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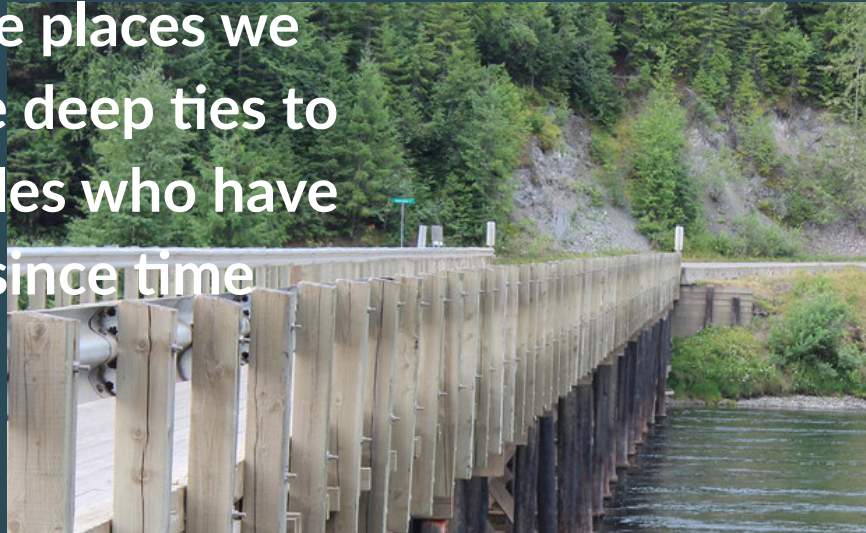
Quesnel Service and Housing Options Review For Vulnerable Populations

Dec, 2023

Submitted to: City of Quesnel

Recognition Of Territory

HelpSeeker's team members live across Turtle Island in what is today known as Canada. We acknowledge that the places we call home today have deep ties to the Indigenous Peoples who have stewarded this land since time immemorial.



We also acknowledge that colonial actors and institutions that perpetually deny Indigenous Peoples their rights to self-determination and sovereignty must be challenged. That is why we commit our organization to aligning our efforts to the advancement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

We would like to acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional unceded territory of the Lhtako Dene people and the traditional keepers of their land.

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.



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Introduction

This report aims to present a comprehensive analysis of housing and support services needed to address vulnerabilities faced by select populations in the City of Quesnel.

These communities are Lhtako Dene Nation, Nazko First Nation, Lhoosk'uz Dené Nation, and ?Esdilagh First Nation, collectively referred to as the Communities. The purpose of this project is to explore the specific needs of these populations to develop targeted solutions that can effectively reduce the risk of homelessness. The approach is multifaceted, entailing a thorough evaluation of existing resources, an assessment of the current and future unmet needs, and the formulation of tailored recommendations to enhance the support infrastructure.

The report is structured around four primary objectives. Each objective encompasses specific deliverables, which may be expanded on by the consultant to ensure the goals of the project are comprehensively met. These objectives include the development of a baseline for current services and housing options, an estimate of the unmet housing needs for vulnerable persons, the provision of recommendations to address these unmet needs, and the supply of guidelines to the Communities for effective engagement and response to the challenges identified.

Through the strategic identification of gaps, evaluation of current models, and the assimilation of community feedback, this report seeks to offer actionable insights and guidelines that can foster a robust support system, mitigate the risk of homelessness, and lay the foundation for sustainable community-specific and joint initiatives.



The outcomes are able to serve as an important resource for the Communities in their efforts to create a resilient and inclusive environment for all members, particularly the most vulnerable.



Actionable insights
and guidelines that
can **foster a robust
support system.**

Objective I: A Baseline of Service and Housing Options

To improve community wellbeing and safety, there must be a detailed baseline of housing and service options available in the Communities. This is not just an inventory, but also the groundwork for strategic growth, allowing for informed decisions and effective resource allocation.

Mapping the community's assets lets us leverage our strengths and pinpoint urgent needs. Housing stability, crucial for public health, requires a thorough evaluation of facilities like shelters and assisted living to measure our preparedness for diverse resident needs.

A catalogue of services—from mental health to family support—offers a comprehensive view of our care capacity. This baseline reflects our current situation and guides future enhancements, spotlighting key areas where investment can improve community infrastructure.

Mental Health and Addictions Supports

In the landscape of mental health and addiction services in Quesnel, BC, a network of specialized organizations works collaboratively to address multifaceted needs. This comprehensive approach is characterized by a synergy of services, each catering to specific aspects of recovery and wellbeing.

The Northern Health Authority's comprehensive health services, including specialized mental health and substance use programs, provides clinical support to ensure that medical and therapeutic needs are met. As part of Northern Health, the GR Baker Memorial Hospital offers acute care, intensive care, and emergency services. The hospital's mental health and substance use programs provide support for people facing various challenges. The services include inpatient care for acute mental health conditions, outpatient support, and specialized programs for substance use. In addition to hospital-based services, the Northern Health Authority runs community programs that address mental health and substance use issues. These programs aim to provide accessible care and support in the community, reducing barriers to treatment and ensuring ongoing support. This includes counselling services, support groups, and programs aimed at preventing substance use and promoting mental wellbeing. For integrated care, Northern Health's approach to mental health and substance use is integrated, meaning they aim to provide seamless care that encompasses physical, mental, and emotional health. This holistic view ensures that people receive comprehensive care that addresses all aspects of their wellbeing.

The Westside Mental Health and Substance Use centre is a comprehensive service provider addressing a wide array of mental health and substance use challenges. Their approach is multi-faceted, ensuring that people with diverse needs receive tailored support.

Some of the supports they offer include:

Opioid agonist therapy (OAT):

This therapy combines medication that reduces the urge to use opioids with counselling and behavioural therapies, offering a holistic approach to recovery. This program is pivotal in treating opioid use disorder.

Counselling services:

Individual counselling sessions at Westside Mental Health are a cornerstone of their service. These sessions offer a safe and confidential space for people to explore personal challenges, discuss mental health concerns, and develop coping strategies. The counselling is aimed at providing support for a range of issues, from depression and anxiety to the psychological aspects of addiction.

Mental health and addictions clinicians:

Specialist services are provided on a referral basis, allowing for more intensive and targeted care for those with specific mental health conditions or addiction issues. These clinicians offer expert guidance and treatment plans, ensuring that each person's unique needs are comprehensively addressed.

Early psychosis therapy:

Early detection and treatment of the initial stages of psychosis can greatly improve long-term outcomes, offering strategies to manage symptoms and reduce the effect on daily life.

Crisis support:

Urgent care and intervention for people in acute mental health distress. This support is vital for those experiencing severe mental health crises.

Assertive community treatment (ACT):

The ACT team at Westside Mental Health offers a community-based approach to psychiatric treatment and rehabilitation. They provide a range of services for people with severe and persistent mental health conditions, including medical, social, and psychological support. The ACT model emphasizes personalized care in the community setting, reducing the need for hospitalization.

Given the serious drug overdose crisis in BC, intensified by the introduction of potent substances like fentanyl and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Quesnel has taken the important step of establishing two overdose prevention sites. These sites, operated by Quesnel Specialized Services and the Coalition of Substance Users of the North (CSUN), play a pivotal role in the community's response to the overdose emergency.

- **Quesnel Specialized Services overdose prevention site:** This site provides a secure and supervised environment for drug use, greatly reducing the risk of fatal overdoses. The presence of trained staff ensures immediate intervention in case of an overdose, and the facility acts as a crucial touchpoint for people to access broader health and support services. Also offers access to healthcare resources and counselling, and referrals to treatment programs.
- **CSUN overdose prevention site:** This site offers supervised consumption services, as well as acting as a hub for connecting people with essential support services, including mental health assistance, medical care, and addiction treatment options. CSUN's approach is grounded in understanding the unique challenges faced by substance users, providing a nonjudgmental and supportive environment.

These overdose prevention sites are essential to address to the rising number of overdose deaths in BC. With the increasing prevalence of fentanyl, a synthetic opioid far more potent than heroin that is cheaper to produce, the risk of overdose has increased substantially. These sites offer a safer alternative for consumption, along with immediate life-saving interventions and connections to ongoing support and treatment.

The Quesnel Tillicum Society Native Friendship Centre focuses on the Indigenous community, and brings an essential cultural perspective to mental health and addiction services. Their integration of traditional practices with contemporary societal needs ensures that support is both culturally relevant and respectful, addressing the unique challenges faced by Indigenous community members. It adopts a holistic approach that addresses both the practical and spiritual needs of Indigenous people, and facilitates their integration into the social, economic, and cultural aspects of the community.

Acknowledging and addressing the unique experiences and needs of Indigenous community members is essential for their wellbeing and mental health resilience.



The Quesnel Community Action Team, part of the Community Action Initiative, offers local, peer-led support and responses for mental health and substance use challenges. Their distribution of harm reduction supplies and provision of essential services like food and hygiene support directly address the immediate needs of those affected by the overdose crisis, a responsive and community-centric approach to health and wellness.

Also offering peer-led support is *Alcoholics Anonymous Area 79, along with Al-Anon and Alateen*, which play an important role in providing a supportive community for individuals and families affected by alcoholism. Their program structure, focused on peer-led sharing and mutual support, offers a foundation for people seeking to overcome alcohol dependency. The weekly meetings serve as a platform for sharing successes and struggles, fostering a sense of belonging and collective resilience crucial for sustained sobriety.

Complementing this, the *BC Region of Narcotics Anonymous* addresses drug addiction with their Essential Evolution Group meetings and hotline, offering immediate and ongoing support to help break the cycle of addiction, and a path toward a drug-free life through community support and shared experiences.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) of Northern BC provides a broad spectrum of mental health services, emphasizing individual empowerment. Through counselling, advocacy, and psychoeducation, they focus on developing coping skills and resilience. This individualized support offers tools and strategies for managing symptoms and improving overall mental wellbeing. In addition to counselling, the CMHA is actively involved in crisis intervention, offering immediate support to prevent harm and stabilize situations. The organization also runs various programs aimed at reducing the stigma surrounding mental health, including community outreach, educational workshops, and advocacy initiatives.

Pearl Essence Therapy introduces a more intimate dimension to counselling, blending professional expertise with a nurturing approach. This personalized care offers a safe space for exploration and growth.

Together, these organizations form a dynamic support system in Quesnel, BC.

Their integrated approach to mental health and addiction services seeks to ensure that the Communities are equipped to support its most vulnerable members on their path to recovery and wellbeing.



Services and Housing for Vulnerable Populations

In the Communities, wraparound services and housing are important to support vulnerable populations, addressing fundamental needs, including mental-health care, substance-abuse treatment, employment assistance, and educational opportunities. These services are designed to meet people 'where they are,' providing tailored support that addresses multiple facets of their lives.

Equally important is the provision of stable and affordable housing, which forms the foundation of security and dignity for individuals and families. Stable housing is not just shelter, but also a platform for personal and community growth, enabling people to focus on rehabilitation, skills development, and integration into the community.

The following table details some of the housing options available for Quesnel's vulnerable population.

Table 1: Housing options for vulnerable populations

Organization	Program	Capacity		Population Focus
Dalkelh Community Housing Society	Rural And Urban Native Program (Stepping Stone)	26 Houses (includes 3 accessible units)	56 people	Indigenous people
	Bc Homes Program (Milestone Manor)	31 houses (includes various unit sizes and wheelchair-accessible options)	73 people	All people
	Urban Native Program	33 houses	116 people	50% must be Indigenous No substance use
	Investment In Housing Innovation (Kikihnow Apartments)	38 apartments (includes mix of studio, 1-bed, 2-bed; includes 11 wheelchair-accessible suites)	43 people	All people Indigenous people Low-Income Families
	Homeless At Risk Program	26 apartments 1 house	29 people	Indigenous people
Quesnel Lions Housing Society	Silver Manor	30 units	No data	Seniors Persons with recognized disabilities ages 55+ and living independently
Quesnel Community Living Association	Racing Road Residence	No data	No data	Persons with diverse abilities
	Apartment Cluster Complex	4 Units	8 people	Applications via Community Living BC
	Hutchcroft House	No data	No data	Women with special needs

Park Place Seniors' Living	Maeford Place	36 1-bed suites	No data	Seniors
Redwood Residences Ltd.	Redwood Residence	11 Assisted Living Units	11 people	Seniors
Axis Family Resources	Specialized Supportive Housing	No data	No data	Mental health, substance use, or behavioural issues, developmental disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) or other complex developmental and behavioural conditions, past or current trauma, or offending behaviours Referral via Community Living BC or Ministry of Child and Family Development
Quesnel Shelter and Support Society	Bridges Supportive Housing	28 self-contained studio units 4 supportive recovery units (90-day stay only)	32 people	People with complex needs
	The Shelter and Support Society also offers support and recovery beds, shelter, beds, and transitional units via Seasons House. These are accessible via referral from a case manager. The units are not included in the table of housing units as these are emergency services, not long-term housing.			
Amata Transition House Society	The Amata Transition House Society offers transitional units for abused women and their children, along with referral services as needed. The units are not included in the table of housing units as these are emergency services, not long-term housing.			

In Quesnel, multiple organizations form a vital network of support for its vulnerable citizens. Many of the organizations serving vulnerable populations in Quesnel offer services that span multiple categories, reflecting the complex and interconnected needs of the community.

While these entities are categorized for clarity, it's important to recognize that their contributions often extend beyond singular service areas, embodying a holistic approach to community support.





Housing, Shelters and Safety

The Dakelh & Quesnel Community Housing Society offers various housing options to accommodate different needs, including housing for low-income individuals, families, seniors, and people with disabilities. Their role includes providing these housing units as well as ensuring they are maintained and managed effectively to support long-term residency. This practical approach to housing provision plays a crucial role in ensuring that vulnerable members of the community, who would otherwise be at risk of homelessness, have access to safe and affordable housing.

The Quesnel Shelter and Support Society provides immediate shelter assistance to individuals and families in crisis, as well as a range of practical services designed to meet the basic and urgent needs of those in transition. Their services include the provision of daily meals and ensuring that residents have access to nutritious food, facilitating healthcare referrals for connecting residents with medical services and mental health support, and providing emotional support for residents dealing with stressful or traumatic circumstances. These services directly aid people to overcome immediate challenges and transition toward more stable living situations.

Redwood Residences Assisted Living provides specialized housing for seniors, with a focus on assisted living. They offer services that cater to the unique needs of the elderly, including health-care support and daily-living assistance, promoting independence and quality of life for their residents.



Women, Children, and Families

The Amata Transition House Society offers safe shelter for women and children fleeing domestic violence in Quesnel. This shelter is more than a temporary residence, providing a secure environment where residents can find respite and safety from abusive situations. In addition to shelter, the society offers counselling services to help women and children process and recover from their traumatic experiences. They also provide legal advocacy, assisting clients with navigating legal challenges, such as obtaining restraining orders or handling custody disputes.

The North Cariboo Aboriginal Family Program Society, also known as the Echen Healing Society, is dedicated to serving Aboriginal families in Quesnel through culturally sensitive services. Recognizing the importance of cultural heritage in the healing and support process, they incorporate traditional practices and knowledge into their programs. These services include family counselling, support for children and youth, and community-based cultural activities.

The Quesnel Women's Resource Centre Society offers support to women in the community through counselling, advocacy, educational workshops, and practical assistance. Their counselling services address issues like domestic abuse and mental health, providing a confidential space for women to seek guidance. They advocate for women's rights, particularly in legal matters related to domestic violence and family law. The society also organizes workshops on topics like health, financial literacy, and career development, and facilitates support

groups for shared experiences and community building. They also assist women to find housing and access other essential services.

Cariboo Youth and Family Resources addresses the mental and emotional wellbeing of children and adolescents, as well as providing assistance to families in conflict. One of their services includes programs tailored to youth mental health, offering support and guidance to young people as they navigate the challenges of growing up. This can include one-on-one counselling, group therapy sessions, and other youth-centric mental health interventions. Cariboo Youth and Family Resources offers mediation and family counselling services for families dealing with conflict. They also provide programs that support the overall healthy development of children and adolescents, including activities and workshops that focus on building self-esteem, social skills, and resilience.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Quesnel provides mentorship programs that pair young people with adult mentors, to provide guidance and support that aids in emotional and social growth. These mentor-mentee relationships involve regular, meaningful activities, fostering essential life skills and a sense of belonging in the youth, especially beneficial for those experiencing challenges.

The Quesnel & District Child Development Centre focuses on early childhood development, offering developmental screenings and assessments to identify any delays in a child's growth. Based on these assessments, targeted interventions, such as speech, occupational, and physical therapies, are provided. Early learning programs and parental support groups are also available, ensuring children receive comprehensive support for their physical, emotional, and cognitive development during the critical early years.

Supports for People with Disabilities



Community Living British Columbia offers a range of services designed to enhance the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities. This includes personalized support plans that cater to individual needs, helping to promote independence and integration into the community. Their programs may involve assisted living arrangements, employment support, and community engagement activities, all aimed at fostering independence and social inclusion.

The Quesnel Community Living Association focuses on providing support and resources to people with developmental disabilities. Their approach includes residential services, community inclusion programs, and family support. These services are tailored to empower people with developmental disabilities to live fulfilling lives as active community members.

Dengarry Professional Services offers residential care services, providing a stable and nurturing living environment for those who require continuous support. These residential settings are designed to be

homelike and comfortable, ensuring residents feel secure and valued. Dengarry also offers community inclusion programs, which help people integrate into the community. These programs focus on developing life skills, promoting independence, and facilitating participation in community activities.

Food Security



Two Rivers Church operates a food bank program that offers essential grocery items to individuals and families in need. The church also organizes community meals, providing nourishment and a space for community connection and support.

Victory Way Church runs a food pantry and meal services, providing direct assistance to those facing food scarcity. Their programs often include nutrition education and support services, helping people make informed choices about their food and health.

The Canadian Mental Health Association of Northern BC, as part of its holistic approach to mental health, offers programs that assist people in accessing nutritious food, including education on healthy eating and assistance with obtaining food resources.

The Green Hope Society focuses on improving environmental health and sustainability in Quesnel by leveraging food that would otherwise be disposed of, distributing it to the community via hampers. Their work also includes community gardening projects, which both beautify the city and provide residents with access to fresh produce and green spaces.

Inclusion and Advocacy



The Quesnel Tillicum Society Native Friendship Centre serves as a cultural hub for the Indigenous community, offering a range of programs and services. These include cultural events, educational programs, and support services, all aimed at preserving Indigenous culture and supporting the needs of Indigenous residents. One of its key services is cultural programming, which includes activities and events that promote Indigenous arts, languages, and traditions. The centre often organizes workshops, cultural celebrations, and educational events that are open to the entire community, promoting cross-cultural understanding and respect. In addition to cultural activities, the Friendship Centre provides support services such as assistance with finding housing and employment, navigating government services, and accessing health care.

The North Cariboo Seniors Council offers a variety of health and wellness programs specifically designed to meet the needs of the elderly. These programs include fitness classes, health education workshops, and recreational activities tailored to seniors. Additionally, the council organizes social activities and events, providing opportunities for seniors to engage with peers, maintain social connections, and

remain active in the community. The Seniors Advocacy Service advocates for the rights and needs of seniors in Quesnel, providing information, support, and advocacy services, and helping seniors navigate issues related to healthcare, housing, and other age-related concerns.

The Quesnel Pride Society is instrumental in advocating for 2SLGBTQIA+ rights and support. They organize events and provide resources that foster an inclusive and accepting community environment, promoting diversity and equality in Quesnel.

The Coalition of Substance Users of the North (CSUN) addresses substance use issues in Quesnel with a focus on harm reduction and supportive interventions. They advocate for approaches that minimize the negative consequences of substance use, such as providing access to safe consumption sites and clean needles. CSUN also offers peer support programs, creating a community of understanding and support for people struggling with substance use.

The Northern Network of Peers for Equality fosters an inclusive community through peer support and equality advocacy, offering a platform where people, especially those facing discrimination or social challenges, can find support and understanding from others with similar experiences. Additionally, they actively advocate for equality, working to address and reduce instances of discrimination and inequality in various community settings.

Employment



The WorkBC Centre in Quesnel offers a comprehensive range of services designed to assist job seekers at various stages of their career journey. One of the primary services is job placement assistance, which includes helping people find suitable employment opportunities that match their skills and interests. For people facing barriers to employment, such as disabilities or lack of experience, WorkBC Centre provides specialized support services. This might include connecting them with employers who offer inclusive work environments or providing access to programs that assist with overcoming these barriers.

The centre provides resources for job searching, including access to job listings, assistance with resume writing, and interview preparation. WorkBC Centre also offers career counselling, providing guidance and advice to people looking to define or redefine their career goals. Counselors work with clients to identify their strengths, explore career options, and develop a personalized career plan. The centre also conducts various training programs and workshops which enhance job-related skills, such as computer literacy, communication skills, and industry-specific training.

Provincial and Federal Programs

In addition to the wide range of local services and organizations dedicated to supporting the community of Quesnel, residents have access to provincial and federal programs. These programs, though not physically located in Quesnel, offer vital resources and support that extend their reach to the city's populace.

Here 2Talk is a provincial program providing post-secondary students in British Columbia, including those in Quesnel, with free, confidential counselling and community referral services. Accessible 24/7 via app, phone, or web, it ensures that students have round-the-clock access to mental health support.

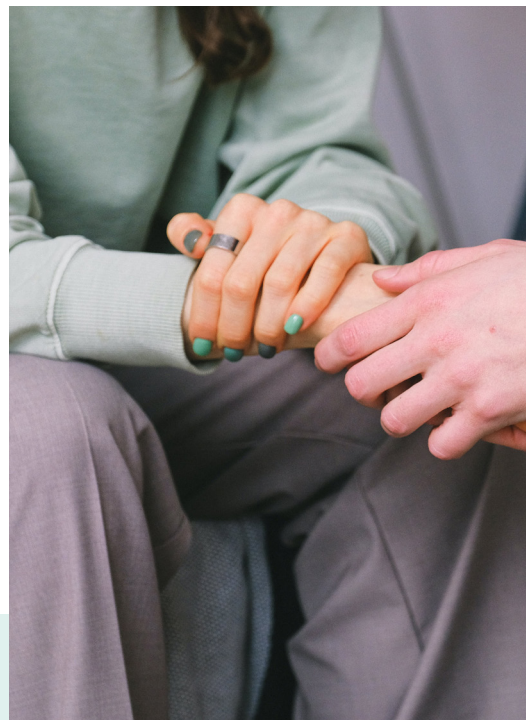
The Legal Services Society operates provincially, offering legal aid to those who cannot afford legal representation. Residents of Quesnel can access information, advice, and representation for various legal issues.

Moms Stop The Harm is a network of Canadian families affected by harms and deaths related to substance use. It provides support, education, and advocacy for policy and practice reform, benefiting those in Quesnel facing similar challenges.

The National Overdose Response Service is a federal initiative offering a life-saving response service for people using drugs when they are alone. It's accessible via phone to Quesnel residents, providing an emergency response in case of an overdose.

The Prince George and District Elizabeth Fry Society, based in Prince George, extends its services to surrounding areas, including Quesnel. This organization supports women, youth, and children experiencing or at risk of experiencing legal issues, providing services like housing, counselling, and advocacy.

Wellness Together Canada offers a wide range of online mental health and substance use support to all Canadians. It provides resources like counselling, information, and self-directed programs for mental health and wellness.





Services that span multiple categories, **reflecting the complex and interconnected needs** of the community.

Strengths and Weaknesses In Quesnel's Support System For Vulnerable People

Thoroughly examining the current landscape of services and housing options can help identify where enhancements are needed to fortify the social fabric of Quesnel, and provide robust support for its most vulnerable citizens.

Collective efforts to date in Quesnel have created a support system with various strengths. From comprehensive services addressing complex needs, to community-led initiatives rooted in cultural sensitivity, these strengths reflect a community that is both responsive and adaptive to the needs of its members.

Alongside these strengths are weaknesses to be addressed. These include infrastructure limitations, such as the shortage of affordable housing, as well as systemic issues like the centralization of services, resulting in limited services in outlying and remote areas.

Strengths



Comprehensive service range: Organizations like Axis Family Resources and the Canadian Mental Health Association offer a broad spectrum of support services addressing mental health, substance use, and developmental disabilities.



Cultural sensitivity: Institutions like the Quesnel Tillicum Society Native Friendship Centre offer services that are attuned to the cultural needs of Indigenous populations.



Community collaboration: Organizations like the Green Hope Society and Quesnel Pride Society drive initiatives to support vulnerable demographics, including the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.








Integrated support services: Entities such as the Amata Transition House Society and Quesnel Shelter & Support Society provide not only housing, but also wraparound services that are essential for holistic support and empowerment.






Educational and Employment Support: Programs offered by Big Brothers/Big Sisters and the WorkBC Centre contribute to the personal development and economic stability of at-risk youth and job seekers.

Weaknesses

-  **Inadequate housing supply:** There is a critical shortage of affordable housing, limiting housing stability for low-income residents.
-  **Geographic and transportation challenges:** The city's location and the inadequacy of public transportation create barriers to accessing services, especially for people in remote areas or those without personal vehicles. The concentration of services within the city limits of Quesnel is a challenge for those living in outlying areas, including reserves, leading to underuse of support systems by those in remote locations, further exacerbating their vulnerability.
-  **Dependency on non-profit organizations:** The system's heavy reliance on non-profit organizations suggests potential issues with long-term sustainability and a need for more robust government support.
-  **Service coordination needs:** The lack of a centralized system for service coordination may lead to inefficiencies and difficulties in navigating the available resources for those in need.
-  **Limited mental health and substance use treatment facilities:** The scarcity of long-term treatment centres for acute mental health and substance use needs is a serious gap in the current support structure.

Additional Observations

-  **Demographic shifts:** The aging population may require an increase in seniors-oriented services, including medical care, assisted living, and targeted social support programs.
-  **Cultural and social inclusivity:** While culturally sensitive services exist, there may be a need for expansion and enhancement, especially support for the Indigenous population.
-  **Economic pressures:** The rising costs of living and housing, coupled with stagnant income levels, increases the risk of homelessness and economic instability for vulnerable populations.

Objective II: Current and Projected Unmet Housing Need

Demand modelling is a method for understanding and anticipating the needs of a community, both now and in the future. This model starts with a detailed look at the current population. Key indicators like the percentage of people who are unsheltered, in extreme core housing need, or at risk due to mental health concerns and addictions are identified. These indicators rely on existing data from reputable national and provincial sources to establish a solid baseline.

From here, the model shifts its focus to future demand. By analyzing expected population growth rates using similar reliable sources, the model projects the future population and its associated housing needs. This dual focus ensures that planners and policymakers are equipped to address not just today's challenges, but also those that will arise in the years to come.

Methodological Limitations

While demand modelling offers valuable insights, it is important to recognize its limitations:

Complexity of social issues:

Housing needs are affected by a wide range of factors like culture, economic status, and demographics, adding complexity that can be hard to quantify accurately.

Predictive limitations:

While the model uses past and current data to make projections, it can't account for unexpected changes, such as sudden economic downturns or substantial policy alterations.

Interpretation and application of results:

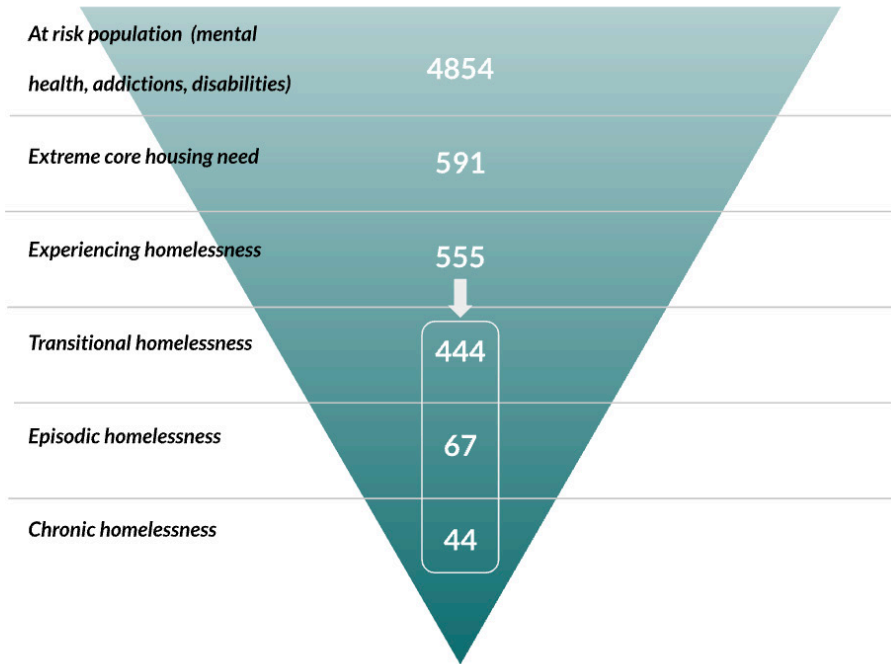
A model is only as good as its application. If the findings are not understood or used effectively, the resulting actions may not solve problems as intended.

Methodological diversity:

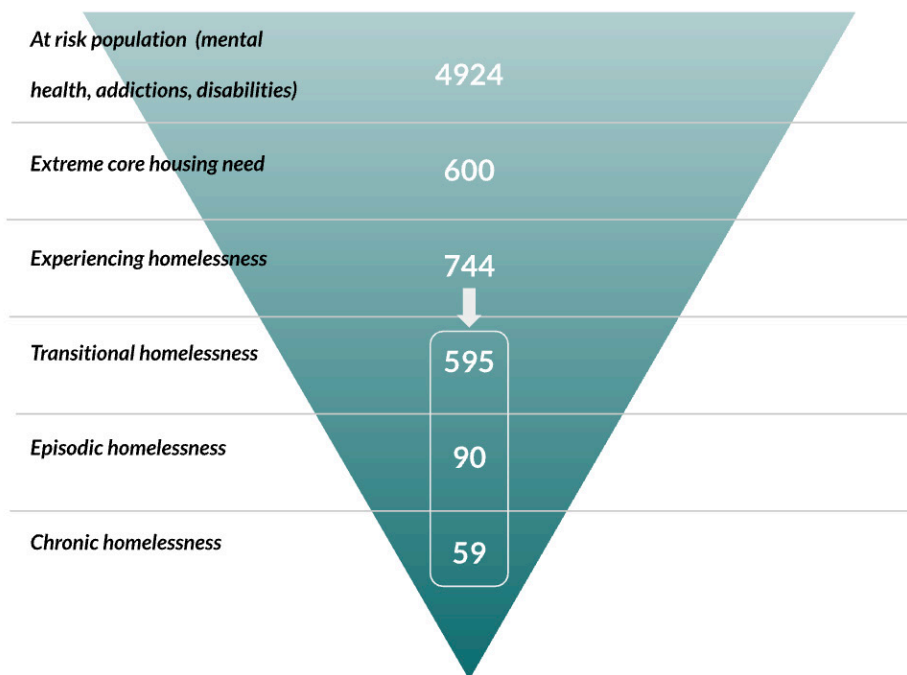
Though the model we use has a proven track record in other contexts, there are various other methods to estimate demand, each with its own strengths and drawbacks.

Projections Of Need - General

Estimated Need, 2021



Estimated Need, 2028



In our housing demand model, the numbers presented for different categories of the population are estimates rooted in reputable sources and statistically sound assumptions. The figures are drawn from the most recent Canadian census conducted in 2021, and are projected to 2028 to provide a long-term view.

The at-risk population estimate is 21% of the total population, including those facing challenges related to mental health, addictions, and disabilities. This assumption is informed by multiple credible sources, including the Canadian Chronic Disease Surveillance System, the Canadian Mental Health Association, and the Department of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion. The growth rate for this at-risk group is anchored to Quesnel's overall growth rate between 2011 and 2021, as reported in the 2021 census.

For Extreme Core Housing Need, a metric that aggregates the severe housing challenges faced by both tenants and owners, the data is sourced directly from the 2021 Canadian census. The growth rate for this category also aligns with the community's growth rate from 2011 to 2021.

For the categories related to homelessness, the assumptions are consistent with general practices across Canada. For example, it's estimated that 2.4% of the total population experiences homelessness. In this homeless population, there are sub-categories: 8% are considered chronically homeless, people who experience long-term or repeated episodes of homelessness; 12% are episodically homeless, those who face shorter, less frequent bouts; and 80% are in a transitional state of homelessness, experiencing short-term homelessness, often for the first time. The growth rate for the population experiencing homelessness is assumed to be 5%. These specific percentages are based on nationwide assumptions corroborated by Statistics Canada and the federal government, and are consistent with general practices across Canada.

Table 2: Actual and projected growth of housing vulnerability, 2021-2028

	Population Growth Rate	2021	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Change 2023 - 2028
At-risk population (mental health, addictions, disabilities)	-1.3%	4,854	4,791	4,729	4,667	4,606	4,547	4,487	-6%
Extreme core housing Need	-1.3%	591	583	576	568	561	554	546	-6%
Experience homelessness	5%	555	583	612	642	675	708	744	28%
Transitional homelessness	5%	444	466	490	514	540	567	595	28%
Episodic homelessness	5%	67	70	74	78	81	86	90	28%
Chronic homelessness	5%	44	46	49	51	53	56	59	28%

Table 3: Housing vulnerability percentages used to calculate projections, and sources

Population	Assumption	Growth Rate	Source
At-risk population (mental health, addictions, disabilities)	21% of total population	Average population change over the last 20 years	Canadian Chronic Disease Surveillance System (CCDSS) / Canadian Mental Health Association / Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion
Extreme core housing need (ECHN)	Sum of ECHN for tenants and owners	Average population change over the last 20 years	Stats Canada
Experience homelessness	2.4% of total population	Assumption in Canada	Stats Canada
Chronic homelessness	8% of unsheltered	Assumption in Canada	Federal Government
Episodic homelessness	12% of unsheltered	Assumption in Canada	Stats Canada
Transitional homelessness	80% of unsheltered	Assumption in Canada	Stats Canada

This methodology enables us to make informed projections about housing needs, not just for the present, but also for the future—up to the year 2028 in this case.

However, it is important to remember that while these numbers are based on solid data and reasonable assumptions, they are not immune to the limitations of predictive modelling, as discussed earlier.



Projections of Need by Support Type - 2028

Following the estimates of the population in need of housing support, this projection chart outlines anticipated housing needs for the year 2028. These projections rely on several types of housing and support services, including affordable housing, emergency shelters and intensive case management, among others. Using the data gathered on current population figures and their projected growth, educated estimates were made about how many people will require each type of housing or support in the future.

This method involves taking each category of need—such as affordable housing or emergency shelters—and applying projection numbers to forecast the likely demand for each category by 2028. By doing so, the city can identify where the most pressing needs will be, such as what kinds of housing spaces will require construction or expansion.

This future-oriented approach allows the City of Quesnel to align current resources with anticipated demand. By comparing the projected needs with the support currently available, any gaps that must be addressed can be pinpointed. This helps inform strategic decisions about where to allocate resources for maximum effectiveness, thus facilitating timely and effective social infrastructure planning.

Table 4: Estimates of needed housing by category of housing vulnerability, 2028

Support Type	At-Risk Population	Extreme Core Housing Need	Transitional Homeless	Episodic Homeless	Chronic Homeless	Total Spaces Needed
Affordable housing	150	300				450
Assertive case management	200			50	30	280
Emergency shelters					0	0
Intensive case management			200			200
Affordable homeownership	150	300				450
Permanent supportive housing	150			40	20	210
Homelessness diversion	100	100	150			350
Rapid rehousing	100		150			250
Transitional housing	200		100			300
Rent supports		400				400
Group homes or community residential services	200			10	10	220
Assisted living or residential care facilities	200					200
Rehabilitation programs	200			30	50	280
Total	1,650	1,100	600	130	110	3,590

This demand model helps us understand current and future housing needs by analyzing today's population, and using growth rates to project future needs. By comparing these projections to existing resources, the model guides resource allocation for more effective planning. The same approach will be applied to specific groups like seniors and youth in the following sections to tailor strategies to their unique needs.

These projections do not account for the potential construction or expansion of emergency shelter capacities in the community. Instead, they are rooted in a more holistic approach that emphasizes preventative measures, aiming to address the underlying causes and factors leading to the need for such shelters. This perspective prioritizes long-term solutions and community-based interventions over immediate but temporary fixes, reflecting a strategic shift towards sustainable and comprehensive support systems.

Glossary of Support Types:

Affordable housing programs:

These initiatives provide housing units at reduced or subsidized rates, ensuring residents allocate no more than 30% of their gross income on housing. It aims to cater to low- to moderate-income individuals or families, ensuring they have access to cost-effective housing options.

Emergency shelter programs:

Serving as immediate housing facilities, these offer immediate shelter and safety to individuals or families facing homelessness. They're characterized by basic amenities, ensuring residents have access to necessities.

Affordable homeownership programs:

Designed to aid low- to moderate-income families in acquiring their homes, these programs offer financial assistance. This can manifest as down payment aid, reduced interest rates, or other fiscal incentives.

Assertive case management programs:

Adopting a proactive approach, these programs ensure people receive the services they require. They encompass consistent outreach and maintain a low client-to-case manager ratio for individualized attention.

Intensive case management programs:

Tailored for people with intricate needs, this program focuses on offering comprehensive support services, assisting clients in achieving stability and independence through focused care.

Permanent supportive housing programs:

Merging affordable housing with essential services, this is specifically for those with disabilities, mental health concerns, or extended periods of homelessness. The emphasis is on ensuring long-term stability, combined with consistent support.

Homelessness diversion programs:

With prevention at its core, these interventions help individuals or families avoid entering homeless shelters or systems. Resources or financial aid are provided to maintain current housing or locate alternative accommodations.

Transitional housing programs:

An intermediate between homelessness and lasting housing, these temporary solutions allow residents a set stay duration, during which they're provided with services to fortify their stability and independence.

Group homes or community residential services:

These residences offer a structured, shared living environment for small groups of people with similar needs. Integrated services are provided, emphasizing communal living and shared experiences.

Rehabilitation programs:

These programs assist people recovering from injuries, addiction, or mental health issues. This includes helping clients regain skills, improve their wellbeing, and reintegrate into society. Services include medical care, counselling, and skills training, targeted toward long-term recovery and reducing risk of relapse.

Rapid rehousing programs:

This program aids those facing homelessness to promptly find permanent housing. Also includes short-term financial assistance and vital services.

Rent support programs:

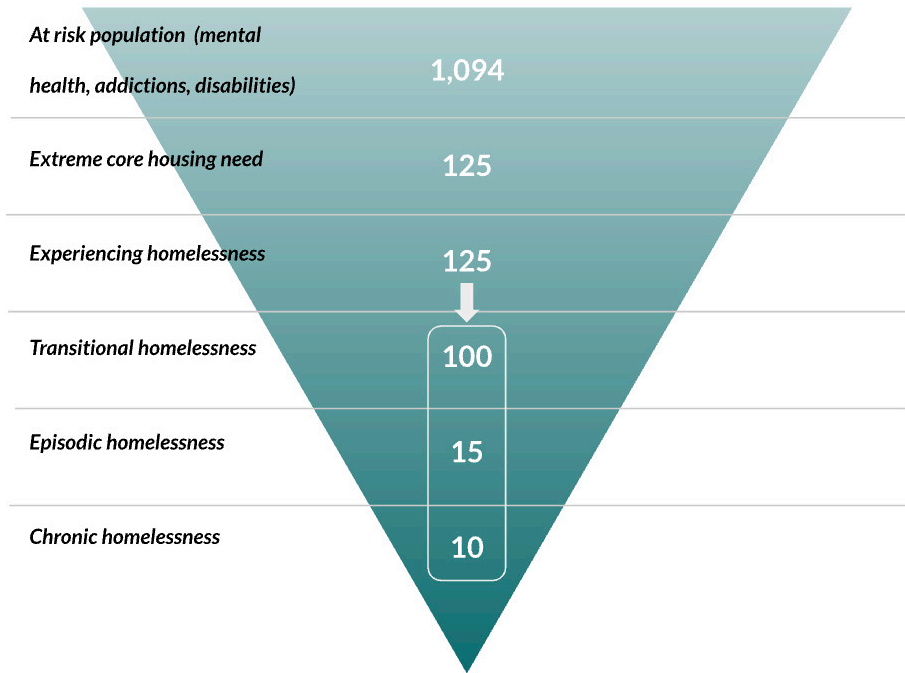
These programs assist individuals or families to manage their rent, including vouchers, landlord-directed payments, or general rent subsidies.

Assisted living or residential care facilities:

These residences offer a blend of housing, personal care, and healthcare for seniors or those with specific health requirements, supporting residents in their daily activities while ensuring they receive necessary medical care.

Projections Of Need - Seniors

Estimated Need, 2021



Estimated Need, 2028

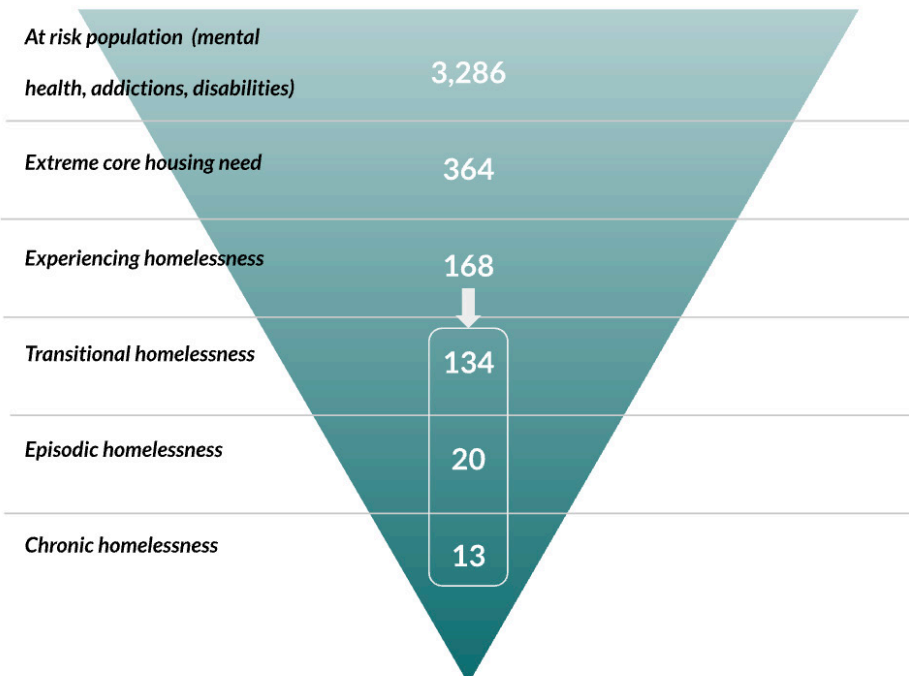


Table 5: Actual and projected growth of housing vulnerability for seniors, 2021-2028

	Growth Rate	2021	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Change 2023 - 2028
At-risk population (mental health, addictions, disabilities)	20%	1,094	149	179	213	255	305	364	144%
Extreme core housing need	20%	125	1,307	1,562	1,867	2,231	2,666	3,186	144%
Experience homelessness	5%	125	131	138	145	152	160	168	28%
Transitional homelessness	5%	100	105	110	116	122	128	134	28%
Episodic homelessness	5%	15	16	17	17	18	19	20	28%
Chronic homelessness	5%	10	11	11	12	12	13	13	28%

Table 6: Seniors' housing vulnerability percentages used to calculate projections, and sources

Population	Assumption	Growth Rate	Source
At-risk population (mental health, addictions, disabilities)	21% of total population	Average population change over the last 20 year	Canadian Chronic Disease Surveillance System (CCDSS) / Canadian Mental Health Association / Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion
Extreme core housing need (ECHN)	Sum of ECHN for tenants and owners	Average population change over the last 20 years	Stats Canada
Experience homelessness	2.4% of total population	Assumption in Canada	Stats Canada
Chronic homelessness	8% of unsheltered	Assumption in Canada	Federal Government
Episodic homelessness	12% of unsheltered	Assumption in Canada	Stats Canada
Transitional homelessness	80% of unsheltered	Assumption in Canada	Stats Canada

Table 7: Estimates of needed housing by category of housing vulnerability for seniors, 2028

Support Type	Chronic Homeless	Episodic Homeless	Transitional Homeless	Extreme Core Housing Need	At-Risk Population (MH, Addictions, Disabilities)	Total Spaces Needed
Affordable housing				300	150	450
Assertive case management	30	50			200	280
Emergency shelters	0					0
Intensive case management			200			200
Affordable homeownership				300	150	450
Permanent supportive housing	20	40			150	210
Homelessness diversion			150	100	100	350
Rapid rehousing			150		100	250
Transitional housing			100		200	300
Rent supports				400		400
Group homes or community residential services	10	10			200	220
Assisted living or residential care facilities					200	200
Rehabilitation programs	50	30			200	280
Total	110	130	600	1,100	1,650	3,590

Glossary of Support Types:

Permanent supportive housing (PSH):

This type of program provides long-term housing combined with supportive services. This can be particularly effective for older adults who have chronic health conditions or who have experienced homelessness for extended periods.

Home modification programs:

As seniors age, they may require modifications to their homes to remain safe. These programs provide grants or loans to help seniors make necessary adjustments to their homes.

Respite care facilities:

These facilities provide temporary shelter and services seniors experiencing homelessness who need medical care.

Senior outreach teams:

Specialized teams that reach out to seniors living on the streets or in unstable situations, connecting them with essential services and housing resources.

Homelessness prevention programs:

These programs provide emergency financial assistance, mediation, and case management to prevent eviction and subsequent homelessness.

Affordable housing programs:

These are programs that offer housing at reduced rates for seniors, often based on income.

Tenant-based rental assistance:

This provides subsidies for seniors to rent private market apartments.

Rapid re-housing:

These programs quickly connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing through rental assistance and support services.

Emergency shelters with senior-specific services:

Some shelters specialize or have specific sections dedicated to seniors, recognizing their unique needs.

Day centres:

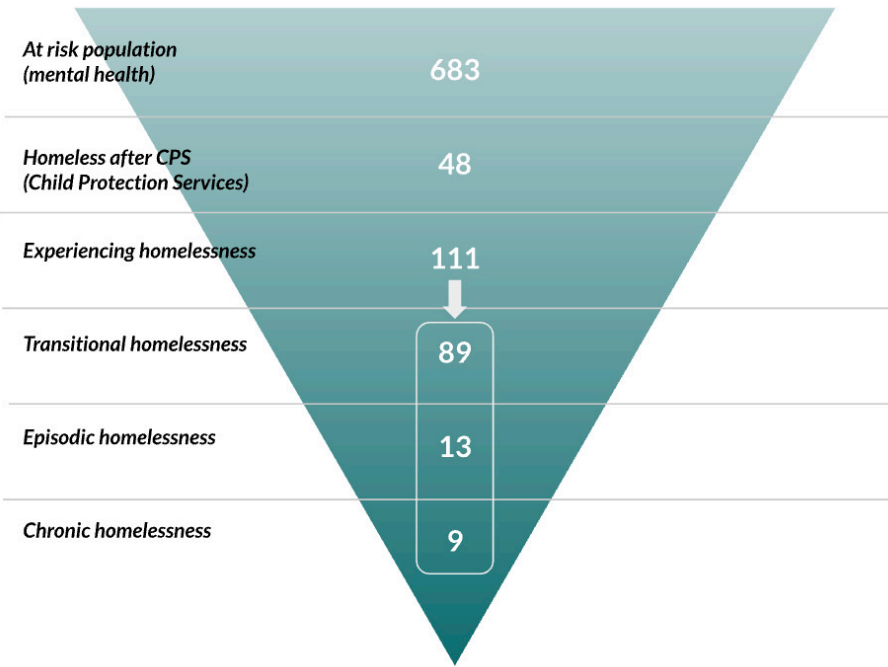
These facilities provide daytime shelter, meals, showers, and access to social and health services for seniors experiencing homelessness who need a place during the daytime hours.

Medical-legal partnerships:

Lawyers partner with health care providers to address the legal issues that can lead to or exacerbate homelessness, such as unlawful evictions or benefit denials.

Projections Of Need - Youth

Estimated Need, 2021



Estimated Need, 2028

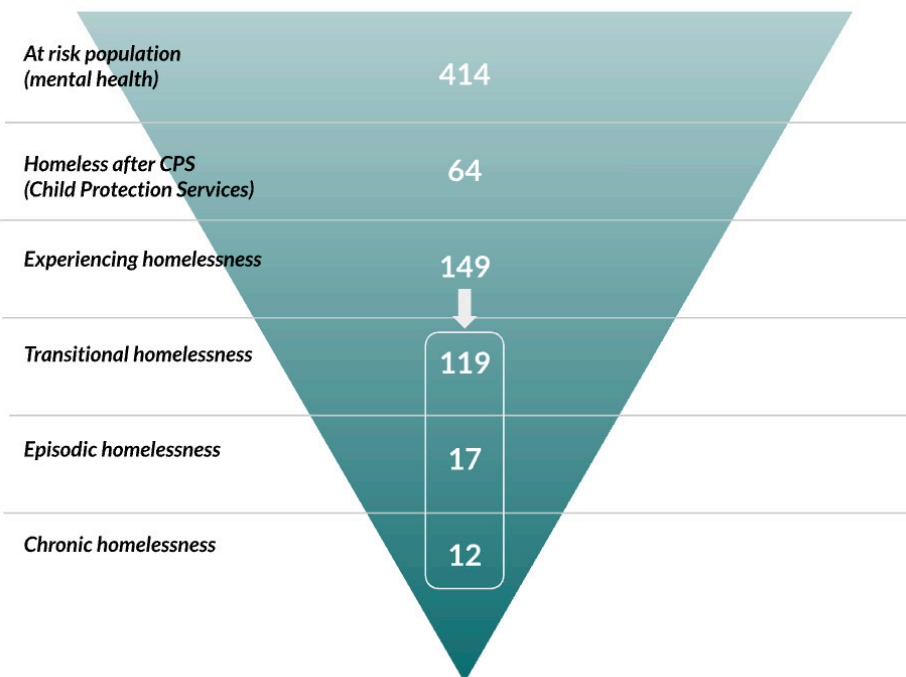


Table 8: Actual and projected growth of housing vulnerability for youths, 2021-2028

	2021	Growth Rate	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Change 2023 - 2028
Chronic homelessness	9	5%	9	10	10	11	11	12	28%
Episodic homelessness	13	5%	14	14	15	16	17	17	28%
Transitional homelessness	89	5%	93	98	103	108	114	119	28%
Experience homelessness	111	5%	117	122	128	135	142	149	28%
Reported youth homelessness after child protection services	48	5%	50	53	56	58	61	64	28%
Mental health	683	-8%	628	578	532	489	450	414	-34%

Table 9: Youth housing vulnerability percentages used to calculate projections, and sources

Population	Assumption	Growth Rate	Source
At-risk population (mental health)	14% of total children and youth population in BC	Average population change over the last 20 years	Canadian Mental Health Association
Homelessness after child protection services	43% of homelessness	Average population change over the last 20 years	Homeless Hub
Experience homelessness	20% of homeless estimates (previous models)	Assumption in Canada	Without a Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey (Stephen Gaetz, Bill O'Grady, Sean Kidd, Kaitlin Schwan)
Chronic homelessness	8% of unsheltered	Assumption in Canada	Federal Government
Episodic homelessness	12% of unsheltered	Assumption in Canada	Stats Canada
Transitional homelessness	80% of unsheltered	Assumption in Canada	Stats Canada

Table 10: Estimates of needed housing by category of housing vulnerability for youth, 2028

Support Type	Mental Health	Homeless after child protection services	Transitional Homeless	Episodic Homeless	Chronic Homeless	Total Spaces Needed
Transitional housing programs		10	5	5		20
Independent living programs		50	70			120
Education and training vouchers		60				60
Aftercare services		50				50
Youth shelter and crisis services		10		5	5	20
Rapid re-housing for youth		30		5	5	40
Mentoring programs	20	20	20			60
Job training and employment programs	20	15				35
Youth outreach teams	10	10		5	5	30
Drop-in centres	5	10		5	5	25
Foster youth to independence		20		5		25
Youth-specific medical-legal partnerships	10	20				30
Total	65	305	95	30	20	515

Glossary of Support Types:

Transitional housing programs:

These programs provide housing and supportive services to young people for a specified period—often up to two years—to help them transition to independent living.

Education and training vouchers:

In the U.S., this program provides financial assistance to former foster youth to attend college or vocational training, recognizing that educational attainment can be a protective factor against homelessness.

Youth shelter and crisis services:

Emergency shelters specifically designed for youth can provide immediate safety and support, connecting them with longer-term resources.

Mentoring programs:

Mentoring can play an important role in the lives of youth exiting foster care, providing them with guidance, support, and connections to resources, including housing.

Youth outreach teams:

These teams specifically engage with youth on the streets or in unstable housing situations, connecting them with shelter, services, and resources.

Foster youth to independence:

In the United States, this initiative provides housing vouchers to young adults under the age of 25 who are in, or have recently left, the foster care system without a home.

Independent living programs:

These programs offer training and resources to help youth aging out of foster care to develop essential life skills, such as budgeting, job hunting, and housekeeping. They might also provide financial support for housing.

Aftercare services:

Some child welfare agencies provide aftercare services to support young people after they exit foster care. These might include case management, counselling, and assistance in accessing housing or other resources.

Rapid re-housing for youth:

This approach focuses on moving youth into permanent housing as quickly as possible, often with rental subsidies and supportive services.

Job training and employment programs:

By providing job training and employment opportunities, these programs can give youth the means to sustain their own housing.

Drop-in centres:

Centres that offer immediate services such as meals, showers, and laundry. They often serve as an entry point for youth to access more extensive housing and support services.

Youth-specific medical-legal partnerships:

Legal professionals collaborate with healthcare providers to assist youth with legal issues that might affect housing, such as emancipation or accessing benefits.



Rooted in **a more holistic approach** that emphasizes preventative measures.

Objective II: Current and Projected Unmet Housing Need

Evaluation Of Current Housing And Support Models

To evaluate the efficacy of current housing and support models, we analyze the system of supports using the following lenses:

- **Current strengths utilization:** Assessing how the strengths of the current system can be leveraged to address the projected demands.
- **Addressing current weaknesses:** Analyzing how the identified weaknesses of the system might affect its ability to meet future needs, and what strategies can be implemented to mitigate these challenges.
- **Demographic and social considerations:** Reviewing the effects of demographic shifts and cultural sensitivities in meeting these needs.

Current Strengths Utilization

Comprehensive service range and cultural sensitivity: Organizations like the QUEST unit, Axis Family Resources, and the Canadian Mental Health Association offer a broad spectrum of support services. The presence of these organizations demonstrates Quesnel's ability to address diverse needs, including mental health, substance use, and developmental disabilities. This multi-dimensional approach is crucial, given the projected 21% at-risk population by 2028 due to mental health, addictions, and disabilities.

Application: *Scaling up these comprehensive services can help meet the growing demand, particularly for at-risk populations. The expansion should focus on the specific needs identified in the projection, such as assertive case management (280 spaces needed by 2028) and rehabilitation programs (280 spaces).*



Community collaboration and integrated support services: Community-driven initiatives by organizations, like the Green Hope Society and the Quesnel Pride Society, demonstrate strong grassroots involvement, while integration of housing and wraparound services by entities such as Amata Transition House Society and Quesnel Shelter & Support Society is a testament to the community's ability to provide holistic support. The presence of integrated support entities in Quesnel, including immediate mental health support from organizations like the CAT team, and Indigenous support services provided through organizations like the Dalkelh and Quesnel Tillicum Society Native Friendship Centre, showcases a holistic approach to care.

Application: *Strengthening these community collaborations will assist in effectively addressing the increasing demands for various types of housing and support, such as the projected need for 450 spaces in both affordable housing and affordable homeownership by 2028, as well as 210 spaces in permanent supportive housing.*

Enhancing these integrated services can be pivotal in addressing the diverse needs of the community. For instance, the CAT team's model could be expanded or replicated to meet the growing demand for mental health services, in line with the projection that 21% of the population will be at-risk due to mental health, addictions, and disabilities by 2028. Similarly, the expansion of culturally sensitive services through organizations like the Dalkelh can help meet the projected needs for more inclusive and culturally competent care.

Other housing societies in Quesnel, such as the Quesnel Shelter & Support Society, provide essential housing and support services. Integration with other support mechanisms is key to addressing the projected increase in various categories of homelessness, including transitional (595 spaces by 2028), episodic (90 spaces), and chronic homelessness (59 spaces).

Educational and employment support: Programs offered by organizations such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters and the WorkBC Centre contribute to personal and economic stability, important factors in preventing and addressing homelessness and housing instability.

Application: *Expanding these programs aligns with the need to support those experiencing transitional homelessness (595 spaces needed by 2028) and those in extreme core housing need (546 spaces), potentially reducing the pressure on housing resources.*



Addressing Current Weaknesses

Inadequate housing supply: The shortage of affordable housing in Quesnel is a serious concern, especially given the projected 28% increase in the population experiencing homelessness by 2028, as well as the projected increase to 546 people in Extreme Core Housing Need. This inadequacy directly hinders the city's ability to provide stable housing for low-income residents and those experiencing homelessness, including the transitional, episodic, and populations experiencing chronic homelessness.

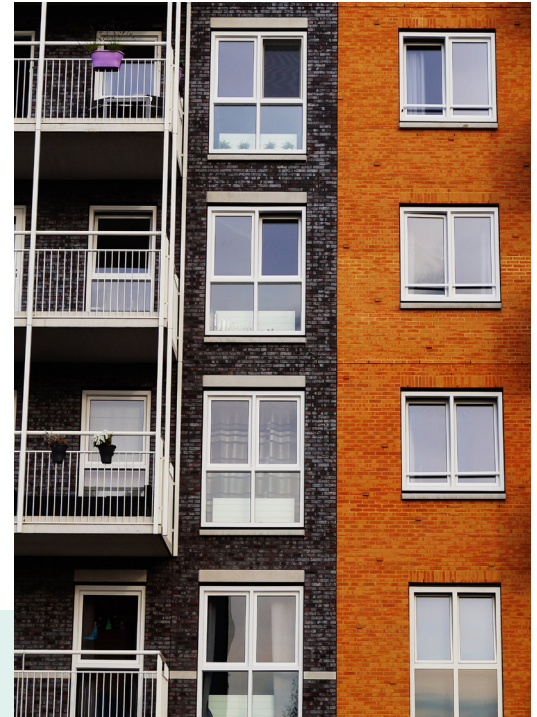
Application: *To address this, there's a need for a concerted effort to increase the supply of affordable housing and affordable homeownership options. The projected need for 450 spaces in both these categories by 2028 demonstrates the scale of expansion required.*

Geographic and transportation challenges: The centralization of services in Quesnel and lack of adequate public transportation create barriers for people without personal vehicles and residents in outlying areas, including reserves. These geographic and transportation challenges hinder access to essential services, potentially exacerbating the vulnerability of remote populations.

Application: *Implementing solutions such as decentralized service delivery, mobile support units, or enhanced public transportation could improve access. Additionally, expanding rent support programs (400 spaces needed by 2028) could help people in remote areas afford housing closer to essential services.*

Dependency on Non-Profit Organizations: Quesnel's heavy reliance on non-profit organizations for providing key services indicates potential sustainability issues, especially in the long term. This dependency raises concerns about the continuous availability and quality of services. Non-profits require sustainable funding in order to operate at the scale required by the community.

Application: *Strengthening partnerships with governmental bodies and exploring diversified funding sources could enhance the sustainability of these services. It's also crucial to ensure that programs like assertive case management (280 spaces needed) and rehabilitation programs (280 spaces) are adequately funded and supported.*



Service Coordination Needs: The absence of a centralized system for service coordination in Quesnel may lead to inefficiencies and make it difficult for those in need to navigate available resources. Without effective coordination, there can be overlaps or gaps in services, reducing the overall efficiency of the support system.

Application: *Developing a centralized or integrated system for service coordination, including but not limited to supportive housing, could streamline access and ensure more effective delivery of services like group homes or community residential services (220 spaces needed) and assisted living or residential care facilities (200 spaces).*

Limited Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment Facilities:

Quesnel currently lacks long-term treatment centres for acute mental health and substance use issues. The limited availability of specialized medical professionals exacerbates the challenge of providing comprehensive care for these issues. The at-risk population, which includes people with mental health and substance use challenges, is estimated to rise to 21% of the total population by 2028. The lack of long-term treatment options and specialized medical care could lead to unmet needs and increased pressure on other parts of the support system.

Application: *Establishing long-term treatment facilities within Quesnel or nearby regions, as well as attracting and retaining specialized medical professionals, including psychiatrists and addiction specialists, are essential. This development would align with the anticipated need for 280 spaces in rehabilitation programs and 280 spaces for assertive case management by 2028. Such facilities and services would not only provide direct care but also act as pivotal components in a comprehensive support system for people with complex health needs.*



However, it is important to remember that while these numbers are based on solid data and reasonable assumptions, they are not immune to the limitations of predictive modelling, as discussed earlier.



Demographic and Social Considerations

Aging population: The aging population in Quesnel necessitates an increase in age-appropriate services, reflected in the projected need for 200 spaces in assisted living or residential care facilities by 2028. An aging population requires not just medical care, but also targeted social support programs and housing options that cater to their unique needs.

***Application:** Expanding and enhancing services such as assisted living, residential care facilities, and senior-specific affordable housing options, and integrating these services with existing community support systems, can provide a more comprehensive care network for the elderly.*

Cultural and social inclusivity: While culturally sensitive services exist, such as those provided by the Quesnel Tillicum Society Native Friendship Centre, expansion and enhancement may be needed to meet the growing and diverse needs of the community, including Indigenous populations. Given that 59% of the homeless population in the 2023 PiT count self-identified as Indigenous, compared to 13% of Quesnel's overall population, it is crucial to ensure that all segments of the population have access to services that are respectful and responsive to their cultural backgrounds and social contexts.

***Application:** Strengthening and expanding culturally sensitive programs and services, especially those aimed at Indigenous populations, aligns with the need for a more inclusive approach. This might include increasing the availability of Indigenous-led or culturally tailored programs in areas such as mental health, substance use, and housing.*

Economic pressures: The rising cost of living and housing, coupled with stagnant income levels, exacerbates the risk of homelessness and economic instability for vulnerable populations. This is particularly important given the projected growth in homelessness and extreme core housing needs. Economic pressures can lead to increased demand for affordable housing and support services.

The PiT count in 2023 identified economic struggles as the primary cause of homelessness, with 49% citing insufficient income as the key reason for their situation. Additionally, the reliance on income assistance and disability benefits among 93% of the homeless population points to economic vulnerabilities.

***Application:** Addressing economic instability involves expanding affordable housing options, increasing rent supports, and providing economic empowerment programs like job training and employment support. These measures can help mitigate the impact of economic pressures on at-risk populations.*

Recommendations For Appropriate Housing and Service Models For Vulnerable Populations

Given the severity and complexity of the crisis facing vulnerable populations in Quesnel, a multifaceted and aggressive approach is necessary. Actions taken by the Communities should aim not only to address immediate needs, but also to tackle systemic issues contributing to these challenges.

1. Comprehensive Housing Strategy

- 1.1 Large-scale affordable housing development:** The major shortage of affordable housing necessitates a large-scale response. The Communities should seek to secure funding and partnerships for the construction of a substantial number of affordable housing units, prioritizing speed and scalability, possibly through modular housing solutions.
- 1.2 Targeted housing for high-risk groups:** The over-representation of Indigenous people and health concerns in the homeless population suggests a need for specialized housing solutions. We recommend that the Communities develop housing projects specifically designed for these groups, incorporating cultural and social sensitivity into their design and management.

2. Health and Social Services Enhancement

- 2.1 Establishment of a local treatment facility:** The lack of local, long-term treatment facilities for mental health and substance use is a serious gap. To best serve their vulnerable populations, the Communities should advocate for, and invest in, the establishment of a comprehensive treatment facility in Quesnel. This should offer a range of services from detoxification to long-term therapy and rehabilitation.
- 2.2 Mobile health and social services:** Geographic and transportation barriers limit access to services for remote populations. The Communities may deploy mobile units providing health and social services, including mental health support, to remote and underserved areas.

3. Cultural Competence and Inclusion

- 3.1 Culturally sensitive programs and services:** The high proportion of Indigenous people among those experiencing homelessness indicates a need for culturally competent approaches. The Communities should collaborate with Indigenous leaders and organizations to develop and deliver programs and services that are culturally appropriate and respectful.
- 3.2 Anti-racism and inclusion initiatives:** Addressing racism and promoting inclusivity are vital for a cohesive community. The Communities should implement community-wide anti-racism programs and inclusivity training, focusing on public services, healthcare providers, and law enforcement.

4. Strengthened Community Engagement and Collaboration

- 4.1 Collaborative governance model:** The Communities may consider establishing a task force comprising First Nations, municipal government, non-profit organizations, healthcare providers, community leaders, and affected people to ensure a coordinated and effective response.
- 4.2 Community awareness and participation:** Addressing community concerns of NIMBYism through community involvement is key to addressing the root causes of these issues. The Communities should consider launching awareness campaigns and community forums to engage residents in understanding and participating in solutions to these challenges.

5. Systemic and Structural Changes

- 5.1 Enhanced public transportation network:** Improving transportation options is essential for ensuring access to services and employment opportunities. The Communities may expand and enhance public transportation routes and schedules, particularly connecting outlying areas to central service locations. Methods they may consider are demand-responsive transport, community shuttle services, or partnerships with private transportation services.
- 5.2 Economic empowerment and job creation:** Economic instability is a major contributor to the crisis at hand. The Communities should develop comprehensive job training and placement programs, especially targeting vulnerable populations, as well as partnering with local businesses and industries to create job opportunities and support economic development initiatives.

The success of these recommendations to the Communities hinges on collaboration and collective action, as these principles form the bedrock of sustainable community transformation. Through collaboration, all partners—including local and provincial government, non-profit organizations, Indigenous groups, healthcare providers, and community members—can pool their unique perspectives, resources, and expertise.

This united front is essential for implementing complex strategies like demand-responsive transport, modular housing solutions, and tailored social services, ensuring they are not only effectively executed but also resonate with the diverse needs of the community.

Collective action will also foster a sense of shared responsibility and community ownership over these initiatives,

creating a strong foundation for lasting change and resilience against the multifaceted challenges faced by vulnerable populations in Quesnel.



Best Practices From Other Jurisdictions

Continuums of Support for Housing and Mental Health

In the Canadian context, an ideal housing continuum provides a wide range of housing options to accommodate the diverse needs of individuals and communities.

A generalized housing continuum is provided below. This continuum is ideal in that it includes a variety of housing options to meet the diverse needs of people at different stages in their lives and varying income levels. However, in practice, many communities face gaps along this continuum, particularly in areas like affordable rental housing and supportive housing.

To achieve this ideal, governments, non-profits, and private sector stakeholders must work together to invest in and develop housing solutions across the continuum. They need to consider local needs, housing market dynamics, and financial resources to ensure a balanced and comprehensive approach to housing provision and policy.

Table 11: Types of housing available for vulnerable populations



Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing

Serve people facing homelessness, offering immediate relief and short-term accommodation.



Supportive Housing

Includes subsidized residence for people with complex needs, who require wraparound support for challenges such as mental health or substance use.



Affordable Rental Housing

Housing options that are affordable to low- and moderate-income households. Affordability is often defined as housing costs that do not exceed 30% of a household's gross income.



Market Rental Housing

Serve individuals and families who may not qualify for subsidized housing but still struggle with high rental prices in the open market.



Affordable and Market Home Ownership

Can help moderate-income households purchase homes. Market homeownership refers to housing purchased without any subsidy or income restrictions.

Similarly, defining a mental health and substance use continuum is important because it provides a structured framework for addressing diverse needs, guiding service providers and policymakers in creating a coordinated and comprehensive system that ensures people receive the right care at the right time. Without an understanding of what the continuum should look like, Quesnel runs the risk of failing to meet its residents' needs.

Best practices suggest the following for a continuum of mental health and substance use care, keeping in mind that cultural appropriateness and person-centred treatments should be at the heart of all points on the continuum.

Table 12: Benefits of various interventions and supports



Early Intervention

Stops issues from becoming more serious. Focuses on recognizing signs and providing immediate support.



Residential Treatment

Full-time support and care in a controlled environment for more severe cases.



Outpatient Treatment and Ongoing Support and Recovery

Ensures support continues even after formal treatment ends, recognizing that recovery is a long-term process.



Crisis Intervention

Addresses acute needs of those in immediate danger.



Coordination of Care

Integrates and coordinates care across all stages, ensuring seamless flow from one stage of care to another.



Cultural
appropriateness
and person-centred
treatments should
be at **the heart of
all points** on the
continuum.

Locating Supportive Housing

Supportive housing facilities, often misunderstood and met with “Not In My Backyard” (NIMBY) attitudes, are essential for addressing societal challenges and should be welcomed rather than resisted.

These facilities play an important role in providing stable housing and support services to vulnerable populations, such as people experiencing homelessness or with disabilities.

Having these facilities in a neighbourhood can contribute to the community in meaningful ways. For instance, they bring in resources and services that can benefit the wider area, promote diversity and inclusivity, and often lead to increased property values over time. Residents in supportive housing are also given the opportunity to integrate into the community, fostering a sense of belonging and reducing societal stigmas. Importantly, evidence shows that supportive housing leads to reduced homelessness and can decrease the demand on public services like emergency healthcare and law enforcement, ultimately benefiting the entire community.



Hence, rather than adopting a NIMBYist stance, residents should recognize the broader benefits and the crucial role these facilities play in strengthening the social fabric and promoting the wellbeing of all community members.

When deciding where to locate a supportive housing facility, there are several important considerations to take into account.



These considerations include:

Zoning and land availability:

Supportive housing apartment buildings can only be built where multi-unit zoning is in place, and land is often scarce and expensive, limiting the available options. Land that is zoned for higher density housing, mixed use, or approved for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) may prove important for Quesnel.

Accessibility to services:

It is important to consider the proximity of the facility to essential services such as healthcare, mental health services, substance use treatment, and social support networks, to ensure that residents have access to the resources they need.

Affordability:

Housing should be affordable, ideally requiring residents to pay no more than 30% of their income for housing costs. Other models for affordability include Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) housing, AKA subsidized housing.

Safety and stability:

The location should provide a safe and stable environment for residents, helping them to achieve their goals and prevent homelessness, hospitalizations, and involvement in the criminal justice system. This may mean keeping a distance from environments in which people experience crises, such as an emergency shelter.

Community engagement:

Engaging with the local community and addressing any concerns they may have about the facility are crucial in ensuring successful integration and acceptance of the supportive housing facility. This should include First Nations, local businesses, and homeowners in the areas being considered. Education may also be required to encourage an understanding of community wellbeing for all.

Population to be served:

Consider the specific population that the facility will serve, such as people with mental illnesses, chronic health conditions, histories of trauma, or who are reentering society after incarceration, and ensure that the location meets their specific needs.

Homelessness prevention:

Providing housing in areas where homelessness is prevalent can help prevent the exacerbation of substance use and mental disorders, making it an important consideration when choosing a location for a supportive housing facility.

By carefully considering these factors, decision-makers can make informed choices about the location of supportive housing facilities, ultimately contributing to the wellbeing and stability of the residents they serve.

To effectively involve the community, including First Nations, in decision-making for a supportive housing facility, meaningful engagement is paramount. This involves appreciating the wealth of knowledge, experiences, and creative insights that community members bring to the table. Recognizing and leveraging these assets is crucial in shaping decisions that resonate with their needs and aspirations.

Building an inclusive political coalition through community engagement practices encourages the implementation of strategies by elected officials, representing a diverse spectrum of voices and interests. This inclusivity not only bolsters the strategy's effectiveness, but also enhances trust in government, particularly in communities historically marginalized from decision-making processes. Such engagement strengthens the bond between city government and community groups, paving the way for more collaborative future planning.

Attracting Medical Professionals

Creating an effective strategy for attracting medical professionals to rural areas like Quesnel requires a balanced approach that addresses both the barriers they face and the unique opportunities available in such settings.

Focusing on attracting culturally competent care providers and specialists in mental health and addiction treatment is especially pertinent.



Table 13: Barriers and strategies to attract medical professionals to rural areas

Barriers for Physicians in Rural Areas

Patient population challenges

- Care for an underserved, aging population
- Less healthy and less affluent patient base

Workload and scope of practice

- Overlapping roles, potential for burnout
- Sole medical resource, isolation risk

Access to specialized care

- Geographical distance from specialists
- Performing services outside comfort zone

Professional isolation

- Lone medical resource in community
- Risk of burnout and isolation

Educational and career opportunities

- Limited educational opportunities for family
- Career advancement concerns

Cultural competence needs

- Requirement for culturally competent care
- Indigenous health care considerations

Mental health and addiction treatment

- Need for long-term treatment specialists
- Limited access to mental health resources

Strategies to Attract Medical Professionals

Appeal to greater purpose

- Highlight the effect on underserved communities
- Emphasize strong doctor-patient relationships

Promote rural practice benefits

- Showcase work-life balance, community impact
- Provide professional support networks

Address potential concerns

- Assure access to technology, telemedicine support
- Develop local partnerships with specialists

Community and staff involvement

- Involve community in welcoming, integrating doctors
- Foster peer support and professional development

Support and resources provision

- Facilitate access to quality education, housing
- Offer career development programs, spousal support

Specialized training and recruitment

- Provide training in cultural competence
- Recruit professionals with experience in Indigenous health

Focus on specialized care needs

- Highlight the community's specific needs
- Offer incentives for specialists in mental health, addiction

Impediments To Setting Up And Operationalizing Resources Required For Housing and Support Services

Implementing the comprehensive recommendations outlined for addressing homelessness and related issues in Quesnel faces a range of impediments, which can be broadly categorized as follows:

1. Funding and Financial Constraints

The implementation of key initiatives aimed at alleviating homelessness and related issues in Quesnel faces serious financial challenges. Securing sufficient funding for the development of large-scale affordable housing is a primary concern, as it requires substantial investment not only in construction but also in the long-term management and maintenance of these facilities.

Similarly, the establishment of a local treatment facility for mental health and substance use issues presents a financial hurdle, given the high initial investment costs associated with building and equipping such a facility, as well as staffing it with qualified professionals. The proposal to enhance the public transportation network, while vital for ensuring community accessibility, incurs ongoing operational and maintenance costs that must be sustained over time. This is particularly challenging in smaller communities where the user base may not be large enough to offset these costs.

The initiative for economic empowerment and job creation, crucial for addressing the root causes of homelessness and poverty, also requires substantial financial resources. This includes funding for training programs and providing incentives for businesses to participate and support job creation efforts.

These financial challenges necessitate innovative funding solutions, partnerships, and sustained commitment from both public and private sectors to ensure the successful implementation and longevity of these initiatives.

2. Regulatory and Bureaucratic Hurdles

Addressing Quesnel's homelessness crisis involves navigating various regulatory and bureaucratic challenges. For the comprehensive housing strategy, this includes modifying zoning laws to allow for new affordable housing projects, ensuring that these projects comply with current building codes and safety standards, and streamlining permit processes to expedite construction.



In enhancing health and social services, the establishment of local treatment facilities and the deployment of mobile health units must adhere to stringent healthcare regulations and standards, which govern everything from facility operations to staff qualifications.

In addition, systemic and structural changes, such as expanding the public transportation network and fostering economic empowerment, require careful coordination with existing policies and legal frameworks. This entails not only navigating transportation policies for network expansion but also aligning job creation initiatives with current economic policies and labor laws, often advocating for policy changes to better support the community's vulnerable populations.

3. Community Resistance and NIMBYism

Community resistance and NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard) present major obstacles in operationalizing service and housing needs in Quesnel, particularly for targeted housing for high-risk groups. When it comes to developing specialized housing solutions for vulnerable populations, such as those experiencing homelessness, people with mental health issues, or Indigenous communities, local opposition often arises.

This resistance stems from various concerns, including fears of declining property values, increased crime, or changes in neighbourhood character. Overcoming these barriers requires addressing negative stereotypes and misconceptions about these groups.

Efforts to foster positive community engagement are crucial in this regard. Building community awareness, empathy, and understanding of the challenges faced by high-risk groups can help mitigate resistance. This involves not only transparent communication about the intended benefits and safety measures of such housing developments, but also active efforts to involve the community in the planning and implementation process, transforming potential opponents into allies.

By doing so, Quesnel can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for its most vulnerable residents, ensuring that service and housing needs are met in a way that is both effective and community-supported.

4. Logistical and Operational Challenges

Logistical and operational concerns are pivotal in the effective implementation of services in Quesnel, particularly for initiatives like mobile health and social services, cultural competence and inclusion programs, and the collaborative governance model.

For mobile health and social services, the coordination and maintenance of mobile units pose a substantial challenge. These units need to be efficiently scheduled and routed to reach remote areas,

requiring robust logistical planning. Additionally, the maintenance of these units, both in terms of equipment and staffing, requires ongoing attention and resources to ensure they remain functional and effective.

For cultural competence and inclusion programs, the challenge is in developing and delivering programs that effectively address the diverse needs of the community, particularly the substantial Indigenous population. This requires a deep understanding of cultural nuances and sensitivities. Programs must be tailored to resonate with and meet the specific needs of different cultural groups, demanding a high level of expertise and continuous adaptation based on community feedback.

Building a collaborative governance model requires consensus among diverse participants, each with their own perspectives and priorities. This is a complex task, involving effective communication, negotiation, and often compromise. Ensuring that all voices are heard and valued, particularly those of marginalized groups, is key to creating a governance model that is truly representative and effective in addressing the multifaceted issues of homelessness and social services in Quesnel.

5. Capacity and Resource Limitations

Capacity and resource constraints present challenges for enhancing health and social services, and for strengthening community engagement and collaboration. These constraints make it difficult to effectively deliver essential services, and engage the community in meaningful ways.

Health and social services enhancement are impeded by the shortage of healthcare professionals and support staff. This shortage is particularly acute in areas such as mental health and addiction treatment, where there is a high demand for specialized skills. The lack of professionals in these fields limits the community's ability to provide comprehensive and continuous care to its vulnerable populations. The challenge of attracting and retaining skilled healthcare workers in rural settings like Quesnel further exacerbates this issue.

Strengthening community engagement and collaboration is limited by the availability of human resources to manage and execute various initiatives. Effective community engagement requires dedicated personnel to plan, coordinate, and implement activities, and to maintain communication with community members. Similarly, collaboration among different participants



requires people who can facilitate these partnerships, align interests, and drive collective action. The lack of sufficient staff or volunteers to undertake these roles can hinder the progress and effectiveness of community engagement and collaborative efforts.

These capacity and resource constraints underscore the need for strategic planning and investment in human resources, to ensure that these initiatives are sustainable and effective in addressing the needs of Quesnel's residents.

6. Cultural and Social Sensitivity Concerns

Cultural and social inclusivity concerns affect the implementation of programs and services. These concerns highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of the community's cultural dynamics, and a commitment to addressing systemic biases and racism.

Ensuring authentic representation and input from Indigenous communities poses a challenge to building culturally sensitive programs and services. Given the over-representation of Indigenous people among the homeless population in Quesnel, it's important that any programs or services developed are not only culturally sensitive, but also co-created with meaningful participation from these communities. This requires active collaboration and partnership to ensure that the services provided are aligned with the cultural practices, values, and needs of the Indigenous population.

The primary obstacle to anti-racism and inclusion initiatives is effectively addressing deep-rooted societal biases and racism. This involves not only creating programs that promote inclusivity and diversity but also fundamentally changing attitudes and behaviors within the community. This requires sustained efforts in education, awareness-raising, and the implementation of policies that actively combat racism and promote inclusivity at all levels of the community.

7. Technological and Infrastructure Barriers

The development of an enhanced public transportation network in remote or underserved areas is a complex endeavor. The primary challenge lies in establishing new transportation systems where existing infrastructure may be limited or non-existent. This includes not just the physical aspects, such as roads and vehicle maintenance facilities, but also the technological components like scheduling systems, digital ticketing, and real-time tracking for efficiency and user convenience.

In remote areas, the geographical spread and lower population density add to the complexity, making the cost-benefit analysis more challenging. Integrating new systems with existing modes of transport to create a cohesive network requires careful planning and substantial investment.

Access to technology and infrastructure plays a crucial role in developing economic empowerment and job creation. Ensuring that both the workforce and businesses have access to the latest technology and high-speed internet is essential for the success of any economic development initiative in today's increasingly digital world.

This is particularly challenging in remote areas where technological infrastructure might be lacking or outdated, requiring both installing the necessary hardware and software and also ensuring ongoing maintenance and upgrades. There is also a need for training and support to ensure that the local population can effectively use these technologies, which is vital for attracting new businesses and fostering an environment conducive to economic growth.

8. Political and Governance Issues

To create the collaborative governance model, the primary challenge lies in aligning the diverse agendas and priorities of various community members, including governmental entities, non-governmental organizations, community groups, First Nations, and private sector participants. Each group brings its own unique objectives, cultural perspectives, and operational styles. For First Nations, whose perspectives are often rooted in distinct cultural and historical experiences, ensuring their voices are not only heard but also given due weight is essential.

Implementing systemic and structural changes will require alterations to existing policies and legal frameworks, which must be done in a way that respects and incorporates First Nations' rights, treaties, and traditional lands. Gaining political support for these changes demands effective advocacy, respectful negotiation, and a keen understanding of First Nations cultures and governance structures. Engaging with First Nations leaders, politicians, policymakers, and influential community figures requires a culturally sensitive approach, ensuring that proposed changes align with First Nations values and address their specific needs and concerns.

9. Sustainability and Long-Term Viability

Initiatives such as the comprehensive housing strategy and economic empowerment and job creation programs are not just about immediate relief, but also creating sustainable, long-term solutions that will benefit the community for years to come.

The comprehensive housing strategy requires not only the construction of affordable housing units, but also considering factors like maintenance, management, community integration, and the evolving needs of the population. Sustainable housing solutions must cater to the diverse needs of the community, including the specific requirements of high-risk groups such as Indigenous people, who may need culturally sensitive designs and support services. They must also be designed to be adaptable,

environmentally responsible, and economically viable over time, and be resilient to economic shifts, and changes in population demographics.

Economic empowerment and job creation involves both providing immediate job training and placement, and fostering an economic environment that supports ongoing employment growth. It involves collaborating with local businesses, industries, and educational institutions to ensure that job training programs are aligned with the current and future needs of the job market. This approach helps in building a workforce that is adaptable and skilled in sectors that are likely to see sustained demand.

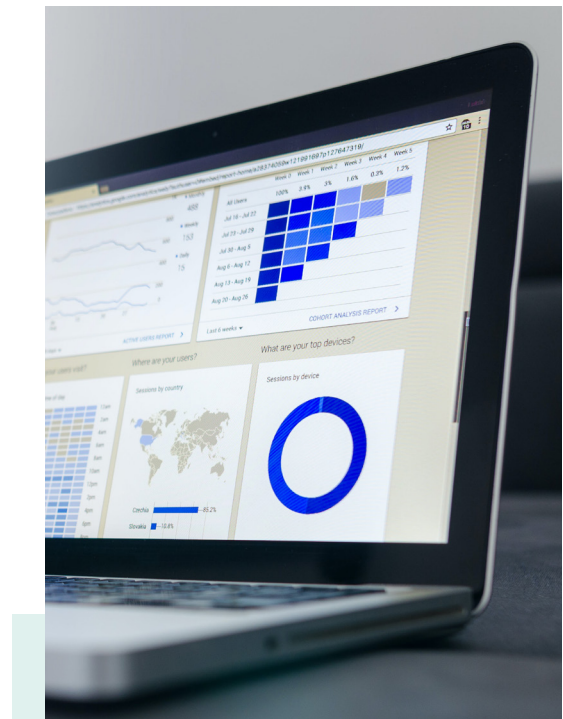
10. Data and Research Gaps

Addressing the various challenges and implementing effective strategies for Quesnel's social issues requires a robust approach to data and research. This involves recognizing and filling gaps in data collection, monitoring, and research across all initiatives.

For all initiatives, from housing to health and economic empowerment, there is a need for ongoing data collection and monitoring. This means not only gathering initial data to inform strategy development, but also continuously tracking progress, outcomes, and emerging trends. This is essential to understand the effectiveness of the initiatives, identify areas for improvement, and adapt strategies effectively in response to changing circumstances.

There is also a need for in-depth research to delve deeper into the root causes and complex dynamics of issues like homelessness, health disparities, and economic challenges in Quesnel. This research should aim to uncover the underlying systemic and structural factors that contribute to these issues, especially considering the specific context of the community, including its substantial Indigenous population.

Effective research and data collection should also involve the voices and experiences of those directly affected by these issues. Engaging with community members, particularly vulnerable groups, can provide valuable insights and ensure that strategies are grounded in the realities of those they aim to support.



Guidelines For Further Community Engagement

The partnership between the City of Quesnel, Lhtako Dene Nation, Nazko First Nation, Lhoosk'uz Dene Nation, and ?Esdilagh First Nation—collectively referred to as the Communities—plays a crucial role in addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, particularly those who are unhoused. A cohesive, well-structured approach is necessary for effective results. This approach should include the following.

Formation of a steering committee:

Establish a diverse steering committee to guide and oversee initiatives for homelessness and support for vulnerable populations.

- Recruit a diverse group of representatives from each community, ensuring cross-sector participation (e.g., healthcare, housing, social services).
- Define clear roles, responsibilities, and governance structures for the committee.
- Continue to organize regular meetings to monitor progress, address challenges, and adjust strategies as needed.

Incorporation of cultural elements in policies and practices:

Ensure that policies and operational practices are deeply respectful of the cultural diversity and heritage of the Communities.

- Involve cultural authorities, such as elders and Indigenous knowledge holders, in the policymaking process.
- Embed traditional practices, languages, and customs in service delivery models.
- Conduct cultural competency training for staff across all communities involved.

Development of a unified vision and strategy:

Craft a collaborative, culturally inclusive vision and strategy to address homelessness and enhance support services.

- Facilitate joint planning sessions to establish a shared vision, incorporating values and insights from all communities.
- Outline a strategic plan with both immediate and long-range goals.
- Implement a phased approach to strategy execution, with regular evaluations of outcomes and effectiveness.

Resource sharing and collaborative projects:

Leverage shared resources and synergies through joint projects and initiatives.

- Identify and amalgamate financial, human, and material resources for collective initiatives.
- Seek grants and funding collaboratively, enhancing the scope and potential effectiveness of projects.
- Initiate combined housing, healthcare, and social service programs that serve the broader interests of all communities.

Questions that the Communities may discuss are:

Strategic priorities and goals

What are our main priorities and specific goals in addressing homelessness and supporting vulnerable populations?

Identification of key community members

Who are the essential community members we need to collaborate with for effective implementation?

Resource allocation and budgeting

How should we allocate our financial and human resources among the various initiatives?

Location for supportive housing and services

Where should we locate supportive housing developments and associated services for optimal accessibility and community integration?

Design of supportive housing

What design elements should our supportive housing include to meet the needs and preferences of our community?

Health and social service enhancements

What enhancements or additions to health and social services are necessary for our targeted populations?

Community engagement and outreach

What strategies should we use to engage the community and gain support for our initiatives?

Cultural competence and inclusivity

How can we ensure cultural competence and inclusivity are integrated into all our programs and services?

Policy development and advocacy

What policy changes or advocacy efforts are needed to support our initiatives and address systemic barriers?

Monitoring and evaluation framework

How should we monitor the progress of our initiatives and evaluate their effect on the community?

Communication strategy

What should be our strategy for communicating with community members and keeping them informed and engaged?

Partnership and collaboration opportunities

What partnerships and collaborations should we explore to enhance the effectiveness of our initiatives?

Emergency response and contingency planning

What plans do we need for emergency responses affecting our homeless population?

Sustainability and long-term planning

How can we ensure the long-term sustainability of our initiatives, including ongoing funding and program evolution?

Submitted to: City of Quesnel

Quesnel Service and Housing Options Review For Vulnerable Populations

Authored by :
HelpSeeker Technologies



HELPSEEKER
TECHNOLOGIES

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
OR DATA INQUIRIES CONTACT:
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Appendix A: Inventory of Service and Housing Options in the Communities

To simplify navigation through the variety of housing and services offered by numerous organizations, we've arranged them alphabetically.

Alcoholics Anonymous Area 79

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a worldwide fellowship that offers a program of recovery for individuals struggling with alcoholism, emphasizing peer support and a step-by-step approach to sobriety. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking, and there are no dues or fees. A.A. is not affiliated with any external groups and focuses on helping members stay sober and achieve sobriety. Al-Anon is a support program for people affected by someone else's drinking, helping them bring positive changes to their situations. Alateen, a part of Al-Anon, is a fellowship for teenagers in those circumstances. Both programs are non-religious and free to join.

Operating in **weekly meetings** at 465 Kinchant Street on Wednesday nights, the Cariboo AFG uses sharing experiences to help bring about positive change, regardless of the alcoholic's acknowledgement or help-seeking.

Website: <https://bcyukonaa.org/contact/>

Address: 465 Kinchant Street

Phone: 6044352181

Amata Transition House Society

The Amata Transition House Society provides a multifaceted support system for women and their children facing transitional challenges, particularly those escaping abuse. Their services are designed to address both immediate needs and longer-term personal growth and healing.

The **outreach worker** is a key contact for clients, accompanying them to important appointments such as with lawyers, medical professionals, and social service providers, ensuring they have support and access to vital information. This role extends to facilitating the **Phoenix Program**, a 10-week educational group aimed at empowerment and recovery.

For families, the **family childcare worker** offers guidance through the transition, helping with information, schooling arrangements, and childcare during important meetings. This support allows mothers to focus on necessary appointments without the worry of child supervision.

The **house coordinator** is the go-to for day-to-day living within the transition house, assisting residents with meal planning, chore coordination, and providing a listening ear when the Support Worker is unavailable.

For children affected by witnessing abuse, the **PEACE program** offers both one-on-one and group counselling. The **PEACE coordinator** is a dedicated resource for these children, ready to answer questions and provide the necessary emotional support to aid in their healing process.

Finally, the **24-hour crisis line** ensures that support is always available, providing an immediate response to those in urgent need, including services for sexual assault response. This comprehensive suite of services underscores the society's commitment to fostering safety, healing, and resilience in the community.

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/amatatransitionhouse>

Address: 693 Mclean St

Phone: 2509927321

Axis Family Resources

Axis Family Resources in Quesnel is a cornerstone of community support, providing an array of services tailored to meet the needs of children, youth, adults, and families since 1992. With a team of approximately 35 dedicated staff members, they offer specialized supportive housing in partnership with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), equipping sub-contracted caregivers to support children and adolescents facing various challenges.

The services at Axis span a broad spectrum, catering to children and youth with mental health issues through both group and one-on-one support programs. For families affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) or other Complex Developmental Behavioural Conditions (CDBC), the **FASD keyworker services** provide essential guidance and support throughout the assessment and diagnosis process. This service extends into education and resource navigation to bolster community capacity to support affected children and youth.

Family services at Axis address the stressors that arise from behavioral challenges, the foster care system, addiction and mental health struggles within families, and the special needs or medical conditions of children. Their approach is individualized, aligning with the families' perspectives and the insights of referring social workers to foster family stability and safety.

The **foster parent support and training program** ensures that foster parents in the North Central region receive the ongoing support and education necessary to provide the highest quality of care for children and youth in the foster system. This program also facilitates a community among foster parents for shared support and learning.

Axis's **specialized supportive housing** offers a variety of living arrangements for people with mental health, substance use, or behavioral issues, and developmental disabilities. This includes **Axis staffed homes** and **Axis therapeutic care homes**, which are discreetly integrated into neighbourhoods, providing 24/7 staff support and personalized care plans.

For children and youth with special needs, the **life skills program** focuses on expanding social and life skills, while the Phase II for Youth program supports those transitioning from foster care to

independent adulthood, emphasizing life skills development, accommodation securing, and crisis management.

Axis Family Services also offers [addiction services](#), [community living services](#), and [non-violence crisis programs and training](#).

Website: <http://www.axis.bc.ca/>

Address: Unit # 2 – 160 Barlow Ave

Email: quesnel.admin@axis.bc.ca

Phone: 2509922759

BC Region of Narcotics Anonymous

The BC Region of Narcotics Anonymous provides support for people struggling with addiction, offering a community where recovery can be pursued. Their services include meetings by the [essential evolution group](#) for those seeking to stop drug use and a [hotline](#) for immediate assistance. These resources are valuable for their accessibility and supportive environment, aiding people in their journey toward recovery.

Website: <https://bcrna.ca/index.php?category=meetings>

Address: 465 Kinchant Street

BC Housing

BC Housing is a provincial crown agency in British Columbia that partners with various sectors to provide a spectrum of housing options. They play a pivotal role in developing, managing, and administering subsidized housing programs across the province. While they do not directly provide housing, they work with approximately 800 housing providers to support over 110,000 households. Facilities supported by BC Housing are detailed elsewhere in this report.

Their mandate includes fulfilling directives from the Attorney General and Ministry responsible for Housing. They also administer the Provincial Rental Housing Corporation, holding properties for social and low-cost housing. Beyond housing provision, BC Housing is involved in licensing residential builders, administering owner-builder authorizations, and advancing the residential construction industry through research and education.

BC Housing's services extend to a wide array of beneficiaries, including people experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, Indigenous communities, women and children at risk of violence, low-income seniors, families, and new home buyers.

Website: <https://www.bchousing.org/>

Address: Suite 1701-4555 Kingsway, Burnaby BC

Email: imt@bchousing.org

Phone: 6044331711

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Quesnel

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Quesnel has been offering life-changing mentoring experiences to the community since 1912. Their programs include:

- **Big Brothers mentoring** - Pairs boys and young men with role models for trust-building activities, requiring a year-long commitment.
- **Big Sisters mentoring** - Connects girls and young women with mentors to share experiences and grow together, with a similar time commitment.
- **In-school mentoring** - Offers youth a chance to engage in activities within school grounds for one hour weekly, excluding school breaks.
- **Go Girls! Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds** - A group mentoring program that focuses on physical activity, balanced eating, and self-esteem for girls aged 12-14.
- **Game On! Eat Smart, Play Smart!** - Provides boys and young men with support for healthy lifestyle choices through physical activities and life skills discussions.
- **Kids in Motion** - A program developed for children in kindergarten to grade 3, aimed at improving social, articulation, and comprehension skills through creative activities.

The mentoring programs provided by Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Quesnel are typically designed to serve vulnerable populations, which can include at-risk youth and children from various challenging backgrounds. These programs aim to provide support, guidance, and positive role models to help vulnerable youth develop confidence, social skills, and healthy habits, which can substantially improve their wellbeing and future opportunities.

Website: <https://quesnel.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/what-we-do/our-programs/>

Address: 336 Front Street

Email: bbbsques@goldcity.net

Phone: 2509927257

Canadian Mental Health Association of Northern BC

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) of Northern BC, with its Quesnel office, plays a pivotal role in fostering mental wellbeing in the community. Founded in 1918, CMHA is a national charity that supports mental health for all Canadians and champions resilience and recovery for those experiencing mental illness. In Quesnel, as a satellite of the Prince George branch, the office extends this mission by providing **community mental health services and advocacy**, with a particular emphasis on food security initiatives.

The Quesnel office meets people in a non-judgmental and empowering manner, offering services like **one-to-one meetings, advocacy, assessments, counselling, psycho-education courses, and support sessions**. They are dedicated to assisting people in building resilience, finding balance, and developing skills for improved wellbeing and psychosocial functioning.

Moreover, the CMHA in Quesnel is deeply invested in addressing food insecurity through the **Community Food Coordination Program**. They provide up-to-date information on local food programs, support in accessing these resources, and coordinate efforts to diversify the local food system. Their work includes sourcing food from local farms and producers to support individuals and families in need, highlighting a commitment to both mental and physical health in the community.

Website: <https://northernbc.cmha.ca/programs/quesnel-services/>

Address: 102-345 Anderson Drive

Email: reception@cmhanorthernbc.ca

Phone: 2364241946

Cariboo Youth and Family Resources

The Cariboo Family Enrichment Centre (CFEC) offers a range of inclusive services, including family and youth conflict counselling and supervised visits, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all community members.

Family and youth conflict counselling: CFEC provides counselling services tailored to families and youth experiencing conflict. This service aims to facilitate communication, resolve disputes, and foster healthier relationships within families. Counsellors apply a trauma-informed approach to ensure that clients feel understood and supported while navigating emotional challenges.

Supervised visits: For families in situations where children's safety and wellbeing must be ensured during parental visits, CFEC offers supervised visitation services. These visits allow children to maintain relationships with their parents in a secure, controlled, and neutral environment. The Centre's staff are present to observe the visits, provide support as needed, and ensure a positive experience for the child.

Website: <https://www.cariboofamily.org/>

Address: cfec@cariboofamily.org

Phone: 2503955155

Coalition of Substance Users of the North (CSUN)

The Coalition of Substance Users of the North (CSUN) provides a **supportive community for people who are currently using or have previously used illicit drugs**. As part of their services, CSUN offers **snacks and hot meals** to those people when food is available, ensuring that people who may be facing challenges with substance use also have access to necessary nutritional support. This program is a vital part of CSUN's efforts to assist and stand in solidarity with people experiencing drug use, offering sustenance alongside advocacy and a shared community.

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/CoalitionofSubstanceUsersoftheNorth/>

Address: 3-445 Anderson Drive

Email: openingdoorstoharmreduction@gmail.com

Phone: 2509910091

Community Action Initiative

The Community Action Initiative (CAI) supports community-led projects aimed at addressing mental health and substance use issues in British Columbia. It operates with a commitment to leadership, equitable granting, and aligning with provincial priorities for mental health and wellness. Between 2010-2020, CAI invested \$41 million into such projects, emphasizing the importance of respecting the self-determination of equity-seeking groups.

In Quesnel, the Community Action Team (CAT) exemplifies CAI's mission through peer-driven and peer-led efforts. Working closely with groups like the Coalition of Substance Users of the North (CSUN), the Quesnel CAT is instrumental in developing programs, services, and resources to respond effectively to the overdose crisis such as the distribution of **harm reduction supplies**, **connections to community services**, **advocacy**, **referrals**, and **food/hygiene support**. The office, which is managed by people with lived experience in substance use, pairs people with lived experience of substance use with frontline service providers, providing support during after-hours and weekends.

Website: <https://caibc.ca/communityactionteams/quesnel-community-action-team/>

Email: info@caibc.ca

Phone: 6046381172

Community Living British Columbia

Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) is a provincial crown corporation formed to support adults with developmental disabilities, as well as people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder who require substantial support with daily living activities. CLBC's services include:

Transition planning: To aid youth with disabilities in their transition to adulthood, CLBC facilitates a process that encompasses accessing community support and developing support networks, which may include applying for CLBC adult services to assist them in living fully and independently within the community.

Welcome and planning process: This process provides essential information to those eligible for CLBC support, aiming to ease the transition to receiving services. It includes Welcome Workshops that cover information on adulthood, local resources, planning options, and available services.

Community inclusion: CLBC encourages people to engage with their community by facilitating access to activities and relationships beyond paid support staff. This may involve participating in local sports teams, classes, volunteering, and other community engagement opportunities.

Home support services: CLBC funds various home supports allowing people to select services that match their current needs and preferences, ranging from skill development assistance to full-time in-home support.

Website: <https://www.communitylivingbc.ca/who-does-clbc-support/who-is-clbc/>

Address: 314, 350 Barlow Avenue

Phone: 2506454065

Dakelh & Quesnel Community Housing Society

The Dakelh & Quesnel Community Housing Society (DQCHS) is committed to providing affordable, safe, and inclusive housing solutions to a diverse population, no matter their race, ancestry, spiritual beliefs, orientation, income, age, or ability. They uphold tenant safety, and self-determination, and honor healthy agreements, fostering an environment of unity and respect.

DQCHS's offerings include:

- **Single family homes in the Quesnel area:** These are intended for families with at least 3 members and require tenants to maintain the property and live a drug-free lifestyle.
- **Kikihnow Apartments:** A 38-unit family apartment complex in downtown Quesnel with accessible suites, common areas for gatherings, secure entrances, and video surveillance.
- **Milestone Manor:** A flagship 31-unit family housing facility also located in downtown Quesnel, featuring various sized apartments and accessible options.
- **Stepping Stone:** An upcoming project providing 26 one-bedroom units, with three accessible for people with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit ancestry, expected to open in early 2023.

In addition to housing, DQCHS supports tenants with services like **tax return assistance**, **personal budgeting** programs, and **advocacy**. They are a key player in the Aboriginal Housing Management Association and the BC Non-Profit Housing Association, working collaboratively to manage the tenant application process and contribute to the community's housing needs.

Website: <https://www.dqchs.org/>

Address: 100-744 Front Street

Email: reception@dqchs.org

Phone: 2509923306

Dengarry Professional Services

Dengarry Professional Services Ltd. offers comprehensive support to adults with intellectual disabilities, focusing on enhancing quality of life through residential, life skills, and employment services. Their tailored programs include **supported living**, providing personalized assistance with

daily activities and **cluster living** for community-based support. The **staffed residential service** ensures 24-hour care in a variety of living environments.

Home sharing caters to unique living situations with caregiver matching and continued support for a comfortable home life. **Employment services** concentrate on vocational achievement, helping clients with job searches, skill development, and workplace integration. These services, funded by Community Living BC, are integral to fostering independence and community participation for their clients.

Website: <https://dengarry.com/>

Address: 391 Johnston Avenue

Email: gcontact@dengarry.bc.ca

Phone: 2509927900

Green Hope Society

The Green Hope Society is dedicated to enhancing food security and fostering a more sustainable future. Their innovative **food rescue initiative** redirects viable food from groceries that would otherwise be discarded to those in need in the form of **hampers**. Additionally, they cultivate fresh produce to enrich the food provided. With ambitions to establish a complimentary food bank styled as a grocery store, they emphasize dignity and choice in food selection. Their efforts are deeply rooted in community and environmental stewardship, working towards a collaborative, waste-free future. They invite like-minded organizations to support their mission.

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/337148011677053/>

Address: 284 Anderson Dr

Email: quesnelgreenhope@gmail.com

Here2Talk

Here2Talk is a government-funded program from British Columbia designed to improve mental health and addiction services for residents, particularly focusing on the needs of post-secondary students. Recognizing the higher prevalence of mental health and substance use issues in the 15-24 age group, the province engaged with student and sector leaders to identify barriers to accessing mental health services. The outcome is the establishment of a **round-the-clock counselling and referral service** tailored to the unique requirements of students in higher education, ensuring they have continuous access to the support they need.

Website: <https://here2talk.ca/main>

Email: here2talk@gov.bc.ca

Phone: 6046425212 Local or 8778573397 Toll free or 6046425212 International

Legal Services Society

Legal Aid BC (LABC), operating as a provincial Crown Corporation since 1979, delivers **legal information, advice, and representation services** under the Legal Services Society Act. It focuses on assisting people who encounter difficulties accessing the legal system while ensuring some services are accessible to all residents of British Columbia. LABC is primarily funded by the provincial government and further supported by the Law Foundation of BC and the Notary Foundation of BC. Despite government funding, LABC maintains operational independence and is accountable to the public.

Website: <https://legalaid.bc.ca/>

Phone: 6044082172 or 8665772525

Moms Stop The Harm

Moms Stop the Harm (MSTH) is a network in Canada composed of families who have experienced harm or loss due to substance use. They seek to reform drug policies they view as unsuccessful, offer **emotional support** to families in mourning, and help people with family members who are current or former substance users.

Website: <https://www.momsstoptheharm.com/>

Email: info@momsstoptheharm.com

National Overdose Response Service (NORS)

The NORS hotline provides Canadians with a **confidential and nonjudgmental service** aimed at preventing overdoses. Available whenever and wherever people use drugs, it offers compassionate support.

Website: <https://www.nors.ca/>

Email: weloveyou@nors.ca

Phone: 8886886677

North Cariboo Aboriginal Family Program Society (?Echen healing Society)

The North Cariboo Aboriginal Family Program Society is dedicated to advancing the welfare of children, youth, and families in the Aboriginal communities of the North Cariboo region in British Columbia. They provide a range of supportive services including **family support, cultural awareness groups, at-risk youth intervention, life skills, advocacy, counselling, and dispute resolution**, as well as programs for **health, healing, education, and family and child development**.

Website:

<https://www.facebook.com/people/North-Cariboo-Aboriginal-Family-Program-Society/100067304131654/>

Address: 324 Hoy Street

Phone: 2509929160

North Cariboo Seniors Council

The North Cariboo Seniors Council is a pivotal organization in British Columbia, focused on enriching the lives of seniors within the community. Their mission revolves around creating an accessible information hub for services and resources that support the elderly population. The Council works collaboratively with other senior organizations to spearhead initiatives on important issues affecting this demographic, from health to housing.

Programs offered by the North Cariboo Seniors Council are diverse and aim to address the multifaceted needs of seniors, who often represent a vulnerable segment of the population:

- **Transportation services:** Recognizing the challenge of mobility, especially for medical appointments, they strive to bridge the gap through effective transportation solutions.
- **Housing inventory and support:** With funds from a UBCM grant, they catalog housing options for seniors to facilitate transitions to accommodations better suited to their changing needs.
- **Food security initiatives:** The Council places emphasis on food security, offering supplementary meal services, access to locally grown produce, and educational classes on nutritious food preparation.
- **Recreational access:** They seek funding to provide seniors with passes to Arts and Recreation Centres, encouraging participation in fitness and social activities for improved wellbeing.
- **Volunteer opportunities:** Development of programs that enable community members to volunteer their time to assist seniors with various supports and services.
- **Social inclusion and respect:** They actively engage with local events and businesses to foster a community that supports seniors with respect and inclusiveness, ensuring they remain integrated and active members of society.
- **Event participation:** The Council organizes and supports senior participation in a variety of events throughout the year, including special outings during the winter months to combat isolation.

Through these programs, the North Cariboo Seniors Council not only addresses immediate needs but also works towards long-term improvements in the quality of life for seniors, advocating for their rights and inclusion in the broader community conversation.

Website: <http://www.caribooseniorscouncil.org/>

Address: 246 St Laurent Ave

Email: info@caribooseniorscouncil.org

Phone: 2509910510

Northern Health Authority

The Northern Health Authority in British Columbia is dedicated to improving health services for northern and rural communities. They offer comprehensive care through initiatives like the GR Baker Memorial Hospital, which provides **acute care**, **ICU**, and **emergency services**, along with a wide range of other medical services. Community programs support mental health and substance use issues, offering services like **crisis response**, **counselling**, and **long-term case management**.

The **Quesnel Urgent and Primary Care Centre** provides same-day access to primary care, addressing less severe medical issues with an integrated team of health professionals.

At the Grace Young Wellness Centre in the Westside Mental Health, they offer an **OAT clinic program**, **counselling**, **mental health and addiction clinicians (by referral)**, **early psychosis therapy**, **methadone treatment**, **addiction counselling**, and **crisis support**. The **Assertive Community Treatment** team also offers support with **outreach**, **medication management**, **medical care connections**, and **life skills**. Further, Westside Mental Health offers an **overdose prevention site (OPS)** that also provides **harm reduction supplies**, **naloxone training**, and other **overdose prevention** work.

Website: <https://www.northernhealth.ca/about-us>

Email: healthpromotions@northernhealth.ca

Phone: 2505652649

Northern Network of Peers for Equality (NOPE)

The Northern Network of Peers for Equality (NOPE) stands as a pillar of advocacy and support within the Quesnel community and beyond, operating with a deep-rooted understanding of the challenges faced by people who use drugs. This not-for-profit, peer-led organization is grounded in the shared experiences of its members, offering a suite of programs that address the multifaceted needs of those they serve.

NOPE's **nutritional support program** is one among many initiatives that reflect the organization's dedication to holistic wellbeing. By providing nutritional guidance and assistance, NOPE ensures that maintaining a healthy lifestyle is accessible to all, particularly for those who may face barriers to adequate nutrition due to socio-economic factors or health challenges related to drug use.

The organization's advocacy extends to empowering women, children, and youth, with a focus on fostering social and legal justice. Through **counselling and educational** programs, NOPE offers a **sanctuary** for learning, healing, and growth, promoting the rights and welfare of women and children in the community.

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/267679468346874/>

Address: 325 St Laurent Ave

Nourish Food Program

The Nourish Food Program is a replacement of the former Salvation Army food services, offering food support including, but not limited to, **bagged lunches**, **food donations**, and **hampers**.

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/nourishfoodbank/>

Address: 102-345 Anderson Drive

Pearl Essence Therapy

Pearl Essence Therapy offers a distinctive approach to **counselling**, characterized by a blend of professional expertise and personal touch. Registered with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA), the service is a harmonious fusion of educational grounding, theoretical frameworks, therapeutic modalities, and valuable lived experience. The therapeutic practice is underpinned by a commitment to providing empathetic support and a nurturing 'being with' presence that clients can rely on through their journeys of self-discovery and healing.

Website: <https://pearlessencetherapy.ca/>

Address: 1319 Renyard Rd

Email: info@pearlessencetherapy.ca

Phone: 2502552185

Prince George and District Elizabeth Fry Society

The Prince George and District Elizabeth Fry Society is an organization deeply committed to assisting and empowering women, children, and youth. With a steadfast dedication to advocacy and support, this society works within the community to provide **counselling, education, and social and legal justice resources**.

Through their efforts, the Elizabeth Fry Society upholds the rights and dignity of women and children, serving as a pillar in the fight for equality and systemic change. Their programs are designed not only to address immediate needs but also to equip people with the knowledge and skills necessary for long-term empowerment.

Website: <https://www.pgefry.bc.ca/>

Address: 205 – 350 Barlow Avenue

Phone: 2509910992

Quesnel & District Child Development Centre

The Quesnel & District Child Development Centre (CDC) Association is an organization dedicated to creating an inclusive world that honours and nurtures the individuality of each person. With a focus on pregnant people, new parents, children, youth, and families, the association is committed to fostering an environment where every person is respected and accepted, enabling them to live life to the fullest and contribute meaningfully to society. Key supports offered at the CDC include **at-risk youth intervention, family and child support, pregnancy outreach, and a therapy program**.

Website: <https://quesnelcdc.com/>

Address: 300-488 McLean St

Email: heidik@quesnelcdc.com

Phone: 2509922481

Quesnel Community Living Association

The Quesnel Community Living Association (QCLA) embodies a vision of a community where equality, dignity, and inclusion are not just ideals, but everyday realities. Their mission is rooted in supporting people with diverse abilities, helping them to make their own choices and decisions in life with an emphasis on community inclusion and independence.

QCLA's philosophy revolves around the conviction that everyone deserves to live with dignity, be an integral part of their community, and have the opportunity to participate effectively in society. They operationalize this philosophy through two primary residential settings:

- **Racing Road Residence:** This ranch-style home is tailored to provide 24-hour care for residents who require intensive support, including those with mobility challenges. It's a licensed facility equipped with accessibility features such as an elevator, ramps, and wheelchair-friendly washrooms. Residents enjoy private rooms personalized to their taste, share common areas, and contribute to the household's ambiance. Meals are prepared considering individual dietary needs and preferences, and each person is encouraged to pursue their chosen interests.
- **Apartment Cluster Complex:** Located above the QCLA's main office, this complex offers four apartments designed for one or two residents each. With 24-hour support available, the focus here is on teaching life skills to promote independence. This includes assistance with daily tasks such as banking and shopping, and the location allows residents easy access to the community, fostering independence and community engagement.

QCLA also offers robust day programs that support people with a higher degree of needs, encouraging participation in a broad spectrum of activities that cater to their personal goals, interests, and abilities. These programs are comprehensive, covering aspects such as life skills, employment readiness, community inclusion, and health and safety. Furthermore, the **Self Help Skills** program promotes the use of existing community support systems to maintain independence, engage in community life, and provide vocational opportunities through initiatives like the Empties for Abilities social enterprise.

Hutchcroft House is another innovative QCLA initiative, a supported living space for women with special needs. It offers a safe haven for those who may be vulnerable or without community support. It is a space of belonging and wellbeing where residents enjoy autonomy with access to shared living spaces and necessary support without intrusive restrictions.

QCLA's approach is one of empowerment, respecting the autonomy and individuality of each person they serve. Applications for QCLA's services are typically referred through Community Living British Columbia, ensuring a coordinated and comprehensive support system.

Website: <https://www.qcla.ca/>
Address: 658 Doherty Dr
Email: officemanager@qcla.ca
Phone: 2509927774

Quesnel Lions Housing Society (QLHS)

The Quesnel Lions Housing Society (QLHS) is a beacon of community-driven initiative, established by the Quesnel Lions Club in 2012 with the noble aim of providing seniors over the age of 60 with affordable, independent living options. This society embodies the spirit of service and care, drawing on the vast experience of Lions Clubs both nationally and globally to develop housing projects that cater to the needs of the elderly.

QLHS's flagship project, **Silver Manor**, stands as a testament to its mission. This not-for-profit apartment complex, located at 255 McNaughton Ave in Quesnel, BC, consists of 30 one-bedroom units designed with the independent senior in mind. With affordability at its core, Silver Manor represents a major stride toward accessible housing solutions for the aging population.

The apartments are tailored to foster a sense of independence for seniors aged 65 and above, as well as for persons with recognized disabilities aged 55 and above, offering them a lifestyle that balances autonomy with the comfort of a supportive community setting. Silver Manor, however, is distinct in its offering as it is not equipped for assisted living, catering instead to those who can maintain their personal health, safety, and tenancy obligations independently.

The Quesnel Lions Housing Society entrusts the operation of Silver Manor to the capable hands of Dakelh & Quesnel Community Housing Society (DQCHS), leveraging their three decades of housing management experience to ensure the smooth running of the facility. DQCHS's role is integral, not only in the operation of Silver Manor but also in managing the **tenant application process**, ensuring that the housing provided meets the highest standards of care and service.

Website: <http://www qlionshousing.ca/aboutus/>
Address: Box 100, 255 McNaughton Ave
Email: qlc.secretary@outlook.com
Phone: 2509910235

Quesnel Lions Society

The Quesnel Lions Society is an embodiment of community service and dedication, functioning as a non-profit service club with a heart for charitable endeavors. Their work is steeped in a tradition of volunteerism and support, focusing on various activities designed to uplift and assist those facing challenges within the community.

Through their actions, the Quesnel Lions Society demonstrates a commitment to social responsibility, organizing and participating in **local events and programs** that directly benefit individuals and families in need. Their approach is hands-on, aiming to create a tangible

improvement to the lives of community members by providing resources, aid, and a supportive network that fosters resilience and hope.

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/QuesnellionsClub/>

Address: #100 - 255 MacNaughton Ave

Email: quesnellions@outlook.com

Phone: 7784660029

Quesnel Pride Society

Officially established in 2019, the Quesnel Pride Society society has its roots in four years of dedicated volunteer work and grassroots events aimed at fostering a more accepting environment for queer youth.

Responding to the poignant label of "lost youth," the founders of the Quesnel Pride Society recognized the profound need for secure spaces and specialized support services for queer young people. By [reaching out directly to local schools](#), they not only spread awareness about the society's mission but also engaged in a vital dialogue with the youth, which brought to light the crucial service gaps within the community.

At its core, the Quesnel Pride Society is propelled by the spirit of volunteerism, with members who are passionately committed to creating a society where queer youth can find solace, understanding, and the freedom to express their true selves without fear or reservation.

Website: <https://www.quesnelpride.ca/>

Email: contact@quesnelpride.ca

Quesnel Shelter & Support Society

The Quesnel Shelter & Support Society is an organization committed to creating a safe haven for those experiencing homelessness in Quesnel. With an array of programs designed to provide shelter, nourishment, and services that foster independence and success, this society is a cornerstone in the community for those in need.

The society operates [Seasons House Shelter](#), which serves as the primary facility for those experiencing homelessness, offering services with respect, compassion, and confidentiality. The shelter is accessible to any people in need and provides a range of support including [case management](#), [shelter](#), and [meals](#).

For those seeking longer-term solutions, the society offers [Transitional Housing Support](#), where potential tenants must complete an application that assesses their individual housing needs. This program is crucial in assisting people to overcome barriers they may be facing.

To support people recovering from alcohol or substance use, QSSS has a [Support & Recovery Bed program](#). This program aims to provide a stable environment conducive to recovery and personal growth.

During periods of extreme weather, the **emergency weather response program** ensures that temporary beds are available to those who would otherwise lack shelter, thus protecting the life and health of people experiencing homelessness during harsh conditions.

The **QSSS Day Program** is an essential resource offering **food services, showers, laundry facilities, clothing donations, and health supports**, including **harm reduction supplies** and **take-home naloxone kits**.

Bridges Supportive Housing, a collaboration with BC Housing, provides subsidized housing with vital on-site support services. Residents here enjoy self-contained studio apartments with access to life-skills training and healthcare services.

Further outreach includes **Northern Peer Connections**, which offers mobile harm reduction services, educational programs, and referrals to healthcare and community support.

The **Homelessness Prevention Program** embodies the Housing First philosophy, ensuring that housing needs are met without precondition, thus enabling clients to focus on improving their lives with the necessary support structures in place.

The society is also home to the **Clean Team**, a group of peers with lived experience of homelessness and/or substance use, who contribute to the community by cleaning up areas around downtown and schools, as well as providing naloxone training and kits.

Website: <https://www.qsss.ca/>

Address: 146 Carson Avenue

Email: executivedirector@seasonshouse.ca

Phone: 2509910222

Quesnel Tillicum Society Native Friendship Centre

The Quesnel Tillicum Society Native Friendship Centre, established in 1972 with its doors opening in 1974, has been a cornerstone for the aboriginal community for over four decades. The Centre is dedicated to recognizing and addressing the needs within the aboriginal community, consistently working towards enhancing the quality of life for Indigenous people and others who are **integrating into the social, economic, and cultural fabric** of the community.

The Friendship Centre's mission revolves around not only addressing the practical needs of Indigenous and other community members as they navigate societal changes but also nurturing spiritual growth among all who engage with the Centre's services and facilities. It operates as a place of convergence where the blending of traditional Indigenous practices and the demands of contemporary life can be managed with support, respect, and cultural sensitivity.

This long-standing institution reflects a deep commitment to the empowerment and wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples, serving as a testament to the community's resilience and the enduring value of cultural heritage.

The Friendship Centre offers services such as both **general counselling** and **drug and alcohol counselling**, **legal aid support**, **family support worker**, **crisis intervention**, **moms for recovery group**, and **youth outreach**.

Website: <https://www.quesnefriendshipcentre.com/>

Address: 319 North Fraser Dr

Email: ellen.brown@qnfc.bc.ca

Phone: 2509928347

Quesnel Women's Resource Centre Society

The Quesnel Women's Resource Centre is a pivotal organization that serves as a catalyst for change and empowerment for women. Founded on feminist principles, the Centre is dedicated to providing a wide array of services tailored to support women through various life choices and challenges. Its mission is to foster an environment free from violence, inequality, and oppression, where women have access to equal rights, child care, and fair compensation for their work.

The Centre's goals are deeply rooted in advocating for women's rights and providing women-centred services that address violence against women, poverty, sexism, discrimination, and other societal challenges. They actively work to enhance the status of women by focusing on important issues such as universally accessible high-quality child care and equal pay for equal work.

Several key programs underpin the Centre's mission:

- **Stopping the Violence Counselling Program:** This offers counselling to women who have experienced sexual assault, violence, or historical abuse. It is a support structure funded by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.
- **Drop-in program:** Provides a safe haven for women confronting life's challenges, particularly those compounded by gender inequality, isolation, or abuse. Funded by the Gaming Branch of the Government of BC, the program provides an inviting space for women to find support and connection.
- **Outreach support services:** Delivers counselling, advocacy, and support to the community, especially aiding women with histories of domestic abuse and violence. The program also facilitates peer support groups and is funded by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.
- **The Respectful Relationships program:** A collaborative initiative with School District #28, focused on reducing violence in youth relationships by fostering skills and attitudes conducive to healthy and respectful interactions.
- **The Compass Counselling program:** Offers diverse counselling services for adult individuals, families, and couples contending with mental health issues, stress, addictions,

and other life challenges. It aims to serve underserved populations, offering in-person, telephone, and web-based counselling, and can reach into rural and remote communities.

Through these programs, the Quesnel Women's Resource Centre not only provides immediate assistance but also equips women with the tools and support needed to navigate and improve their life situations, advocating for systemic change to build a more equitable society.

Website: <https://www.qwrc.ca/>

Address: 690 Mclean Street

Email: qwrc@shawcable.com

Phone: 2509928472

Redwood Residences Assisted Living

Redwood Residences Assisted Living provides a sanctuary for seniors, offering a secure, comfortable, and homelike environment. The facility features **10 private bedrooms**, ensuring personal space and comfort for each resident. Committed to comprehensive care, the residence offers **24-hour on-site care**, catering to the individual needs of each senior.

In addition to essential care, residents receive **three nutritious meals a day**, tailored to meet their dietary requirements and preferences. The services extend to include **laundry and housekeeping**, ensuring a clean and well-maintained living space for all.

Redwood Residences also offers a range of **programming activities** designed to engage seniors in a fulfilling community life, promoting their physical, mental, and social wellbeing.

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/redwoodresidences.ca/about>

Address: 1901 Alder Rd

Email: redwoodresidences@shaw.ca

Phone: 7784665400

Seniors Advocacy Service

The Seniors Advocacy Service is a committed group of trained volunteers dedicated to supporting seniors and other community members by providing referrals to various agencies and offering free consultations for practical advice. The volunteers collaborate with other community organizations to ensure that the needs of their clients are met in a safe, secure, and comfortable environment.

This service plays a vital role in the community by raising awareness of local challenges and contributing solutions to help solve problems. They are committed to continually enhancing their skills to address the evolving demands of the market.

Operating independently without government or other funding, the Seniors Advocacy Service relies on fundraising efforts and the generosity of volunteers to keep their office operational. They encourage community members to consider supporting their cause through donations.

Website: <https://quesnelseniors.ca/>

Address: 155 Malcolm Dr

Phone: 2509929330

The Board of Education of School District No. 28 - Quesnel

Welcome to the Quesnel School District in central British Columbia, which is dedicated to fostering the potential of all its learners. The district encompasses a diverse student population of approximately 2950, distributed among twelve elementary schools, a junior school for grades 8-9, a secondary school for grades 10-12, a secondary alternative school, and a distance learning school. The District is proud to serve the communities of Quesnel, Nazko, and Wells.

About one third of the student body comes from Indigenous backgrounds, including the First Nations of Nazko, Lhtako, ?Esdilagh, and Lhoosk'uz, as well as Métis and Inuit students. The district acknowledges with gratitude that its activities take place on the traditional territory of the Lhtako Dene Nation.

The district offers a variety of specialized programs to cater to the needs of its students:

- **StrongStart:** A free early learning program for parents/caregivers and children aged birth to five years old, focused on language, physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development.
- **Specialized schools and programs:** Such as the McNaughton Centre, which offers an alternative high school education, and Quesnel Junior School, which emphasizes the combined responsibility of staff, parents, and students in creating a positive academic and social climate.

Website: <https://www.sd28.bc.ca/>

Address: 401 North Star Road

Email: accounting@sd28.bc.ca

Phone: 2509928802

The Quesnel Community Foundation

The Quesnel Community Foundation, established in 2001, stands as a testament to the power of community-driven philanthropy. Their goal is to support and enhance the quality of life for all members of the Quesnel community. They achieve this by responsibly managing and growing permanent **endowment funds**.

Their vision is centred on supporting a thriving and dynamic community by adhering to the best practices at provincial and national levels and ensuring the sustainability of a robust endowment fund. This vision guides their efforts to provide lasting support for various community initiatives.

The Foundation's mission is to operate in a progressive, active, and cooperative manner, working closely with donors and partners. They focus on meeting the needs of not-for-profit organizations within Quesnel by distributing the annual proceeds generated from their endowment fund.

Website: <http://www.quesnelfoundation.ca/>

Email: quesnelcommunityfoundation@gmail.com

Phone: 2509851612

Therapy North Counselling Services

Therapy North offers a **supportive environment** for people seeking to navigate through life's challenges and improve their mental wellbeing. This process involves calming anxious thoughts, reducing negative self-talk, enhancing communication skills in relationships, and learning to regulate emotions. Their goal is to assist clients in feeling good again, or finding their "True North."

Embracing a client-centred approach, Therapy North respects the individual as the expert on their own life and works to guide them to a better understanding of their thoughts and feelings. They offer flexibility in their counselling services with telephone and video counselling options:

- **Telephone counselling:** Ideal for busy people or those who face challenges in traveling, this service provides support for anyone who needs to talk to a counselor but cannot do so in person.
- **Video counselling:** As technology advances and becomes more integrated into our lives, video counselling has grown in popularity, offering a convenient option for those with travel difficulties. This mode of counselling allows clients to connect with therapists from any location, provided they have internet access.

Website: <https://www.therapynorth.ca/>

Address: 152 Enemark Road North

Email: info@therapynorth.ca

Phone: 2502557306

Two Rivers Church

Two Rivers Church in Quesnel is actively engaged in community service through its food programs, which include:

- **Hot meal service:** The church offers a sit-in service where people in need can come to enjoy a hot meal. This service provides not only nourishment but also a chance for community connection and support.
- **Soup and sandwiches events:** Located at the west end of Fraser River Footbridge, this event is a welcoming space for community members to gather and enjoy complimentary soup and sandwiches, fostering a sense of community and togetherness.

These programs reflect Two Rivers Church's commitment to addressing food insecurity and providing a supportive environment for fellowship within the Quesnel community.

Website: <https://tworiversquesnel.ca/>

Address: 214 Anderson Drive

Email: tworiversquesnel@gmail.com

Phone: 4167952048

Victory Way Church

The Victory Way Church offers **prepared meals**, **hot food**, and **snacks** to Quesnel's vulnerable populations.

Address: 214 Anderson Dr

Email: newvictorywaychurch@gmail.com

Phone: 2509918574

Wellness Together Canada

Wellness Together Canada is a vital initiative launched in response to the increasing mental health and substance use issues that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing the unprecedented challenges faced by people across the country—ranging from social isolation and financial insecurity to racial inequality—the program underscores the message that no one is alone in this struggle.

The program, funded by the Government of Canada, offers **support to Canadians on their wellness journey**, acknowledging that wellness is not a static goal but a continuous path that involves daily commitment to personal wellbeing. Wellness Together Canada provides **resources and support** to help people take meaningful steps towards improving their mental health and overall wellbeing.

Website: <https://www.wellnesstogether.ca/en-CA>

Phone: 8665850445

Westside Mental Health

Westside Mental Health offers a comprehensive suite of services designed to address a variety of needs for those dealing with mental health and substance use challenges:

- **OAT clinic program:** Opioid agonist therapy for people with opioid use disorder.
- **Counselling:** One-on-one support for people facing mental health challenges.
- **Mental health and addictions clinicians:** Specialist services provided on a referral basis.
- **Early psychosis therapy:** Interventions aimed at the initial stages of psychosis.

- **Crisis support:** Immediate assistance for those in acute mental health distress.
- **ACT team:** Assertive Community Treatment program for comprehensive, community-based psychiatric treatment, rehabilitation, and support.
- **Outreach support:** Services that reach out to people in the community who may not seek traditional forms of help.
- **Medication management:** Assistance with managing psychiatric medication effectively.
- **Crisis management:** Strategies to handle mental health emergencies effectively.
- **Medical care connections:** Coordination with healthcare providers to ensure that clients receive comprehensive care.
- **Overdose prevention site:** Overdose prevention services to provide a safe space and immediate support in the event of an overdose.
- **Harm reduction supplies:** Providing materials that reduce the risks associated with substance use.

These services work in tandem to offer a holistic approach to mental health and addiction, ensuring that people have access to the care they need to manage their conditions and improve their quality of life. Westside Mental Health is referral-based only.

Address: 395 Elliott Street
 Phone: 2509925189

Wild Women of the North Society

The Wild Women of the North Society in Quesnel, BC, exemplifies dedication and community spirit through its array of initiatives designed to address some of the most pressing issues faced by their community. It is a volunteer-driven organization that was formed to fill gaps left unaddressed by existing structures, particularly in areas such as the opioid and mental health crisis, stigmatization, child poverty, and food insecurity.

Their **garden project**, which leverages the generosity of senior farmers donating garden space, allows volunteers to cultivate food that is then distributed as hampers throughout the year. This project is not only about providing immediate relief in the form of **food hampers** but also involves **educational aspects**, such as teaching students about plant growth and sustainable practices.

The society's outreach is broad, encompassing **hot meal** provisions every Friday evening, **support for drug users** every Tuesday, and the **distribution of harm reduction supplies**. They work collaboratively with various groups for funding and operations, and their efforts are visibly affecting the community, from reducing theft to saving lives through naloxone training.

Their work with the Quesnel Native Friendship Centre and other local organizations also highlights their commitment to servicing those who are underserved, offering **direct food assistance** and helping people **navigate to services** provided by others.

Website:

<https://www.westcoastseeds.com/blogs/community-roots-spotlight/wild-women-of-the-north-society>

WorkBC Centre - Quesnel

WorkBC Centre in Quesnel serves as a vital resource for the local workforce, offering a **bridge between job seekers and employers** in the province of British Columbia. It is part of a larger initiative designed to support British Columbians in navigating the labour market effectively. The Centre provides a variety of tools and resources, including an **extensive database of job postings**, **career tools** that make occupations more accessible, and a **blog** that offers job search tips and information on employment programs. Additionally, it features an interactive map to locate **WorkBC employment services centres** and offers **live chat for real-time assistance**. This suite of services and resources aims to help people find employment, explore career paths, enhance their skills, and aid employers in discovering talented candidates to help their businesses thrive.

Website: <http://www.workbccariboo.ca/Quesnel.html>

Address: 100 488 McLean Street

Email: centre-quesnel@workbc.ca

Phone: 2509927691

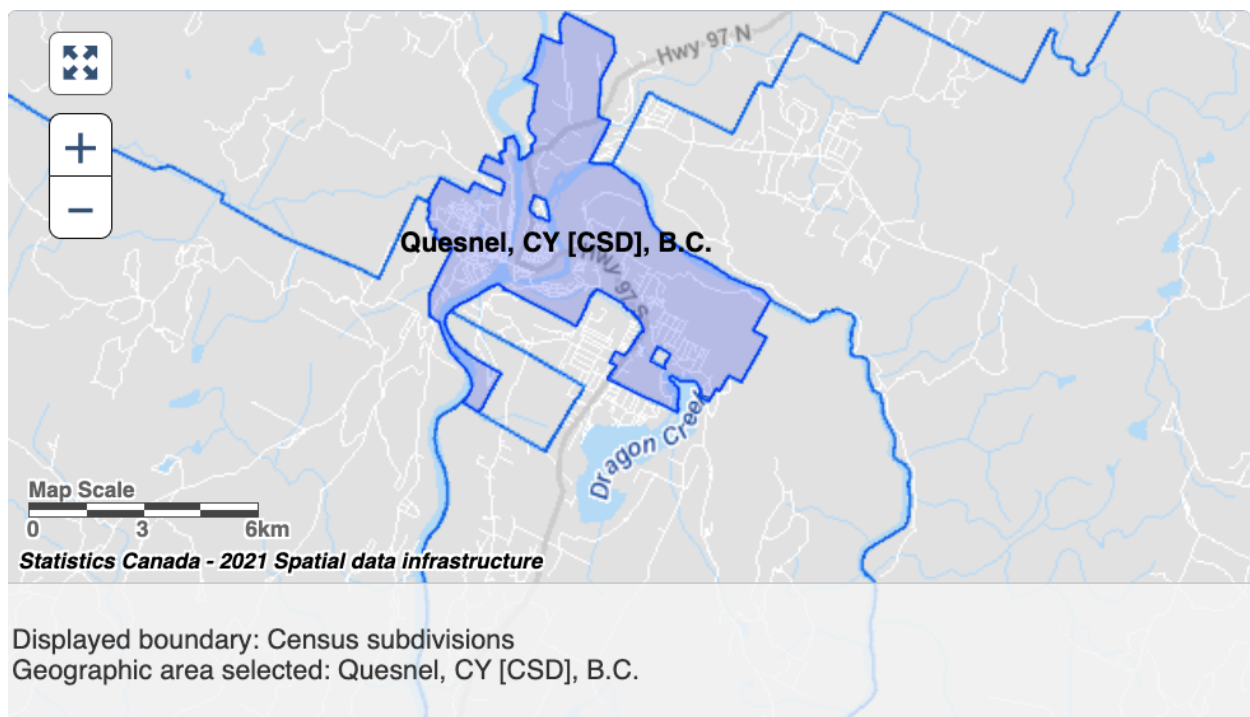
Appendix B: A Profile of Quesnel's Social Needs

Geography

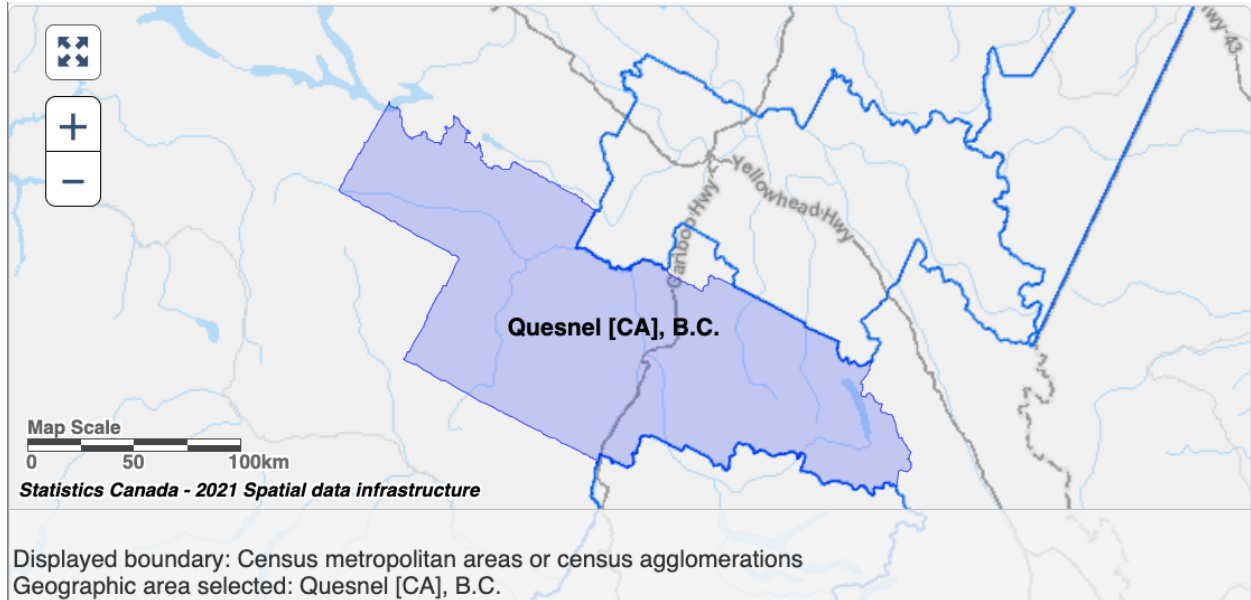
Quesnel is located in the central interior region of British Columbia, Canada. It sits at the confluence of the Quesnel and Fraser Rivers and is approximately 117 kilometers south of Prince George.

The city is surrounded by a mix of forests, lakes, and mountains, reflecting the Cariboo region's diverse landscape. The area is mostly characterized by temperate climate zones, experiencing warm summers and cold winters. The nearby Cariboo Mountains to the east and the Fraser Plateau to the west and south influence the climate, vegetation, and wildlife of the region. Overall, Quesnel's geographic position in a resource-rich and scenic part of the province contributes to its economy and way of life, making it a notable location within the region.

Within the boundaries of the City of Quesnel, the most recent census (2021) recorded a population of 9,889.



However, given that the City of Quesnel forms a local hub for services in the surrounding areas, this analysis also considers the Quesnel census agglomeration—henceforth Quesnel (CA)—within its scope. Given that that support is being accessed not only people living within city boundaries, but also other people within the region, it is important to ensure the capacity exists for all users of those services.



One of the implications of serving such a large geographic area is the importance of transportation. Without proper transportation, people are at risk of being unable to access the resources they need.

The quotes below from local service providers illustrate this:

“ I probably sound like a broken record because transportation and connection is one thing that really draws barriers.”

“We’re a really big hub here in Quesnel. We’re kind of the middle meeting grounds between folks coming up from the coast and people headed down from like Prince George ... Quesnel is kind of in the middle ground. I find that we have a very big transient population.”

“You need to leave your community and travel up to probably upwards of about 10 hours to get into treatments. It’s a long way to travel. And we don’t make it easy for folks to travel [...] we lack bus services, we lack train services. You can put someone onto a flight, but getting them from their community into an airport can cause a lot of challenges [...] connectivity to our remote communities is still a challenge.”

Even within the city limits, transportation can be difficult. For workers, families, and individuals trying to get to appointments, getting around without a car comes with its own set of challenges.

“I know that there’s transportation here in Quesnel, but I know it’s really tough for little ones and their mom to try and take a bus, or their dad with all the strollers and everything else that goes along with it. And trying to get out of town is not an option because Greyhound no longer runs.”

"[The South Quesnel Business Association] has a hard time hiring people because they can't get to work up there because our transit system is so bad...[people can't make it to work]. We need it up the hill."

"We do have public transit. It runs sometimes. But I think that also if you're looking at our vulnerable populations, would they access it all the time? Probably not [...] Public transit doesn't run all the time. There are no buses to other communities anymore, except for the Northern Health one, but that's changed."

"The vulnerable population doesn't have access to transportation. So unless you're stealing a vehicle, they don't have the ability to go out into the countryside, it's very spread out. We're talking trees and farmland, little houses, not subdivisions."

The geographic situation in Northern BC and Quesnel exacerbates existing barriers to medical treatment and healthcare. This particularly affects Indigenous communities, who may not have as many health care services on-reserve.

"We also only have one detox in all of Northern BC... in Prince George. And again, it's not accessible for all of our folks. And we definitely need more than just one detox to support the mass volume of folks that are dying."

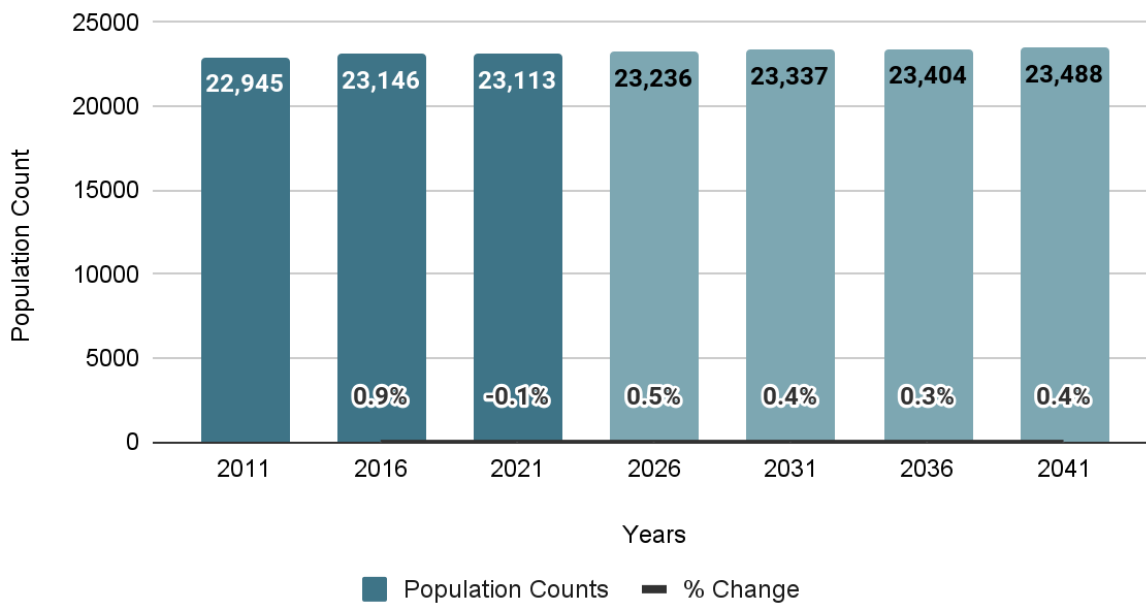
"If somebody needs opioid treatment right now, they're still trying to come into town. It's amazing to me that drug dealers can get their drugs out from a reserve three hours away to a real population, but not a health authority to provide prescription alternatives. [Patients] have to find a way to get into town every day...especially for three hours away."

"Where is the support for our Indigenous population? One of our reserves is our First Nations, it is a three-hour drive out there and a three-hour drive back on a dirt road. So the people that are in town have no access to their community support...We don't have any ability to get our First Nations people back to their First Nation where their elders support them... everybody keeps talking about how important it is to get them back."

Demographics

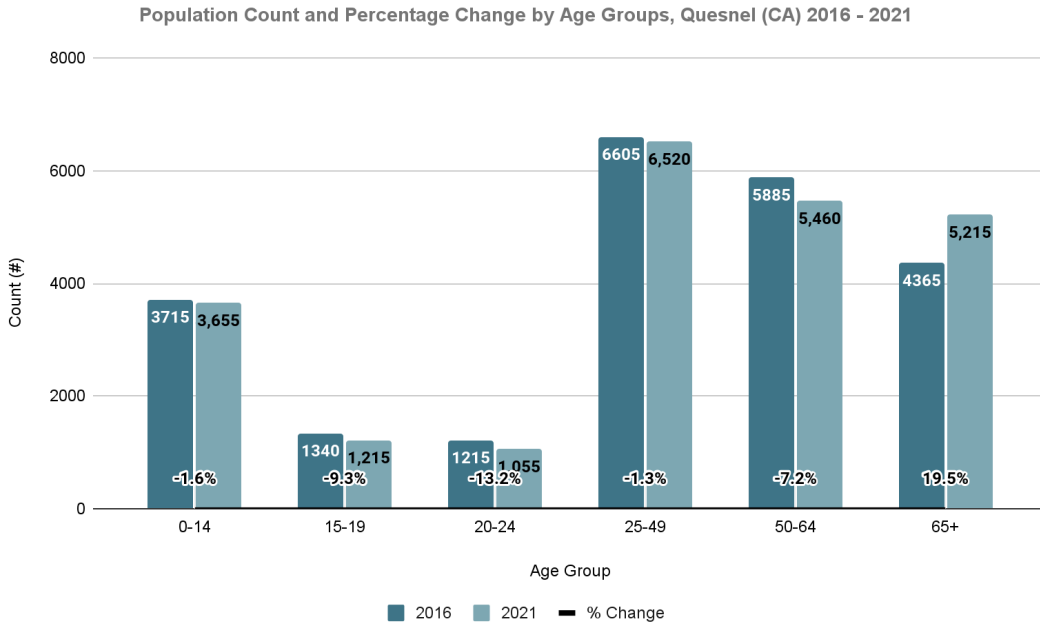
In the five-year period from 2016 to 2021, the population of Quesnel (CA) dropped by 0.1%, from 23,146 to 23,113, a contrast to the trend of population growth seen across Canada. Nevertheless, the population is projected to grow, with estimates of 22,236 by 2026 and 23,488 by 2041.

Population Count, Projected Population and Percentage Change, Quesnel (CA), 2011 - 2041

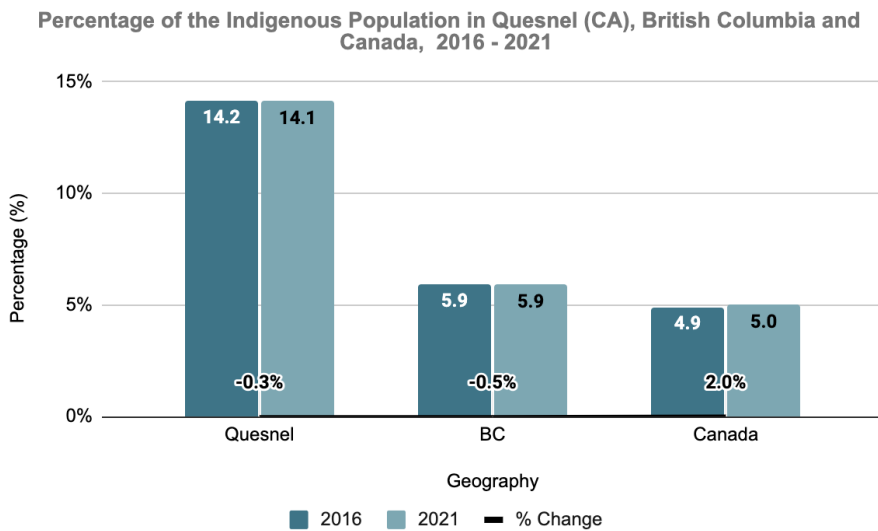


The overall population decrease in Quesnel (CA) from 2016 to 2021 is reflected in most age groups. Only the 65+ years age group increased in population, from 4,365 to 5,215 (19.5%). The population of all other age groups decreased, especially in the 20-24 years (1,215 to 1,055, -13.2%), 15-19 years (1,340 to 1,215, -9.3%), and 50-64 years (5,885 to 5,460, -7.2%) age groups. This change in demographics may be influenced by economic factors such as limited job opportunities, migration patterns, or other factors such as the cost of living.

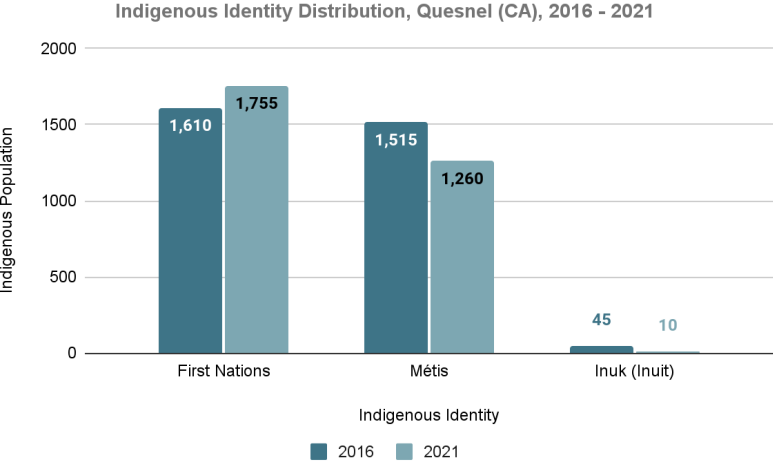
An older population may require different types of services, such as senior-oriented healthcare, assisted living, and social support. The city may need to adapt to meet these changing needs. To quote one service provider, “there's an increase [in demand for services] due to...increased complexities with psychosocial and healthcare needs, [in] our aging population.”



The proportion of the population identifying as Indigenous in Quesnel (CA) decreased by 0.3% from 2016 to 2021, from 14.2% to 14.1%. However, this is still more than double the proportion for BC or Canada overall, at 5.9% and 5.0% respectively. Combined with the fact that census data tends to under-represent Indigenous people in population counts, and the proximity of the Lhtako Dene Nation, Nazko First Nation, Lhoosk'uz Dene Nation, and ?Esdilagh First Nation, the importance of ensuring service to First Nations is clear.



Indigenous identity in Quesnel is primarily First Nations and Métis. From 2016 to 2021, The First Nations population increased from 1,610 to 1,755 (9%), while the Métis population dropped from 1,515 to 1,260 (-17%) and the Inuk population dropped from 45 to 10 (-78%).



Housing Affordability

Affordable and safe housing is vital to community wellbeing, providing stability and security and enabling residents to focus on employment, education, and building community connections. However, there is a shortage of affordable places to live in Quesnel, which creates a risk of poverty, displacement, and homelessness for many individuals and families.

The situation in Quesnel reflects a growing crisis of housing instability that needs urgent attention. Based on a variety of key findings, this section aims to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the pressing risks and challenges that residents face in securing affordable, stable housing.

The Affordability Challenge

In Quesnel, most residents report housing security as a serious concern, with over half rating it as extremely insecure. In addition, 45% of respondents agree that finding affordable housing is challenging¹. This challenge manifests itself in stark economic terms: 14% of households cannot manage the minimum annual income to afford rent of \$30,960. In addition, median rent has increased while incomes have stagnated, creating a widening gap between housing costs and residents' ability to pay.

Income ranges required to afford rent in Quesnel					
Income Range	Number of households	Max monthly income earned	Income allocated for rent according to affordability measure	Difference with respect to average monthly rent	
Under \$5,000	75	\$417	\$125	-\$649	
\$5,000 to \$9,999	50	\$833	\$250	-\$524	
\$10,000 to \$14,999	105	\$1,250	\$375	-\$399	
\$15,000 to \$19,999	265	\$1,667	\$500	-\$274	
\$20,000 to \$24,999	570	\$2,083	\$625	-\$149	
\$25,000 to \$29,999	390	\$2,500	\$750	-\$24	
\$30,000 to \$34,999	470	\$2,917	\$875	\$101	Minimum income to afford rent
\$35,000 to \$39,999	490	\$3,333	\$1,000	\$226	
\$40,000 to \$44,999	450	\$3,750	\$1,125	\$351	

¹ See Appendix C

\$45,000 to \$49,999	460	\$4,167	\$1,250	\$476	Minimum income to buy an apartment
\$50,000 to \$59,999	810	\$5,000	\$1,500	\$726	
\$60,000 to \$69,999	745	\$5,833	\$1,750	\$976	
\$70,000 to \$79,999	690	\$6,667	\$2,000	\$1,226	
\$80,000 to \$89,999	625	\$7,500	\$2,250	\$1,476	
\$90,000 to \$99,999	510	\$8,333	\$2,500	\$1,726	
\$100,000 and over	3,440	\$8,333	\$2,500	\$1,726	
Household total income groups	10,160				

Affordability measure	30%
Average monthly rent	\$774
Average annual rent	\$9,288
Total households not able to afford rent	1,455
% of population (over 15) income earners not able to pay average monthly rent	14%
Minimum monthly income needed to afford rent	\$2,580
Minimum annual income needed to afford rent	\$30,960

Income Required to Afford Housing by Type of Housing

	2011	2016	2021
Single-detached dwellings	\$56,688	\$57,408	\$80,640
Apartments (low-rise, high-rise, duplexes)	\$49,920	\$49,440	\$66,240
Other single-attached (semi-detached and row houses)	\$33,840	\$44,160	\$72,000

Supply Constraints

The supply of housing in Quesnel is insufficient to meet demand. A service provider highlighted the problem, stating,

"The main barrier is lack of housing. More housing of all types is needed."

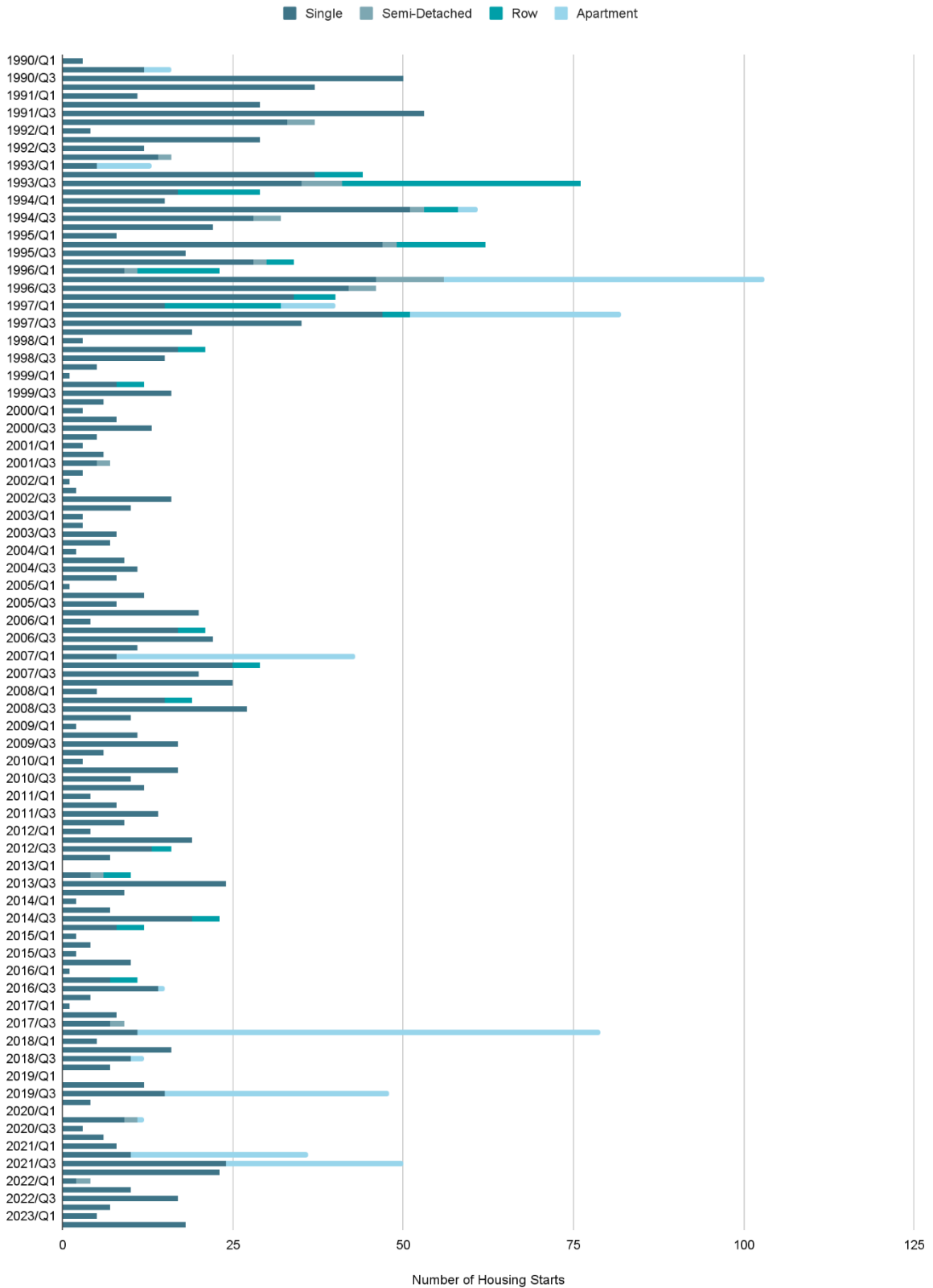
The rental vacancy rate in Quesnel is only 1.2%, resulting in fewer households able to afford different types of housing compared to 2011. Only 43% of new housing starts in the past decade were designed as rentals, with an estimated 176 additional apartment units needed to reach a healthier 3% vacancy rate.

This supply shortage is detrimental to those who are unable to afford rising prices.

“But right now...[there]'s really, almost...forced homelessness, [with] the cost of housing right now and whenever there's something that's available...it's just that prices are people right out in the market. So if we had lower demand, the prices would withdraw.”

From 1990 to Q2 of 2023, housing starts in Quesnel (CA) were generally more numerous in the 1990s than in more recent years. However, there has been a notable increase in housing starts, particularly apartment housing, since 2017. Whether this new housing will suffice to meet demand has yet to be seen.

Historical Housing Starts by Dwelling Type, Quesnel (CA)



Intensifying Competition and Effects on Vulnerable Populations

The limited availability of housing has led to competition between renters. As one provider put it,

"Low apartment vacancy indicates strong demand, potentially increasing prices and competition."

This high demand for limited housing options also affects specialized programs, as another provider noted,

"We could triple our housing placement program and still not meet demand."

To quote another service provider, who works with people facing housing insecurity,

"The cost of housing or the cost of rentals is unfathomable to some of our folks. So we have, we really need to address that cost of living to what people can afford."

Vacancy Rates by Bedroom Type, Quesnel (CA), October 2022								
	Bachelor		1 Bedroom		2 Bedroom		3 Bedroom +	Total
Quesnel	**		0	d	1.5	d	**	1.2
Notes								
The following letter codes are used to indicate the reliability of the estimates: a - Excellent, b- Very good, c - Good, d - Fair (Use with Caution)								
** Data suppressed to protect confidentiality or data not statistically reliable								
CMA, CA and CSD definitions are based on 2021 Census Geography Definitions								
Source	CMHC Rental Market Survey							

Other factors like limited income, discrimination, and health issues contribute to difficulty in staying housed. Providers note that there are seniors asking for help and that "housing first" is essential for people to move out of survival mode.

For people with complex needs, the supply of available housing is even more limited. Giving people places to live with the support they need, but also the dignity to live how they want to, is critical to stabilizing their housing situations.

"Elderly people are struggling to get homes. People with mental health issues without addictions are struggling to get homes and of course [those] with addictions. Sometimes I struggle to understand what the supportive piece of supportive housing is because my experience has been people who do need this support get moved into those buildings, but then they get evicted because they're not conforming to how the service providers want

them to live. But I still struggle to understand, how long does the service provider think it takes somebody to move out of survival mode?”

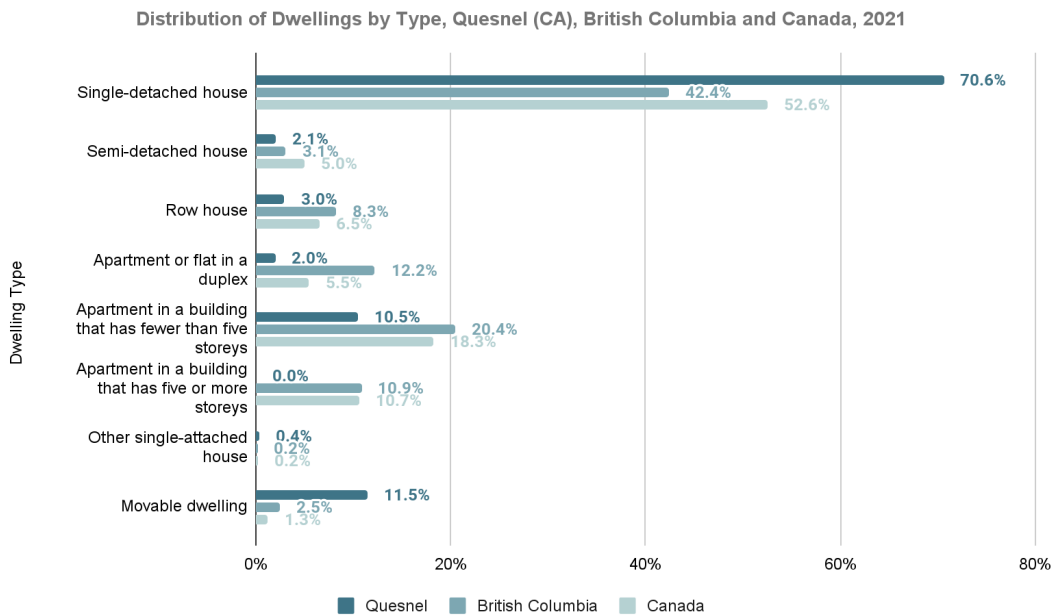
“To me, it just means people need a space to live how they live. If somebody is a drug user, they need to be able to safely continue to live that life. It means not dictating to people how they live their life and accepting them where they're at.”

With these supports in place, and with a person-centred approach to housing provision, this can not only divert people from homelessness, but ideally help them maintain housing on their own.

“[Even if] we were not gonna house more people, but the people that we're housing might be longer or better [housed], that would be fantastic.”

Housing Types

While affordability remains a pressing issue, the type and suitability of available housing also require attention. In Quesnel as of 2021, the housing landscape, with a total of 10,155 occupied units, is primarily composed of single-detached houses, movable dwellings, and apartments in buildings with fewer than five storeys. This distribution is distinctly different from the provincial and national averages, with proportionally more single-detached houses (70.6%) than in BC (42.4%) or Canada (52.6%), and many more movable dwellings (11.5%) than in BC (2.5%) or Canada (1.3%). This skewed distribution suggests a lack of housing catering to diverse needs.



Specialized Housing

Several service providers noted that specialized housing is lacking. One provider emphasized the need for housing with support, stating,

"We need housing with support, but also the dignity to live how they want."

This points to a deficit in housing options that cater to demographics who may have specialized needs, like seniors, people with disabilities, and those requiring mental health and substance use services. Another provider noted the urgent need for senior-specific housing solutions, saying

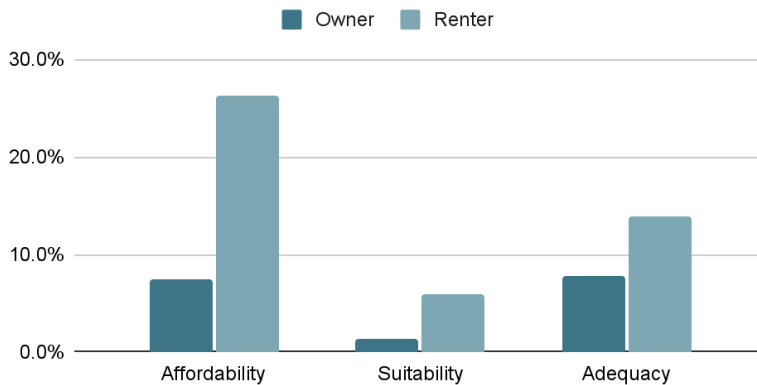
"We have seniors asking for help, it's insane."

Adequacy of Housing

Housing adequacy is a serious problem in Quesnel, with more than one in four renters in core housing need, primarily due to affordability issues. While affordability is the greatest concern, there are also deficiencies in housing adequacy and suitability. Unacceptable housing can worsen health outcomes and contribute to social inequity. Issues like limited income, discrimination, and health complications (including mental health) make it challenging to access and maintain suitable housing.

Households Housing Need Standards by Tenure, Quesnel (CA), 2021			
	Total - Tenure	Owner	Renter
<u>Acceptable housing</u>			
Total - Acceptable housing	10,155	7,625	2,460
Below affordability threshold only	1,065	500	570
Below suitability threshold only	225	105	120
Below adequacy threshold only	800	525	240
Below affordability and suitability thresholds	25	0	0
Below affordability and adequacy thresholds	150	75	75
Below suitability and adequacy thresholds	40	0	25

Percent of Households Failing to Meet Housing Need Standards by Tenure, Quesnel (CA), 2021



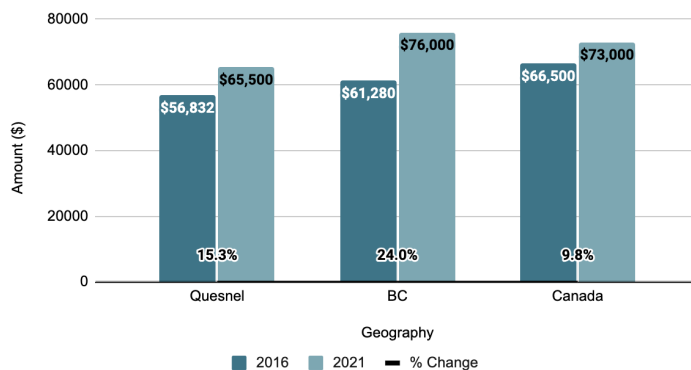
Housing instability in Quesnel presents a major and multifaceted risk factor, exacerbated by both economic and social factors. Immediate and comprehensive strategies are required to address the shortage in housing supply, the challenges of affordability, and the specific needs of vulnerable populations.

Poverty

Poverty, as a fundamental driver of social and economic vulnerability, often contributes to housing insecurity, homelessness, and mental health issues. The struggle to meet basic needs often forces people into unstable or inadequate living situations. This, in turn, can lead to homelessness, particularly when people face unexpected financial crises, job loss, or other setbacks.

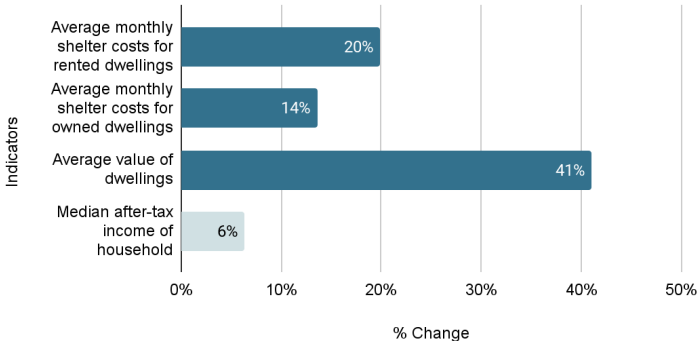
In Quesnel (CA), the overall median income rates increased from \$56,832 to \$65,500 (15.3%) from 2016 to 2021. However, this is lower than the average income rates in BC (7.3% lower in 2016 and 13.8% lower in 2021) and Canada (14.5% lower in 2016 and 10.3% lower in 2021). This places residents in a position where they may be unable to afford to live in other areas, as their incomes are insufficient to afford the cost of living elsewhere.

Median After-Tax Income of Households, Quesnel (CA), British Columbia and Canada, 2016 - 2021



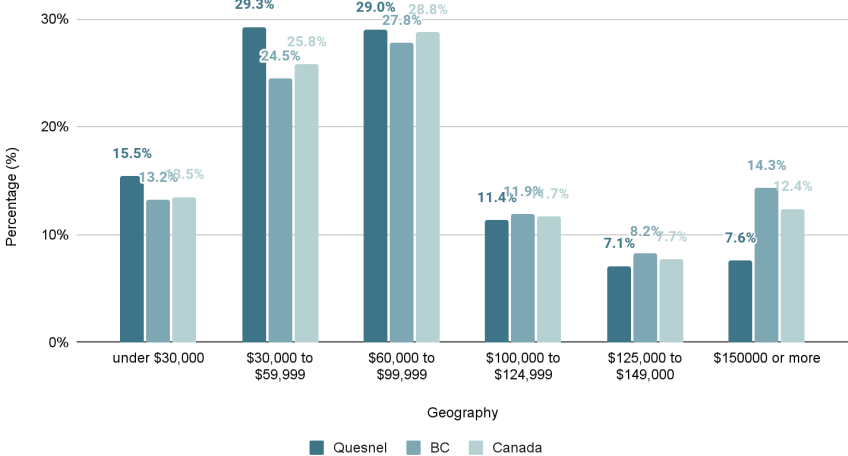
Additionally, incomes in Quesnel are not keeping up with shelter costs. Between 2016 and 2021, median after-tax income rose by 6%, less than half the increase in monthly costs for owned dwellings (14%) and less than a third the increase in monthly costs for rented dwellings (20%).

Percentage change for selected housing indicators and income, Quesnel (CA), 2016 - 2021



Quesnel also has a higher proportion of households in lower income brackets than in BC and Canada. The proportion of households in the under \$30,000 bracket in Quesnel (15.5%) is 17% higher than in BC (13.2%) and 15% higher than in Canada (13.5%), and in the \$30,000 to \$59,999 Quesnel (29.3%) is 20% higher than in BC (24.5%) and 14% higher than in Canada (25.8%). Conversely, the number of households in the \$150,000 or more bracket in Quesnel (7.6%) is 47% lower than in BC (14.3%) and 39% lower than in Canada (12.4%). This may indicate economic disparities, lower quality of life, or social challenges such as unemployment or underemployment.

Distribution of Households by Household After-Tax Income, Quesnel (CA), British Columbia and Canada, 2021



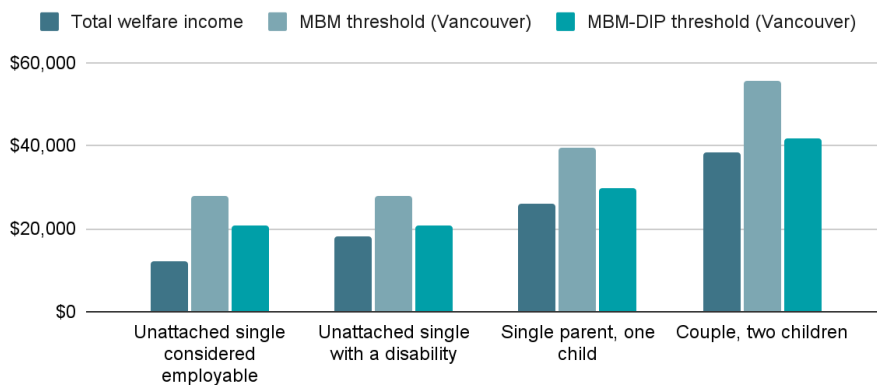
Regarding quality of life and perceptions of social issues in Quesnel, some trends are evident in the survey:

- 45% consider homelessness to be one of the most serious issues in the Communities

- 22% are struggling or somewhat struggling with their current financial situation
- 45% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that it has been difficult for them to cover their basic living expenses
- 82% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they find the cost of living in the Communities too high
- 49% of respondents agree or strongly agree that difficulties in covering their needs have affected their quality of life

When people are living in poverty, they may rely on provincial or federal benefits to supplement their income. This can include benefits such as EI, disability, or child benefit payments. However, these incomes aren't enough to keep people over the poverty line. A study from the Maytree Foundation outlines this discrepancy, specifically for example households in BC.²

Total Welfare Income, MBM Threshold, and MBM-DIP Threshold, BC, 2022



Laidley, J., & Tabbara, M. (2022). Welfare in Canada, 2022. Maytree Foundation. <https://www.maytree.ca/>

The study shows that welfare income is insufficient to meet people's basic needs. Here, we share some comments from service providers about the effect of poverty on affordability and overall quality of life:

“So our challenges are absolutely poverty, lack of housing, lack of transportation. Housing is a big one. There's no decent place for low income people to rent, rents are like \$1,500, which is a little astronomical for a small town. If you can find anything.”

² While the information here isn't specific to Quesnel, it mirrors trends and challenges observed across the province. We acknowledge this limitation and the variations in local contexts. However, this broader perspective allows to foresee potential issues and solutions applicable to urban centers, enabling a proactive approach to similar challenges. By understanding these wider patterns, strategies can be tailored more effectively, considering both the unique aspects of Quesnel and the shared experiences of municipalities in the province.

“I would say [with] 75% of our [food centre] clients we deliver to [it] doesn't necessarily mean that they don't have a vehicle... but it helps with gas as well. So [it helps] transportation barriers, seniors living on seniors income, folks that are on disability and have no money for food after they pay their rent and their basics, like utilities.”

“I think [the root of our problems] comes down to poverty. So the funds [for residents to] actually access the private [housing] market [and] the number of units within the private market.”

“So [our barriers are] services and affordability when it comes to, say, housekeeping meals, [or the] cost of travel. Just the cost of living for our guests is an issue.”

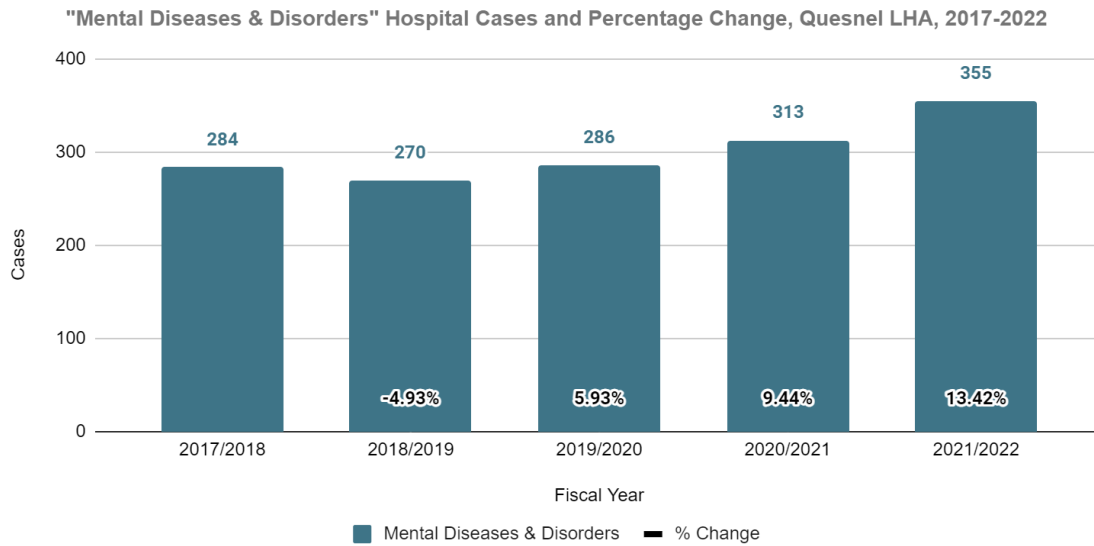
Mental Health And Substance Use

Mental health challenges and substance use often disproportionately affect vulnerable populations in Canada, creating a cycle of hardship that can be difficult to overcome. For example, in communities with limited access to mental health services and support, people may turn to substances as a coping mechanism, while those struggling with addiction may find it harder to access stable housing or employment, further entrenching their vulnerability. As one local service provider stated,

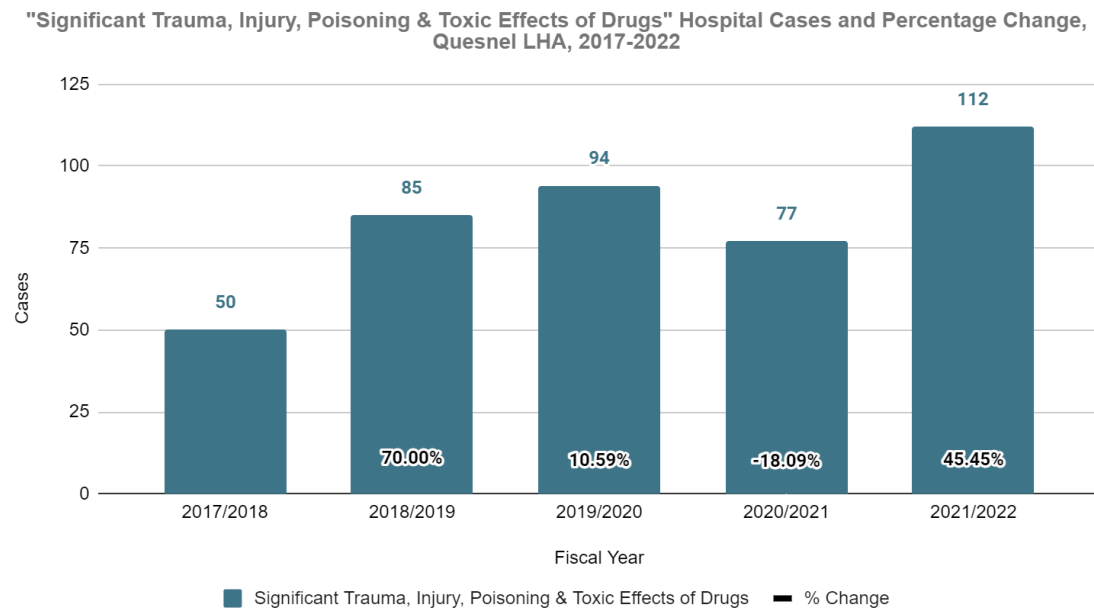
"There are two really large barriers [to keeping people housed]. One is obviously the substance use issue and the other is mental health. And we are lacking in mental health support for our clients and community and that's not someone else's problem. It's a widespread problem throughout the province. It's just that we don't have enough mental health support in our community to help a lot of our clients be successful in housing.”

From 2017 to 2022, the number of hospital cases for mental diseases and disorders in the Quesnel LHA increased, from 284 cases in the 2017/2018 reporting period to 355 in 2021-2022³.

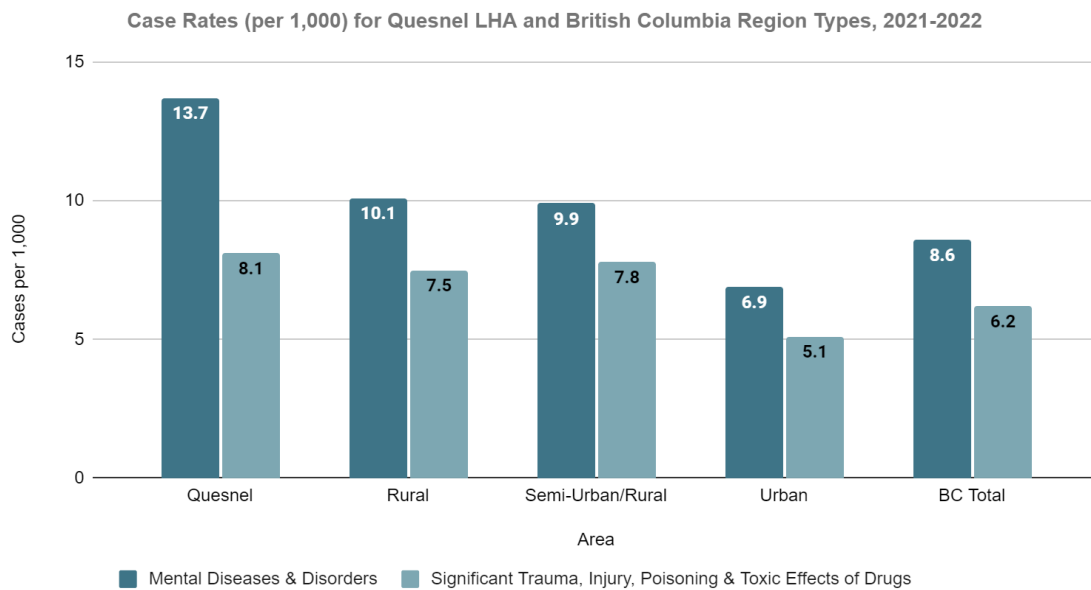
³ Government of British Columbia, 2023. *Hospital Workload by Governance Authority*. <https://public.healthideas.gov.bc.ca/>



Between 2017 to 2022, case rates for the trauma, injury, poisoning, and toxic effects of drugs also increased in Quesnel, from 50 in the 2017-2018 reporting period to 112 in 2021-2022.



In the 2021-2022 reporting period, Quesnel's case rates per 1,000 for mental diseases and disorders (13.7), as well as for trauma, injury poisoning, and toxic effects of drugs (8.1) was higher than the provincial averages (8.6 and 6.2, respectively), as well as for rural (10.1 and 7.5), semi-rural (9.9 and 7.8), and urban regions (6.9 and 5.1) within BC.

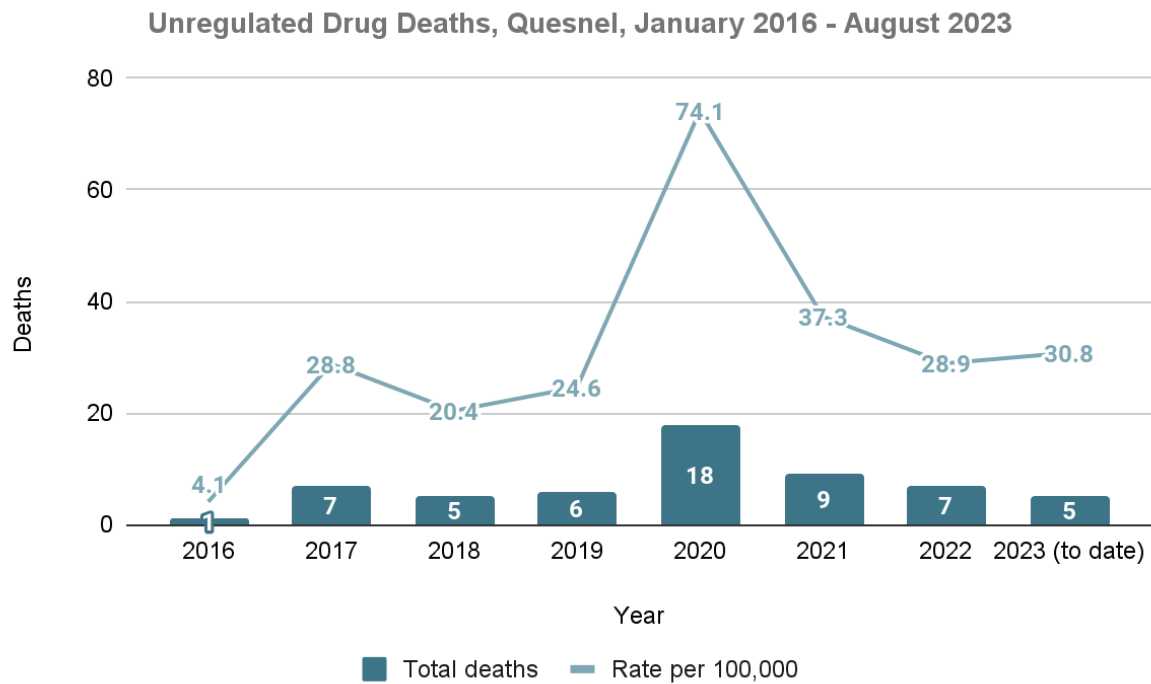


Another service provider noted the evolution of the conversation around these issues, saying,

“I think that we're doing a really great job of addressing mental health and more and more people are talking about mental health but we still don't want to talk about that messiness that comes around with homelessness or what people are experiencing.”

From 2016 and 2023, the rate of unregulated drug deaths in Quesnel were generally in the range of 20 to 30 per 100,000 population. 2016 had a lower rate of 4.1, but the rate spiked to 74.1 in 2020, possibly related to factors tied to the COVID-19 pandemic⁴.

⁴ Government of British Columbia, 2023. *Statistical Reports on Deaths in British Columbia, Unregulated Drug Deaths in B.C. (to Aug. 31, 2023)*. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/life-events/death/coroners-service/statistical-reports>

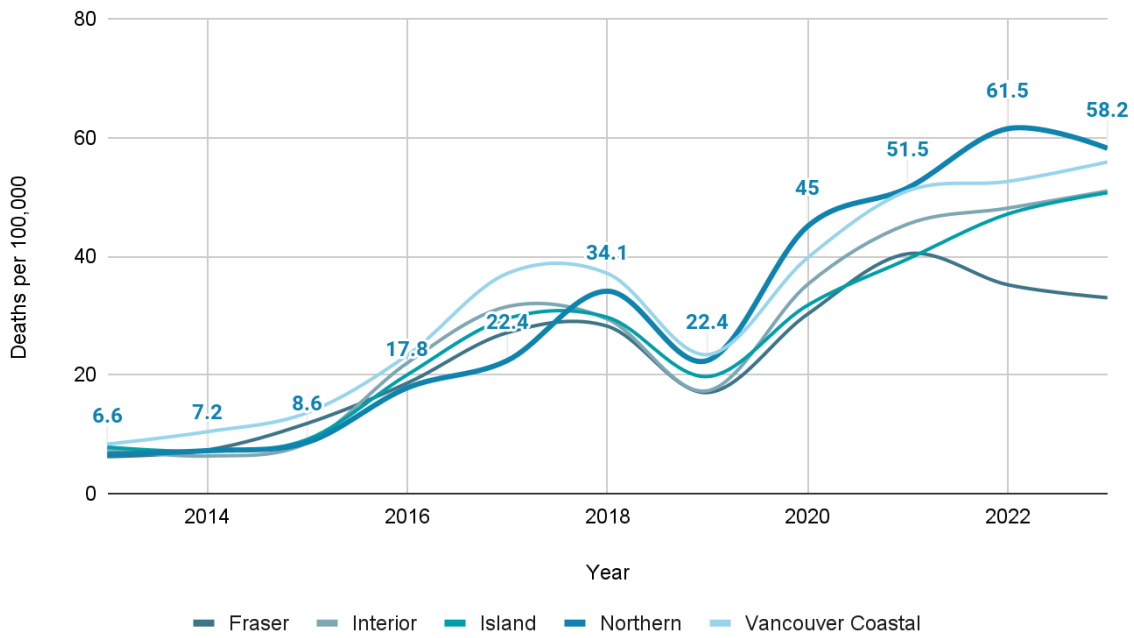


A local service provider on the front lines of the crisis noted a need for a more robust response, saying,

“We need more detox, we need more treatment centres. We can provide that really heavy duty, hands-on time with that person to help them through their addictions or to give them the support that they need. That can only happen in treatment or residential treatment. So we definitely need some sort of holistic treatment centre.”

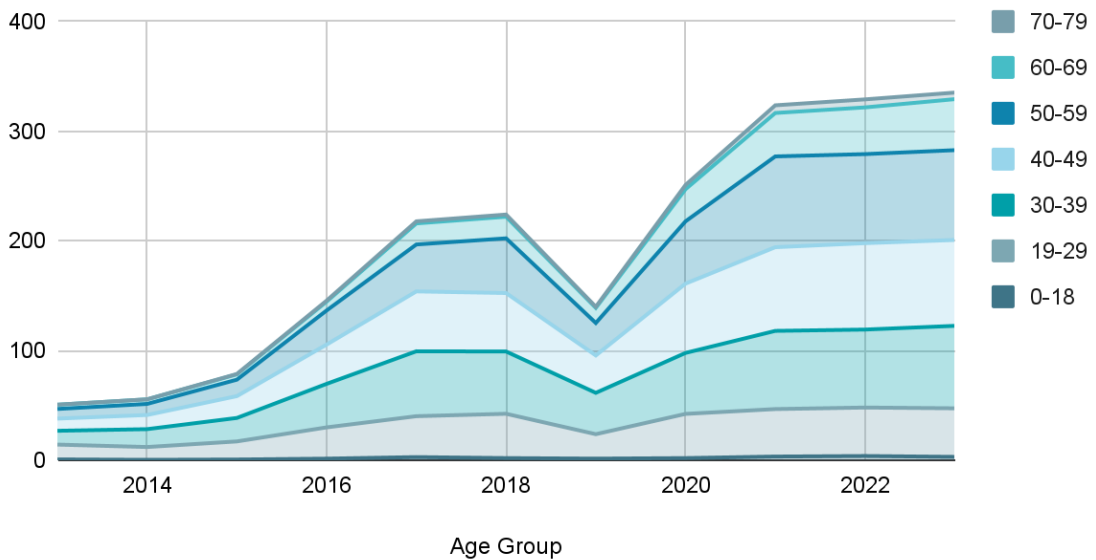
From January 2013 to August 2023, the overall rate of unregulated drug deaths per 100,000 people in BC rose dramatically from 7.2 to 45.7. In the same period, the rate of unregulated drug deaths in the Northern Interior Health Services Delivery Area increased from 6.6 per 100,000 in 2013 to 58.2, peaking at 61.5 per 100,000 population in 2022. It has also had the highest rate among health service delivery areas in BC since 2020.

Unregulated Drug Death Rates per 100,000 by Health Authority of Injury, January 2013 - August 2023

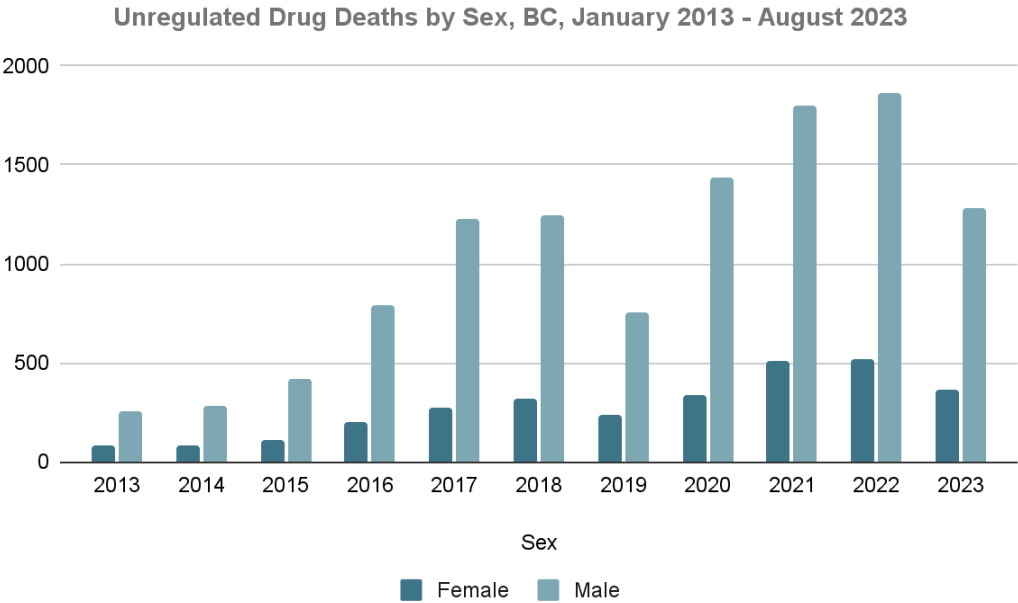


Across BC, the age groups with the highest rates have consistently been the 30-39, 40-49, and 50-59 brackets, with rates per 100,000 ranging from 75 to 82 in 2023. Rates are consistently lowest in the 0-18 and 70-79 age brackets.

Age-Specific Unregulated Drug Death Rates per 100,000, BC, January 2013 - August 2023

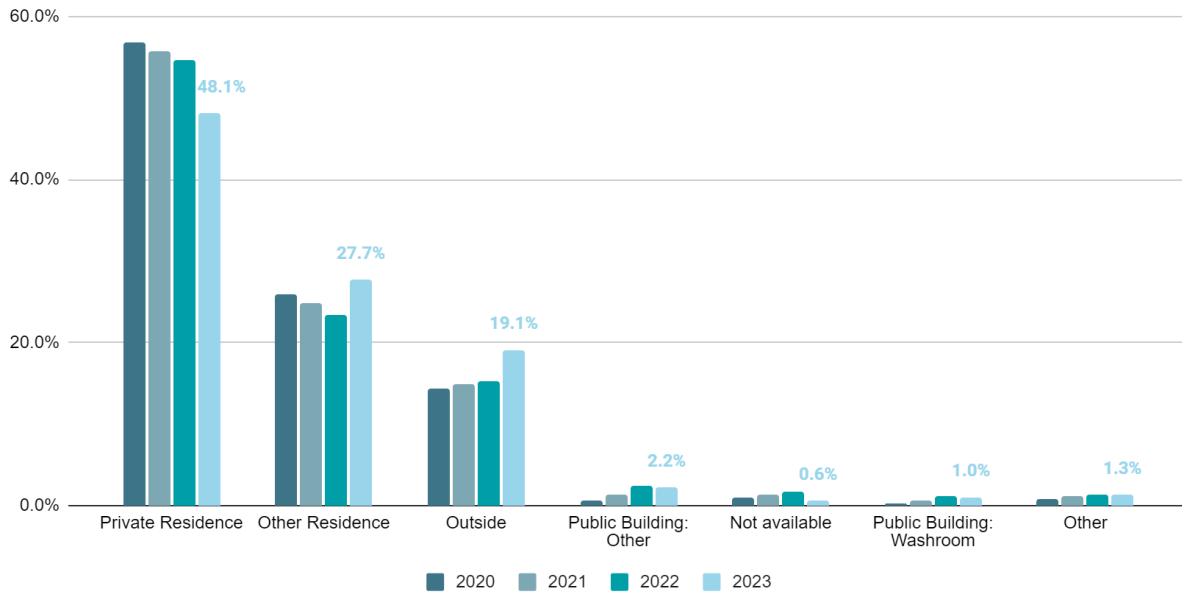


The majority of unregulated drug deaths in BC are of men, representing 78% of all deaths in the last three years. However, the number of deaths has increased substantially for both men and women from 2013 to 2023.



From 2020 to 2023, the locations of unregulated drug deaths in BC have been trending away from private residences, dropping from 56.7% in 2020 to 48.1% in 2023. This corresponds to an increase in incidents in other residences (from 26.0% in 2020 to 27.7% in 2023), and outside (from 14.4% in 2020 to 19.1% in 2023).

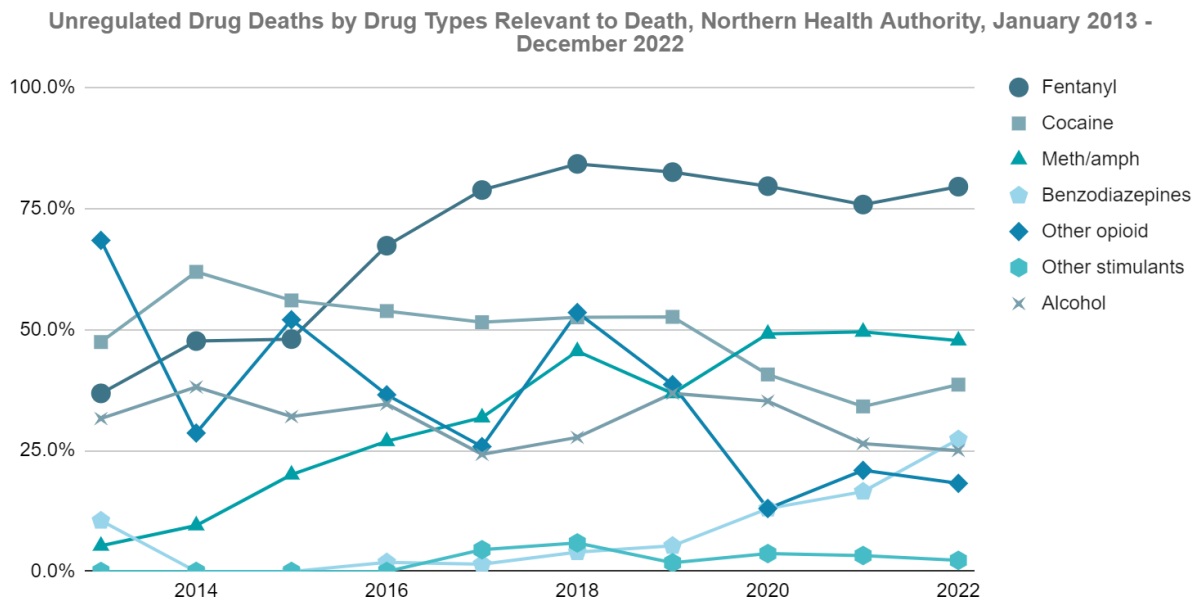
Unregulated Drug Deaths by Place of Injury, BC, January 2020 - August 2023



The trend toward incidents of unregulated drug deaths occurring outside may, in part, be due to a rise in the number of encampments. As one service provider said,

“I find that our encampments are starting to grow at a pretty significant rate, and I know that Seasons House...they do some outreach the best that they can, but I feel really we're missing those kinds of grassroots boots on the ground connecting to see from the people themselves.”

From 2013 to 2022, the proportion of drug deaths related to Fentanyl has more than doubled from 36.8% to 79.5%, surpassing cocaine and other opioids in 2016. Deaths related to methamphetamine and other amphetamines have also risen dramatically from 5.3% in 2013 to 47.7% in 2022, while deaths related to benzodiazepines, after dropping from 10.5% in 2013 to 0% in 2014, have risen to 27.3% in 2022.



Given this complex drug landscape, it is clear that northern BC requires support systems and interventions that are finely calibrated to the specific needs of its residents, allowing communities to address the distinct challenges they face.

“Everything to do with mental health and substances in the province is such targeted funding. It's like, we want you to target this specific issue. So here's funding for that. But it doesn't give certain local level leadership the opportunity to funnel that money where it's most beneficial.”

Service providers also recognized the importance of culturally appropriate responses to the opioid crisis, acknowledging that Indigenous people have unique experiences that require a holistic approach and underscoring the need for collaboration with Indigenous communities.

“Look at the opioid crisis... if you go underneath it's the homeless and the poverty and the trauma and that's why... you have to work with Indigenous.”

Addressing the opioid and mental health crises in BC poses a substantial challenge, and will require harm reduction, oversight, support for recovery, cultural sensitivity, and government support.

“The illicit drug supply is killing people. And it's the most harmful thing. If [they] don't have a ...[safe supply]...what do they have? They got nothing. There is no safe supply.”

The need for wraparound supports

Wraparound supports are important because they provide a comprehensive and coordinated approach to care, addressing diverse and interconnected needs such as housing, mental health, and substance use. This enables people to achieve stability, wellbeing, and successful integration

into the community. Community members expressed a desire for these wraparound supports, particularly for people with complex mental health or substance use issues.

According to service providers, this complex care needs to be easy to access and barrier-free. This would help keep people housed, reducing their health risks.

“We need complex care and we need as low a barrier as we can get. People just need a place to call home to live how they want to live and just be themselves.”

“I think bringing a program like the complex care housing, that is a collaboration between health and housing integrators, would be a quick win, but I know how long those programs have taken to get going in other communities.”

However, service providers note that there are not enough wraparound supports to meet demand.

“There doesn't seem to be enough wraparound support. We talk about them all the time, but I really feel that if we had more treatment centres to collaborate with or connect with, I think those wraparound services would be easier to identify. It's really hard to put wraparound services in place or even talk about them when we don't even have this service to provide the wraparound services.”

In particular, access to doctors and healthcare is a major barrier for vulnerable people. This stems from a shortage of qualified professionals in the area, and a lack of funding for mental health services. Service providers noted:

“Most of our physician group in Quesnel is not comfortable with complex mental health and substance use. So we have an over reliance again, on one individual who is our physician for serving this vulnerable population. We've had a really difficult time recruiting other physicians that are willing to work with individuals with complex mental health and substance use problems.”

“I feel like health care, they want to partner with us and they want to do it, but there's, there's, there's positions that they can't fill. Like there's just not the people to do the work.”

“We have people who, because they're unattached [to a doctor], [are in] positions where they don't get psychiatry support, they don't necessarily get the healthcare interventions that they need, which can lead to all sorts of complex issues with housing, complex issues in the community impacts our policing force, because that's a really broad effect.”

“A lot of our tenants can't even get a doctor in Quesnel. They're on a waiting list. I know several people have been on a waiting list for over a year and a half. It gets frustrating for people who really need some help but every time they go to the clinic or whatever, they're getting a different doctor and having to redo the whole thing again and getting a totally different answer.”

Regarding needed mental health and substance use services, community members suggested that timeliness and responsiveness to community needs requires more resources and staffing.

“There's not enough people to get those support so when you do call again, it's always there. Plates are just as full as the rest of us, even though we would like to get that help immediately. Their hands are tied too, so I think one of the biggest things is trying to get more staff ... so people can get through and not have to wait for weeks for a return phone call.”

“Our healthcare system is way overloaded right now and so people don't have [a chance] when [we]’re spread so thin ... Maybe on a good day, [they won't] be short with people.”

“We always talk about wraparound services to make sure that, from the beginning to the end, clients and families are getting the help and the support they need ... but then there's always a gap or there's, oh, you have to wait six months or a year for this help and that's not going to work. It's always, ‘I'll get back to you when I can’ because everybody's overworked.”

“There also needs to be an acknowledgement for the folks that are already doing that work ... to encourage them to keep going in and do what they're doing [so] well. So I think that's also really important, but we need to look at housing, and we need access to treatment.”

In terms of what supports are needed aside from simply hiring and retaining staff, the need for complex care and person-centred support was clear, especially for people experiencing homelessness. Service providers also believe there needs to be an integration between housing, mental health, and substance treatment.

“If I could wave a magic wand today, it would be that health and housing come together to create that whole perspective of what's needed. Not just saying hey, housing first and then we solve the problems. Don't get me wrong, I totally appreciate that model. But also recognizing that if we want to be really successful, we need to try and have some of these things start from scratch at the beginning or from day one.”

Crime And Safety

Risks to Quesnel's wellbeing extend beyond housing insecurity, homelessness, and substance use. Drug trafficking and related violence also pose serious threats to the community's safety.

The following quotes detail the nature of these safety concerns.

"So we've got a lot of robberies. We had three armed robberies in the month of January that were all from a drug user just trying to get enough money for his next fix. So yeah, I believe that there's definitely an increase of violent crime stemming from the vulnerable population and their opioid addictions."

"I think [crime] is worse because of the opioid crisis. Okay, so we got a lot more drug dealing on the streets, open, consumption, overdose rates going up. People carry weapons to protect themselves. They're staying in tent cities where they gotta carry weapons to protect themselves."

Geographically, Quesnel is also positioned as a thoroughfare for trafficking activities.

"I would say [drug trafficking and gangs are] extremely prevalent. And the reason I'm saying that, not because nobody's doing anything about it, and the RCMP are trying their best, is because Quesnel is the thoroughfare. So we are a tiny little town, like maybe 12,000 in the city limits, but then you have all these other areas. So you have 25,000 people. You can go east, west, north, or south. ...[violence] is alive and well ... there's absolutely been situations where [family members] have either disappeared or been murdered."

Additionally, violence may increase as mental health or addiction issues go unaddressed.

"With the current landscape, we're seeing an increase, we're seeing individuals who were never violent before and unpredictable. That's an issue for the community that we're seeing, like I said, individuals who had never behaved that way before are being linked."

While accountability is important for fighting traffickers, addressing the upstream causes of violence and danger are more sustainable solutions to improving community safety. This may include violence prevention and intervention programs, or connecting people with the support they need to cope with difficult situations. This approach is a more compassionate and holistic response, providing pathways to treatment and recovery, and is more likely to create long-term positive change compared to a strict "hard on crime" stance that might further alienate and marginalize those in need.

Discrimination And Racism

Discrimination is another barrier to accessing support. Stigma around homelessness and mental health, as well as racism against Indigenous people, are present in Quesnel, and should be addressed in any strategies to improve the wellbeing of the vulnerable population.

Discrimination can make it more difficult for people to find a place to live, especially for lower-cost units that are in high-demand. One service provider said,

“We have a population that's quite challenging to house within a private market setting. It's also quite difficult to keep a house without a supportive environment. It's not market value, or not a private market home. So that's been a big letdown.”

Other service providers noted,

“We just find a lot of our [Indigenous] families and our tenants, our peoples are treated so differently.”

“The vacancy rate is quite low. And on top of that there's only X number of landlords that rent units that could potentially be affordable and could potentially be a landlord that would be willing to accept people that are maybe coming from the shelter.”

This not only affects housing, but healthcare and social services as well.

“We have a lot of clients that refuse to go to the hospital for services for the way they've been treated in the past. I know Northern Health is trying to create a more acceptable environment for everybody. But you can't take away history and a lot of people's experiences.”

“Even when [they] go into hospitals or anything like that, as soon as they see a native person, they're like, automatically, ‘Oh, you're addicted to drugs or you're an alcoholic.’ They're given no self-worth. And it's, it's just heartbreaking to see it.”

“It's unfortunate that the people that need the services the most are the ones that get turned away the most...we try to pick up the pieces and make sure that our population gets treated fairly wherever they go.”

These attitudes also affect public opinions on social support for vulnerable populations, which can hinder the provision of services needed to ensure their wellbeing. Regarding encampments in particular, there are many misconceptions that can contribute to stigma and NIMBYism.

“There's so much misconception about what happens. I feel like our folks are just so stigmatized. And I think that encampments [where people who are homeless are living] happen as well for people's safety. Know that our general consensus isn't great about them. So I think they too, want to stay in their own community and that's why these encampments pop up first, safety and sense of security as well.”

Instead, a human rights lens that acknowledges encampments are located on Indigenous land, are often a response to local housing and homelessness crises, and promote a sense of belonging, could provide a more productive conversation about how to best respond to these camps. Building public awareness that housing and resources for social support is important for community safety and wellbeing.

“I think everybody wants a safe community. Even people who are living at risk, they want a safe community. The bankers, the city councilman, the white collar, the blue collar, whatever colour you are, you want a safe community to live in ... If you have those supports available for people, it benefits the whole community ... if somebody has a home to go to, there's going to be less harm in the community.”

There is also a need to recognize that even if people refuse formal services available to them, they still have the right to health and safety.

“People have the decision and the right to to live their life at risk...if society is going to walk that line of where people are allowed to make these decisions, then I assert that then we need to be able to support them to live. And in doing so it reduces the risks for other folks in the community.... if their mental health and health care, all of those things are addressed, it makes the whole community as a whole a safer place.”

Regarding strategies on improving inclusion for vulnerable people, calls to action from service providers include:

“I think that there needs to be that continuation of education [on Indigenous practices] for our health care partners ... people lean in all the time and ask questions about how can I be more holistic in my practice, how can I support better, but I think that that edge in the healthcare system itself really needs to continue.”

“I just think that we would make it a lot farther and be more effective if we kept kindness at the forefront, rather than fighting an entire population of people and trying to criminalize them.”

“It would be really super encouraging to humanize [the fact] that homelessness happens, they're there for a reason. We [unfortunately] get back to that old school ‘pull yourself up by your bootstraps’ [mentality]. And for some folks, that's just not it.”

“[Take] that time and [be] patient, not rushing somebody to tell their story. Because it's their story to tell, they'll tell it when they feel comfortable telling it. And when they do, that's a privilege for us to hear that story. And we should respect that.”

Point-In-Time Count (2023)

In 2023, the state of homelessness in Quesnel was captured by the Point-in-Time (PiT) count. The count, conducted over a 24-hour period, identified 127 people as experiencing homelessness, a slight increase from 121 in the previous 2020 count.

The condition of people experiencing homelessness varied, with 42% having some form of long-term shelter on the night of the count, whether in homeless shelters, transition houses for women fleeing violence, youth safe houses, or those with no fixed address temporarily residing in institutions like hospitals, jails, or detox facilities. The remaining 58% did not have long-term shelter. The majority of this unsheltered group, approximately 58%, were couch surfing—seeking temporary refuge at a friend's or acquaintance's place, while 25% spent the night outdoors, and 7% in vehicles.

However, it is crucial to understand the framework of this count. The PiT methodology defines a person as homeless if they lack their own residence where they can stay for a foreseeable 30 days or more, encompassing those in institutional settings as well as those without any shelter. This definition helps to encompass a broader spectrum of the homeless population, making the count more comprehensive.

While the PiT count is a valuable tool for gauging the scale of homelessness in a community, it is limited in that the numbers presented are, by nature, an underestimation, capturing only those identified within a specific 24-hour window. However, it still highlights the pressing nature of homelessness in Quesnel and the immediate need for interventions.

The Face of Homelessness

The face of homelessness in Quesnel is as diverse as it is poignant. A closer examination of the demographics revealed in the 2023 Point-in-Time count showcases a spectrum of ages, genders, orientations, and cultural backgrounds, underscoring the universal nature of this societal challenge.

- Age: 89% of the enumerated people experiencing homelessness were younger adults, with seniors aged 55 and over representing 7%, and youth making up the remaining 4%.
- Gender: 57% of those included in the PiT count were men, and 40% were women. People identifying with another gender accounted for 2%.
- 2SLGBTQIA+ community: 14% of the homeless population identified as belonging to the 2SLGBTQIA+ spectrum, with 3% having a trans experience.
- Indigenous representation: 59% of the homeless population identified as Indigenous, much higher than the 13% in the overall Quesnel census population. 64% of these Indigenous respondents had either direct or generational experiences with residential schools,

underscoring the deep-seated systemic issues and historical traumas exacerbating the Indigenous community's homelessness rates.

The demographic insights from the 2023 Point-in-Time count offer a multifaceted understanding of homelessness in Quesnel, illuminating the varied faces and stories behind the numbers and emphasizing the need for targeted, diverse, and inclusive strategies to address and alleviate homelessness in the community.

Health Challenges

Circumstances leading to homelessness can be exacerbated by health challenges. The 2023 Point-in-Time count for Quesnel underscored the pressing health concerns experienced by many of the homeless community.

- Broad health concerns: 83% of respondents faced addiction issues, and 71% had mental health challenges. 47% reported medical conditions, 43% physical disabilities, and 26% learning disabilities.
- Acquired brain injuries: 49% of the respondents reported an acquired brain injury, a substantial increase from the 34% recorded in 2020.
- Multiple health challenges: 81% of respondents reported living with two or more health concerns. This overlapping of health issues underscores the need for holistic healthcare interventions that can address multiple health challenges concurrently.

In understanding the health profiles of Quesnel's homeless community, it becomes clear that addressing homelessness is not just about providing shelter, but also ensuring that integrated healthcare solutions are available to address the varied health concerns faced by this demographic.

Root Causes of Homelessness

Understanding the root causes of homelessness is essential to creating effective solutions. The 2023 Point-in-Time count in Quesnel provides insights into why people find themselves without stable housing, and how long they remain in such conditions.

- Root causes: The top reasons for housing loss mirror broader societal challenges. The cause of homelessness was reported as lack of sufficient income by 49% of respondents, personal conflicts with spouses or partners by 31%, and substance use by 29%.
- Duration: 72% of respondents had been experiencing homelessness for a year or more, with 18% reporting less than six months of homelessness. In contrast, in the 2020 PiT count, 42% had been experiencing homelessness for less than six months, suggesting that over time, many of the people experiencing short-term homelessness might have transitioned into long-term homelessness. This underscores the need for long-term, sustainable solutions.

The reported causes of homelessness highlight that both systemic challenges (like economic factors) and individual issues (like personal conflicts or health challenges) are major drivers of homelessness. It is critical to address both facets as Quesnel seeks solutions to the homelessness crisis, as well as to ensure that proposed solutions are able to sustainably address long-term problems.

Living Situations

People who are experiencing homelessness, often viewed as outliers, remain deeply intertwined with the community of Quesnel, with their interactions, duration of stay, and access to services highlighting their connection to the community and the available support structures.

- Deep community roots: 90% of respondents had lived in Quesnel for over a year, 77% had lived in Quesnel for five years or more, and 42% had always lived in Quesnel. This suggests that solutions to homelessness need to be grounded in local context, history, and community dynamics.
- Service utilization: 71% of respondents have accessed food services, 59% have visited the emergency room, and 59% have accessed non-emergency hospital services within the past year. These figures underscore the physical and mental health challenges this community faces and the reliance on acute care services.
- Living arrangements: 68% of respondents had stayed in homeless shelters at some point over the past year. 67% had stayed with someone else, or “couch surfed,” showcasing an informal network of support. 51% had at some point stayed outdoors, highlighting the insufficiency of shelter options.

The homeless community in Quesnel is deeply rooted and integrated in the wider Quesnel community. The reliance on available services and long-standing ties to the town emphasizes the need for community-centred, holistic, and long-term solutions.

Economic Influences

The economic landscape is an important driver of homelessness in Quesnel, highlighting the importance of considering economic challenges and the relationship with employment.

- Income dynamics: 93% of people identified as homeless reported having some form of income, mostly income assistance and disability benefits. However, while essential, these forms of income may be insufficient to secure stable housing. In addition, the most common reason for housing loss, reported by 49% of respondents, was inadequacy of income.
- Employment status: While a substantial portion of respondents had some form of income, only 7% reported having a job, either full-time or part-time.

In summary, there is substantial interaction between economic challenges and homelessness in Quesnel. A substantial percentage of people experiencing homelessness are also faced with economic vulnerabilities and low employment opportunities.

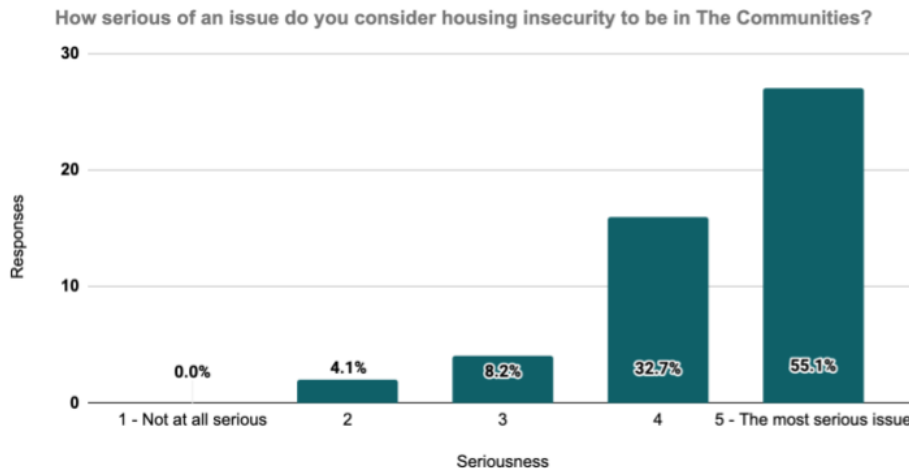
Appendix C: Community Survey Results

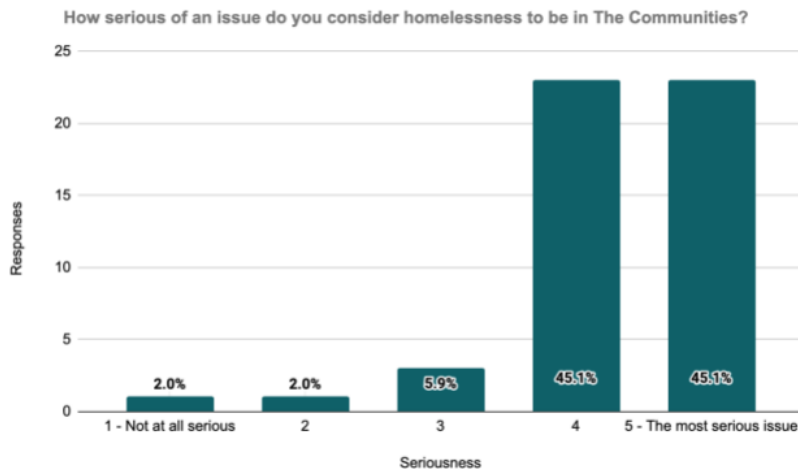
Notes about the Survey

- Posted on the City of Quesnel "Let's Chat" Platform
- Online responses only
- 54 usable responses
 - ◆ 7 men, 43 women, 2 prefer not to specify
 - ◆ 41 White, 6 Aboriginal/Indigenous, remaining not listed due to privacy and small sample size
 - ◆ 44% of respondents experienced one or more health challenges (illness or medical condition, physical limitation, learning or cognitive limitations, mental health concerns, substance use issues)
 - ◆ 27 respondents live in City limits, remainder lived outside or did not answer

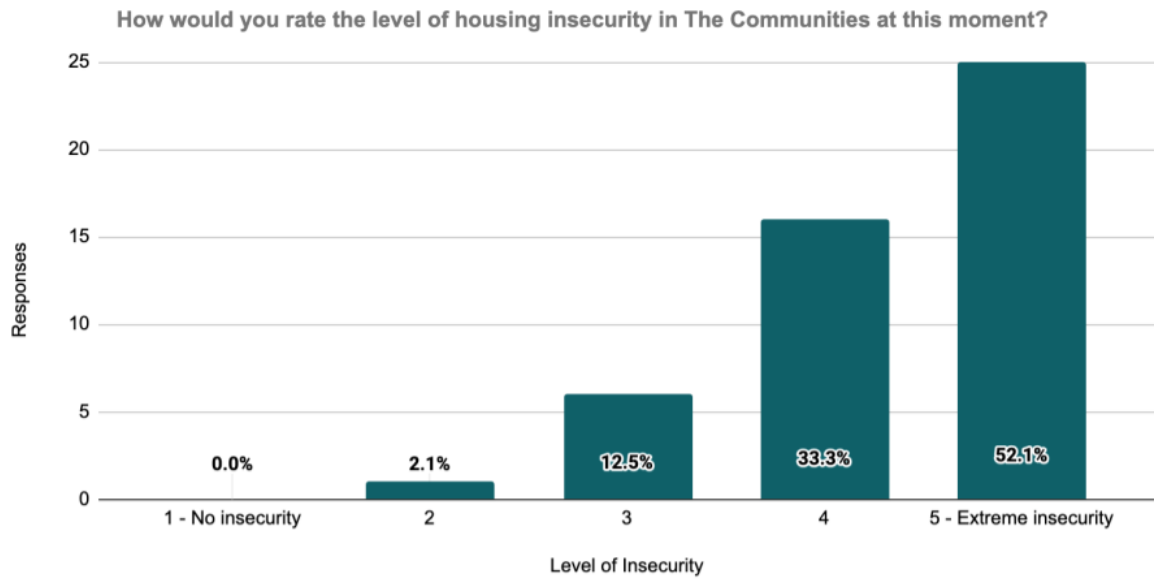
Because of the limited sample size and respondent profile, we strongly recommend that these findings are not used to represent The Communities' opinions as a whole.

Further engagement would be required in order to gather a more representative sample.

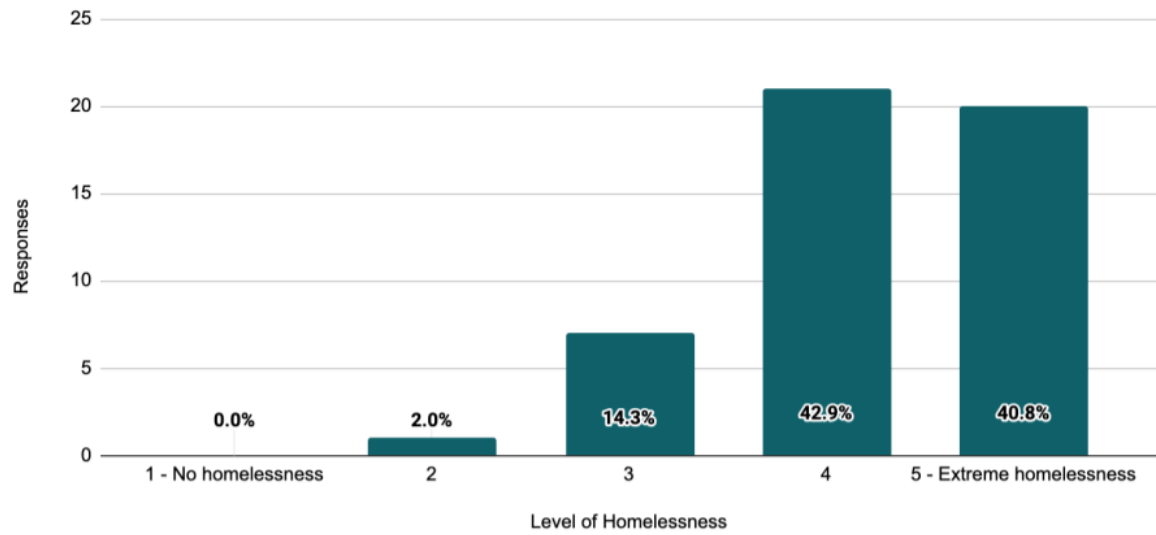




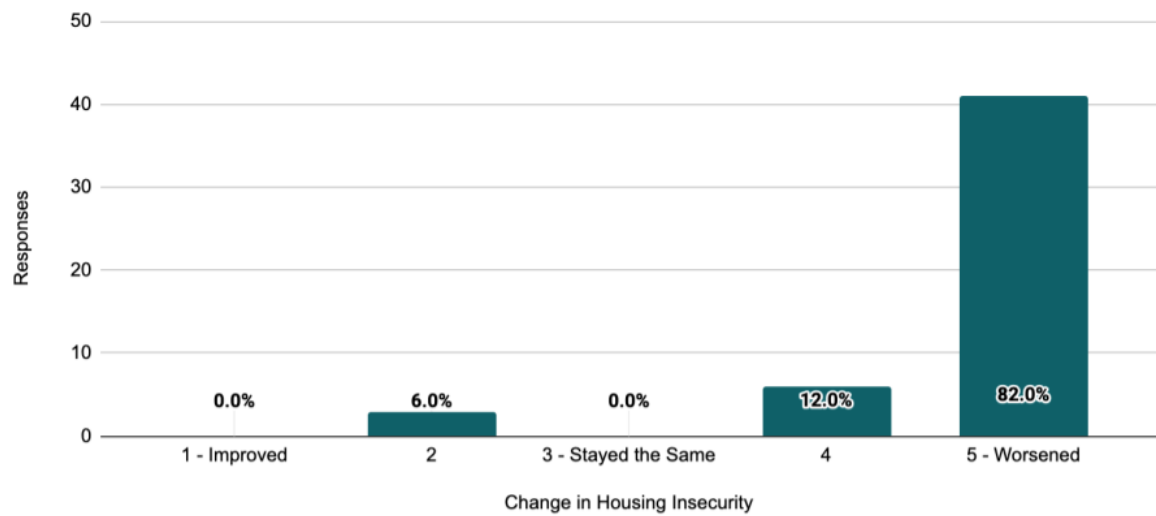
HelpSeeker.org

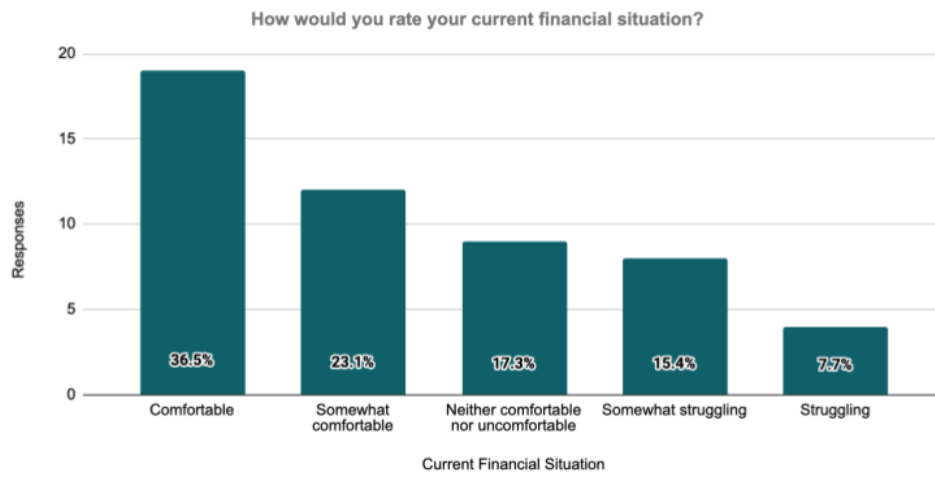
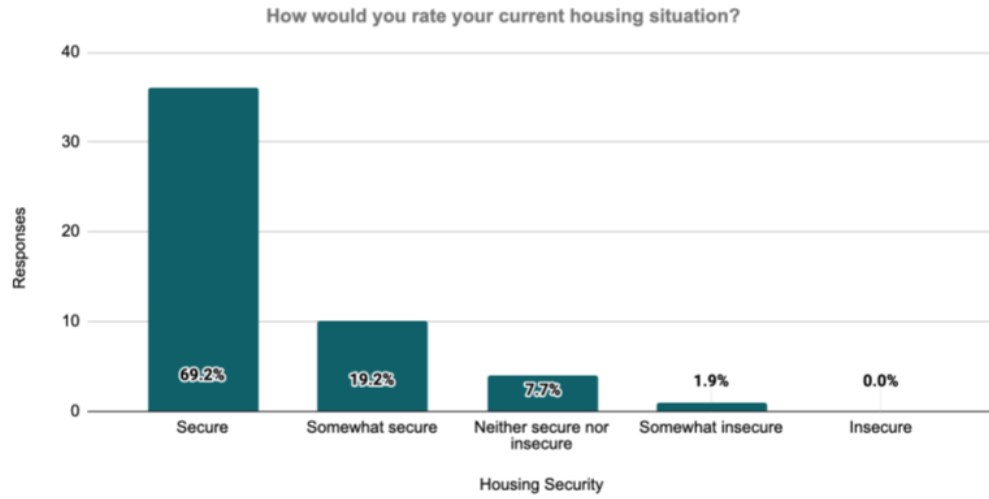


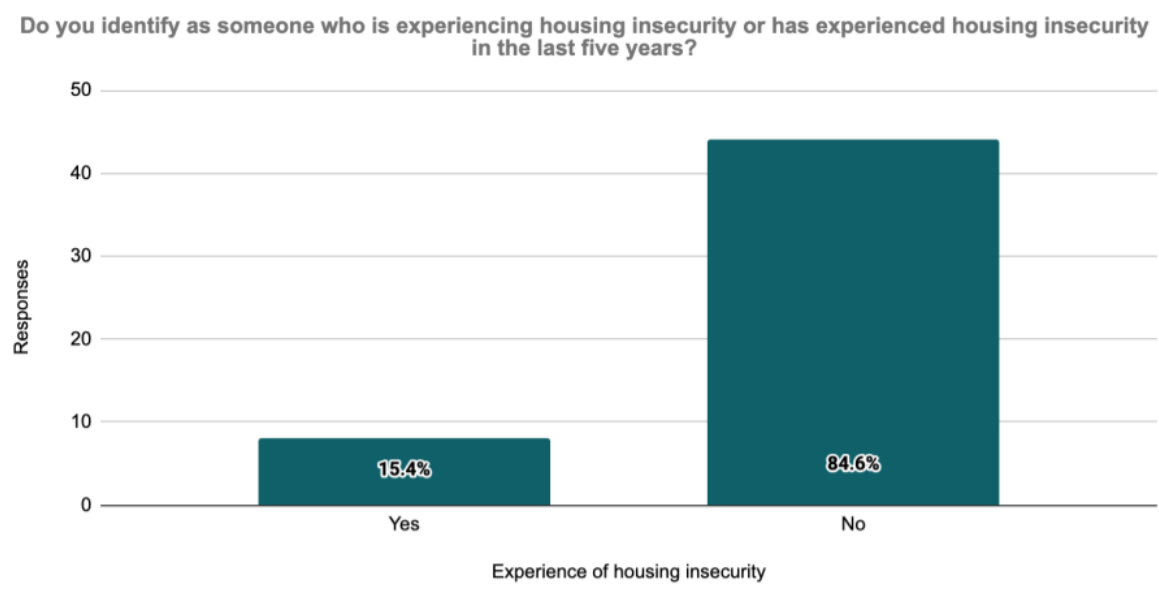
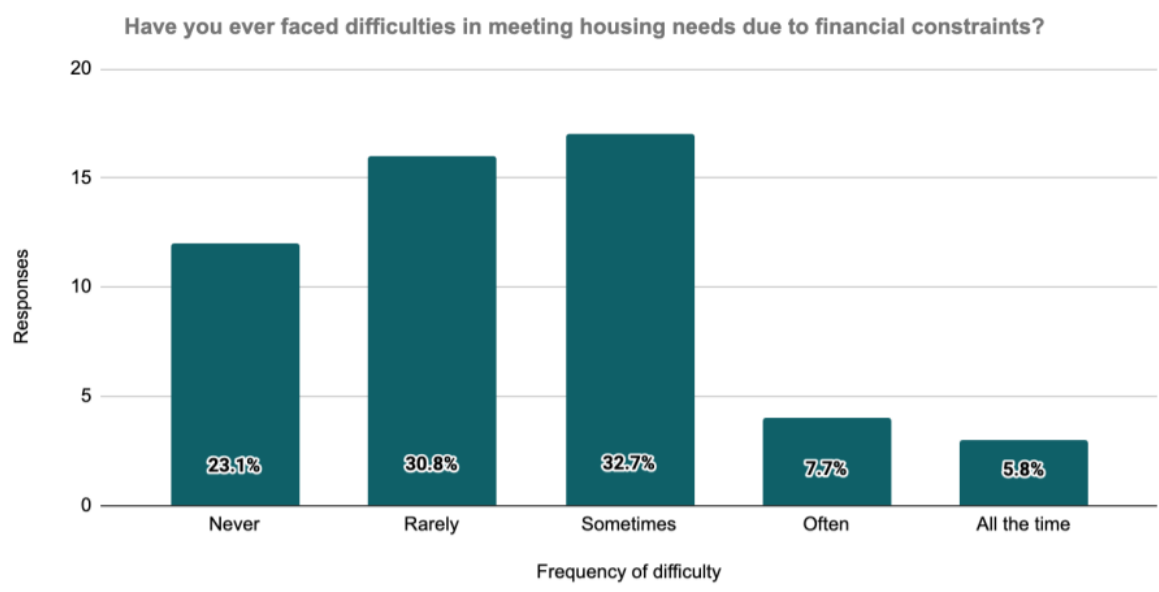
How would you rate the level of homelessness in The Communities at this moment?



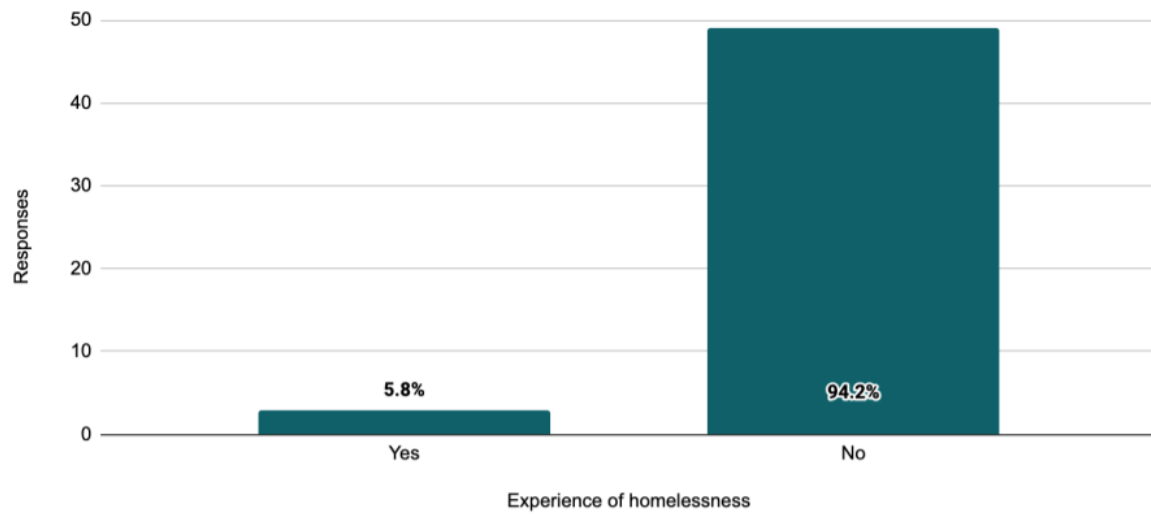
Do you feel that the level of housing insecurity in The Communities in the past five years has improved, stayed the same, or worsened?



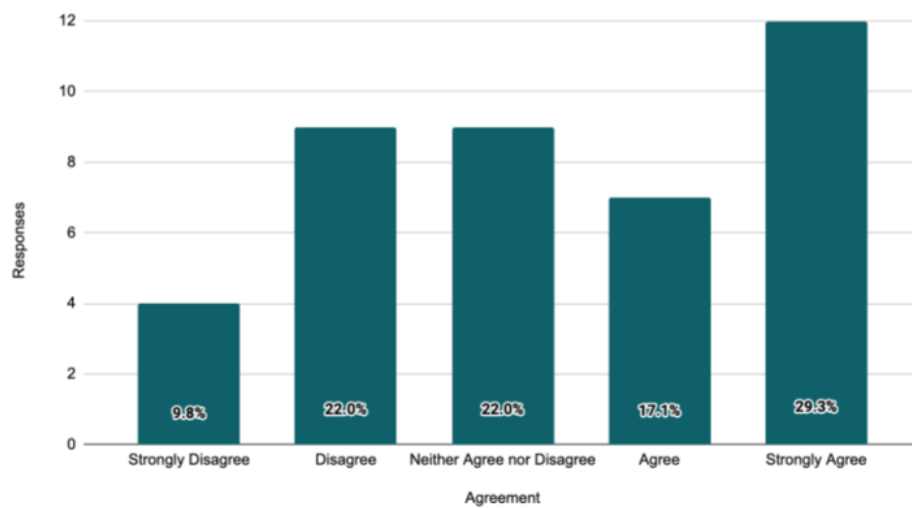


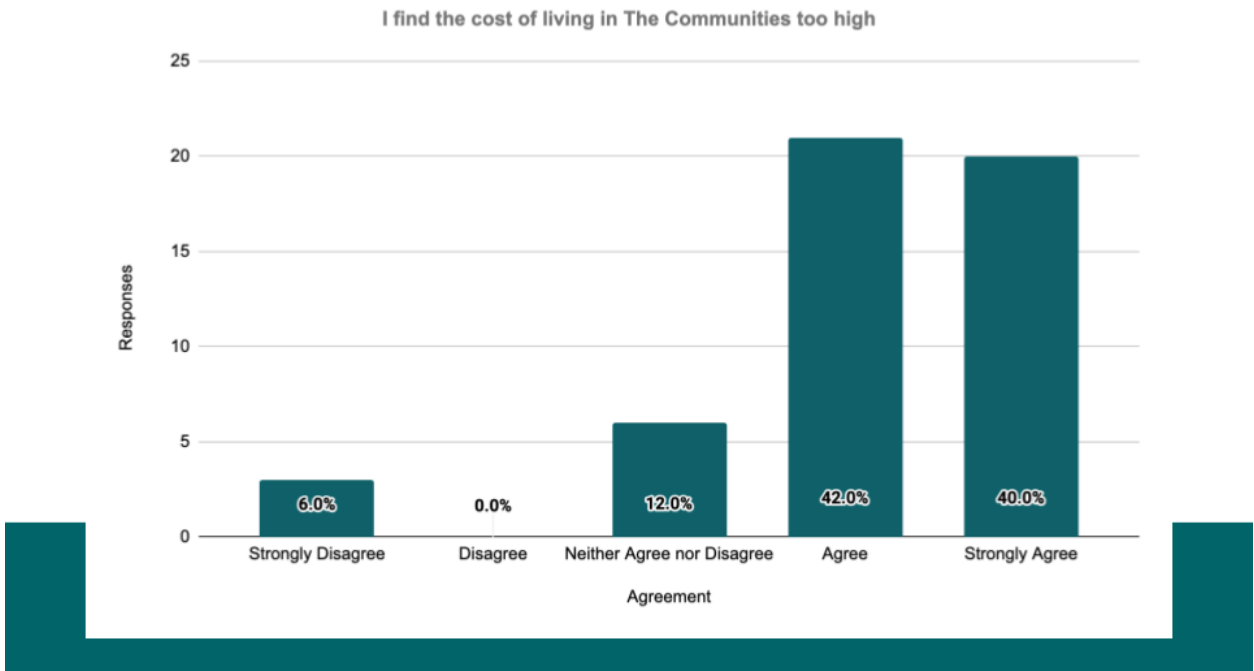
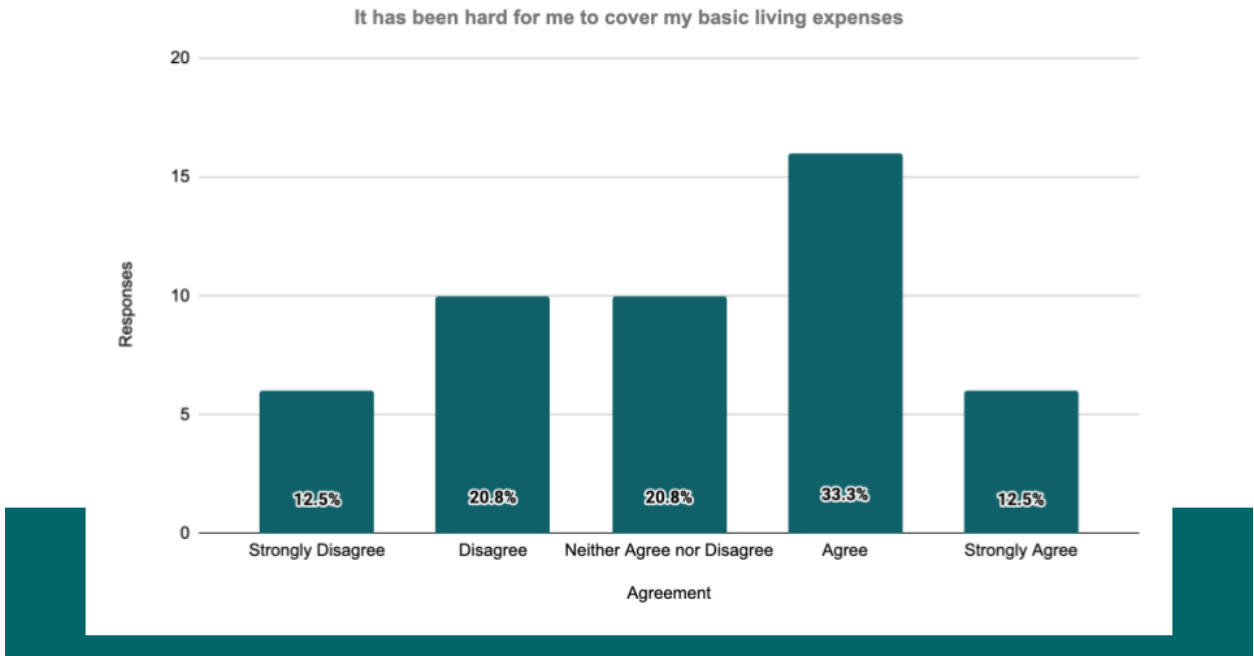


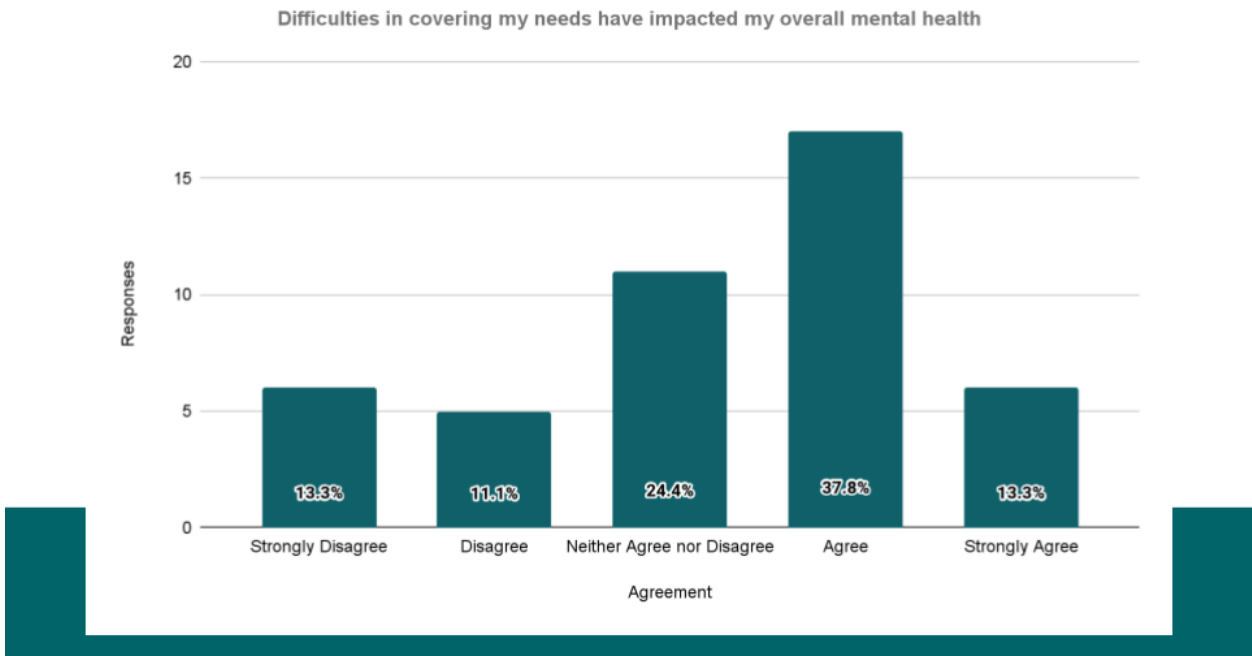
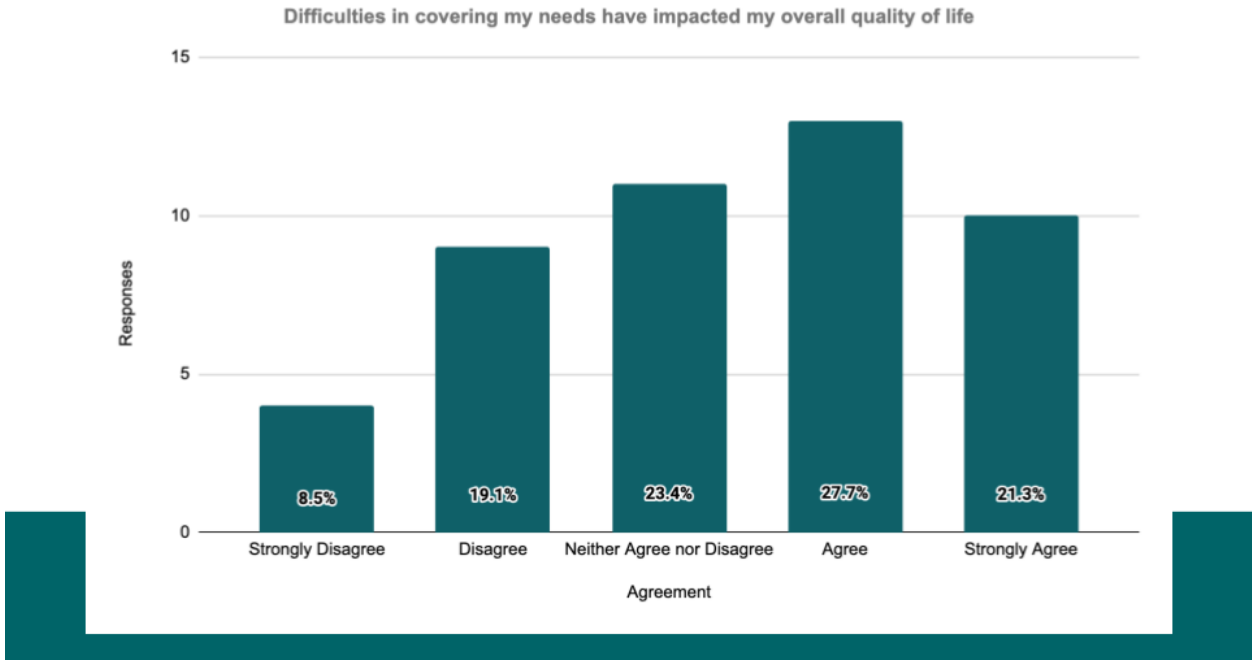
Do you identify as someone who is experiencing homelessness or has experienced homelessness in the last five years?

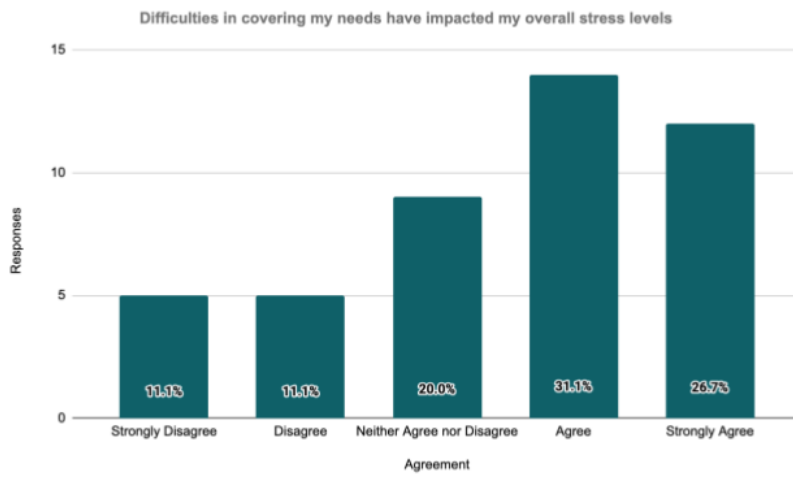


Finding affordable housing in The Communities that works for me and my family has been hard

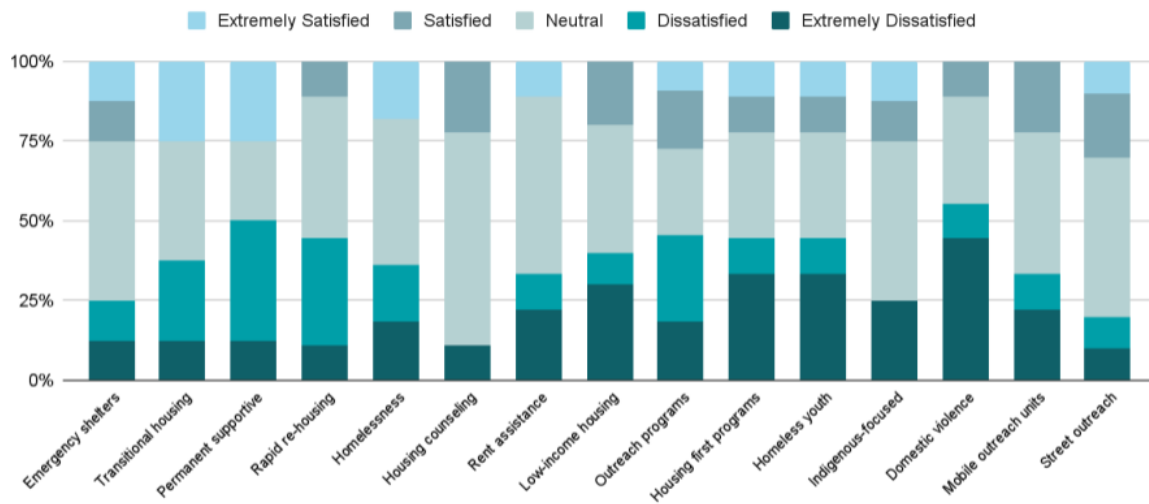




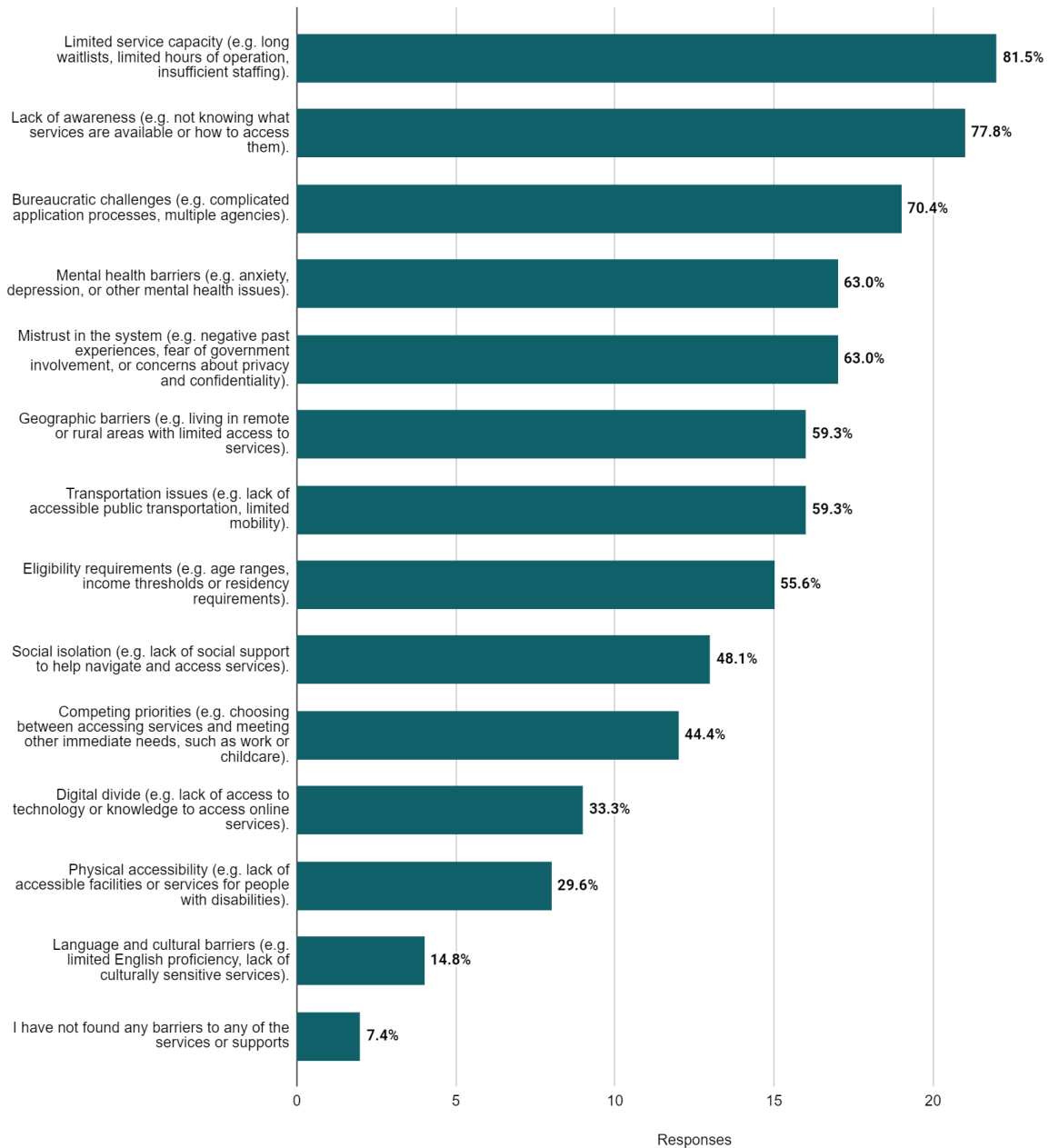




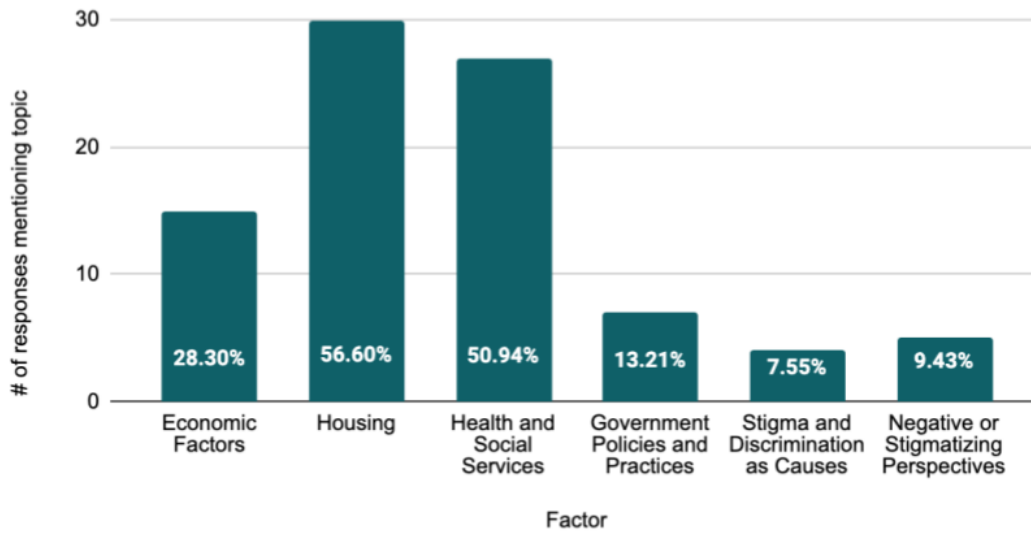
Satisfaction of Survey Respondents (Users of Services Only)



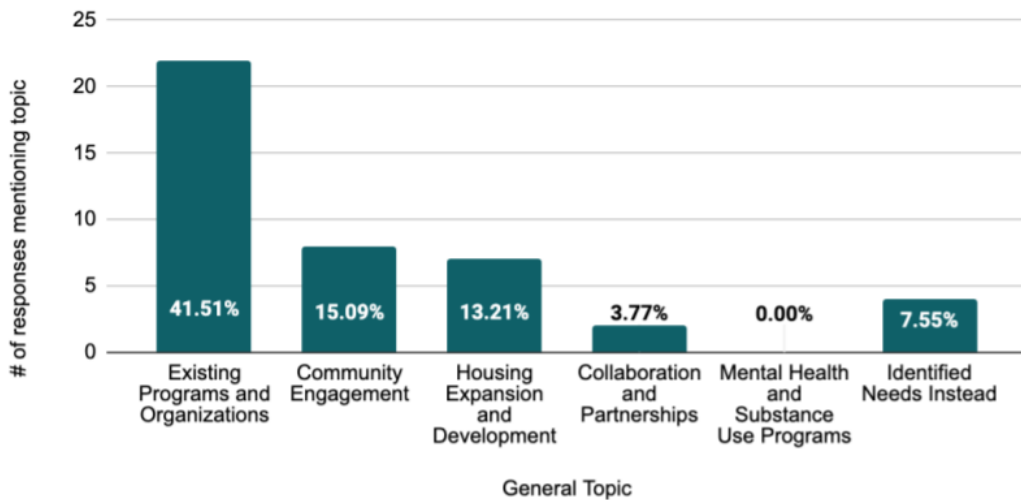
What barriers have you found, if any, when trying to access services and supports?



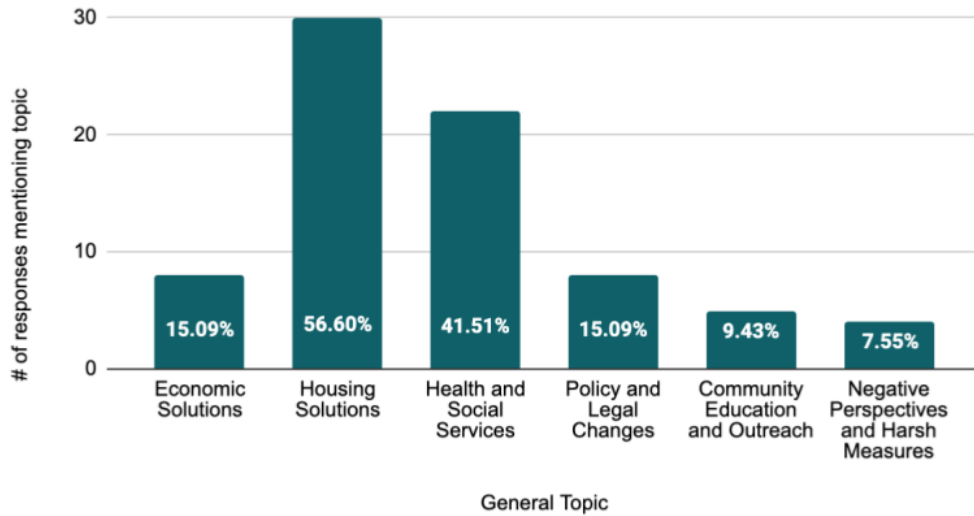
In your opinion, what are the biggest factors contributing to housing insecurity and homelessness in The Communities?



What strengths does your community have right now that can help eliminate housing insecurity and/or homelessness? This could be anything, including people, programs or resources, etc. Please list as many as you think appropriate.



What types of additional supports do you think are needed in the community to assist in reducing housing insecurity and homelessness?



In your opinion, what are the biggest factors contributing to housing insecurity and homelessness in The Communities?

Housing (57%)



Lack of housing and massive increases in rent prices that are not matched by wages, subsidies, etc., corporate landlords, cost of living increasing drastically

Government Policies (13%)



The three levels of Canadian government are fundamentally at odds with one another. The [...] city stifles change and prevents adaptation to the conditions imposed by the other levels of government.

Health and Social Services (51%)



Lack of services: addiction services, mental health services, food & shelter services, and homelessness prevention/housing services. In addition, I think that Quesnel is under resourced and lacks numerous programs/initiatives that could help alleviate some of the homelessness we are experiencing.

Stigma/Discrimination as Cause (8%)



[L]ack of city council to devote time, money and energy to crisis because of personal bias, racism, allowing downtown association to completely sweep issues away, prejudice, 1950's mentality that if we ignore something it will go away and not in my neighbourhood[.]

Economic Factors (28%)



[N]o decent paying jobs, inflation too high, taxes too high, house prices too high, cost of living too high.

Negative/Stigmatizing Responses

Some responses to this and other questions expressed concerns and stigmatizing responses about social programs, implying they may lead to over-reliance. **Prevailing best practices in the field contradict this view.** Moving forward, the City of Quesnel may wish to develop strategies that address these misconceptions, with an emphasis on promoting the wellbeing of the entire community.

*Quotes taken from survey responses

If you were in need of housing support from social programs, how would you find the services you need in The Communities?

Government Sources

- BC Housing
- City of Quesnel
- Ministry of Social Development
- Ministry of Income Assistance
- Service BC
- MLA's Office
- Service Canada
- Hospital or CYMH

Non-Government Sources

- Quesnel Shelter & Support Society
- Seasons House
- Friendship Center
- Bridges
- Dakelh Community Housing
- Women's Resource Centre
- Better at Home
- Salvation Army
- Westside Mental Health
- Homelessness Prevention Program
- Axis Family Services

General Sources

- Internet search
- Word of mouth
- Social media
- Asking someone who knows all of the resources available
- Asking friends and family
- Local shelter
- Social service agencies
- No idea

What strengths does your community have right now that can help eliminate housing insecurity and/or homelessness?

Existing Programs and Organizations (42%)



There are several organizations that are doing their best to bring homelessness [assistance] to our community in hopes that it will get recognized and addressed.

We have a shelter [...] They are kind individuals who help everyone and we need more of that in the community .

- Seasons House, Bridges Supportive Housing, Dakelh Housing
- Clean Team, Cat Van, Oat Program, West Side Mental Health
- Greenhope, [...] Quesnel Matching Needs, Better at Home, Women's Resource Centre, Axis.

**Quotes taken from survey responses*

Community Engagement (15%)



Community awareness of homelessness and housing insecurity issues is increasing, lots of organizations that would be able to support any initiatives.

It's a smaller community, so the scale of the issues may be more easily tackled than in a big city.

[I] know many compassion caring hearts that assist [with] food insecurities and provide blankets, tents.

Housing Development (13%)



[P]ossible buildings that could be low-income housing, some low-income housing developments have been built in the last few years.

2 new apartment buildings, a 4 block empty space in north Quesnel could be used for low income senior housing.

Collaborations / Partnerships (4%)



A solid collaboration between social services, mental health, police, bylaw, and medical services that all work together to help those hard to reach individuals.

What types of additional supports do you think are needed in the community to assist in reducing housing insecurity and homelessness?

Housing Solutions (57%)



More housing. Low income, seniors, supportive, etc. There is enough private market rental housing that is laughably expensive in our community. We need to limit private/corporate, and prioritize subsidized/low barrier/etc.

Policy and Legal Changes (15%)



Universal basic income/reverse income tax. Readily available safe supply. More drug enforcement of illegal drug dealers[.]

Supports that target the working class to reduce the number of people at risk.

**Quotes taken from survey responses*

Health and Social Services (42%)



I think there are multiple services that are missing, that we haven't tried yet: detox/treatment, high-barrier supportive housing for substance users[.]

Equitable mental health supports - current waitlists for affordable options are not efficient for dealing with the issues in the short term.

Community Education/Outreach (9%)



[...] more education to the community about mental health and what we as a community can do to support each other.

Community outreach to assist citizens who may not be aware of resources available.

Economic Solutions (15%)



Flexible and creative, low barrier job opportunities for folks who can't work traditional 9-5 Monday to Friday. Pick up and go jobs.

[P]rograms to help people get back on their feet, [...] helping people get jobs (employers who will give people facing difficulties a chance)

Is there anything else regarding housing and homelessness in The Communities that you would like to add?

Housing and Infrastructure (23%)



I've asked people who work in the support industry on what they think is the biggest thing we can change to help the crisis situation we find ourselves in, and it is housing. So we need to ensure that there is safe, affordable housing for all[.]

Government Policies (7%)



The resistance from the business community and the City is making the situation with homeless people worse, not better. Additional Bylaw staff is not the answer and I would prefer our tax dollars go towards housing and services, not Bylaw staff.

**Quotes taken from survey responses*

Support Services/Rehabilitation (19%)



How is it possible to address homelessness without improving someone's mental health condition or working to rehabilitate them to get them off drugs?

We could house them all day long but if we don't have actual supports for rehabilitation, then housing will not completely solve the issues we are facing.

Community Engagement (6%)



BC Housing and other community agency informational meetings with local stakeholders/advocates sharing successes and options for our communities. Educational sessions to help the greater community understand the need and how we can address the issues.

Safety, Security, Quality of Life (9%)



[P]eer initiatives/programs ARE the solution to many of the problems we are facing. Not only do these programs provide security, health/wellness, and vital connections to peers, but they also create a healthier and better connected community as a whole.