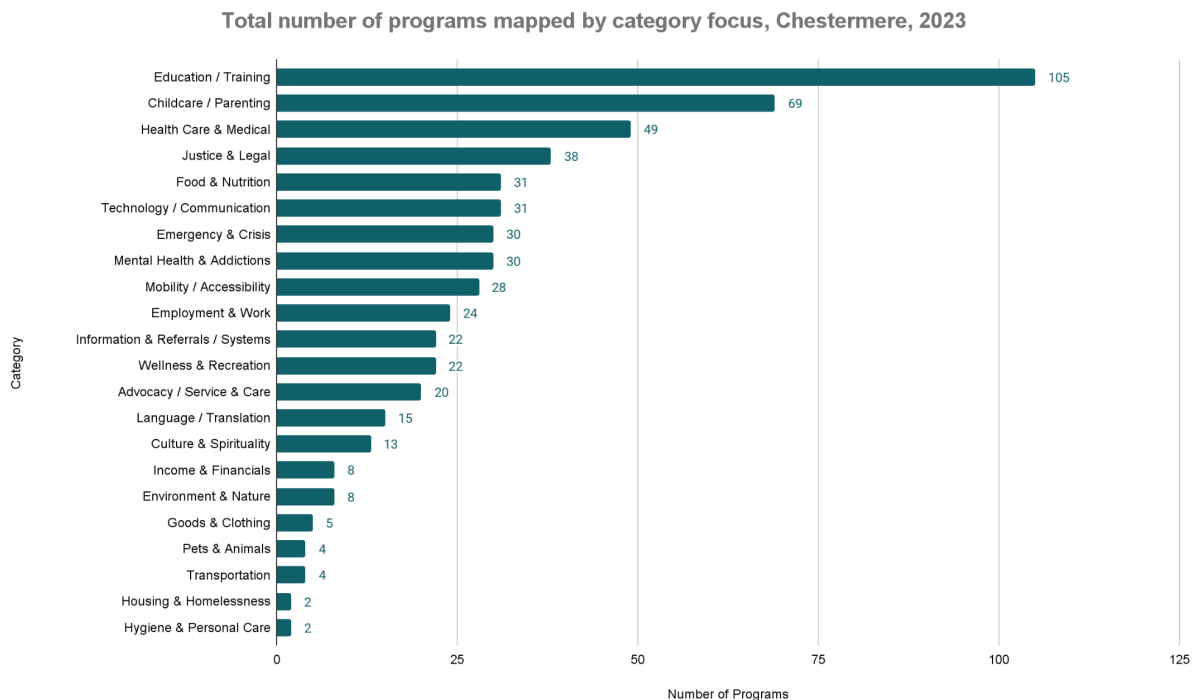


**Support Groups and Counselling:** For chronic diseases like diabetes, hypertension, cancer, and mental health disorders, support groups can provide emotional support and information, leading to better disease management and improved quality of life.

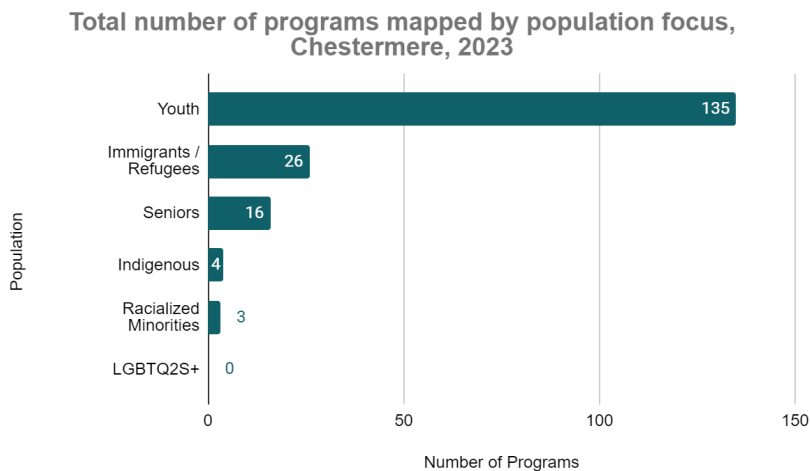
## Social Ecosystem

In Chestermere, a mapped social ecosystem reveals 67 organizations running 272 programs. This knowledge is relevant to the municipality's social planning. It helps identify available resources, service gaps, and areas of overlap, enabling informed decision-making and efficient resource allocation. Ultimately, understanding the social landscape ensures a thriving, inclusive community in Chestermere.

In 2023, the social ecosystem mapping reveals a diverse range of programs across various categories. The data indicates a significant focus on Education/Training with 105 programs, followed by Childcare/Parenting and Health Care/Medical with 69 and 49 programs respectively. However, there's a noticeable gap in areas such as Housing & Homelessness and Hygiene & Personal Care, each having only two dedicated programs.



The mapping data highlights 135 programs for youth and 26 for immigrants/refugees. However, Indigenous and racialized minorities have only 4 and 3 programs respectively, and notably, there are no programs specifically for the LGBTQ2S+ community.



## Gaps and Opportunities

As shown, in Chestermere, the evolving demographic landscape brings forth a myriad of needs and challenges across diverse population segments. The city is witnessing a significant aging population, an increase in ethnic diversity, escalating housing concerns, economic strains, and a rise in various health issues. An examination of the currently available community programs against these identified needs reveals notable gaps and presents opportunities for strategic enhancements.

The following table encapsulates the specific needs in key focus areas, outlines the programs currently in place, and proposes some considerations to bridge the identified gaps, thereby fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for all Chestermere residents.

Focus Area	Need	Available Programs	Gap/Considerations
Aging and Diverse Population	The population is aging, with significant growth in the 65+ age group. Ethnic diversity is increasing.	16 programs for seniors and 105 in education/training.	Increase programs tailored for seniors, focusing on health, housing, and cultural integration.
Housing Concerns and Growth	Rising housing concerns, and a need for affordable and suitable housing, especially for seniors and modest-income families.	Only 2 programs on housing and homelessness.	Significant increase in housing-related programs, focusing on affordability and suitability for diverse needs.
Economic Strain	Dip in market income, the rising cost of living, and financial burden on residents.	8 programs on income & financials and 22 on information & referrals.	Enhance and possibly increase financial support services and information/referral programs.
Health Concerns	Increase in hypertension, mental health issues, substance abuse, and lifestyle-related health risks.	49 programs in health care & medical, and 30 in mental health & addictions.	Strengthen and possibly expand health-related programs, with a focus on prevention and lifestyle education.

Diverse Demographic Needs	Diverse needs across different demographic groups, including lower-income families, immigrants, seniors, and Indigenous communities.	Programs targeting youth (135), immigrants/refugees (26), and Indigenous (4), but no specific programs for LGBTQ+ and limited for racialized minorities (3).	Develop inclusive, culturally diverse, and age-friendly programming, with a focus on the LGBTQ+ community and racialized minorities.
Remote Work and Health Pressures	Increase in remote working affecting housing needs; rise in chronic and acute health needs pressuring healthcare and social safety nets.	Several programs in healthcare, education/training, and technology/communication (31), but limited in housing.	Evaluate and adapt programs to support remote work needs, and continuously assess and adapt healthcare programs to meet rising demands.

## Overlapping of Social Needs

The concept of overlapping of social needs in a community refers to multiple social challenges coexisting in specific areas or segments of a community.

For example, a particular neighbourhood might experience high rates of unemployment, which is intrinsically linked to poverty. Those living in poverty might also find themselves in core housing need, meaning they spend a disproportionately high percentage of their income on housing or live in unsuitable or overcrowded conditions. Other examples might be a high proportion of seniors with specific health and accessibility needs, and one-parent families who face challenges related to childcare, employment, and housing.

Overlapping needs can often exacerbate each other. For example, high unemployment can lead to increased poverty, which in turn can result in more significant housing needs. Similarly, neighbourhoods with a high proportion of one-parent families might experience increased demands for childcare, employment opportunities with flexible hours, and affordable housing close to schools or workplaces.

With overlapping issues, addressing one issue in isolation may not bring about significant change or improvement in the community's overall wellbeing. Instead, integrated, holistic solutions that address the interrelated nature of social challenges may be needed.

Considerations for recognizing and addressing the overlapping of social needs in a community are listed below.

- **Holistic Solutions:** Solutions are comprehensive and address the root causes, rather than just the symptoms of a problem.
- **Inclusive Policies:** Policies are designed to be inclusive, ensuring that no group is marginalized.
- **Efficient Resource Allocation:** Resources are used efficiently by targeting areas where multiple challenges intersect, thereby maximizing the impact of interventions.
- **Empowered Communities:** Understanding and addressing interlinked challenges increases the likelihood of empowering communities for sustainable, long-term change.

In this section, the overlapping needs for selected social indicators are presented by the census dissemination area in Chestermere.

## Seniors and Low-Income



Areas in black have the highest proportion of seniors (between 16% and 27%), and low-income households (between 5% and 7%).

The map on the left highlights the dissemination areas in Chestermere with the highest proportions of both seniors (65 years and over) and low-income households.

Such areas experience compounded challenges: seniors often require specialized healthcare, social services, and accessibility provisions, while low-income households struggle with financial stability and accessing basic necessities. When combined, the community may see heightened strain on local resources, increased health disparities, and a greater need for comprehensive support systems.

## Children and Core Housing Needs



Areas in black have the highest proportion of children (between 24% and 28%), and households in core housing need (between 5% and 16%).

The map on the left highlights the dissemination areas in Chestermere with the highest proportions of both children (0 to 14 years) and households in core housing needs.

Areas with high proportions of children and core housing needs face increased vulnerabilities: children require safe, stable environments for optimal development, while core housing need indicates a lack of suitable housing options. This combination can lead to compromised child wellbeing and amplifies the urgency for affordable, adequate housing solutions.



## One-parent families and households spend more than 30% of their income on shelter costs

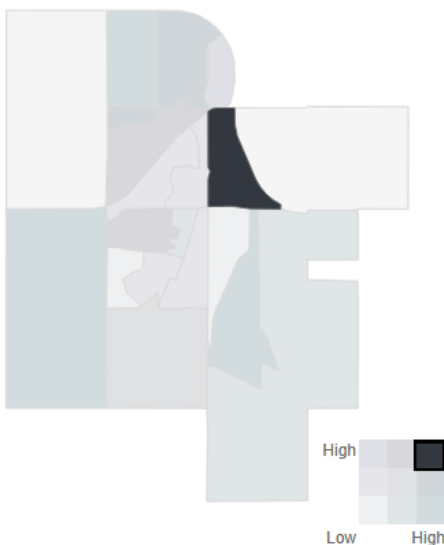


The map on the left highlights the dissemination areas in Chestermere with the highest proportions of both one-parent families and households facing housing affordability issues.

Areas with high proportions of one-parent families and households spending more than 30% of their income on shelter costs face financial strains: single parents often have limited resources, and excessive housing expenses can lead to financial instability. This combination can exacerbate poverty risks and underscores the need for affordable housing and support services.

Areas in black have the highest proportion of one-parent families (between 13% and 31%), and households spending more than 30% of income on shelter costs (between 5% and 16%).

## Immigrants and unemployment



The map on the left highlights the dissemination areas in Chestermere with the highest proportions of both immigrants and unemployment rates.

Areas with a high proportion of immigrants and significant unemployment rates can face integration challenges: newcomers might struggle to find jobs due to language barriers or unrecognized qualifications. Such circumstances can hinder their economic assimilation and increase their reliance on social services.

Areas in black have the highest proportion of immigrants (between 33% and 41%), and unemployment rates (between 8% and 14%).

Each highlighted area in Chestermere presents its unique blend of challenges that are deeply intertwined. To genuinely elevate the quality of life for residents, a broad, holistic approach is necessary—one that not only addresses the challenges in tandem but also recognizes the symbiotic nature of these social issues.

## Implications for Social Planning



**Seniors and Low-Income Households:** The higher number of seniors and low-income households in certain neighbourhoods suggests a need for versatile services that address both healthcare and financial stability. Tailoring programs and resources to accommodate the diverse needs of these demographic groups could enhance overall community wellbeing and reduce strain on local resources.



**Children and Core Housing Needs:** Where children live with core housing needs, it would be beneficial to closely examine housing policies and child welfare services. Targeted interventions and resource allocation in these areas can help promote children's safe living conditions and optimal development.



**Single-Parent Families and Housing Costs:** The intersection of single-parent families and households with high shelter costs in specific neighbourhoods suggests that focused financial support and housing assistance may be helpful. Policies and programs that address affordability and provide essential support services can help alleviate financial pressures and contribute to family stability.



**Immigrants and Unemployment:** Community members who are both immigrant and unemployed likely have a need for programs that assist with job placement, language acquisition, and qualification recognition. These efforts can support immigrants' economic assimilation, and community integration, and reduce reliance on social services.

# Key Challenges and Opportunities

Chestermere's evolving demographic landscape presents a range of challenges and opportunities. By examining these challenges alongside prevailing trends, we can identify targeted opportunities for intervention. The following is an overview of these dynamics by broad areas, with recommendations for guiding strategic decision-making to benefit Chestermere residents.

## Population, Urban and At-Risk Dynamics

Chestermere is facing the challenge of infrastructure strain, brought about by rapid and varied population growth, and compounded by increased urban density. This particularly affects lower-income households and recent immigrants.

To address these challenges, there is an opportunity to prioritize scalable community programs, enhance public transport, develop multi-use centres, establish community gardens, expand green spaces, and provide targeted support for the at-risk populations.

## Demographic Shifts

There are challenges posed by an ageing population, cultural integration hurdles, a decline in the number of Indigenous residents, increased healthcare demands, and concerns over economic sustainability.

With significant growth in the senior population, changing immigrant and ethnic profiles, and a decline in the size of the Indigenous community, there is a need to emphasize services for the elderly, wellness checks, multicultural hubs, Indigenous-focused events, and comprehensive language/cultural integration programs.

## Educational Trends

There are variations in grade enrolments, overall growth in enrolment, except in grades 10, 11, and 12, changes in educational attainment, growth in studying outside the country, and a decrease in the number of workers with certain areas of specialization.

With an overall increase in school enrolment and higher educational attainment, the city has opportunities to expand schools, enhance teacher development, partner with colleges, promote academic fields experiencing a decline, and strengthen ties with international institutions.

## Economic and Employment

Economic fluctuations are evident in shifting employment trends, business declines, a surge in remote work, and changes in how many people are accessing employment insurance benefits. Workers, entrepreneurs, and people working remotely are at the centre of these shifts. As businesses decline and work dynamics evolve, there are opportunities to support startups, emphasize work promotions, improve the digital infrastructure, establish community remote hubs, and offer financial counselling services.

## Family and Social Dynamics

The community is experiencing changes in family structures, a decrease in crime rates, shifting language patterns, and mobility changes.

These changes open doors for diverse family-centric programs, community policing, multilingual services, local amenities, and broader community integration initiatives.

## Housing and Income

Housing stability is affected by shifts in income sources, rising housing costs, slow median income growth, and increased food bank usage.

With the growing number of dwellings and a decrease in market income, Chestermere can focus on homeownership programs, financial literacy, equitable service access, and initiatives that address rising housing costs and food bank demands.

## Health and Wellness

Health in the community is of concern, particularly in the areas of chronic diseases and mental health challenges. These, along with changing employment trends and an ageing population, increase the strain on social services.

There may be a need to expand healthcare facilities, launch health and wellness programs, and reinforce social safety net elements that relate to health.

## Commuting and Business Dynamics

Changes to workplaces, employment opportunities, and commuting patterns indicate a possible need for public transit, supporting alternative forms of transportation, focusing on business retention, and introducing industry retraining programs.

## Conclusion

Chestermere is on the cusp of substantial growth and transformation, with many opportunities and challenges. The anticipated population surge, coupled with changing economic and demographic factors, reinforces the need for evaluating current and future needs and planning for change.

Key areas of concern include bolstering public transit in response to increasing city density, catering to the expanding senior and newcomer demographics, and addressing housing disparities. The rise in working remotely underlines the need for enhanced digital capacity. Fortifying healthcare in light of current and evolving health concerns is also indicated.

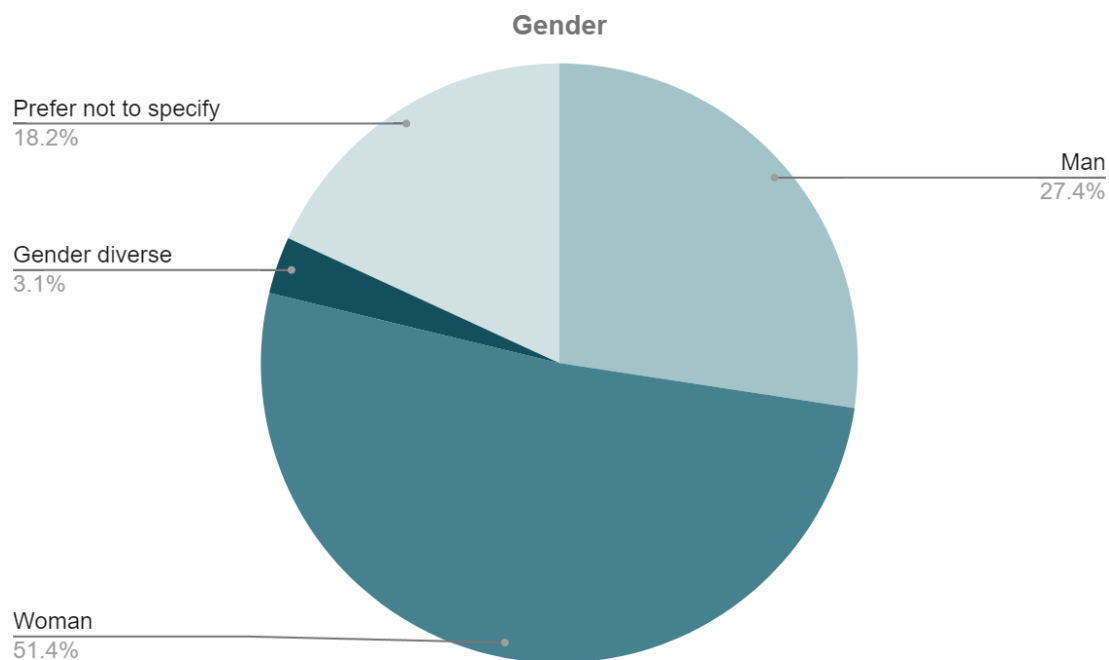
A strategic and holistic approach to resource allocation can ensure that Chestermere thrives as a resilient, inclusive, and vibrant community for all its residents.

## Appendix A: Social Needs Survey Results

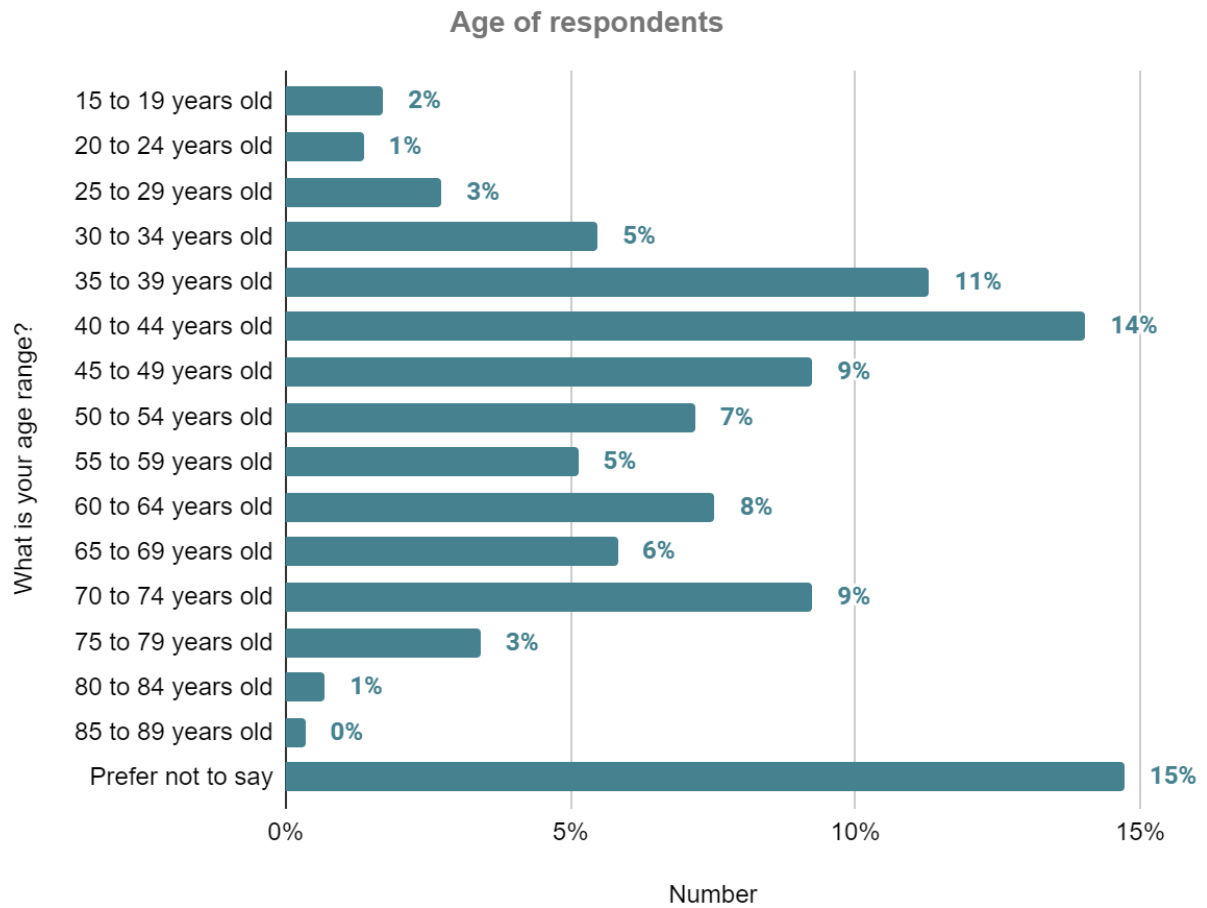
The Chestermere Social Needs Survey serves as an initial framework for assessing the array of community needs and perspectives. While inclusive of a broad demographic, it's acknowledged that surveys are not fully representative and that factors such as race, gender, sexuality, family status, diverse abilities, housing stability, and mental health can significantly impact perceptions of safety and belonging, for example. As such, ongoing validation of these preliminary findings is recommended. Further community engagement will be facilitated through forums and feedback mechanisms, with the aim of incorporating diverse and inclusive perspectives in shaping Chestermere's social infrastructure.

### Respondents

- 292 individuals completed the survey.
- Of those who responded to the question about ethnicity, 114 identified as White, 101 as South Asian, and 24 as either another ethnicity (e.g. Indigenous, Latin American, Black, Arab, Southeast Asian, or Other) or more than one ethnicity. Due to the low number of responses in these categories, and to preserve anonymity, these responses were grouped together. Responses were weighted according to the 2021 Census demographics for the city of Chestermere.
- 28% of those surveyed identified as immigrants, but only 3% identified as newcomers to Canada (arrived within the last five years)

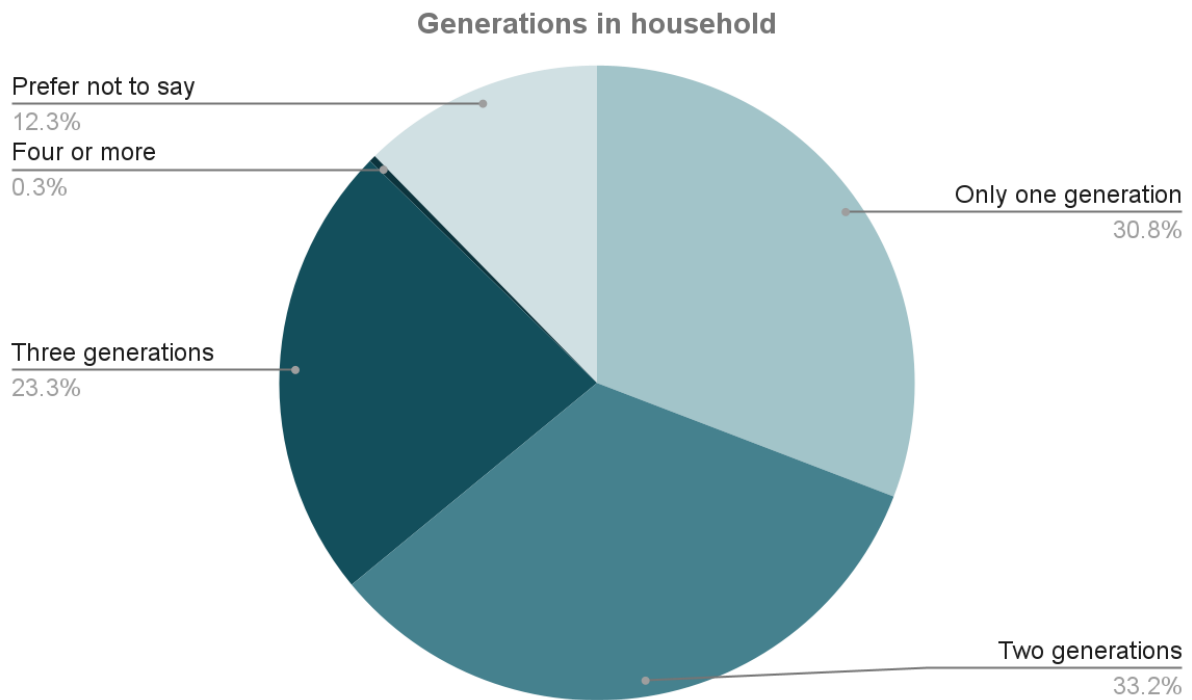


→ Just over half of respondents identified themselves as women, while over a quarter identified as men.

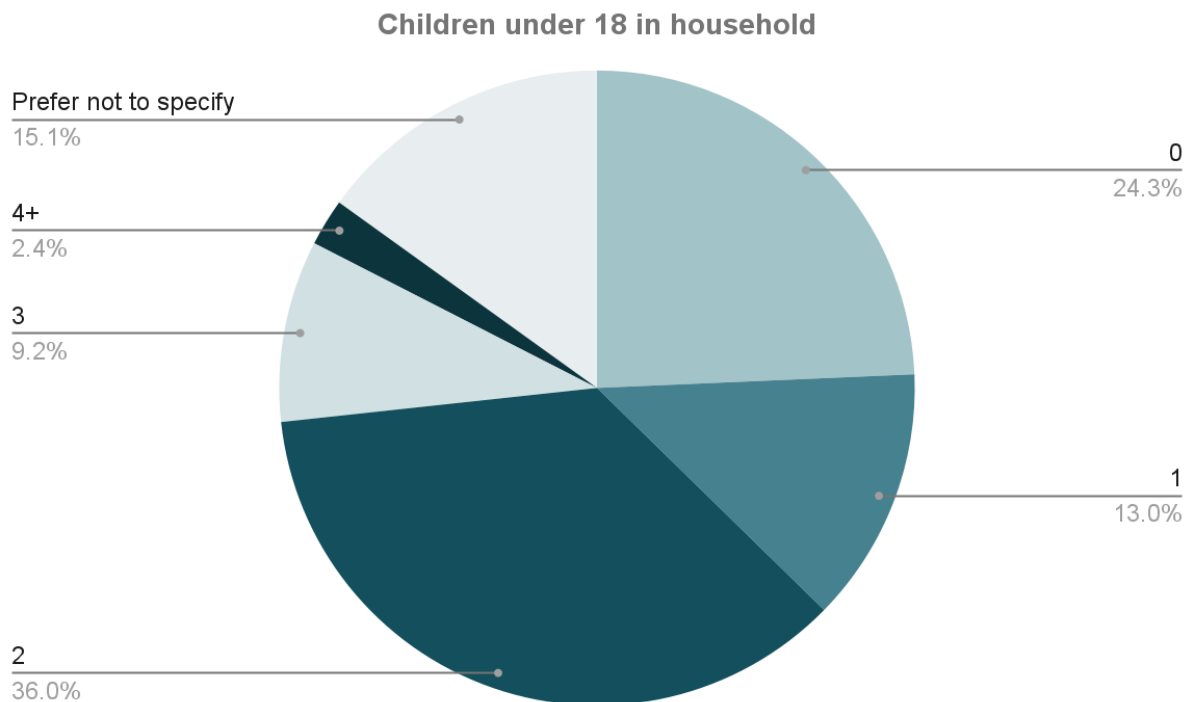


→ Most responses fell into the 35 to 49 year age range, but there was a spread of responses from individuals between 15 and 89.



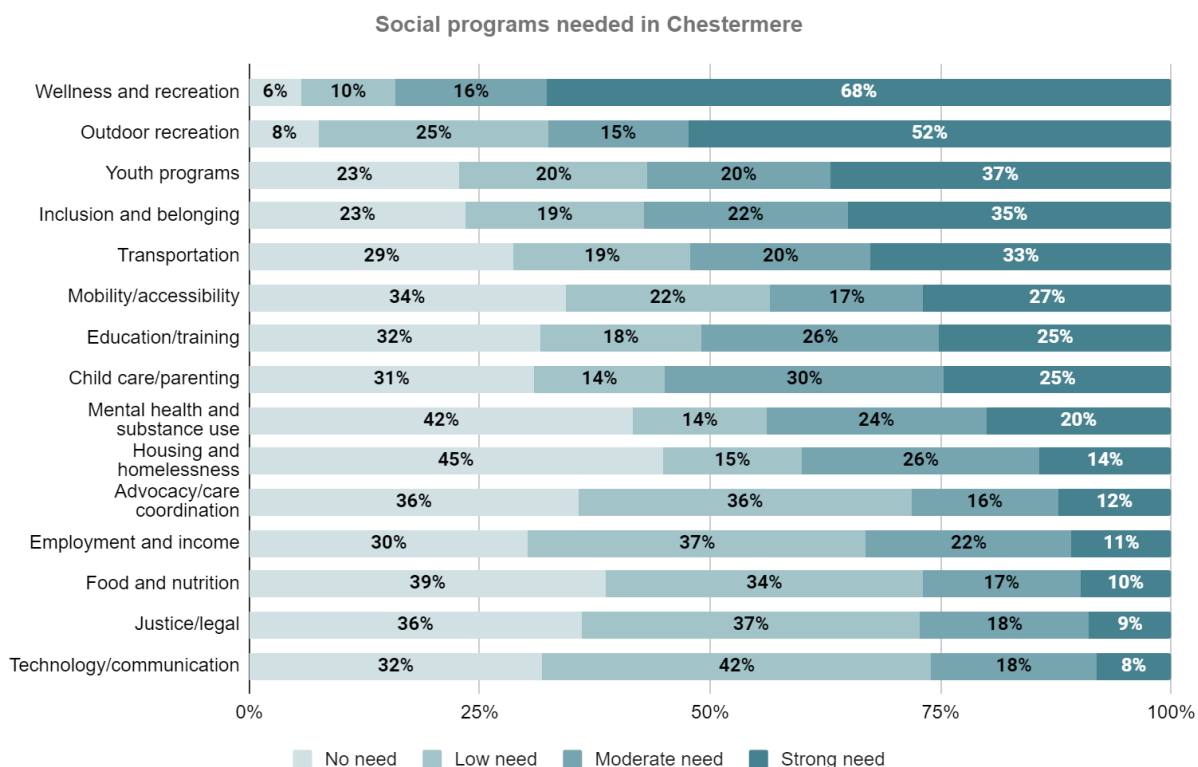


→ While a third of respondents came from two-generational households, around 30% came from single-generational households, and almost a quarter lived in three generation households.



- Over half of responses came from people who lived with at least one child under 18, but a quarter came from those with no children under 18 in their household.

## Social Programs Needed in the Community



The two most commonly cited needs in Chestermere are wellness and recreation (84% moderate or strong need), followed by outdoor recreation (68% moderate or strong need). Other common needs include youth programming, inclusion and belonging programming, and transportation.

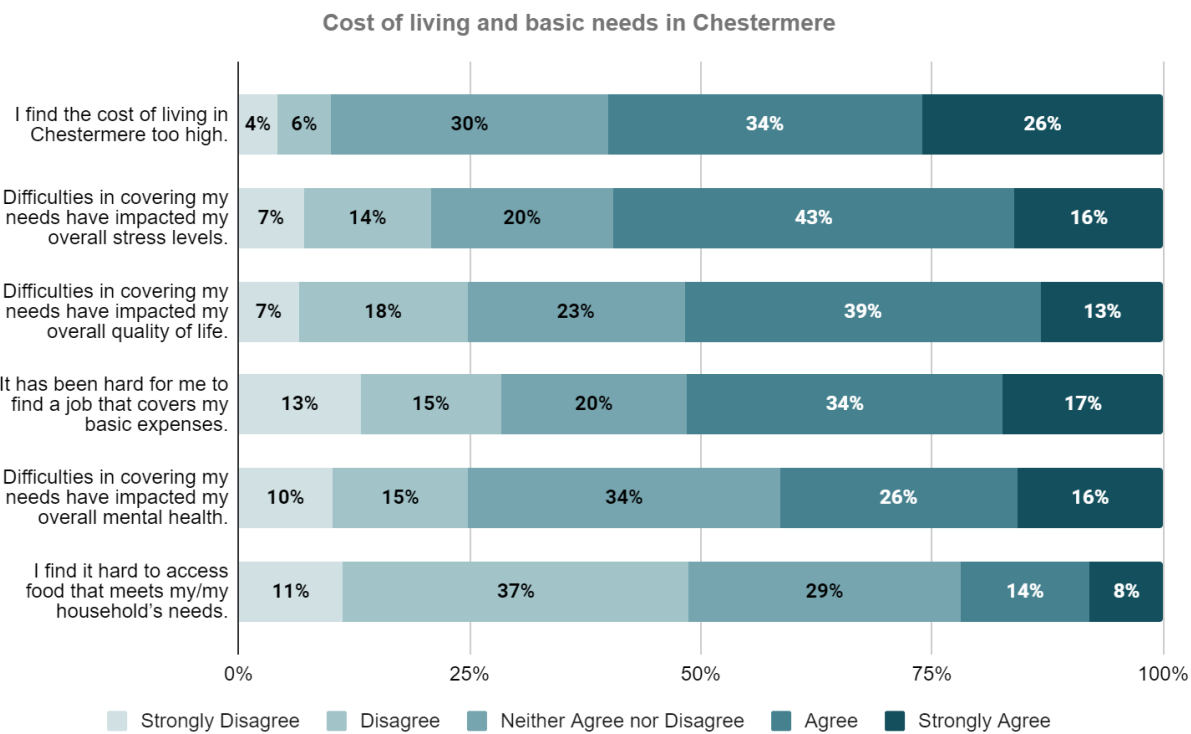
The community is split on some topics. When asked about mental health and substance use, 42% said there was no need for those programs, while 44% said there was moderate or strong need. A similar split was seen for housing and homelessness programming (45% no need, 40% moderate or strong need). Many who said there was no need for this programming cited concerns about unintended negative outcomes for the city.

Despite the divided public opinion, the data still shows a significant portion of the community acknowledging a moderate or strong need for such services. This suggests that there is indeed a real requirement for these programs, and failing to address these needs could have long-term consequences for the community's well-being.

When asked what additional services not listed were needed, many individuals took the opportunity to list specific services that fell within the previous categories. The most commonly demanded services included:

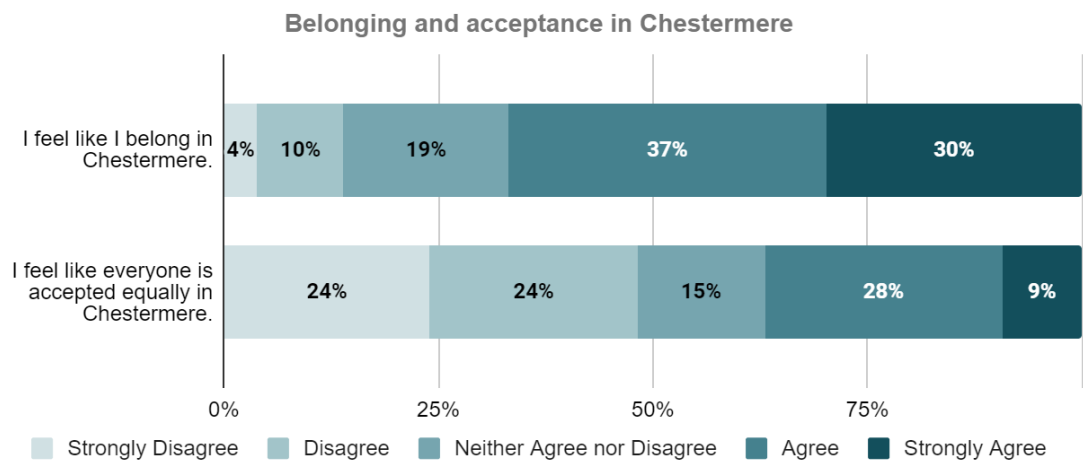
- 1. Swimming Pool: This was a recurring request, mentioned multiple times as both a standalone pool and part of a recreational center.
- 2. Recreational Center: The need for a multifunctional recreational space that could include various amenities was commonly cited.
- 3. Transportation: Several responses mentioned the need for better public transport, both within the community and between neighboring cities like Calgary.
- 4. Senior Programs and Housing: Various types of senior support, including housing and programming, were frequently mentioned.
- 5. Youth Programs: Multiple responses cited the need for additional youth activities and services, including Synergy programs and other after-school activities.

### Personal Experiences in the Community

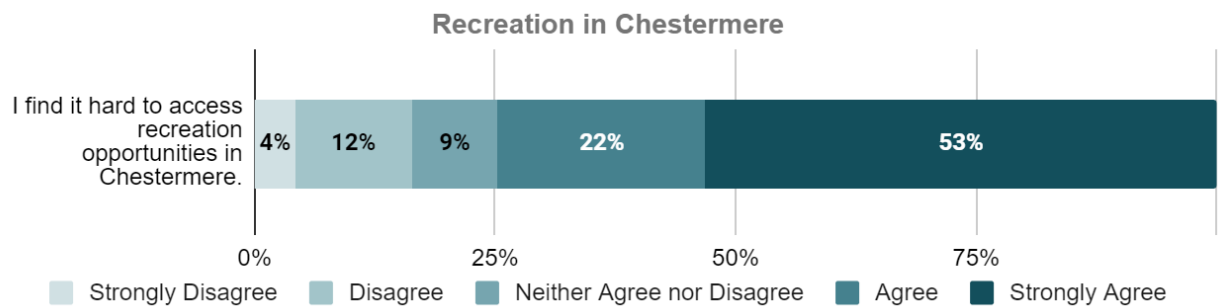


There is broad agreement that the cost of living is high in Chestermere, and individuals are reporting that this is impacting their well-being. Over half of individuals agree that difficulties in covering their basic needs have impacted their stress levels and quality of life, while over 40% report an impact on their mental health. Over half have difficulty finding employment that

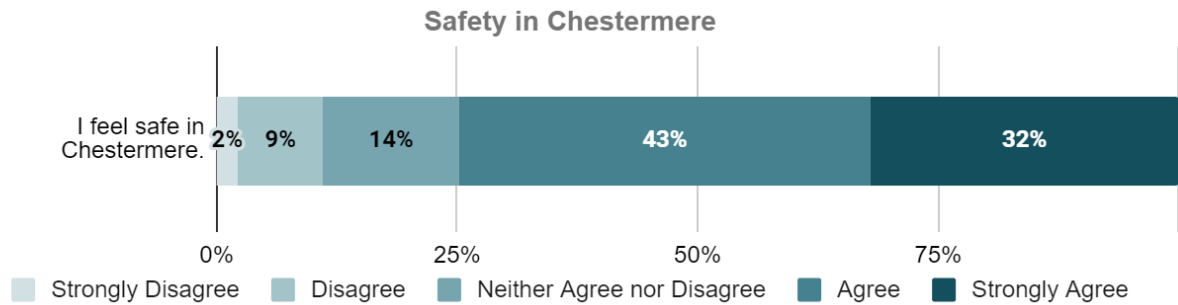
adequately covers basic expenses. Finally, nearly a quarter of those responding expressed difficulty to access food for their household.



When asked about belonging and acceptance in Chestermere, an interesting trend emerged. The vast majority of those answering the survey felt that they, personally, belong in the city, with only 14% of people disagreeing with that statement. However, almost half of people disagreed with the statement that everyone is accepted equally in Chestermere. This disagreement was most pronounced in the South Asian community, but could be seen amongst people of all ethnic backgrounds. Thus, even those who feel included in the community are seeing signs that this inclusion does not extend to everyone, and may be vulnerable to feelings of exclusion in the future.



Once again, recreation is seen as a major need in Chestermere, with three quarters of responses agreeing that it is hard to access recreational opportunities, and over half of individuals in strong agreement.



Finally, most of those surveyed feel safe in Chestermere, with only 11% disagreeing with that statement. However, some individuals did mention safety in schools as a concern during open-ended segments of the survey.

## Community Strengths

When asked about Chestermere's strengths in terms of social supports and services, the five most frequently mentioned were:

1. Synergy (Youth Programming, Mentorship)
2. Food Bank (Hamper Programs, Emergency Support)
3. Chestermere Women's Crisis Society (Domestic Violence Support)
4. Older Adults Coalition of Chestermere (Senior Engagement)
5. Library Services (Programs for Various Age Groups)

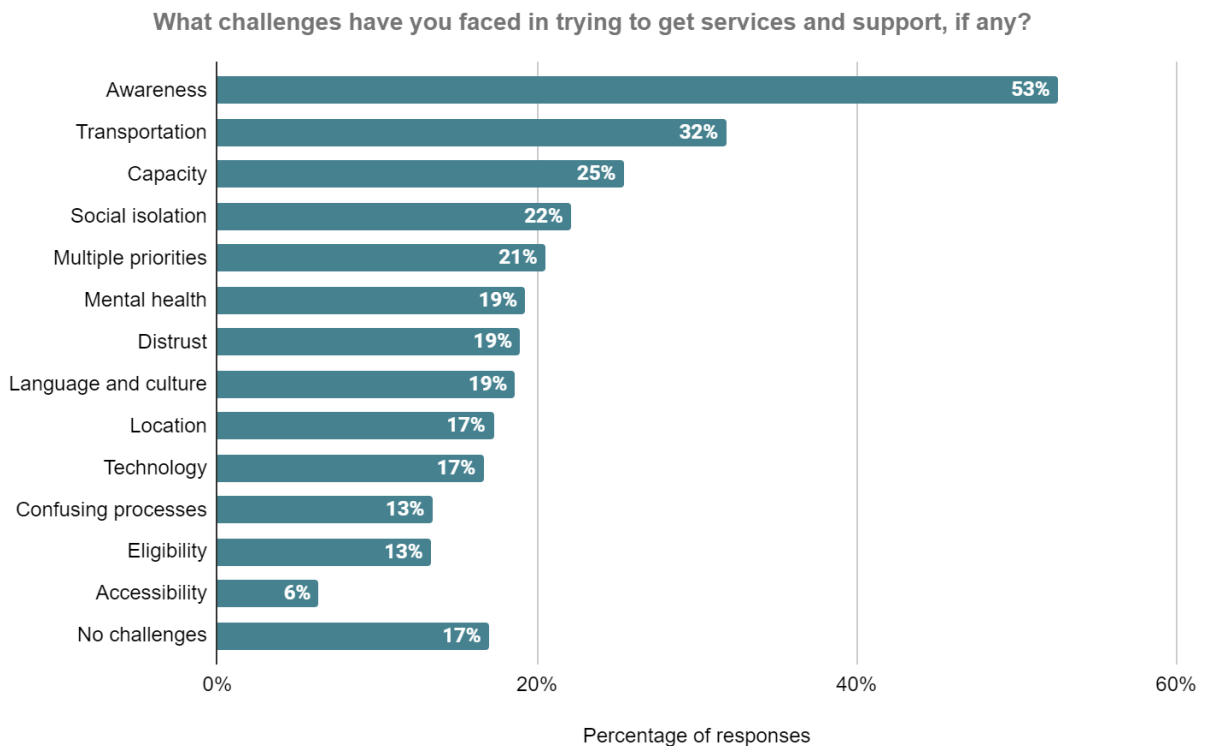
Other organizations and programs that were highlighted included:

- City of Chestermere's Community Services Department
- Whitecappers (senior services)
- Camp Chestermere (youth engagement, summer camps)
- Community Access Program
- Transit Subsidy
- Gift of Kindness Program
- Trellis (children's programs)
- Healthy Families Program
- CIWA Counselling Services
- Community Volunteer Income Tax Program
- AHS Workshops
- Community Resource Centre
- PCSS (Mental Health Services)
- Luna Play Kids
- Back to the Mat (jijitsu program)
- Parent Link
- Community Therapy Dogs

- Historical Society
- Senior's Week Bike Park

More general community strengths emerged in a diverse range of areas. High levels of volunteer engagement and agencies collaborating together underscore a culture of cooperation and shared purpose. There are support systems in place for specific age groups, such as parents of young children and older adults. Social cohesion is also promoted through a variety of inclusive community events, block parties, and community grants that fund both services and events. In terms of recreational and leisure activities, the community benefits from good recreational areas, walking and bike paths, as well as an array of festivals and community events. These strengths are underpinned by the general perception of a safe community environment.

## Challenges in Accessing Services



The single most cited challenge people in Chestermere face in getting services and support is being aware of those services. Over half of those surveyed expressed that awareness is a major challenge, with the lack of a local newspaper being mentioned in some open-ended responses as a barrier. Transportation to and from services is another major barrier, as is capacity, with many people reporting programs at their limit. Social isolation, and specifically the lack of other people to help find and access services, was noted by one in five respondents, and is likely tied to both awareness and transportation as a barrier - those who are socially isolated don't have other people to help them find programs, or to help them physically travel to those services.

When given the opportunity to list other barriers, those most commonly mentioned fell into the broad categories of funding issues, facilities and infrastructure, and governance and jurisdiction. Funding issues primarily stem from insufficient government support and limited program budgets. Facilities and infrastructure face challenges such as insufficient public spaces like libraries and recreational centers. Lastly, governance and jurisdiction concerns include mistrust in city leadership and jurisdictional conflicts.

## Finding Services

Citizens were asked how they would find services if they were in need of support. The most common responses were:

1. Using the internet, including search engines like Google
2. Visiting or contacting the City of Chestermere's official website or City Hall
3. Engaging with social media platforms, particularly Facebook
4. Consulting local organizations like Synergy, Older Adults, Whitecappers, Women's Crisis, or Food Bank
5. Visiting the library

Several people said that they would find it hard to know where to start. It was also noted that some people find the city website hard to navigate, while others said that programs aren't advertised well. Some also suggested going to Calgary for services.

## Additional Feedback

All people surveyed were given the opportunity to share their feedback more generally. While most comments reinforced themes seen previously in the survey, such as the need for recreation, some new topics emerged.

**Safety and Security:** Multiple comments pointed to a significant concern over safety in schools, especially middle schools. This issue seems to be top-of-mind for parents, both in-person and online. There were also calls for more visible police presence and better authority in schools to keep children safe. Some respondents felt that a lack of effective policing, especially during nighttime, leads to minor crimes and disturbances.

**Program Availability and Diversity:** Various responses indicated a need for a more diversified range of social support and recreational programs. The community is particularly concerned about the lack of support programs for teens, mentioning this directly and indirectly by highlighting issues like vandalism that could be mitigated by more engaging youth programs. There was also a call for mental health support, specifically due to the lingering effects of the pandemic. Programs for the elderly and those dealing with domestic violence were other areas mentioned.

**Funding and Support for Nonprofits:** Respondents noted that many social and recreational programs once managed by the city are now run by nonprofits, but without adequate support from

the municipality. There were concerns that the city has a large staff of advisors but is not “doing” enough for the community. The community worries that funding is being withheld and that nonprofits are not being sufficiently supported or included in discussions about community welfare.

**Economic and Social Disparities:** Income inequality within the community was mentioned, with specific reference to how this has widened over the last 25 years. Respondents noted that even housing initially meant to be affordable, such as duplexes, are priced significantly higher than expected. This economic division creates a social rift, with some residents feeling "left out" or "looked down upon," including children who experience this income gap at school. The issue of affordable housing and the growing income gap seems to have broad social implications, affecting residents' sense of belonging and community cohesion.



## Appendix B: Relevant Policies, Programs and Initiatives

As municipalities like the City of Chestermere undergo growth and transformation, the complexity and range of challenges they encounter inevitably intensify. Addressing these evolving challenges demands dynamic and responsive policies, programs, and initiatives. The provided brief serves as an initial step, offering an overview of selected policies, programs, and initiatives that form part of Chestermere's mandate, illustrating their connections to the findings of the recent social needs assessment. These policies, programs, and initiatives are not mere guidelines; they function as essential levers, playing a pivotal role in shaping the city's response to its socio-cultural landscape.

By grounding their understanding in these foundational instruments, stakeholders are better positioned to establish a robust foundation, setting the stage for more tailored and effective social planning efforts in the future. Further policy recommendations will be generated in subsequent phases of this work.

### 2016 Municipal Development Plan

Policy Description	
The City of Chestermere's Municipal Development Plan (MDP) outlines the community's long-term vision for development, setting policies for land use, infrastructure, and services. It serves as a guiding document for both the Council and city administration, detailing desired land use patterns, infrastructure investments, and service provisions. This MDP, shaped through comprehensive public engagement, ensures alignment with the aspirations and priorities of Chestermere's residents and leadership.	
Strengths	Opportunities
The City of Chestermere's Municipal Development Plan (MDP) represents a thorough understanding of community desires, emphasizing inclusive growth and infrastructure. The extensive public engagement process ensures the MDP resonates with the citizens' vision. By offering clear policies on land use, transportation, and infrastructure, it provides a structured roadmap for Chestermere's expansion. Moreover, its adaptability, as seen in its 2015 update, indicates a commitment to remain relevant to evolving community needs, especially in accommodating an aging and diversifying population, and addressing housing and health challenges.	While the MDP is comprehensive, there's room to further tailor policies to specific demographic shifts, such as the growth in the senior population and increasing ethnic diversity. Opportunities exist to integrate more targeted strategies for affordable housing, considering the surge in construction and property growth. Addressing the rising cost of living and economic strains can be more explicit in the plan. Additionally, given the health trends, policies could further emphasize preventive health measures, mental health support, and initiatives to counter chronic diseases like hypertension and diabetes. Finally, as Chestermere grows, continuous community engagement will be key to ensure

	that all residents' voices are heard and incorporated.
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## 2014 Recreational Facilities and Amenities Strategic Plan

Policy Description	
<p>The Chestermere Facilities and Amenities Strategic Plan consists of essential facilities like the RCMP, Emergency Services, and Health Facilities; the 2014 Master Recreation Plan focusing on sports, leisure, and outdoor amenities; environmental resources policies; and a Cost of Growth Analysis. Chestermere aims to be Alberta's recreation and leisure hub, evident by its active residents who partake in various outdoor activities. The town's vision promotes an active lifestyle, enriched by diverse resident-initiated organizations, community-focused groups, private recreational businesses, schools, and fundraising events. The 2014 Master Recreation Plan outlines the strategic direction for recreation in Chestermere, considering trends, comparisons with other communities, development priorities, and recommendations.</p>	
Strengths	Opportunities
<p>The Chestermere Facilities and Amenities Strategic Plan showcases a well-thought-out approach to community development, emphasizing essential services, recreational infrastructure, environmental conservation, and growth considerations. This holistic perspective ensures that key areas of residents' lives are catered for, from safety to leisure. The emphasis on promoting an active lifestyle underscores Chestermere's commitment to health and well-being, further augmented by the wealth of resident-initiated organizations and community-focused groups.</p>	<p>Given the challenges faced by the growing community, there's potential to further harness the enthusiasm of resident-initiated organizations and amplify their impact, fostering even stronger community ties. Expanding and diversifying recreational and leisure activities can cater to a broader range of residents, thereby fostering inclusivity. Additionally, while the current plan is comprehensive, ongoing engagement with the community can provide insights into emerging needs, ensuring that the strategic plan remains dynamic and responsive to the evolving socio-cultural landscape of Chestermere.</p>

## 2019 Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Policy Description
<p>The City of Chestermere prioritizes fairness and inclusivity for all residents and employees. This commitment includes equitable access to services, promoting diverse rights, and cultivating unbiased policies. The city acknowledges Indigenous history, collaborates with marginalized groups, celebrates cultural events, and is part of initiatives against discrimination. Chestermere emphasizes clear communication and champions diversity, ensuring an inclusive environment for everyone.</p>

Strengths	Opportunities
The City of Chestermere's policy framework underscores its unwavering commitment to ensuring fairness, equity, and inclusivity for all its residents and employees. By championing the participation of every individual regardless of their background, the city fosters a harmonious and diverse environment. The policy's emphasis on proactive outreach, from raising awareness of various groups and their rights to increasing knowledge of Indigenous history, highlights Chestermere's progressive stance.	As Chestermere grapples with challenges intrinsic to growing urban landscapes, there lies a golden opportunity to further intensify its engagement with marginalized groups, ensuring they feel seen and valued. While the city already celebrates various organizations and events, expanding these celebrations can lead to a richer cultural tapestry, promoting unity in diversity. Additionally, by regularly revisiting and refining its policies based on active community feedback, Chestermere can ensure its strategies stay relevant, agile, and in tune with the pulse of its dynamic populace.

## 2012-2014 Social Plan

Policy Description	
In 2008, Chestermere residents overwhelmingly chose to develop a distinct identity rather than remain as Calgary's extension. This decision birthed the Chestermere Municipal Development Plan (MDP), detailing both the town's physical growth and the residents' desired community feel. While the MDP has a 30-year horizon, a more immediate Social Plan was introduced to address the town's evolving social needs and align with the provincial Family and Community Support Services Act. This plan, primarily for Chestermere's residents, emphasizes themes like inclusivity, safety, and the town's adaptability across life stages.	
Strengths	Opportunities
Chestermere's proactive approach in community planning, evidenced by initiatives like the Municipal Development Plan and Social Plan, has enabled a cohesive balance between physical development and preserving its residents' desired quality of life. This synergy of infrastructure and communal feeling sets Chestermere apart, fostering a unique identity. Additionally, the town's emphasis on inclusivity, safety, and adaptability signifies a community that values the well-being and diversity of its residents.	Chestermere's rapid development presents the chance to harness the collective energy of its residents and organizations, turning challenges into community-building opportunities. By continually engaging with the residents, Chestermere can identify emerging needs, ensuring that the town's development remains dynamic and resonant with the aspirations of its people. This feedback loop can further solidify Chestermere's identity as a community that's not just growing in numbers, but also in depth and richness of experience.

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## Social Investment Framework

Policy Description	
<p>The Social Investment Framework (SIF) in Chestermere is a guiding tool to coordinate funding and shape social programs for its residents. Operating on a local level, it bridges direct service provision with partnerships, including governmental bodies, charities, and businesses. SIF emphasizes three goals: fostering connected communities, advancing positive mental health, and promoting equity. By collaborating with key financiers like the Provincial Family and Community Support Services program, Chestermere delivers flexible interventions. This unified approach, in sync with the City's priorities, strengthens Chestermere's social fabric and addresses challenges, ensuring a more inclusive community.</p>	
Strengths	Opportunities
<p>The Social Investment Framework (SIF) addresses Chestermere's evolving demographic needs, emphasizing inclusivity in its social programs. With the city's growing population and housing challenges, there's a clear need for diverse housing solutions. The economic shifts and increased living costs underline the importance of the SIF in promoting stability. Notably, as mental health concerns rise in Chestermere, the SIF focuses on advancing positive mental health, supporting early intervention, and community-based resources. By addressing these areas, Chestermere aims to create a supportive environment for all its residents.</p>	<p>The Social Investment Framework (SIF) is positioned to address identified gaps in Chestermere's shifting demographics and evolving needs. While the city faces rapid population growth, housing shortages, and increased living costs, the SIF could potentially enhance its focus on affordable housing solutions tailored to diverse population segments, such as seniors and new immigrants. As Chestermere grapples with economic strains and a rise in mental health concerns, there's an opportunity for the SIF to allocate more resources towards economic empowerment programs and comprehensive mental health initiatives. Tapping into these opportunities would further strengthen Chestermere's commitment to serving its residents effectively.</p>

## 2022 Social Master Plan Committee

Policy Description
<p>The primary role of the Social Master Plan Committee is to provide guidance and suggest actions to the City Council and City Administration concerning issues like housing, both physical</p>

and mental well-being, safety measures, income generation, employment, and fostering community participation. This committee consists of ten individuals from the public and two members from the Council.

Strengths	Opportunities
The Social Master Plan Committee, comprising ten public members and two Council representatives, offers a comprehensive approach to address Chestermere's challenges. Its focus on diverse topics, from housing to mental health, means it is well-positioned to address the increasing ethnic diversity, ageing population, and associated housing and health concerns. Direct representation from the Council ensures that the pressing issues like affordable housing, mental health challenges, and the rising cost of living have a clear channel to the decision-makers, facilitating timely action.	However, the broad scope of the committee's focus areas might lead to a potential lack of specialized expertise in each domain, especially given Chestermere's rapid demographic and economic shifts. There's an opportunity to involve subject-matter experts or sub-committees to delve deeper into specific challenges like the mental health crisis and the specific needs of the ageing population. Engaging more with vulnerable demographics, such as new immigrants and the Indigenous community, can further refine the committee's recommendations to ensure inclusivity.

## Current Social programs

Policy Description
<p>The Community Development (CSD) and Community Support Services (CSS) in Chestermere offer a comprehensive suite of programs catering to diverse community needs. Initiatives such as Block Parties, Community Gardens, and the Neighbourhood &amp; Family Connections Program are tailored to foster community cohesion and engagement.</p> <p>Dedicated outreach services, such as Community Support Services Outreach and the South Asian Seniors Social Outreach, address specific segments of the community, ensuring inclusivity. The Connect &amp; Belong program and Community Pop Up Days further enhance this sense of belonging.</p> <p>With a keen focus on resource accessibility, CSS provides Information and Referral services, Resource Navigation, and programs like Transit Subsidy and the CVITP. To ease economic challenges, they've launched the CAP Program, Gifts of Kindness, and a range of Grant programs, including the novel Community Sponsorship Program. In addition, a range of events and partnerships, including the Chestermere Job Fair and CanWill Women's Leadership, are organized to cater to diverse community needs.</p> <p>Moreover, the Parent and Care Giver Support Services (PCSS) boasts a plethora of programs aimed at child development and parenting support, from the Ages &amp; Stages Questionnaires to specialized initiatives like the Triple P- Positive Parenting Program and the Baby Talk Series.</p>

Wellness Wednesdays and One-On-One Supports further ensure individualized care and attention to Chestermere's residents.

Strengths	Opportunities
<p>The diverse programs provided by Chestermere, ranging from Block Parties and Transit Subsidies to the comprehensive Parent and Care Giver Support Services (PCSS), showcase a multi-faceted approach to community well-being.</p> <p>Programs like Community Gardens and the Neighbourhood &amp; Family Connections Program foster a sense of community, making residents feel more connected and engaged.</p> <p>The South Asian Seniors Social Outreach and Connect &amp; Belong specifically address the needs of the growing diverse population, ensuring inclusivity.</p> <p>Grants programs, such as HSAB and Vitality Grants, provide financial support to initiatives that bolster community resilience.</p> <p>Parent-centric programs like Triple P and the Baby Talk Series focus on the foundational years of a child's life, ensuring both parents and children receive the necessary support.</p>	<p>Despite the array of programs, there's room to expand in terms of targeted interventions for the specific challenges identified in Chestermere. While there are initiatives for seniors, considering the growing aged population, there may be a need for more age-specific programs addressing health and lifestyle.</p> <p>Given the rising mental health concerns, initiatives focused explicitly on mental well-being across all age groups could be beneficial.</p> <p>There's also an opportunity to introduce more programs addressing the rising cost of living and housing affordability, especially for demographics most affected, such as citizens aged 55-84.</p> <p>Lastly, continuous evaluation of one-off events, like Chestermere Job Fair, can help in assessing their impact and iterating for greater community benefits.</p>